

Volume 7  
Issue 3  
**Fall /Winter**  
**2024**

*A note from the  
Editor:*

***Benvenuto  
inverno!***

*How quickly this  
year has passed!  
We are approaching  
the end of the  
Advent season and  
awaiting the joyful  
birth of our savior  
and Christ child.  
Together with  
Thanksgiving, this  
season reminds all  
of us of our grateful  
hearts and the  
opportunities that  
present themselves  
for faith, hope and  
charity in our lives.  
Whether  
decorating, baking,  
shopping,  
entertaining, or  
sharing the “gifts”  
of this season of  
Christmas, let’s not  
also forget our  
loved ones and  
friends who have  
touched our lives,  
near and far, past  
and present. Buon  
Natale e Felice  
Nuovo Anno!*

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# Il Giornale

Newsletter for the Grand Lodge of Virginia  
Order Sons & Daughters of Italy in America

## **A note from the Grand Lodge President**

Cari amici,

Seems like just a few days ago everyone was thinking of fun things to do on summer vacation and now here we are with much cooler temperatures and thoughts of Christmas trees and New Year’s celebrations. It is my sincere wish that every one of you will have or has had the Christmas they dreamed about.

Well, this past summer I spoke about the new OSDIA logo and its introduction to the entire membership. That has now happened, and the new logo is part of the “face” of this organization. As you may have heard, our National leadership team wants this logo to be adopted by all State and Local lodges. There are versions of the logo for any situation. From the standpoint of marketing our organization this makes sense. As they say, there’s strength in numbers. Remember, we’re not just a State lodge of some 400 members, we’re part of a worldwide organization with 30,000 members. However, with so many Local lodges we still can maintain the family type of atmosphere that we all so enjoy being a part of. There is a lot to be said about that and hopefully it draws prospective members to your door.

By now it looks like all our lodges have the new imembersDB system in place and are using it to communicate with members. At first, I admit, I was skeptical about such a system working for us. I was proven wrong. It is a tremendous tool, especially in my position. With pretty much one push of a button, I can contact every member in our State that uses email. Imagine how long that would take if I had to develop that list, and keep it up to date, on my own. I couldn’t. The system is there for us to use and make our tasks easier.

I wish everyone nothing but the best for the New Year. Be safe and stay happy,

Aldo Funai  
*Grand Lodge President*



ORDER  
**Sons and  
Daughters  
of Italy**  
IN AMERICA

***Grand Lodge of Virginia  
39<sup>th</sup> Biennial Convention  
April 25-26, 2025  
Hosted by Italian Heritage Lodge #2517  
Fairfax, Virginia***

The Grand Lodge of Virginia's 39<sup>th</sup> Biennial Convention, hosted by Italian Heritage Lodge #2517, will be held on Friday, April 25, 2025, and Saturday, April 26, 2025, in Fairfax, Virginia.

Registration forms detailing registration for delegates and non-delegates, registration costs, hotel reservations, meeting agendas, meals and all other information will be forthcoming to the Grand Lodge and all local lodges.

The Italian Heritage Lodge looks forward to welcoming our state-wide members to Northern Virginia next spring!

**Grand Lodge of Virginia Quarterly Meeting**

The Grand Lodge of Virginia will meet for its quarterly meeting on *Sunday, March 23, 2025*.

The meeting will be held at the Giuseppe Verdi Lodge #315 in Mechanicsville, VA.

Council members and lodge presidents are asked to arrive no later than 10:30 am.

It will be determined at a later day if there will be a foundation meeting.

Lodge presidents will meet at 10:30.

***The Grand Lodge of Virginia will have a new website address in the New Year. It should be up and running no later than January 15, 2025. The new website address is: [www.vaosdia.org](http://www.vaosdia.org)***

***For the purposes of downloading the 2025 Scholarship applications (see page 12 of this newsletter), this information can be accessed on our current website:***

***[www.vaosia.org](http://www.vaosia.org)***

I would like to acknowledge those who assisted and advised me, and contributed articles, pictures and ideas for this quarterly *Il Giornale*:

Beverly Amante, Jim DeLucia, Kathy Drummond, Dawn Falsinotti, Aldo Funai, the Hall family, Eleanor Lillo, Joseph Scafetta Jr., Robert Sherretta, and Mary Louise Smith.

Mostly, I am grateful for the support of *i miei amici italiani!* ~ c.s.

