

# The Floridian

**Vol 23, No. 3    The Quarterly Publication of the Grand Lodge of Florida**

## Coming Events!

**Every Sunday, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.**

Deltona Lodge Kraft Fair  
1270 Doyle Road, Deltona  
Food trucks on site, fresh vegetables market. Call John Malfettone, 407-415-4790

*(Continued on page Two)*



*Joe Dente elected new state president, pgs. 3, 8*



*Many Florida lodges awarded scholarships, such as these from the Central Gulf Coast Lodge, P. 18*



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OSDIA — Order Sons & Daughters of  
Italy in America  
Florida Foundation, Inc.  
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CEN Sector	Anthony Cianciotta	fl.grandlodge@gmail.com

**Coming Events!**

**Saturday, July 8, 2023**

Central Gulf Coast Lodge  
Thrashers vs. Palm Beach Cardinals at Baycare Stadium. \$20.50 includes all-you-care-to-eat buffet. For tickets, call Joan DeSantis 413-281-8371

**Sunday, July 9, 2023**

A 4th of July Tribute  
The Port Charlotte Lodge is celebrating Independence Day with hamburgers, hotdogs and picnic fixin's. Call 941-764-9003 for reservations and tickets.

**Saturday, September 9, 2023**

Karaoke Reunion  
Sons of Italy, #3725 Easy Street, Port Charlotte. Doors open at 4 p.m. \$10 admission.

**Tuesday, October 14, 2023**

One-hundredth Anniversary of La Nuova Sicilia Unita Lodge.  
Contact Nick Capitano at 813-245-0685 for more information.

**Friday, December 15, 2023**

Christmas Party, Central Gulf Coast Lodge. Dunedin Golf Club 1050 Palm Blvd, Dunedin, FL

# A Message from Joe Dente and Tony Cianciotta



Dear Brothers and Sisters:

I am pleased and humbled to have been elected as your Florida Grand Lodge President for 2023-2025.

The Florida Grand Lodge 36th Biennial Convention was held June 7-10 at the Embassy Suites in Kissimmee. We had a large turnout of lodges and by all accounts the convention was a great success. I want to thank Tony and Carolyn Cianciotta and Bob and Gertrude Dorries for all the hard work they put into making the convention a success.

The elections ran smoothly under the capable direction of Greg Esposito and I thank him for his leadership.

I am pleased to announce the newly elected officers for 2023-2025. You'll find the list on pag-

es 2 and 4 of this publication.

Congratulations to all newly elected and returning officers! Also, the Grand Lodge thanks sister Alice Russell for her many years of service and hard work chairing the Calendar Program. Under Alice's leadership, the Calendar Program has been one of the most successful fundraisers for both the Grand Lodge and our local lodges.

The convention's special events – luncheons, installation dinner/dance, and the presentation on the new imember database were all well attended. We raised money for the Grand Lodge via the Silent Auction, the Raffle, the sales of the new pins and other memorabilia and the sales of the cookbook. A big thank you goes to Betty Dente, Greg Bianchini, Bill Pezzillo and Edmondo Catania for their hard work for the Grand Lodge.

I am excited about the momentum generated during the convention, and I am looking forward to building on that momentum and working for you and with you for the next two years. Please call or email me or any of the officers if you have a question or concern.

Fraternally yours,

Joseph S. Dente  
President  
Grand Lodge of Florida



Dear members of the Florida Sons and Daughters of Italy. I have completed my 2 terms as as your State President and have proudly served to the best of my ability to preserve our Italian heritage and fraternity.

I would like to thank my counsel for their dedication & commitment the past 4 years.

We must all continue to have a common goal to keep our heritage first and foremost. It was my duty and honor to represent you. Please give your newly elected officers your support and respect.

Tony Cianciotta, Immediate Past President

# OSDIA Joins Others to Form Italian American Leadership Forum

The Order Sons and Daughters of Italy in America® (OSDIA) is proud to announce that the Supreme Lodge, Foundation, and Commission for Social Justice have joined other nonprofits to form the Italian American Leadership Forum (IALM).

IALF is a fraternal association of major Italian American nonprofit groups, representing the needs of an estimated 17 million Americans of Italian heritage. IALF serves as a mechanism to discuss, debate, and act on the most important public policy issues facing our community.

We are a coordinative body, providing a spiritual bond that encourages, supports, and assists the membership to build consensus and advance our shared goals.

Many of the organizations involved in the establishment of Italian American Leadership Forum have been at the forefront of Italian American social, economic, educational, and public policy issues for nearly a century and have participated directly in the evolution of this community that remains a significant contributor to all facets of life in the United States. We look forward to a working collaboration of these major Italian American organizations to better advance the goals of all Italian Americans in America.

