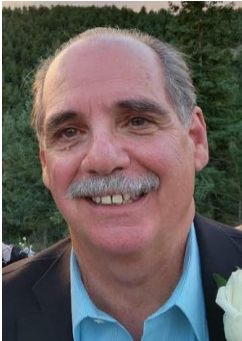




LA PAROLA

Bringing You Information About the Denver Lodge Since 1958

Dicembre/December 2025 Issue



Brothers and Sisters,

The Holiday Season is fast approaching, and the snow is not far behind! We have much to be thankful for this year!

Our November membership meeting was a very big success! With over 140 members and guests, we enjoyed a great Thanksgiving Feast, and then we celebrated our first responders and veterans with a heart-warming celebration coordinated by Sister Pam Wright. It is without a doubt, my favorite meeting of the year. Thank you, Sister Pam and a big thank you to all the volunteers that helped prepare and serve our big Turkey Dinner.

Our Annual Craft Fair, held on November 7th and 8th, was very well attended as vendors and shoppers enjoyed a very successful show. Special thanks to Sister Anna Maria Hunt for once again coordinating a wonderful show!

December brings 4 events that you don't want to miss! *On Saturday morning, December 6th, is our Annual Breakfast with Santa Children's Christmas Party. Of course, Jolly Old St Nick will be there in person! *The evening of Saturday December 6th is our Candy Cane Christmas Dinner Dance. *On Saturday December 13th we will be having a Christmas Tea! *On Wednesday December 17th at our General Meeting, it will be our Feast of the 7 Fishes, or the "Festa dei sette Pesci". It is the Italian American Christmas Eve tradition of eating a seafood meal. Since we won't all be together on Christmas Eve, we will celebrate at our General Meeting. We will also do a Christmas Ornament exchange that evening, details forthcoming!

See you all very soon!

MANGIA BENE, RIDI SPESSO, AMA MOLTA

President Sal



La Parola

Dicembre/DDecember 2025

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

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

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Vice President

Patrick Lubrano

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John Capone

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Recording Secretary

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Dr. Rita DeFrangé

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Historian- Ramona (Mo) Toto-Travis

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Trustee

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Trustee

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Trustee

Joannie Flynn

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Trustee

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Immediate Past

President

Pam Wright

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Mistress of Ceremonies

Linda Villano

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Mistress of Ceremonies

Kim Bonfiglio

Having an Event this Year? by Dr. Rita DeFrangé

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 inquires! Grazie!



Our membership is 370+ 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.



Today I Noticed

By Ellie Gaccetta

During holiday gatherings hosts look for ways to make guests feel comfortable. The book titled *"Today I Noticed"* is one to be a sure ice-breaker. It is a guide for intentional noticing and could be the secret to making mindfulness stick. Here are a few charming and profound examples: *"Today I noticed home is where somebody notices when you are no longer there."* *"Today I noticed my heart beats all day long and I rarely pause to appreciate it."* *"Today I noticed how much I love my Christmas tree.."* and *"Today I noticed how my niece waits for everyone to be seated before she sits."* These small mindful observations invite us to really see one another – and that is what gratitude is all about. So, as you attend holiday events and dinners invite your guests to share what they notice and listen with your heart wide open. Gratitude is not just a list we recite at the holiday gathering. It is daily practice of truly seeing life before us. When we notice, we appreciate and give thanks. Happy Holidays.



Honoring Sergeant Orace Joseph Mestas Posthumously



At the November 17th meeting, the Denver Lodge presented a Certificate of Remembrance to the family of Sergeant Orace Joseph Mestas. Sgt. Mestas served in the 1st Company 3rd Battalion 21st Infantry Regiment 24th Infantry Division during the Korean War. He was reported missing and killed on April 25, 1951, north of Seoul, South Korea. His remains were recovered and identified on January 31, 2025, by the US Army.

On February 4, 2025, his family was notified of the positive identification. After 74 years Sgt. Mestas was returned from Hawaii to Colorado. His final journey to the US mainland included a military plane escort. On June 20, 2025, he was buried in the Trinidad Catholic Cemetery with full military honors, including a flyover.

He was born on June 18, 1930, to Felix Mestas and Frances Mestas Brunkoski. He is survived by his sister Darlene Garcia and numerous nephews and nieces. He is preceded in death by his parents and stepfather Victor Brunkos, and 7 siblings.

Welcome home Sgt. Orace J. Mestas. You gave the ultimate sacrifice for our country. You will never be forgotten.



Each year the Italian American Business Association hosts the Annual Bravo Awards. The voting is not yet open but 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 not yet open. We will provide information where to locate the form.. Please vote.



