



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*

GENNAIO 2026
MESSAGGIO DELLA PRESIDENTESSA

Buon Anno a tutti,

As we usher in this New Year, I have hopes that 2026 will be a good year for us all.

2025 brought IHL and its family much loss and it's important for us to remember those sweet souls we lost.

Our Christmas party was its usual fun and festive time. Thank you to Eleanor and Dennis for delivering the gifts, an annual event, to the sick children at Children's Hospital. Everyone enjoyed playing Yankee Swap. The buffet dinner was tasty and plentiful, along with Dennis' eggnog and my Christmas punch.

We're blessed to have added quite a few new members over the past several months. It's crucial to get to know them and make them feel welcome. I look forward to getting to know each one.

Our events, while very successful, need more helping hands. Please volunteer to assist where you feel you could best serve. We need both floor and kitchen help and it would be much appreciated.

Many interesting and fun events are planned for this year. As always, if you have suggestions on Italian culture, topics of interest, etc., please don't hesitate to let me know. I welcome your thoughts and suggestions.

Best wishes for a fantastic, healthy New Year!

*Best,
Dawn x*



IL CALENDARIO



4 gennaio	New Year's Brunch*	11:30-1:30 p.m.	Knights Hall
14 gennaio	Executive Council Meeting	6:30 p.m.	TBD
14 febbraio	St. Valentine's Day		

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

To ring in the New Year, IHL traditionally holds a New Year's Brunch just after the New Year. This year we will hold it on Sunday, January 4 from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Knights of Columbus Hall, behind St. Leo the Great Church. The cost is \$10.00 per member and can be paid at the door, but please RSVP to Steve Kramer at steven.kramer52@gmail.com by January 3rd. See the flyer in this Newsletter for all information so that you, your family and friends can come and continue the holiday celebrations, and the traditions and festivities of this season.



JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

Carmine Primeggia	January 2
Arthur Moscatello	January 4
Dawn Falsinotti	January 5
Maria Carolla	January 7
Alex Genovese	January 7
Judith Cretara	January 8
Francesca Mazarella	January 14
Pam Pasquariello	January 21
Laurie Gwaltney	January 22
Eric Schena	January 23
Maria Ingham	January 28



ITALIAN HERITAGE LODGE
"NEW YEAR'S BRUNCH"



SUNDAY, JANUARY 4TH

11:30 AM TO 1:30 PM

ST. LEO KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS HALL
(BEHIND ST. LEO CATHOLIC CHURCH,
3700 BLENHEIM BOULEVARD, FAIRFAX)

*Please join your IHL brothers and sisters for a delicious brunch ringing
in the New Year 2026.*

*It will be a chance to share our 2025 holiday events with each other
while we look towards our wishes for health and happiness in the new
year.*

*Cost is \$10 per member and can be paid at the door. Please RSVP to
Financial Secretary Steve Kramer by Saturday, January 3rd at
steven.kramer52@gmail.com*

*Sample Menu: Croissant French Toast Casserole, Egg & Sausage
Casserole, Salads, Fresh Fruits, Assorted Desserts.*



Felice Anno Nuovo !

RSVP to Steve Kramer: steven.kramer52@gmail.com



Thank you to all who brought an unwrapped gift to place under our Christmas tree during the Festa di Natale in December for those children who would be spending Christmas in the hospital. All gifts were taken to the Hospital For Sick Children in Washington, D.C. by Dennis & Ellie Lillo before Christmas Eve.



Grazie mille to Dennis & Ellie for making sure the children received our donations in time for Christmas.

IHL Annual Dues

In December, each member should have received a "Dues Notice" by email from Steven Kramer, IHL Financial Secretary. We encourage those who will be attending the New Year's Brunch to bring your payment to this event on January 4th. Otherwise, please read Steve's instructions in his email for payment amount and remittance.

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 three 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.

Festa di Natale - December 6, 2025

The evening was a joyful celebration of singing our favorite Christmas carols, eating and drinking the special foods and beverages of the season, and remembering the season of giving to others in need. Thank you to all who worked so hard, before, during and after the evening, for all the planning, cooking, set up and cleanup - we are grateful for everyone's assistance to make the evening so enjoyable.



Photographs courtesy of Eleanor Lillo



The Feast of the Epiphany and the Flight of La Befana

For many, Christmas rituals and traditions extend well past Dec. 25.

Drive down any neighborhood in the U.S. a few days after Christmas and you're likely to see holiday trees at the curb, ready to be picked up by the local trash men. I've seen my share with tinsel or fake snow still on them.

For many, Dec. 26 is the day to un-decorate, but actually, "Little Christmas" is just getting started. Having been raised in Italy, I myself — like many of you — celebrate the blessed season until January 6.

Speaking of Jan. 6, it is exactly 12 days after Christmas, when Italians and all Catholics celebrate the Feast of the Epiphany. This is the real last day of the Christmas season. If we want to get technical, the Christmas season actually starts on Christmas Day, and lasts until the Epiphany. The days prior to Christmas are part of Advent.

While Italians conjure up images of a friendly witch on a broom delivering small gifts to well-behaved children; the Epiphany, of course, has a much deeper, religious meaning.

According to the Gregorian calendar, Jan. 6 marks the day the Three Wise Men, also known as the *Magi*, find the newly born baby Jesus after a days-long, starlit search.

The Epiphany is also believed to be Jesus's Baptism day, which occurred some 30 years after his birth. The word itself is of Greek origin and means "*manifestation*" or "*to show or display*" to an audience.

Per the Catholic Church, the Epiphany rejoices the adoration of Jesus by the visiting Wise Men.

So where and how does the *Befana*, the friendly witch delivering goodies to all well-behaved Italian children, actually come into play?

Christian folklore tells us that the Three Wise Men approached a friendly woman and asked her to help them find Jesus. She did not know where he was, but since they were in for a long journey, she welcomed them in for the night. As she kept a very clean home, always sweeping and tidying up, she was more than able to accommodate the unexpected guests.

The next day, they continued on and invited the kind woman to join them in their search for the newly born King. She turned them down, saying far too much housework needed to be done.

Soon after, she had a change of heart and set out to catch up with the Magi and Jesus. She was unable to find them, so to this day she goes out on her broom, looking for the little baby.

She enters every home with the hope of laying her eyes upon him, but when she doesn't, she leaves behind small toys or candy for the children she does find.

Jan. 6 really is the end of the Christmas season in Italy. The feast day of the Immaculate Conception (Dec. 8) opens the Christmas season, and the Feast of the Epiphany closes it, much to the dismay of children all over, who have received batches of presents from *Babbo Natale*, and *La Befana*.

Article written by Francesca Montillo, ISDA Food & Travel Writer; Italian Sons and Daughters of America *Sunday Supper*.

**ORDER SONS & DAUGHTERS OF ITALY IN AMERICA
ITALIAN HERITAGE LODGE #2517
2025-2026 OFFICERS**

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<u>Guard:</u>	Dennis Lillo	
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Vice Chair:	Joseph Scafetta Jr.	
<u>Scholarship & Charity:</u>		<u>Publicity Committee:</u>
Chair:	Joseph Scafetta Jr.	Chair: Joseph Scafetta Jr.
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<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

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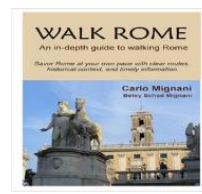
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CARLO AND BETSY MIGNANI have written a valuable guide to assist tourists who want to explore the Eternal City on their own with historical context and timely information. Available on Amazon, search “Walk Rome Mignani.”
www.walk-rome.com

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