## **GRAND LODGE COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS**

<p>Following are the proposed changes to the committee appointments list. Some of the committees have been eliminated or combined. The list is subject to change.</p> <p><b>BUDGET/FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE COMM:</b> Jennifer Santos (chair) Tom Papsodero (co-chair) * Nick Cantore * Tony Cianciotta</p> <p><b>ITALIAN EDUCATION COMMITTEE/FAU/FATA:</b> Ed Mottola Jr. * Joe Dente * Edmondo Catania * Nick Cantore</p> <p><b>BYLAWS &amp; RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE:</b> J.P. Mahieu * Joe Dente, (ex-facto member) Greg Bianchini * Al Greco</p> <p><b>MEMBERSHIP/EDUCATION TRAINING COMMITTEE:</b> Mildred Cooper * Carolyn Cianciotta * Nick Capitano * Mark Gregorio * All state officers as needed for training</p> <p><b>OFFICIAL PUBLICATION COMMITTEE:</b> Tony Branco * Edmondo Cantania * Dan Kaestle * Ernie Lijoi</p>	<p><b>WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE: GRAND LODGE PROJECT</b> Bill Pezzillo * Carolyn Cianciotta</p> <p><b>CALENDAR PROGRAM COMMITTEE:</b> Carmela (Mel) Gucciardo</p> <p><b>CHARITY COMMITTEE:</b> Gertrude Dorries Mildred Cooper (Cancer) * Raeann Wallace (Cooley's Anemia) * Carole DeVito (Alzheimer's) * Robert Cardaci (Autism)</p> <p><b>SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE:</b> Gertrude Dorries * Robert Cardaci * Carolyn Cianciotta</p> <p><b>INVESTMENT COMMITTEE: MANAGES GRAND LODGE, FLORIDA FOUNDATION</b> Jennifer Santos * Nick Cantore * Mark DeNunzio * Joe Dente * Thomas Papsodero * Greg Esposito * Greg Bianchini * Tony Cianciotta * Gertrude Dorries</p> <p><b>COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL JUSTICE:</b> Greg Esposito * Gregory Bianchini * All local lodge appointed CSJ chairs</p> <p><b>FUTURE GOOD OF THE ORDER:</b> Carolyn Cianciotta</p>
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# Cancer Report



By Mildred Cooper, Chairperson

## Are Caregivers Also Survivors?

Have you survived cancer? If you are the family member, friend or caregiver of someone diagnosed with the disease The National Cancer Institute says that you have. Nevertheless whether or not to classify caregivers as survivors is widely debated. Perhaps part of the debate stems from whether a caregiver is a spouse or intimate partner of the patient, who may rely largely or solely on that person for support. Also, spouses or partners who consider patients their "other half" may view the cancer as shared simply be-

cause their lives are shared. For patients with cancer who are single, friends and family members, maybe most deeply affected, because they play larger roles in offering care and support. John Fisher of Iowa said he absolutely considers his wife a survivor of cancer. My wife's world was turned upside down every bit as much as mine was the moment I told her that my urologist had found a tumor in my bladder and that it was very likely cancerous, he says, "she didn't need any motivation to learn about my cancer, my treatment and her chosen role in my recovery. Betsy Stein, however, does not con-

sider her caregivers survivors " They have been my anchors, my supporters, my cheerleaders, but they haven't experienced what I've experienced, physically and mentally" says Stein of New York, who was treated for three types of cancer. "That said, I have been so fortunate to have my entire family as my caregivers. My relationship with my parents and my siblings is incredible now; we all became one through the experience of my cancer."



# Cooley's Anemia

By Raeann Wallace, Chairperson

Thalassemia is an inherited (i.e., passed from parents to children through genes) blood disorder caused when the body doesn't make enough of a protein called hemoglobin, an important part of red blood cells. When there isn't enough hemoglobin, the body's red blood cells don't function properly and they last shorter periods of time, so there are fewer healthy red blood cells traveling in the bloodstream. Red blood cells carry oxygen to all the cells of the body. Oxygen is a sort of food that cells use to function. When there are not enough healthy red blood cells, there is also not enough oxygen delivered to all the other cells of the body, which may cause a person to feel tired, weak or short of breath. This is a condition called anemia. Peo-

ple with thalassemia may have mild or severe anemia. Severe anemia can damage organs and lead to death. A person who has thalassemia trait may not have any symptoms at all or may have only mild anemia, while a person with thalassemia major may have severe symptoms and may need regular blood transfusions. In the same way that traits for hair color and body structure are passed down from parents to children, thalassemia traits are passed from parents to children.

## Do I have thalassemia?

People with moderate and severe forms of thalassemia usually find out about their condition in childhood, since they have symptoms of severe anemia early in life. People with less severe forms of thalassemia may

only find out because they are having symptoms of anemia, or maybe because a doctor finds anemia on a routine blood test or a test done for another reason. Because thalassemias are inherited, the condition sometimes runs in families. Some people find out about their thalassemia because they have relatives with a similar condition. People who have family members from certain parts of the world have a higher risk for having thalassemia. Traits for thalassemia are more common in people from Mediterranean countries, like Greece and Turkey, and in people from Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. If you have anemia and you also have family members from these areas, your doctor might test your blood further to find out if you have thalassemia.



# Autism Report

By Marilyn Pezzillo, Chairperson

It has been a privilege for me to represent the Grand Lodge of Florida and the Florida Foundation as Chairperson for our Autism Charity for the past 12 years. It was also a privilege to be a member of the National Autism Committee. Now the Doug Flutie Junior Foundation is our official charity for autism. I would like to thank you for your generous donations and our trimester meetings. This has given me the opportunity to research autism and pass on information and stories to our members. Just a few facts about autism that I would like to share with you:

20 years ago the prevalence of autism was one in 1000 children. Now it occurs in as many as one in 100 children.

April is National Autism Month and April 2nd is World Autism Day. Also on April 2nd, Light it up Blue is celebrated when many famous landmarks across the nation light up in blue to show their support for autism.

The autism awareness puzzle piece is the most recognized symbol of the autism community in

the world. The puzzle piece symbol reflects the mystery and complexity of the autism spectrum.

Families who love someone with autism need our support. Our understanding and our respect and we can improve the quality of life for individuals with autism and their families, one puzzle piece at a time.

# Alzheimer's Report

By Carol DeVito, Chairperson



This year Biogen's Aduhelm became the first new drug to be approved by the FDA in nearly 20 years. Also, another drug from Eli Lilly, Donanemab, is being studied. There has never been a more exciting time in Alzheimer's Research. I have found a number of different articles that tell us how to prevent Alzheimer's disease.

## I Your Eyes

Glaucoma, age-related muscular degeneration, and diabetic retinopathy point to an increased risk of Alzheimer's. Cataracts do not. All these diseases are linked to cardiovascular disease. So treat high blood pressure, high cholesterol, eat a healthy diet, exercise and get seven-to-eight hours of sleep.

