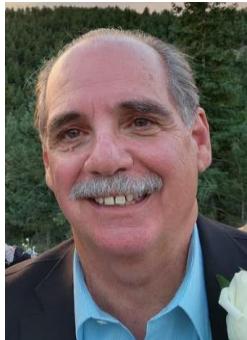




LA PAROLA

Bringing You Information About the Denver Lodge Since 1958

Gannaio/January 2026 Issue



Brothers and Sisters,

Happy New year! I hope everyone had a wonderful Christmas! December gave us some memorable Holiday events.

The Children's Christmas Party was great fun. The morning started out with a delicious breakfast prepared and served by our hardworking volunteers. As is our tradition, Santa arrived on a West Metro Fire Truck and Jolly Old St Nick did not disappoint! Over 35 kids took turns sitting on Santa's lap, talking to the big fella, making sure they were on the "nice" list. Special thanks to Pam Wright and her family for organizing this wonderful event!

That very same night, we had our adult Christmas Party! We enjoyed a great catered dinner and danced to the sounds of Tina Marx and the Millionaires. Special thanks to our party planners Anna Vann and Dr. Rita DeFrane!

On Saturday, December 13th, we had our first Christmas Tea. About 100 ladies enjoyed tea, a cocktail and sweets served by the men. A harpist played and Santa made an appearance. Special thanks to Pam Wright and the Book Club members for organizing this lovely event.

On Wednesday December 17th, we had our General Membership Meeting and our Annual Feast of the 7 Fishes, prepared and served up by our great volunteers. We also enjoyed a Christmas Ornament Exchange after dinner.

We are very fortunate to have so many members that step up and volunteer when called. However, we can always use a few more. If you have ever thought about helping out, let me know, we would love to have you!

See you all soon!

MANGIA BENE, RIDI SPESSO, AMA MOLTA

President Sal



La Parola

Gennaio/January 2026

Sal Siraguse, Dr. Rita DeFrangue, LeAnne DiTirro, Eleanor Gaccetta, Kathy Holt, Beverly Mendicello,,

Building Contacts

Desi Ramirez – Facility Manager

We are looking for a member who would like to chair our building committee. Please contact Sal if you are interested!

Health & Condolence

Joannie Flynn Joannie818@gmail.com

Hall Rental – Sal Siraguse (303) 238 - 8055

Address Changes

SOIDenver2075@gmail.com

By-Laws

According to Denver By-Laws, Article 1-Paragraph 4, "The by-law commission shall accept for consideration any by-law or change submitted in writing by a regular member in good standing by March 1 of each calendar year.

2025-2026 Lodge Officers

President

Sal Siraguse

siraguse56@msn.com

Trustee

Crist McAfee

Cmcafee@grdelectric.com

Vice President

Patrick Lubrano

Patrickklubrano@yahoo.com

Trustee

Jack Loth

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Orator

John Capone

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Trustee

Joe Calabrese

JAC5260@MSN.com

Recording Secretary

Anna Vann

tmvenv@msn.com

Trustee

Joannie Flynn

Joannie818@gmail.com

Treasurer

John Callor

Calor95@gmail.com

Trustee

John Gargano

Financial Secretary

Dr. Rita DeFrangue

ritadefrange@gmail.com

Immediate Past

President

Pam Wright

pcake@comcast.net

Mistress of Ceremonies

Linda Villano

l_villano@comcast.net

Mistress of Ceremonies

Kim Bonfiglio

babeepietrafeso@outlook.com jbonfig@gmail.com

Historian- Ramona (Mo) Toto-Travis

alnmo@comcast.net

Having an Event this Year? by Dr. Rita DeFrangue

If you are interested in renting the hall, please use the ["contact us"](#) from the website or call 303-238-8055. We are already booking up for 2025/26 and want to be able to accommodate all inquiries! Grazie!

MEMBERSHIP



Our membership is 300+ members strong! If you would like to get a jump on paying your 2026 Dues – go to our website, <https://osiadenver2075.org/> "Contact us" for an invoice. There will be further information after the first of the new year!



Come Polka on Sundays!

Sunday afternoon Polka dancing is back in full force!! If you're interested, dancing is from 2-5:30 pm Sundays. Need information, contact Bev Meyer at 970-222-4331 or email coloradopolkaklub@gmail.com.



Book Club

by Pam Wright & Maggie Iozzo

Book Club meets the second Monday of the month.

Meeting place Panera on 64th & Yank, 12:00 p.m.

everyone is welcome

December: When I Was 7-M.E.

Brownswell *January: Battle Mountain* by CJ Box

February: Mrs. Endicott's Splendid Adventure by Rhys Bowen

Becoming ADA Compliant

In the State of Colorado, legislation has all Public Agencies pursuing ADA compliancy. That means we will begin to ensure 12 Point font, Calibri text, using links and making sure our colors can be read by those in our community with disabilities. More to come in future issues.



