



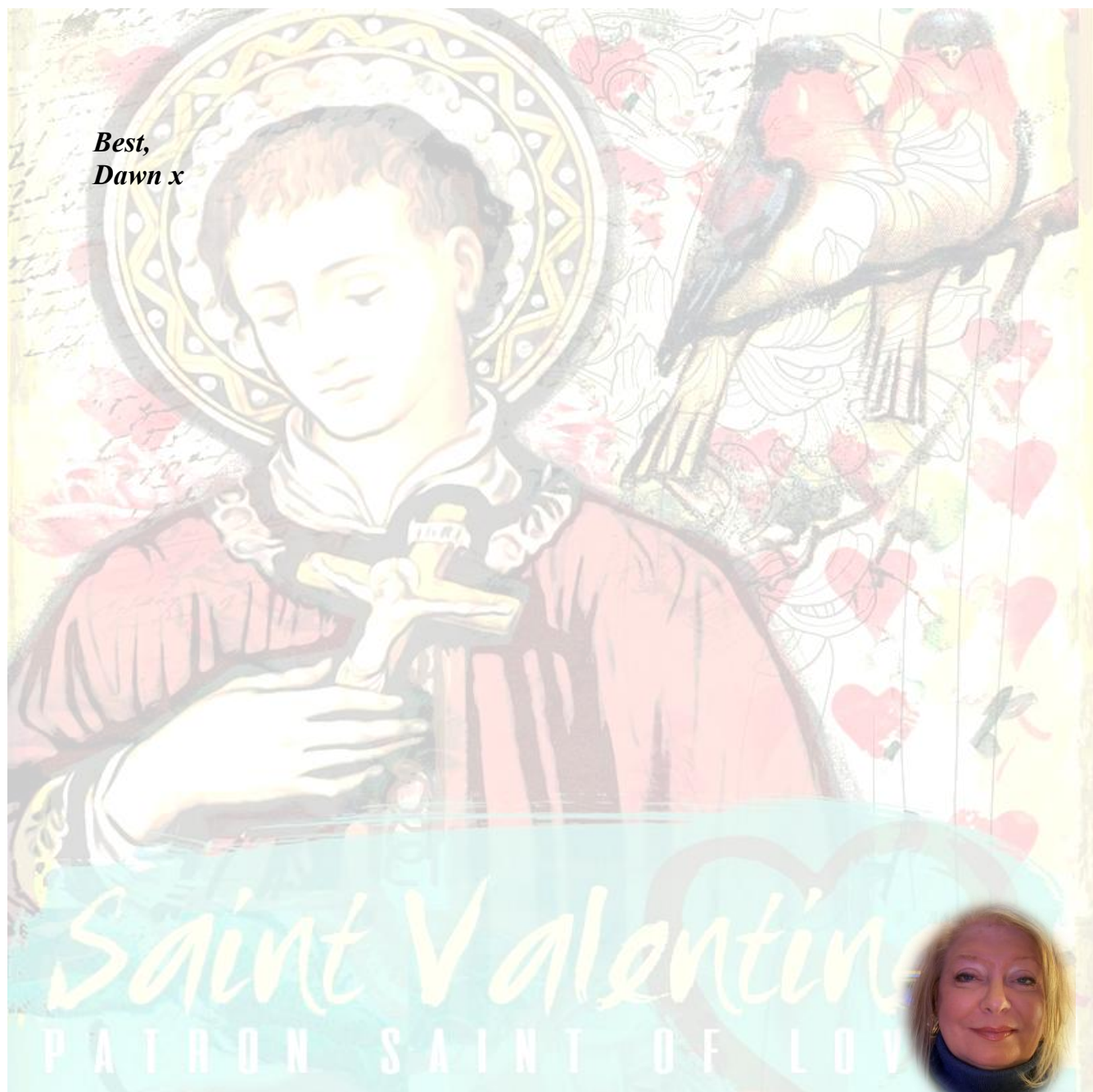
ORDER
Sons and
Daughters
of Italy
IN AMERICA

La Bandiera

*The Banner
Newsletter of
The Italian Heritage Lodge #2517
Fairfax, Virginia
Order Sons and Daughters of Italy in America*