# Local Lodges

## Giuseppe Verdi Lodge

**July 2024 - November 2024**

*(Submitted by Mary Louise Smith)*

### Verdi Lodge members share their family trip to Italy in June

The Hall Family, Chad, Rocco (17 yrs. old), Wick (12 yrs. old) and Lisa Moroni Hall spent two weeks in Italy at the beginning of June. We visited Venice, Cinque Terre, the Tuscan countryside (near San Gimignano) and Rome. It was the first time in Italy for all of us but certainly will not be our last. We had a fantastic time exploring each city, taking in the local food and drink and learning about the history and culture of each. A few highlights from our trip are:

#### **Favorite Place**

Chad: Cinque Terre

Lisa: Venice

Rocco & Wick: Tuscan countryside

#### **Favorite Food**

Chad: Suppli

Lisa: Ricotta Pie

Rocco: anything with Black Truffle

Wick: Panna Cotta

#### **Favorite Excursion**

Chad: Guided tour of the Colosseum & Pantheon Hill

Lisa: Cooking class in Cinque Terre

Rocco: Guided bike ride in Tuscany

Wick: Nighttime Golf Cart Tour of Rome



## July



Verdi Lodge had a nice group at our annual Independence Day picnic with all enjoying hot dogs, hamburgers, pasta salad, potato salad, baked beans, coleslaw and ice cream sandwiches.

Although not all enthused with my request to wear holiday head gear, I was able to get them to do so long enough to snap a few pictures.



## September

At the Verdi monthly meeting we invited Rachel Lawson from the Greater Richmond Alzheimer's Association to come speak with us. She shared enlightening information and left brochures for us to share with others.

## October

Our member, Virginia Hudert, set up a display for our Italian Heritage Month which all seemed to enjoy.

### Verdi Lodge Italian Heritage Cultural Display



In November, Stew Master Arthur and his fine crew of men once again delved in and made a large pot of Fall Favorite Brunswick Stew selling 311 quarts. Kudos were given for all the hard work they put in to make it a success!

During our meeting on November 3, we recognized our Veterans for giving of their time, their youth and away from families to keep America safe. Each was given a small favor to let them know we still care about them.



# Peninsula Italian American Lodge

**October 2024**

*(Submitted by Beverly Amante)*

## *Celebrating Fallen Italian Soldiers*

PIAL 2145 - October 20, 2024

For about 40 years members of the Peninsula Italian American Lodge #2145 have participated in a memorial service for fallen Italian soldiers. In the next edition of the *Il Giornale*, I'll have some pictures to share about the ceremony that will be held on Friday, November 15<sup>th</sup> at the Veteran's Cemetery in Hampton.

At our October general meeting, we decided to not only celebrate Columbus Day but also celebrate these fallen soldiers with a presentation, given by Jim DeLucia. Below is some of what we learned.

### **POW's during WWII**

During WWII, captured POW's, both Italian and German, were shipped to the United States. The number of Italian POW's grew to around 51,000.

Because of events that happened during the war, including the Allies capturing Rome, many POW's were motivated to change sides. Ninety percent of Italian POW's joined American Service units. Most of them were enlisted. They were placed in camps where they worked, and were given food, beds & hot showers. When the war ended, there were about 425,000 POW's spread across the US.

Jim was able to find some information about the five Italian soldiers buried in the Hampton National Cemetery which is in the Phoebus area of Hampton.

Michele Casamassima, the only officer in the group, died on November 9, 1945, of a heart attack on a Newport News pier while waiting to board a ship that would take him back to his homeland. He is the only soldier who was repatriated.

Angelo Verchesi died on July 6, 1944, while working with two other men on a pier near 18<sup>th</sup> Street in Newport News. An electrical wire fell on the three men. Verchesi was the only one who did not survive. His death was ruled an accident.

Pietro Buglio died of Tuberculosis on October 26, 1943.

Gaetano Capetta died on October 30, 1944, but Jim was unable to find out how he died.

Pasquale Cerbone, who was 18, drowned while swimming at Norfolk Army Base where he worked.

There are many other National Cemeteries where both Italian and German WWII POWs are buried.



The magazine “Sacrali e Cimiteri Italiani all’estero” (Memorials and Italian Cemeteries Abroad) lists the burial sites of all Italian dead, including those buried in the US. This publication can be seen online. It is written in Italian.