## II Your Teeth

Your dentist can help prevent Alzheimer's by treating you if you have. Gingivitis, a bacteria found in gum disease,

Ninety-nine percent of people with Alzheimer's were found to have this bacteria. Visit your dentist two times a year for cleaning and floss and brush every day.

## III Your Sense of Smell

Could a sniff test be the end of Alzheimer's? Researchers discovered that when they tested people's ability to detect a jar of peanut butter just inches from their nose, people with early stages of Alzheimer's had a hard time. Five other scents are used in the test: peppermint, fish, oranges, roses and leather.

## IV Your Blood

A new blood test given 20-to-25 years before any symptom of Alzheimer's is noticed may be a major breakthrough in diagnosing Alzheimer's. This blood

test measures levels of a specific protein called P-Tau 21. This protein forms tangles inside brain cells, disrupting brain communication.

## V Your Personal Hygiene

Picking your nose could increase your risk of Alzheimer's. Bacteria travel through nasal cavities, olfactory nerves and reach the brain. Cells in the brain respond to the attack by depositing amyloid beta protein, a hallmark of Alzheimer's disease.

So, don't pick your nose.

# Future Good of the Order

By Carolyn Cianciotta, chairperson

Could this be what your potential members are saying?

"I don't really understand what you do."

I've read your mission statement; spent some time on your 'about page,' checked out The Floridian."

"I just can't understand how your organization works, or what impact it has on local communities."

"I'm sure that you do good work. I see some nice stories on your Website, and it looks like you really help people."

"It's nothing personal. It's just that there are a lot of organizations that look or sound an awful lot like you, and they're all asking for a piece of my

attention and understanding. And while you have told me a lot of stuff about what you do, you never got me to engage on a personal level. You didn't give me a fresh understanding of a pressing community need, or help me to really see how your mission matters to things that I care about.

It sounds like really, important work, but, I just don't quite get it."

Set aside a little time every month to step back and see your lodge from an outsider's point of view.

Ask yourself, "Why would I recommend my lodge?"

Do we communicate properly and often enough?



Carolyn Cianciotta, chairperson

Do we focus on cultural events?

Do we have fun?

## 2023 Calendar Program



Alice Orlacchio Russell of the Deltona Lodge.

Well, here we are at the middle of the year. Do you know what that means? It means we can buy calendars for \$25. We can't win until after July 1<sup>st</sup>, but what a bargain! Here are the big prizes:

- July 4 \$500
- September 4 \$100
- September 11 \$200
- September 19 \$100
- October 9 \$1,000
- October 31 \$ 100
- November 7 \$ 100
- November 23 \$1,000
- December 7 \$100
- December 25 \$1,000

Really? And you wouldn't buy a \$25 calendar with a chance for those prizes? Better chance than the Florida Lottery. And you are helping your lodge and the Grand Lodge. Reach in your pockets. I bet you can find \$25.

# Meet Joe Dente, the new president of the Grand Lodge of Florida

Joseph Salvatore Dente has been elected president of the Grand Lodge of Florida. He succeeds Tony Cianciotta who served two terms as president.

Joe says he is humbled and honored to serve as president. Before being elected president, Joe served as First Vice President.

“During the convention, we had returning leadership and some new officers, says Joe. “I am looking forward to working with them all. Congratulations to all newly elected and returning officers!”

## GET TO KNOW JOE DENTE

Joe has been a member of the OSDIA in Florida since 2002 when he joined Delray Beach Lodge. He quickly became an active member of the lodge, participating in the fundraising events and eventually running for office. He was elected President of the Delray Beach Lodge in 2005 and held that office for seven years.

He is currently a member of the Port St. Lucie Lodge.

Joe comes from a large family. In fact, at last count, he has about 400 relatives in Metro NY, New Jersey and Scranton, PA. They gather every five years and Joe, says, that’s always a very good time.

Joe is a retired educator having worked for over 40 years as a teacher, coach (wrestling) and school administrator. He earned his bachelor’s degree in health and recreation from Morehead State College, Morehead, KY, in 1965 and his graduate degree in school administration from the University of Cincinnati in 1975.

In his spare time, Joe volunteers at his church, with the Knights of Columbus and in his condo association activities.

Joe and his wife Betty have been married for 57 years. He has three children: John, Beth and Kristen, eight grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Joe enjoys playing cards, bowling, golf

and reading.

## NOW, REALLY GET TO KNOW JOE

What better way to know a person than to play 20 questions? So, we sat with Joe and asked the following:

1. Do you have siblings?  
I have one brother. He lives in Delray Beach.
2. Which sports have you played?  
In high school, I ran track, cross country, played baseball, and wrestled.
3. Favorite Italian dish?  
Lasagna
4. Is it sauce or gravy?  
It’s sauce.
5. Coffee or tea?  
Coffee
6. Vanilla or chocolate?  
Vanilla.
7. Tenor or soprano?  
Tenor
8. Last book read?  
“I just read the Italian American Journey, which tells the story of our order’s founder, Vincent Sellaro. It was written by Carmelo Cutuli. He’s the president of the Rome chapter of the Sons & Daughters of Italy. I enjoyed it very much. I also enjoy reading Patterson, Clancy, Connelly, Lee Childs & Baldacci ”
9. What’s your religion?  
Catholic.
10. What does the afterlife hold for you?  
Probably Purgatory, but hopefully heaven.
11. Name a farm animal.  
A bull.
12. Do you believe in the supernatural?  
I’m interested in it.
13. Would you go into a “haunted house” during the day or at night?

Yes, either.