Dancing at the Lodge – Come and Enjoy

Sponsored by our own Maggie Francucci!

Ballroom dancing is back in full swing too!

They meet on the 2nd and 4th Fridays of most months., To verify or check with Cathy and/or Maggie at

[Http://danceconnectioncolorado.com](http://danceconnectioncolorado.com) There is a one-hour class for various types of dances followed by open dance the rest of the evening.

OSDIA Council Updates

The by-laws of the OSDIA require that we “announce” changes to the Council.

There has been an open Trustee position on the council for some time. Crist McAfee has placed his name in nomination to serve in this open slot. Thanks to Crist for his willingness to become part of the Council. If anyone else wants to place their name in nomination, please see or contact President Sal at siraguse56@msn.com..

The council is seeking someone to step into the Vice President position as our current Vice President, Patrick Lubrano, is unable to perform the duties. If you are interested in becoming the Vice President, please contact Sal Siraguse at siraguse56@msn.com at your earliest convenience! Thanks!



Christmas Candy Cane Dance

The evening of December 6th the Denver Lodge celebrated the holidays with the Candy Cane themed dance. The beautiful and festive decorations set the backdrop for 120 members and their families to enjoy a lovely dinner. Attendees danced the evening away to Tina Marx and the Millionaires. Plenty of photo opportunities were available.





Breakfast with Santa

On December 6th 103 children and adults enjoyed the annual Breakfast with Santa. Everyone loved Santa's arrival on the fire truck, and this event is always a fun holiday tradition.



Christmas Tea at the Lodge

On December 13th, nearly 100 “sisters” of the Denver Lodge came together to celebrate the holidays with a Christmas Tea. The men served sandwiches and pastries. A harpist provided music and the ladies had an opportunity to take pictures with Santa or near the tree. Truly a lovely event that we hope continues next year.



December “Seven Fishes” Lodge Meeting

On December 17th, the Denver Lodge held the annual Christmas seven fishes' meeting/celebration with our member sisters and brothers. The traditional seven fishes' dinner was beautifully prepared by the kitchen crew. In addition, the ornament exchange has become a fun tradition enjoyed by many of the members.





New Year's Trivia

By Beverly Mendicello

1. In 46 B.C., which Roman leader made Jan. 1 New Year's Day?
2. In what year did the ball-lowering celebration in Times Square first take place?
1907
3. How much confetti drops in Times Square on New Year's Eve?
4. In what country is it a tradition to jump off a chair at midnight on New Year's Eve to avoid having bad luck in the new year?
5. What happens during a popular New Year's Day event called the Polar Bear Plunge?
6. Which city in the United States drops a giant chocolate kiss at midnight on New Year's Eve?
7. When did the practice of making **New Year's resolutions** start?
8. In Greece, what object is baked into a New Year's cake to bring good luck?
9. In Spain, what fruit do people eat 12 of when midnight strikes?

Answers: 1. Julius Caesar, 2. 1907 3. More than 1 ton, 4. Denmark, 5. People take a dip or swim in a cold body of water, typically in a place located in the Northern Hemisphere, 6. Hershey, Pennsylvania, 7. Rome 4,000 years ago, with ancient Babylonians, 7. A coin, 8. Grapes



The membership of the Sons and Daughters of Italy Denver Lodge 2075 continues to grow. Applications to join the Sons and Daughters of Italy Denver Lodge are available online at our website <https://osiadenver2075.org> If you are a member and would like to sponsor someone to become part of our organization, membership applications are available from Council members. At the December meeting the membership grew to 315 with the acceptance of five new members. Welcome Michael and Crystal Gabriel, Robert Saunders, Bram Van Room, and Danny Sweeney





Apple Pie Cake

By Kathy Holt

Ingredients: 4 cups (1 1b) chopped (combo of granny smiths and honey crisp are good), $\frac{1}{2}$ cup unsalted butter, softened, 2 cups white sugar, 2 eggs, $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp salt, $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp cinnamon, $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp nutmeg, 2 tsp baking soda, 2 cups flour, 1 cup chopped toasted nuts.

Instructions: Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Butter a 9x13 -inch pan. 1. Whisk together the flour, baking soda, nutmeg, and cinnamon in a large bowl. Set aside. 2. Cream the eggs, butter, and sugar until thoroughly combined. 3. Pour the wet ingredients into the dry and stir until almost combined. 4. Add the apples and nuts and mix until the batter comes together completely. 5. Spread the batter into the prepared cake pan.

Bake for 45 minutes but check at 40 minutes. Serve warm with caramel sauce and ice cream. Cake can be reheated at 200 for 10 minutes.