*Jim giving his presentation.*



*Members of PIAL listen intently to Jim's presentation.*



*Can you pick out four past state presidents?*



In conjunction with this presentation, we decided to have a “SPECIAL ITALIAN MEAL”.

Nine members of our lodge, coordinated by Bob Amante, worked together to make a six-course meal for our members. Forty-five members and guests attended the event, and we believe we’ve even gotten a new member! This was actually a great example of members working together! The menu and pictures from the event are below.

### Menu

#### *Antipasto*

*Prosciutto Wrapped Dates with Goat Cheese*

*Prepared by Bob Amante*

#### *Minestra*

*Italian Wedding Soup*

*Prepared by Faye Boninu*

#### *Insalata*

*Caprese Salad*

*Prepared by Michelle Romanello & her husband Ed*

#### *Primo*

*Stuffed Shells with Mushroom Parmesan Sauce*

*Prepared by Briana & Barry Robison*

#### *Il Secondo*

*Chicken Piccata*

*Prepared by Jim & Terry DeLucia*

#### *Dolce*

*Tiramisu*

*Prepared by Beverly Amante*



*Michelle & Ed getting ready to put the Caprese Salad together.*



*Jim, Terry & Bob preparing the Piccata to plate.*





# Italian Heritage Lodge

## August 2024 – November 2024

*(Submitted by Coletta Sciscilo)*



*August – Summer Game Night & Barbeque*



*September – Meet  
and Greet Pasta  
Dinner  
and  
Little Flower Farm  
Presentation*



IHL Orator, Joseph “Sonny” Scafetta Jr., was given a warm welcome as he spoke at our Italian Heritage Month celebration. Dressed in an authentic Christopher Columbus costume, Sonny read excerpts from his book “The True & Complete Story of Christopher Columbus,” specifically a chapter entitled “In Defense of Columbus.” Sonny also enthusiastically answered our members’ questions on the subject.



Following a family-style Italian dinner, IHL members also presented pictures and crests, along with their family ancestral stories and remarks. Here are President Dawn and member Sharon Strauchs with her family crest.

*October – Italian Heritage Night*

***National Columbus Day Ceremony  
October 14, 2024 - Washington, DC***

*Robert Sherretta with President Dawn at the wreath laying ceremony.*



*Sonny Scafetta and Robert Sherretta attending the ceremony.*







*Our guest speaker, James Gearing, is President of the Washington Winemakers.*

*Our cooks for the event: Marianne, Coletta, Dawn, Donna & Chef Nick prepared and fed our members and guests Pork Tenderloin, Butternut Squash Stuffed Shells, Roasted Autumn Vegetables, bread, salad and Italian desserts.*



*November – “Traditional Italian Winemaking” And Harvest Dinner*



## **The Virginia OSIA Foundation 2025 Scholarships**

The Virginia OSIA Foundation is pleased to announce that two academic excellence-based scholarships totaling \$1,500 are available for 2025. The Foundation encourages eligible and deserving students to apply for any or all of these scholarships.

### **Available scholarships for 2025**

**The Joseph Fulton Memorial Scholarship -- \$1,000.00**

**The Grand Lodge of Virginia Scholarship -- \$500.00**

For the Joseph Fulton Memorial Scholarship, applicants must be accepted into or currently enrolled in a full-time undergraduate (four year minimum) or graduate degree program in any course of study at an accredited institution of higher learning. For the Grand Lodge of Virginia Scholarship, students must be accepted into or currently enrolled in a community college or trade school.

### **Deadline**

***Applications must be postmarked no later than  
April 15, 2025***

If you have questions, please contact Kathy A Drummond,  
Scholarship Committee Chair, at  
anellol@verizon.net or 703-368-5039.

Visit the GLVA website to download scholarship  
applications:  
[www.vaosdia.org](http://www.vaosdia.org)

# Stamp of approval

By Joseph Scafetta Jr.

Corrado Mezzana was one of the key figures in Italian stamp design in the 20th century, turning out hundreds of tiny works of art over the course of his storied career.

The son of a postal official, Mezzana was born in Rome on June 7, 1890. When he was 16, he began to take painting lessons from the landscape artist Pio Joris. After he graduated from high school, he attended the Institute of Fine Arts in Rome from 1908 to 1910. He then transferred to the University of Rome, from which he earned a degree in jurisprudence in 1912.