14. Do you have any tattoos?  
No.
15. What’s your favorite holiday?  
Thanksgiving.



President Joe Dente and First Lady Betty Dente

16. Batman or Superman?  
Superman
17. Do you prefer northern or southern Italy?  
Southern.
18. Can you name the seven dwarves?  
No.
19. Can you draw?  
Yes, mostly in charcoal. This used to be one of my favorite hobbies, but I haven’t tried to draw in years.
20. Name one item on your bucket list.  
Parachuting.

Bonus question, which of the above questions would you ask Betty?

All of them, but she would definitely have very different answers.

*Editor’s note: You’ve piqued our interest. We’ll feature Betty’s answers next issue.*



# The Cavalcade of Italy

by Mildred Cooper, cultural chairperson

We have traveled to Sicilia, Roma, Napoli and Venezia through the magic of the written word.

Some of the most noted Italians such as Amadeo Gianni, Sophia Loren, Vittorio De Sica and Tony Bennett have gained our respect through the same medium.

To say that this has been a labor of love wouldn't even scratch the surface of how I feel about Italian culture.

Where else would you find so many beautiful cities, impressive art work, haute couture, unforgettable opera, racier autos and delicious cuisine not to mention the Pope.

What other language is like music, what other cuisine is like a rhapsody? I am not acquainted with any man or woman who would turn down a design by Valentino, Roberto Cavalli, Emilio Pucci, Versace, Gucci or Giorgio Armani. Why would I want to drive a Honda if I could have a Ferrari?

To attend an opera at La Scala would be a dream come true. The voices of Caruso, Gigli and Pavarotti echo through the gates of time.

I could continue on and on, but that would only spoil your appetite for the months to come.

Please join me as we journey through the inimitable contributions of the Italians throughout history.



*The Cavalcade of Sardinia, aka the Feast of Beauty. The historical roots of Sardinian Cavalcade refer to the rides through the streets of the city in honor of the rulers of the past.*



**A Ferrai Cavalcade is in Naples' Piazza del Plebiscito**



*St. Joseph's cakes — part of Italy's endless cavalcade of food.*



*In Florence, the cavalcade of Wise Men*

# Grand Lodge Awards 5 Scholarships by Gertrude Dorries, chairwoman, state scholarship

The scholarship committee and I are happy to announce this year's recipients. My co-chairs Carolyn Cianciotta, Immediate Past President and Robert Cardaci, President of the Osceola County Lodge #2523 enjoyed reading each of the applicant's information. We were happy to receive 14 applications and choose from those that came to us with all the paperwork required to include their personal information, grade point average, class rank, school activities, work activities, volunteer hours, sealed high school transcripts, FSA reports, SAT and ACT scores, letters of recommendations and their essay-most choosing La Famiglia.

This year, 2023- \$2,000 was awarded to five students for the fall semester of their freshman year. This year our recipient from Niceville, Brock Marelo will be attending the University of West Florida studying sports management and marketing. Leonardo Mota of Lithia will be attending the University of Florida for Bio chemistry and Bio engineering. William Cioffi comes from Saint Johns, Florida attending University of Florida, majoring in mechanical engineering and sales engineering. Jeana Dundon of Deland will be attending Florida State University majoring in finance and business. Lastly, is Elliott Lila Francolla of Tampa number 2 in class of 634 majoring in History and Economics

attending the St. John's College at the University of Oxford, United Kingdom.

We had a broad spectrum of students from all parts of the state with all showing a love for their family. These students came with extremely high qualifications each presently themselves with unique qualities, proud of their love of their Italian Heritage- some learning from their parents or grandparents from stories told at the dinner table of how their great grandparents arrived here in America at the turn of the century.

The scholarship committee were all confident of their decisions and are proud of these students. Each student was extremely happy to receive their scholarship and very appreciative of the Sons and Daughters of Italy for choosing them. On behalf of the Grand Lodge of Florida and Florida Foundation, Inc., we wish the recipients good luck and continued success as they move forward in their higher education to make their dreams come true.



(Above) The Dante Medal, front and back

OSDIA awards the Dante Medal to its scholarship winners because Dante Alighieri, for whom the medal is named, was a brilliant statesman, philosopher and poet. He is called the Father of the Italian Language because he chose to write his masterpiece *The Divine Comedy* in Italian, instead of Latin. At that time — circa 1300 — most poetry was written in Latin.

## ‘...Italians make huge efforts to get to know people and be hospitable.’

Italians started to come to the United States at the turn of the century, located primarily in New York City. By the early 1920s, nearly six million Italians had immigrated to America, and currently there are more than 25 million people of Italian descent who live in the United States, making Italian Americans the fifth-largest ethnic group in the nation.

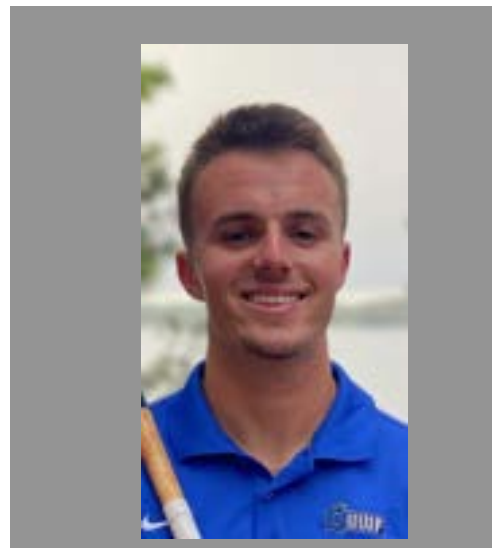
There have been numerous contributions from Italian Americans to today's society. Italians brought a deep history and understanding of both art and culture. Italian families share a similar focus on the importance of religion and a strong family unit. We have provided sports and entertainment legions like Joe DiMaggio and Frank Sinatra and shared with the world the undeniable gift of Italian cuisine. But upon arrival in America, most important contribution from Italian Americans was the introduction of two words that many people still lack even today: Work ethic.