FEBBRAIO 2026
MESSAGGIO DELLA PRESIDENTESSA

*Best,
Dawn x*



IL CALENDARIO

1 febbraio	Soup, Sandwiches & A Movie* “Marriage Italian Style”	12 – 3:00 p.m.	Knights Hall
14 febbraio	<i>St. Valentine’s Day</i>		
16 febbraio	<i>President’s Day</i>		
18 febbraio	<i>Ash Wednesday</i>		
28 febbraio	<i>The Coinage of Venice*</i> Presentation by Michael Markowitz	5:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.	Knights Hall
TBD	Installation of Officers* Ceremony & Dinner		Knights Hall



* RSVP to Steve Kramer (steven.kramer52@gmail.com)

We welcome back Michael Markowitz on Saturday, February 28th, who will give us another interesting power point presentation, but this time his subject will be the *Coinage of Venice*. Mike was well received in 2024 as he presented many samples of the coins of the Papal States and Vatican City. The cost is \$15.00 per member and can be paid at the door, but please RSVP to Steve Kramer at steven.kramer52@gmail.com by February 26th. See page 3 in this Newsletter for Mike’s impressive bio and information about this event.

IHL will hold its elections on February 28th with the installation ceremony and dinner being held in March. A date will be announced shortly.



FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

Michael Gering	February 2
Steven Kramer	February 9
Roy Schender	February 12
Theresa Scola	February 28

**ITALIAN HERITAGE LODGE
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 28TH
5:00 PM TO 9:00 PM
ST. LEO KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS HALL
(behind St. Leo Catholic Church,
3700 Blenheim Boulevard, Fairfax)**



Michael Charles Markowitz

Michael Charles Markowitz was born in New York City. His mother's Italian family name was Genga. His father's ancestors emigrated from Romania. Mike attended the University of Rochester, then the University of California, Irvine. He worked for many years in the aerospace industry in southern California. He moved to northern Virginia in 1991 where he is a senior research specialist for the Center for Naval Analyses.

Mike is a contributing writer on ancient and medieval coins for CoinWeek.com. He is a member of the American Numismatic Society and the Ancient Numismatic Society of Washington, D.C. Additionally, he is the vice president of the Fairfax Coin Club.

Mike has said that one of the greatest thrills of his life was spending an afternoon inside the coin vault of the archaeological museum in Siracusa, Sicily. As a lifelong bachelor, Mike resides in Fairfax where he is married to his coins.

Mike gave a talk to IHL on April 20, 2024, about the coinage of the Papal States and Vatican City. He showed some coin samples from his collection. He made a Power Point presentation which was followed by a question-and-answer period. He will speak to us again and show us another Power Point presentation about the "Coinage of Venice."

Let's give a warm welcome back to Mike Markowitz!

Please join your IHL brothers and sisters, friends and family for another interesting event.

Cost is \$15 per member and can be paid at the door. Please RSVP to Financial Secretary Steve Kramer by Thursday, February 26th at steven.kramer52@gmail.com

Italian Heritage Lodge #2517
2026-2027 Term
Elections of Officers & Trustees
February 28, 2026

IHL elections of Officers and Trustees for the 2026-2027 term will be held at the *Coinage of Venice* presentation on Sunday, February 28, 2026. The declaration of election shall be made by the vote counters on the floor of the meeting after all votes are counted. Here are the relevant IHL bylaws to hold these elections.

Article VI: Elections

Section 1. Election of Officers/Members.

The officers/members shall be elected in February for a term of one (1) year or until their successors are installed. The officers shall assume the duties of their office upon installation during the month of March.

Section 4. Needed for Election.

The candidate receiving a majority of the votes shall be declared elected.

Section 8. Voting Eligibility.

Only regular members in good standing may vote.

The following members have been nominated for the new term:

IHL Annual Dues

In December, each member should have received a "Dues Notice" by email from Steven Kramer, IHL Financial Secretary. If you have not already renewed your membership for 2026, we encourage those who will be attending the "Coinage of Venice" on February 28th to bring your payment to this event. Otherwise, please read Steve's instructions in his email for payment amount and remittance. Grazie!