Easy Homemade Caramel Recipe 1 stick unsalted butter, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup heavy whipping cream, 1 cup packed light brown sugar, $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon sea salt. **Instructions:** Add the butter, cream, and brown sugar to a medium-size saucepot. Heat over low to medium heat while continuing to whisk until slightly boiling and smooth, which takes about 5 minutes. Finish by stirring in salt and serve. You can also use a good brand of jarred caramel sauce from the grocery

Sparkling Cranberry Mimosa

By Leeann Ditirro

1 cup Fresh cranberries
 1 cup Unsweetened cranberry juice
 1 Bottle Chilled champagne or sparkling wine
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup orange juice, preferably fresh squeezed
 Sugar (optional) for rimming glass
 1 Rosemary sprig (for garnish)
 Orange slice or zest for garnish



1. In a small bowl add sugar and orange zest. Wet the rim of each champagne flute with water or orange juice. Dunk the wet rim in the sugar orange mixture to coat the rim of the glass. 2. in each champagne flute add 2 oz. of cranberry juice. Top with champagne and serve. Garnish with rosemary sprig, and/or an orange slice.





National Leadership Grant Application Are Now Open for 2026

Through the SIF, the Order Sons and Daughters of Italy in America® (OSDIA) has awarded tens of millions of dollars in scholarships to date.

Every year since its inception, the SIF has offered 10 to 18 merit-based scholarships (National Leadership Grants), ranging from \$5,000 to \$20,000.

This year, the SIF awarded a record-breaking \$200,000 in scholarships during its 36th Annual National Education and Leadership Awards (NELA) Gala. These figures and the number of scholarships may vary from year to year, depending on the funding available.

Eligibility Requirements: Individuals* of Italian descent** enrolled in a four-year undergraduate or graduate program at an accredited academic institution for the Fall 2026 term.

What You'll Need: \$35 application fee

Official transcripts through December 2025, or the most recent completed academic term

2 recommendation letters (from non-family members). Official results from all standardized tests taken during the past 5 years

Deadline: February 27, 2026

All requirements for a given scholarship must be met or the application will not be considered. *No exceptions will be made.*

Visit to apply: <https://www.osdia.org/initiatives/scholarships/>

Sons and Daughter of Italy Denver Lodge 2075 Scholarship

Each year the Denver Lodge awards five scholarships to current high school seniors for the purpose of continuing their education, whether through university programs, trade schools or any other means of furthering their academic and/or vocational endeavors. The program is only open to **high school seniors** who are members of the Sons and Daughters of Italy, or whose parents or grandparents are members. The scholarship was increased to \$1,500 by vote of members attending the November meeting. Applications are now available at the Denver Lodge 2075 website and must be submitted by April 17, 2026. Winners are mandated to attend the May 20, 2026 meeting when scholarships are formally presented.



Each year the Italian American Business Association hosts the Annual Bravo Awards. The voting is now open and we asking our members to vote for the Sons and Daughters of Italy Denver Lodge to receive the best “**cultural event of 2025.**” Our membership hosted the Italian Heritage Festival in October. That event attendance was beyond what any organizations could have imagined. The voting for 2026 is now open. The website is <https://bravoawardscolorado.com>. Please go to the site and vote.



"Find the Paparazzi"

By Rita Defrange

Have you wondered how to get your picture(s) included in the La Parola? Well, find the Denver Lodge’s “paparazzi.” Paparazzi are freelance photographers who pursue celebrities to capture candid, often private, moments for publication in magazines, websites, and tabloids. While we are not chasing celebrities with our cameras or phones, we encourage all members who take pictures at events to share them at our main email address - soidenver2075@gmail.com. If you didn’t know, we have our own resident “paparazzi” who are Sister Mo, Sister Ellie, Sister Jamie, and Sister Rita. Don’t despair if you don’t have a camera or a phone - and you want your picture taken at an event to be included in the La Parola - find one of them and they will be happy to take a picture! Be sure to share your pictures with us.





Italian Heritage

We are adding a new feature to the La Parola. When space permits, we will share the history of an Italian tradition, food, or festival. If there is something or someplace you may be interested in, please let Rita Defrange know at ritadefrange@gmail.com.



Panettone

Panettone is a towering round of sweet bread speckled with raisins, citrus, and almonds with a plush, buttery texture that is popular both here and all over Italy during the winter holidays.

It makes a dramatic Christmas dessert or breakfast treat. Its Milanese origins date back to the Renaissance, when, it is said, wheat was so scarce and precious it was made only at Christmas.

These days, scores of beautifully wrapped versions of this tall, round cake appear pretty much everywhere in December in Italian and even ordinary grocery stores. Those versions vary in quality; many of them are rather cloying with artificial flavors. So read on, all ye who love a baking challenge!