When Italian immigrants entered the country in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, they found work as day laborers and dock workers. They provided the labor and workforce for American families, steel mills and mines. Italian immigrants helped build roads, dams, tunnels and other infrastructures. They were recruited by coal mining companies to work the deep mines in West Virginia, and they found work on railroads and on farms. It was this type of hard labor provided by the Italian Americans that was the foundation for the advancement of society in the United States. Nearly all the Italian people who immigrated to America were poor and had very little money when they arrived. Our ancestors demonstrated a tremendous work ethic to survive. They work themselves to the bone every day because their families and their ability to make it in America depended on it. At the turn of the 20th century, southern Italian immigrants were among the lowest paid workers in

the country and child labor was common. Even small children went to work for their families in factories, mines and farms. And they sold newspapers on the street. I strongly believe that the same toughness, grit and forceful work ethic has become a part of who we are as the next generation of Italian Americans, and that our work ethic has become contagious and inspired others to do the same.

People with a strong work ethic know how to manage time well, take great pride in their work, demonstrate dedication to not only finishing the task, but working well with their teams and seek to advance their opportunities and better themselves. This is evident with the immigrant Italian Americans. Over time, Italian Americans saw their roles enhanced within the country's workforce. After beginning in mostly labor jobs and classified as unskilled workers, Italians were able to move into a much wider range of careers, including jobs in food service and independent business owners, and eventually evolving into careers in the financial and medical industries.

Interestingly enough, Italian Americans in the workplace and Italian business culture manages to balance that strong “get-things-done” attitude while maintaining his own relationships. Meaning that relationships are incredibly important. In the Italian working culture, the Italian peers make huge efforts to get to know people and to be hospitable. They ask lots of personal questions, but in an effort to relax and engage their peers without making the person feel like they are intruding or being nosy. This is all an effort to build lasting working relationships to increase productivity within the organization. People with strong work relationships work harder and work better. And Italian Americans know this.



Today, Italian Americans are very well represented throughout U.S. society. This includes representation on the United States Supreme Court, members of the U.S. Cabinet and even governors of their respective states.

Americans of Italian descent have also made significant advances in engineering, science and business and are represented throughout professional sports and the entertainment industry. More than 100 years after Italian immigration began, the work ethic and dedication of our immigrant forefathers that was instilled in the next generation of Italian Americans like my family and myself make us better at what we do. You are self reliant. We put in the work. Show up on time and forge through challenges. We do this because the work ethic from the Italian American immigrants has shaped the culture for hard work and success in our country.

## '...*la famiglia* is at the center of the Italian American reality.'

My mom was born and raised in Italy. She comes from a town called Bozano, located in the Trentino-South Tyrol region. I have traveled to Italy to visit my *nonna* and my Italian family since I was a baby. And I consider myself a first generation Italian American. *La famiglia*, the way I know it, has always been there and so has its values. I am referring to values like the importance of family, having pride in our Italian heritage and having a strong work ethic.

As an Italian American, I know how important family is. My *nonna*, aunt, uncle and cousins all still live in Italy and we can only get together when we travel there. We love to do things together and hang out, especially around the dinner table. My grandparents always have a story to tell us about when they were younger and it is fascinating to learn about my Italian family history. I believe *la famiglia* is at the center of the Italian American reality and the respect and support you give one another, starting from the early elderly people, makes family bonds strong.

Having pride in our Italian American heritage is another important value in modern day America. One of my most memorable experiences that generated pride in my heritage has been the trip I took in 2021. My family, along with two other families, went to Italy in June that year. It was our traveling companions first time in Italy. We started the trip on the Amalfi coast and we went all the way north to Bolzano. We covered a lot of territory, but with each town and city we visited, I felt my sense of pride in my Italian heritage grow more and more. It is hard to describe it, but in a sense I felt somewhat responsible, or for a lack of better words, compelled to introduce them to Italy and make sure they had a memorable experience. What was particularly important to me was that with every place we visited, our group would

bring back a positive memory. Visiting all the historical sites, walking on an ancient Roman road was more than I could have imagined. I felt like I not only can say that I am a proud Italian American, but that I can carry with me the history and the heritage of a people that has been around for a very long time.

Our journey continued through Tuscany and then to my mom's hometown, Bolzano. This city is nestled in the middle of the Dolomites and it is unique. There are three official languages spoken in South Tyrol: Italian, German and Ladin. Ladin is a Romance language, and it is spoken in certain valleys of the Dolomite Mountains. When we were there, the change in landscape and architecture was pretty evident. The Austrian German influence on their food and traditions is everywhere, but I am proud of knowing my Italian heritage also comes from a place that has unique history. Although very different from any other place we visited on our trip, I still wanted to make sure that people knew that Italy, despite being a small country compared to the United States, is a mosaic of different traditions and cultures.

Last but not least, I believe Italian Americans have a strong work ethic. Sometimes when we refer to Italian Americans, we immediately think about the first immigrants who came here to the United States in search of a better life and worked hard to achieve that. This is part of the Italian American history, but their work ethic is still strong. In the current generation of Italian Americans, I know, my father and mother have always worked hard to provide for our family of five. My mother has always told us that her parents expected her and her sister to do better than they did. I know my parents expect the same from us, and we know that if we work hard and take

pride in what we do, we will succeed. Traditional Italian American family values are strong in our modern day America and they will be passed down to the next generation. America is what cultivates these values and I am sure it is here to stay for the long run.



Leonardo Mota

SCHOLARSHIP ESSAY BY ELLIOTT LILA FRANCOLLA

## ‘...Italian American family values transcend our families to create strength and connection in our communities.’

Italian Americans are a wonderfully diverse group, hailing from all over Italy and residents across the 50 U.S. states. In tandem, Italian Americans values are diverse, with different groups placing different emphasis on what is most important to their families and cultures. However, I believe that our family values can best be summed up by the Franco Ola family motto, “*La Familia e Tutto.*” Family is everything.