IHL La Bandiera Advertisement Page

The 2026 New Year brings the renewal of our La Bandiera Ad page (the last page of each month's newsletter). There are currently four ad spaces available. The yearly ad price is \$25/members and \$35/non-members and your ad will run twelve times per year (once a month). If you would like to renew or place a new ad in La Bandiera, please contact Colette Sciscilo (Colette.sciscilo@gmail.com) who can assist you with preparing your ad. Please send your ad fee to Steve Kramer (contact him at steven.kramer52@gmail.com).

Cena e Conversazione!

The goal of the IHL Language Group is to promote our Italian heritage through language by creating opportunities to practice and improve our ability to speak Italian. To that end, we strive to create a friendly and pleasant environment for our meetings. Specifically, we meet monthly in a social setting to speak as much Italian as we can.

Contact Dennis Ferrara at dennisferrara@hey.com for more information.

Inquiries should go through Dennis Ferrara for the next monthly gathering of Cena e Conversazione.

Three Italian-American Women Nominated for Seven Grammy Music Awards

By Joseph Scafetta Jr.

The Recording Academy has announced its nominees for its 68th annual Grammy Music Awards in its 16 major categories, and three Italian-American women have been nominated in seven of those categories.

Lady Gaga, whose birth name is Stefani Joanne Angelina Germanotta, was nominated in five categories. Her "Mayhem" was nominated for Album of the Year and also for Best Pop Vocal Album; her "Abracadabra" for Record of the Year and also for Song of the Year; and her "Disease" for Best Pop Solo Performance.

Ariana Grande was nominated with Cynthia Erivo for their "Defying Gravity" for Best Pop Duo/Group Performance while Kelsea Ballerini's "Patterns" was nominated for Best Contemporary Country Album.

The winners will be announced and given their awards in Los Angeles on Sunday, February 1, 2026.

NEW YEAR'S BRUNCH - JANUARY 4, 2026



Photographs courtesy of Eleanor Lillo

La Festa Degli Innamorati

Valentine's Day is celebrated in many countries around the world, with people showing their love in many ways – typically with gifts of candy, flowers, cards, and romantic dinners. Italy has a special connection to the holiday because its origins began during the Roman Empire, and Feb. 14 is the feast day of San Valentino – Saint Valentine.

There are several theories about who was actually the holiday's namesake. Several Christian martyrs who died for love's sake were named Valentine, but the patron saint is generally acknowledged to be a bishop from Terni, a small town in Umbria. Valentino defied the emperor's orders by secretly marrying couples, either because of their Christianity or to spare the husbands from war. For these "infractions," Valentino was martyred on Feb. 14 in the year 269.

In the fifth century, the Pope created a feast day for San Valentino, in an effort to stop the raucous Roman fertility festival of Lupercalia, when young couples participated in sexual game-playing from Feb. 13 to 15. St. Valentine's fame grew over the years as poets including Chaucer and Shakespeare wrote about this day of love. In the United States, Hallmark transformed the feast day into a full-fledged commercial holiday. And in Italy, La Festa Degli Innamorati is celebrated with some special traditions:

Baci – the Italian word for kisses – are popular Italian chocolates with a hazelnut filling, crowned with a whole hazelnut. The iconic blue foil wrapper also covers a tiny love note with a romantic quote. To celebrate its 100th year, Baci Perugina partnered with Dolce & Gabbana to create a special collection "Love and Passion" Baci. The Valentine's confection is a soft gianduia heart topped with a hazelnut and enriched with raspberry flavored crystals.

Locks of Love – A recent romantic trend is Lucchetti dell'Amore. Italian sweethearts profess true love for each other by locking a padlock in a public place – especially famous bridges in Rome, Florence and Venice – and then throwing the key away, typically into the water under the bridge.

The tradition continues all year and seems charming, but Italian authorities keep trying to stop it. The padlocks obstruct the historical beauty of old bridges, and the added weight of hundreds of abandoned locks threatens the structures' integrity. It has been a losing battle, and authorities periodically cut off the romantic locks.

Visits to Verona – In Verona, Italy – known as the city of Romeo and Juliet – a giant red heart is painted in the middle of historic Piazza dei Signori.

Illuminated heart-shape lanterns are also hung around the center of the city. There are free concerts, a contest for the most beautiful letter written to Juliet, and many local hotels and restaurants offer specials to attract couples to visit Verona for the weekend.