Under the tutorage of the architect Gustavo Giovannoni, he qualified to teach drawing in technical schools and artistic institutes. In 1915, he traveled to the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco, where he exhibited his painting "Terme Antoniniane" ("Antonine Thermal Baths") in the Italian Pavilion.

After he returned to Italy, he was drafted in 1916 and initially worked in the De Merode Military Hospital in Rome. In 1917, he was made an artillery officer and was sent to the Austrian front. After World War I ended, he was mustered out and in 1919 married Albertina Giorelli, with whom he had six children. One of them, Laura, became a stamp designer for the Italian post office.

After he was married, Mezzana took a job as a set designer for Tespi Film in Rome until 1922. He quit to work next as a publicist for the Catholic magazine *Gioventù Nuova* (New Youth) for two years. In 1925, Mezzana exhibited some of his paintings at the Third Roman Biennale and was hired to design stained-glass windows and mosaics for the chapel in the Basilica of the Holy Cross of Jerusalem in Rome. In 1929, he became a member of the Gruppo dei Romanisti (Group of the Romanists),

which was a club for Roman artists.

Because of his connections as a Romanist and his father's influence as a retired postal official, Mezzana was hired by the Italian Postal Administration in 1930 and proceeded to design about 200



stamps over the next 22 years. Although Mezzana was apolitical, some of his most prominent stamps were designed for the fascist regime of Benito Mussolini.

Among many other themes, his stamps commemorated the bimillennium of the birth of the poet Virgil in 1930, the decennial of Mussolini's March on Rome in 1932, the bimillennium of the birth of Emperor Augustus Caesar in 1937, the proclamation of the new Roman Empire in 1938, the Rome-Berlin Axis showing Mussolini and Hitler facing each other in 1941, and the tricentennial of the death of Galileo in 1942.



## ▲ CORRADO MEZZANA

The son of a postal official and a fine artist by profession, he became one of the most revered stamp designers in the history of the Italian postal service.

Mezzana also designed some impressive Vatican-themed stamps, such as the coronation of Pope Pius XII in 1939. In the post-World War II era, he designed a series for the republic of San Marino to honor U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt. When the Italian republic was established in 1946, Mezzana was retained and continued to produce magnificent stamps, including one for the sixth centenary of the birth of Saint Catherine of Siena in 1948. In 1950, he designed his most famous series, "Italia al lavoro" ("Italy at Work"), which included 19 stamps dedicated to the 19 regions of Italy. (At that time, Abruzzo and Molise were one region.) Each stamp showed a worker doing a different task.

Mezzana was a heavy smoker and died of lung cancer at the age of 62 in his home in Rome on Sept. 15, 1952. The city of Rome honored him with an exhibition of his stamp designs in 1954 and named a street for him. A report about this exhibition is available on YouTube under the keywords "Retrospectiva di Corrado Mezzana." In 1990, on the annual Day of Philately, the Italian post office issued a 600-lire stamp showing Mezzana's self-portrait for the centennial of his birth.

## Italian Immigrants Sparked NYC's Rockefeller Center Tree Tradition

*Even the biggest traditions can grow from the simplest acts of gratitude.*



In 1931, with the Great Depression casting a long shadow over the country, a crew of Italian immigrants began excavating the foundation for what would become Rockefeller Center. Grateful to have work when so many were struggling, they decided to bring some holiday cheer to the grinding and risky work site in Midtown Manhattan.

By Christmas Eve, they had pooled their money, purchased a modest 20-foot balsam fir and decorated it with whatever they could find: cranberries, paper garlands, tin cans, even foil wrappers from blasting caps. That simple tree marked the humble beginnings of what we now know as the Rockefeller Center Christmas Tree tradition.

By 1933, the tradition had grown significantly. That year, Rockefeller Center raised its first official Christmas tree — a 50-foot fir wrapped in 700 lights.

Today, the Rockefeller Center Christmas Tree stands as a towering symbol of the holiday season.

Adorned with 50,000 LED lights and topped with a dazzling Swarovski star comprised of 3 million crystals, the Norway Spruce will come to life on December 4, 2024, marking the official start of the Christmas season.

The tradition's lasting significance lies in its origins: a simple act of gratitude and hope during one of the nation's darkest times.

What began as a small gesture by hardworking immigrants has become a cherished part of the holiday season, reminding us of the resilience, community and spirit that continue to define this celebration.

*Article credit by Italian Sons & Daughters of America, Sunday Supper; Photo credit by AP*