Yes, this bread is a project! Two days! When researching its Italian origins, many accounts of baking it at home were so intimidating that people often give up before I attempted it. Don't be defeated. It might take a few tries to get this bread in and out of the oven looking glorious.

BEST PARTS ABOUT GROWING UP ITALIAN

- Everything was centered around **FAMILY**
- Every Sunday was basically a holiday
- There was always plenty of food that was left over
- Following the traditions
- Spending time with **Nonna** was the highlight of your day
- Spending time with **Nonna** was the highlight of your day

Italian New Year Superstitions

Because a little *fortuna* never hurt anyone!

- Eat 12 Grapes at Midnight**
One for each month — sweet grapes = sweet year
- Wear Red Underwear**
For love, luck & new beginnings
- Eat Lentils and cotechino**
Coin-shaped = prosperity & money
- Throw Out Old Stuff**
Out with the old, in with the new
- Keep Money in Your Pocket**
Start the year with cash to attract more
- Pop the Prosecco**
The louder the pop, the better the luck
- Open Doors at Midnight**
Let the old year out, welcome the new one
- Avoid Poultry**
Move forward, not backward

Buon Anno!
Which ones does your family follow?

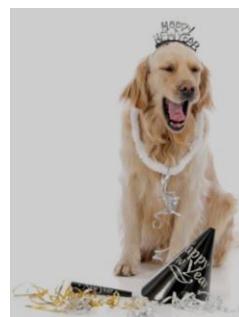


Making Resolutions

By Ellie Gaccetta

So here we are at the beginning of another year. Have you made your resolutions for a better 2026? Well, here are some tips to help. Resolutions aren't necessarily made to be broken. Right after Christmas gyms fill up with people who have resolved to get in better shape. But by the end of February, the usual gym crowd is again alone. Harvard Health has some tips for us all about making resolutions.

1. Dream big. Audacious goals are compelling. Want to compete in a marathon or triathlon? Lose 50 pounds or just enough to fit into clothes you once loved? With perseverance, encouragement, and support, you can do it. Inspire others and cheer for yourself. **2. Break big dreams into small-enough steps.** Now, think tiny. Small steps move you forward to your ultimate goal. Start every plan with "to-do list" and you'll check boxes off quickly. Break hard goals down into smaller "bites" and enjoy breezing through the easy tasks first. **3. Understand why you shouldn't make a change.** That's right. Until you grasp why you're sticking like a burr to your old habits and routines, you won't have the energy or the will to change. Unhealthy behaviors like overeating and smoking have immediate, pleasurable payoffs as well as costs. So, when you're considering a change, take time to think it through and balance pluses and minuses enough to make adopting a new behavior more attractive than standing in place. Otherwise, you're working against a headwind and are less likely to experience lasting success. **4. Commit yourself.** Make yourself accountable through a written or verbal promise to people you don't want to let down. That will encourage you to slog through tough spots. Find an online tribe with like-minded goals and support each other to success. **5. Give yourself a medal.** Don't wait to call yourself a winner until you've pounded through the last mile of your big dream marathon or lost every unwanted ounce. Health changes are often incremental and take time. Encourage yourself to keep at it by pausing to acknowledge success as you tick off small and big steps. Ask family and friends to cheer you on. **6. Learn from the past.** Any time you fail to make a change, consider it a step toward your goal. Why? Because each sincere attempt represents a lesson learned. When you hit a snag, take a moment to think about what did and didn't work. Maybe you took on too big a challenge? If so, scale back to a less ambitious challenge, or break the big one into smaller steps. If nailing down 30 consecutive minutes to exercise never seems to work on busy days, break that down by aiming for three 10-minute walks. **7. Give thanks for what you do.** Forget perfection. Set your sights on finishing that marathon, not on running it. If you compete to complete, you'll be a winner even if you wind up walking as much as you run. With exercise — and so many other goals we set — you'll benefit even when doing less than you'd like to do. Any activity is always better than none. It's enough. Maybe tomorrow will be better. Make your resolutions and give yourself credit for whatever you achieve. There's always next year!



Community Events



January

January 5th - Prima Domenica - Mt. Carmel
January 19th - Martin Luther King Holiday
January 21st - OSDIA General Meeting - Dinner at 6, Social meeting at 7

February

February 2nd - Prima Domenica, *Sponsored by the The IOA & Sons & Daughters of Italy*
February 14th - [La Festa d'Amore](#), Altar & Rosary, *Doubletree in Westminster*
February 19th - OSDIA General Meeting - Dinner at 6, Social meeting at 7
February 28th - Spaghetti Dinner, *Sons & Daughters of Italy*

Contact Us

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