The Bishop of Terni – Many Italians believe that San Valentino was the Bishop of Terni, a town in the Lazio region. The beautiful Basilica di San Valentino has the tomb of Saint Valentine under the main altar. Each year on the Sunday before Feb. 14, engaged couples attend a special mass and exchange vows in front of the altar.

The Basilica di San Valentino also has a stained glass window showing San Valentino blessing the Christian Serapia and the Roman centurion Sabino, performing an illegal Christian-Pagan marriage.

In another local legend, the bishop grew roses in his garden and gave them to young people in his congregation. When one couple fell in love, others began to visit the bishop for flowers and his blessings, securing his reputation as a patron of lovers.

Orange is the new red? One Italian community celebrates La Festa Degli Innamorati in an unusual way – by blessing large amounts of oranges. San Valentino, the patron saint of Vico del Gargano in the Umbria region, protects local orange groves from the winter cold.

Vico del Gargano residents start Valentine's Day with a solemn mass, then parade through the village streets carrying a wooden statue of San Valentino decorated with citrus and laurel. Plants and fruits of oranges and lemons are blessed, and people eat the blessed oranges and drink orange juice to ensure joy and happiness.

The village is also famous for its Vicolo del bacio, a very narrow alley in the center of the historic district. Traditionally, lovers meet in the alley to exchange promises of love.

According to legend, kissing a loved one in Vicolo del bacio ensures their loyalty for life.

This article is written by Joyce Venezia Suss, a career journalist who is now Director of Special Projects for The Italian Cultural Foundation at Casa Belvedere, NYC, NY.

Sonny's Funnies



ZITS

JERRY SCOTT & JIM BORGMAN



BLONDIE

DEAN YOUNG & JOHN MARSHALL



GARFIELD

JIM DAVIS



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ITALIAN HERITAGE LODGE #2517
2025-2026 OFFICERS**

<u>President:</u> 703-362-1724	Dawn Falsinotti falsinotti@yahoo.com	<u>Lodge Trustees:</u> Maria Carolla
<u>Vice-President:</u> 703-678-9361	Michael Gering mdgering@hotmail.com	Eleanor Lillo
<u>Imm. Past-President:</u> 703-795-2231	Coletta Sciscilo colette.sciscilo@gmail.com	Angelo Saladini
<u>Orator:</u> 703-533-8064	Joseph Scafetta Jr. joseph.scafetta.jr@gmail.com	
<u>Recording Secretary:</u> 703-831-7551	Tommaso Ammazalorso tammazza@gmail.com	
<u>Financial Secretary:</u> 703-489-9279	Steven Kramer steven.kramer52@gmail.com	
<u>Treasurer:</u> 703-241-7775	John Dovel jhn.dovel@gmail.com	
<u>Master of Ceremonies:</u>	Roy Schender	
<u>Mistress of Ceremonies:</u>	Sandy Schender	
<u>Guard:</u>	Dennis Lillo	
<u>Programs & Activities:</u>		
Chair:	Dawn Falsinotti	
Vice Chair:	Joseph Scafetta Jr.	
<u>Scholarship & Charity:</u>		<u>Publicity Committee:</u>
Chair:	Joseph Scafetta Jr.	Chair: Joseph Scafetta Jr.
Vice Chair:		
<u>Membership:</u>		<u>Italian Language Group:</u>
Chair:	Michael Gering	Contact: Dennis Ferrara dennisferrara@hey.com

Lodge Members Serving on the Grand Council of Virginia:

Joseph Scafetta Jr., Former State President and Trustee
Steven Kramer, Recording Secretary
Coletta Sciscilo, Trustee
Joseph Scafetta III, Trustee

La Bandiera Editor: Coletta Sciscilo (703) 795-2231 / Colette.sciscilo@gmail.com
Website: <https://italianheritagelodge.org> Facebook: OSDIA Fairfax
Instagram: sonsofitaly_ihl2517

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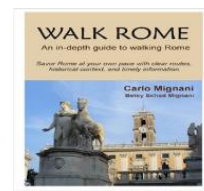
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CARLO AND BETSY MIGNANI have written a valuable guide to assist tourists who want to explore the Eternal City on their own with historical context and timely information. Available on Amazon, search “Walk Rome Mignani.”
www.walk-rome.com

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