Italian Americans are, among other things, family oriented. We care for those around us as second nature. Further, the experience that Italian Americans have had as immigrants have instilled within us a deep work ethic. We understand the value of effort and that good things seldom come easily. In the modern day United States, the core Italian American values of family and hard work are crucial to a productive and safe society.

Family support structures are immensely valuable in an era when people grow increasingly distant from one another. Though family relationships can occasionally be difficult, they are the antidote to loneliness and isolation. The quintessential Italian American image of a family crowding around the table for holidays is lovely and calls up fond memories for many of us. The networks of extended families that Italian Americans are often lucky to have are key to creating our value systems. For one, my experiences in a large family as the eldest grandchild taught me to share with my cousins, to lend a helping hand whenever possible, and to give love freely to those I care about. Simple lessons, yes, but deeply important ones nonetheless. These values, fostered by our families, enable Italian Americans to bring love and understanding to the table in all our interactions.

Perhaps the most wonderful thing

about Italian American families is how they transcend blood. Though family bonds characterize our lives, Italian American families give to their communities uniquely. During my life I have lived in a variety of places and have not always had an extended family of cousins and grandparents close by. I grew up close to my Italian American family in New Jersey, but I also lived in The Bahamas between the ages of five and 11. With my family over 1000 miles away I was still able to experience familiar connection. In The Bahamas, and to this day, my parents and brothers and I opened our doors to neighbors and friends on holidays, invited anyone and everyone to stay in our home if ever they needed, and found a family where we did not have one. In doing this, we created deep ties to our community. These ties are sources of joy and good times, but crucial to survival during the bad. In The Bahamas and Florida, my family and I experienced five hurricanes and had to deal with the destructive aftermath. Because of the connections we made in our community, we were able to help in a time of dire need. Italian American family values transcend our families to create strength and connection in our communities.

An integral part of the Italian American identity is our roots as immigrants to the United States. Though every Italian American has a different story, many immigrated during times of hardship. As a second generation immigrant, my grandfather was born in Italy. He and his family came to the United States in 1951 in the wake of the Second World War and the subsequent civil and political unrest. They had no ties to the United States and had to work hard for years on end to build a secure life. This work ethic has translated to my parents and to my generation. My parents and their siblings all hold advanced degrees as lawyers, nurses, and a

news executive in my family. I myself have worked tirelessly in my studies thus far and will pursue a degree in history and economics to best serve my



community. So a fitting example, my family is only a microcosm of the Italian American community. The value of hard work has resulted in. Italian American communities of professionals, politicians and blue collar workers alike. The common thread is that we all take great pride in what we do and aim to always give our best.

For such a diverse group as Italian Americans, our values are unifying characteristic. Though we live in a great variety of places, speak different languages and hail from many regions, we have our values in common. Through our values of hard work, Italian Americans have opened businesses, established families and pursued their own individual goals. By valuing our families. Italian Americans bring comfort and connection to society. In the grand scheme of America's melting pot, Italian Americans bring our immigrant work ethic and open hearted generosity to our communities.

## '...stereotypes create a false image of Italian Americans as criminals...'

Stereotyping is a prevalent phenomenon in society. And it has negative consequences for those who are stereotyped. One group that has been stereotyped in movies and on tv is Italian Americans. The depiction of them in these media has had numerous effects on this group, including the perpetuation of negative stereotypes. The creation of self esteem issues. And the marginalization of Italian Americans in society.

One effect of stereotyping Italian Americans in movies and on television is the perpetuation of negative stereotypes. For example, the portrayal of Italian Americans as members of the Mafia or as violent individuals has been prevalent in media for decades. These stereotypes create a false image of Italian Americans as criminals or people who are prone to violence, which is not representative of the entire group. This perpetuation of negative stereotypes can be harmful to Italian Americans because it can lead to discrimination, prejudice and marginalization.

Furthermore, the depiction of Italian Americans as people who are only interested in food, fashion, and family has also been a common stereotype in movies and on television. While these are all aspects of Italian American culture, they do not represent the entirety of the group's identity. The perpetuation of these stereotypes can lead to Italian Americans being viewed as one-dimensional and not taken seriously in other areas of their lives.

Another effect of stereotyping Italian Americans in movies and on television is the creation of self esteem issues. When individuals see themselves portrayed negatively in media, it can lead to feelings of shame, embarrassment and self doubt. This is particularly true for Italian Americans, who may feel as though their identity is being reduced to a set of negative stereotypes. These feelings can lead to low self esteem, depression and anxiety.

The portrayal of Italian Americans in media can affect how others view them in real life. When individuals are exposed to negative stereotypes in media, they may be more likely to believe that these stereotypes are accurate representations of the group. This can lead to discrimination and prejudice toward Italian Americans, which can further exacerbate self esteem issues.

Finally, the stereotyping of Italian Americans in movies and on television can also lead to their marginalization in society. When a group is consistently depicted in a negative light in media, it can create a sense of otherness and marginalization. This can lead to Italian Americans being excluded from certain opportunities and experiences. For example, they may be less likely to be hired for certain jobs or to be taken seriously in professional settings. This marginalization can also lead to social and economic disparities. As Italian Americans may not have the same access to resources and opportunities as other groups.

While the effects of stereotyping Italian Americans are numerous, it is important to note that not all depictions of them are negative. There are many positive representations of Italian Americans in media. These depictions showcase the richness and complexity of Italian American culture, and they help to dispel negative stereotypes.

There are many Italian American actors and film makers who have used their platforms to challenge stereotypes and promote positive representation of their culture. For example, actress and filmmaker Alyssa Milano has been vocal about the need for more diverse and authentic representation of Italian Americans in media. Similarly, actor and director John Turturro has used his work to showcase the diversity and complexity of Italian American culture.

There are also organizations that are working to promote positive representation of Italian Americans in media. For one, the National Italian American Foundation is a nonprofit organization that aims to celebrate and promote Italian American heritage and culture. They work to dispel negative stereotypes and promote accurate and authentic representation of Italian Americans in media and in other areas of society.



## '...the domination of social media and its influence has at times skewed the focus of what is truly important...'

La Familia The importance of traditional Italian American family values in modern day America. In Italian heritage family La Familia means everything. Multigenerational families live near each other. The elders grandparents are highly respected and the main source of socialization centers around the kitchen and home cooked Italian food. The kitchen is likely the most important room in the house. The same is true for the family I have grown up in. Although my mom is of 100% Italian descent, my father is only half Italian. However, he physically resembles and identifies more with his Italian roots. My father is also half Irish, hence our last name and my great grandmother. Always would jerk with my father that he gave her great grandchildren dirty blood.

I grew up with an upbringing. That predominantly resembles the epitome of a true Italian family. The family bond runs deep. My maternal grandparents live in multigenerational homes with my great grandparents until my mother was born. Although we don't live with my grandparents, we live less than two miles from the. As a family, every Sunday we go to Catholic Mass, immediately followed by dinners at my grandparents house. House. The Italian ones, of course. The smell of heaven wafts throughout the house and hits you the minute you cross through the threshold. Without fail or 2:00 PM, dinner initially starts with a huge serving of pasta and gravy. No, it's not the brown gravy you find in the gravy boat at Thanksgiving. It is the delicious and savory red sauce that Nanny cooked on the stove for hours. Filled with meatballs, sausage and stuffed pigeon. Honestly, there's nothing better in the entire world.

Once we are done with the appetizer, our entire four course meal is served

after the dishes are cleaned. Coffee and some Italian cookies or pastry marks the end of another delectable feast. Often my grandparents will reminisce about their passage through Ellis Island. And it will be incorporated into the dinner conversation. One of my favorite things about the family gathering is that it is never quiet. Everyone talks over everyone else. Everyone is invested in every individual's life. It doesn't matter if you're a parent, aunt, uncle, cousin, son or daughter, the family bond is strong. It is a house filled with laughter and love. Where everyone is welcome. If anyone comes with me to visit my nanny and Papa. The very first thing that happens after they hug everyone is to offer them something to eat. Food and the effort made into making it delicious is truly the love language of an Italian woman. I have been to many of my friends and their extended families houses. Their truly is nothing that compares to the warmth felt in an Italian household.

Many people have a great work ethic, but the work ethic of an Italian is unparalleled. Most of my family has a work ethic that is unlike any other. My father is one of the hardest workers and doesn't stop until he feels satisfied that he has provided well for our family. He has instilled in us that nothing is given to you, everything is earned. He believes that he can fix everything and was taught that by his Sicilian grandfather. If my father struggles with fixing, he enlists my uncle or poppy's help.

My family's bond is strong, my Italian roots are even stronger and for the last three years we have had a huge family reunion with over 100 attendants. We have had shirts and hats made with the very fitting La Familia Sara logo on everything. We take time every year during this reunion to honor our Italian de-

scendants. A slideshow was viewed with pictures accompanied with stories about the determination of our ancestors. The older people in attendance want to ensure our family Italian traditions will live on. Through all of us.

American culture has changed so much over the years. The domination of social media and its influence has at times skewed the focus of what is truly important. People don't appreciate their heritage or the family traditions that some cherish. Rather than reach for technology, they should revel in the stories told by their relatives or learn how to cook a proper Italian meal from a recipe that has been handed down from generations before. The further removed each generation gets, the harder it is to uphold and honor the amazing values my family has been determined to maintain. I truly hope I can continue to make my family proud and live like an Italian. Honestly, there's no better way.

# La Nuova Unita Sicilia Lodge #1251

Tampa

By Geraldine Clemons

Our March 18, 2023, Feast of St. Joseph was quite a success! We were honored to have Father Dan from the Resurrection Church in River-view bless the altar. We auctioned off many baskets at the Festa. We would like to give a great big “THANK YOU” to the Noto family who graciously donated and prepared all the food, which was served by our fellow members! We look forward to working together with the Noto family next year to continue a family tradition! Thank you to the ladies that worked tirelessly to bake ALL the cookies, which were also sold

Another wonderful event was our April 1, 2023 Rummage Sale!! There were over 35 tables sold as

well as a number of tables donated to the Lodge filled with a variety of items from cups, household goods, clothing, and just about everything in between! A tremendous amount of work — from the initial thought process through the setup and sale day could not have occurred without our Chairperson, Darlene Frisco, and the many volunteers that stepped up to make this possible! Let’s not forget the delicious Italian Sausage with peppers and onions sandwiches and hotdogs which were sold during the event!

Finally, we were proud to award three scholarships to brilliant young Italians who are entering college in the fall.



*Lucianno Vivino won a scholarship from La Nuova Sicilia Unita Lodge.*



*Mason Hamm also won a scholarship from La Nuova Sicilia Unita Lodge.*



*Grand Lodge Scholarship winner Eliot Lila Francolla receives her prize from Nick Capitano and Marie Leggett*



# Bonanno Lodge #2549

Boca Raton



Playing bocce are members of the Florida Atlantic University (FAU) and Ed Catania, president of the Bonanno lodge in Boca Raton. FAU's friends Man-About-Town John Paul Acocella and his friend Giovanni.

The FAU has 30,000 registered students. It is one of the few universities that is deeply dedicated to the discipline of Italian American Studies and to incorporate a strong creative writing component.

The Order has an ongoing relationship with the FAU. It donates money to the FAU scholarship that enables students to study aboard in Italy.



# Central Gulf Coast #2708

Palm Harbor



Three \$1000 scholarship winners from the Central Gulf Coast Lodge. From left, they are Grace Carmen, Hannah Alfieri and Lorena Lumia

What's more important than working to preserve our Italian culture? Having fun doing it.

Members of the Central Gulf Coast Lodge typically do both when President Mildred Cooper, Italian language expert, instructs the lodge on Italian words and phrases at the dinner-meetings. For example, at one meeting the members learn the days of the week, at another it's the months of the year. And there might also be this month's mystery word.

For example, do you know how to say monkey in Italian? It's *scimmia*.



The Bocce team of the Central Gulf Coast Lodge won the championship Bocce tournament, which was held at La Nuova Sicilia Unita Lodge in West Tampa on Saturday, June 24. Above are the members of the winning team — Prima Volta:

(from left) Patrick Folcarelli, Donna Fiorillo, Carol and Gary Malfa.



# Port Charlotte Lodge #2507

Port Charlotte

The hallmark of the Port Charlotte lodge has come to be known for its unique way of fundraising — by producing and staging plays starring the talented members of the lodge.

President Ernie Lijoi, who also is a poet and published author, writes and produces each performance, which are all geared toward highlighting the ensemble particular talents while having fun.

In March, the lodge celebrated the patron saint of Ireland — St. Patrick. (So, why is an Italian organization celebrating an Irish holiday? Because L'Italo-Americano, the biweekly Italian-American organization established in 1908, said research shows that St. Patrick was indeed Italian.)

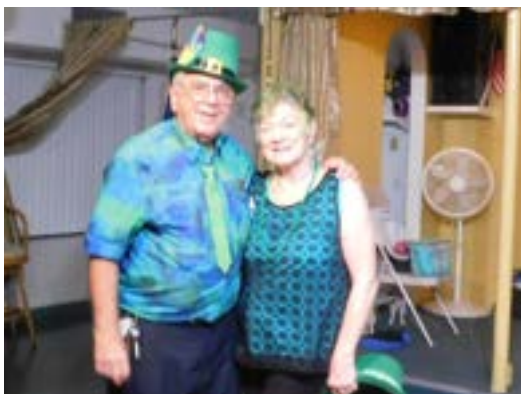
“At our St. Patrick’s Day fundraiser, we garnered \$1700,” says Ernie.



*Joining President Ernie Lijoi is Bryce Eaton, the scholarship winner and his family and Barbara Castrovinci, immediate past president of Lodge #2507. As if to highlight the graduate’s status, a star appears serendipitously directly over his head. The star is part of the lodge’s decorations for the Fourth of July.*

*Not in Picture is our second Graduate and also a Scholarship winner; Jaelynn Tomaske Lemon Bay High.*

*The members of the Sons and Daughters of Italy Lodge #2507 wish both Bryce Eaton and Jaelynn Tomaske a wonderful, happy and successful experience in their future.*



*President Ernie Lijoi and his wife Ceceila*



*Jeri Wolf and Barbara Castrovinci with Jeri in costume*



*Ernie Lijoi flanked by his son Joseph (left) and his brother Vincent (right).*

# Buona Fortuna Lodge #2835

Pensacola



# Buona Fortuna Lodge #2835

Pensacola



# Buona Fortuna Lodge #2835



# Perry Como Lodge, #2876

Jupiter



*(From left) Joe & Karen Amenita, Dawn & Sal Cerini*



*Vittoria & Antonio Catteneo*



*Donation to Case for Smiles: Marilyn Degler and Joe Sconzo*



*Joann Barella and Janice Clark*



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**NEXT DEADLINE: SEPTEMBER 11, 2023**

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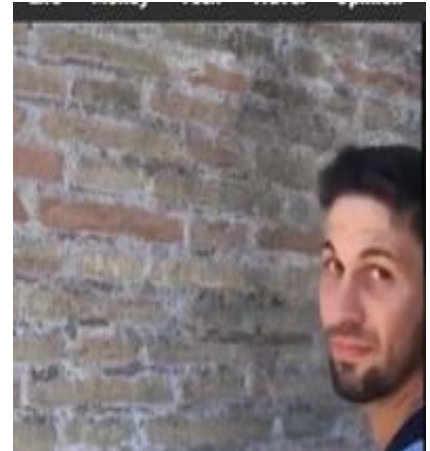
### Vandal Defaces Colosseum

A California man taped a vandal defacing the Colosseum. Italy's culture minister is calling for the person to be "identified and sanctioned." Police are trying to track the man down and more cameras are expected to be put up around the Colosseum.

A few years ago, a Russian visitor was fined \$20,000 and given a four-month prison sentence for carving the letter "K" on the Colosseum.



*Vandal defaces the Colosseum.*



*Police believe the vandal is a British man. Ivan Dimitrov, a 27-year-old Bulgarian-born fitness trainer.*

### Italy's Supervolcano Might Erupt

Campi Flegre, a dangerous Italian volcano may soon erupt.

The volcano is located just west of Naples, and about 360,000 people live nearby.

Supervolcanoes are the most dangerous type because they explode and typically throw huge amounts of ash into the sky, as did Vesuvius, 2,000 years ago. If the volcano erupts it could affect weather worldwide for years.

### Italians Love Their Pets...

... and that's certainly no secret. Now, a supermarket chain in Italy is making it easier for pet lovers to shop with their canines.



### 'Did You Say Olive Oil?'

Next time you catch Ziegfeld Follies on TCM, pay attention to the dance number with Fred Astaire and Gene Kelly. Kelly says "olive oil" twice.

What the heck?

If you look online in the Urban Dictionary, you'll see olive oil means friend. But, **warning**, if you look it up, olive oil has many vulgar meanings, too. We're going to assume Kelly said olive oil in a friendly way.



*Hoofers Gene Kelly and Fred Astair*