Car Show Charity Award

The Caruso Family was the selected charity for the 2025 Sons and Daughters of Italy Car Show. At the November 17th meeting. Jerry Caruso accepted a \$1,500 check to support their charity. The Caruso Family Foundation provides services to families with a child diagnosed with a serious illness. We were proud to contribute to such a compassionate organization.



Annual Veterans and First Responders Day Salute

The November meeting of the Denver Lodge is dedicated to celebrate and honor veterans and first responders. Each veteran and first responder was presented with an embroidered heart taken from a US flag removed from service due to age or condition. As usual, it was a meeting to remember.



Veterans Honored by the Denver Lodge



First Responders Honored by the Denver Lodge



The Missing Man Table

Each item on the Missing Man Table represents the emotions and feelings reserved for those who did not come home. The ceremony symbolizes that they are with us, here in spirit. All Americans should never forget the brave men and women who answered our nation's call to serve and fought for our freedom with honor. For more information (<https://warmemorialcenter.org/missing-man-table/>)



Military Memorabilia awarded to fathers of President Sal, Joe Calabrese and John Collar shared for the event.





How were Santa's Reindeer Named

By Beverly Mendicello



Santa's first eight reindeer were named by Clement Clarke Moore in a poem penned in 1823. A visit from St. Nicolas, using names that suggested speed, movement, or were Dutch words for "thunder and lightning". Donner & Blixem were later changed to Donner and Blitzen to better fit the poem's rhythm. The ninth reindeer, Rudolph, was created in 1939 by copywriter Robert May for a Montgomery Ward department store poem.

Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, and Vixen: Likely chosen for their connection to speed and movement. **Vixen:** Possibly referring to a spirited female fox. **Comet & Cupid:** Chosen to suggest speed (like comet) and warmth/love (like the Roman god Cupid). **Donner & Blitzen:** These are Dutch words for "thunder & lightning". **Rudolph:** Robert May wanted him to be the hero of a Christmas story poem for the store which was an instant success. Rudolph became the ninth reindeer, used to guide the sleigh through a foggy Christmas Eve when the others couldn't see.

Annual Craft Fair

This year's Annual Craft Fair was held November 7th and 8th. The two-day event was well attended, and vendors were happy to showcase and sell their crafts. As usual, great food and sweet treats were available as well.



New Members

New Members welcomed in November include: Rob & Alicia Cristinizio, Jeff & Traci Stoffel, Michael Gilles, Nicole, Isaak, and Sebastian Skorka, Melissa Smith, Jenna Erdle, and Gianni Martinez





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/>

Stay Informed

There are many events being held by our sister organizations this holiday season. Events and information about the Denver Lodge can be found at: <https://osiadenver2075>. Members can also sign up and receive monthly emails from the Denver Lodge. December's notification will be published in the first week of the month.

Want to know what's going on in the city and County of Denver? Stay up-to-date on public events like festivals, markets, runs and walks held in public parks and on public streets throughout Denver. Check out the Mile High City Office of Special Events calendar at denver.org. You can view monthly newsletters and subscribe to receive future newsletters directly in your email box.

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. Applications are available at the Denver Lodge 2075 website and must be submitted by April 2026.

Can You Share Your Time and Talents

By Dr. Rita DeFrangé

Dear Brothers & Sisters,

One of the benefits we enjoy as members is the ability to participate in the many activities the Denver Lodge holds and hosts throughout the year. Each event requires nearly a village to organize, plan and manage. As we move to a new year, we need members to volunteer to chair many of our events such as the Anniversary Dinner, Bocce tournaments, several Spaghetti Dinners, and numerous holiday events such as the Christmas Dinner.

Chairing an event includes working with and directing committee members and being responsible for all facets of the event. While it may sound daunting - it really isn't. At the Denver Lodge there are always people willing to help in some capacity. If you can spare the time and are willing to chair or even help plan and organize events throughout the year - please contact Rita DeFrangé. Her contact information is: ritadefrange@gmail.com or text her at 970-685-1327. Thanks for any help you can provide!





Cranberry Jalapeno Dip

By Cathy Holt

Ingredients: ¼ cup sour cream. 8 ounces cream cheese, **softened**. It must be soft for it to mix well with the other ingredients. 6 ounces fresh cranberries, finely chopped. 1/2 cup sweet dried cranberries. 3 green onions chopped. 1 jalapeno pepper seeded and chopped, add more if you like more heat. 1 Tbsp orange zest. ½ cup sugar, add more if you like it sweeter. ¼ teaspoon salt. Fresh chopped rosemary, for garnish. **Instructions:** **1.** In a food processor, combine the cranberries (fresh and dried), jalapeno, green onions, orange zest, sugar, and salt. Pulse until very finely chopped. **2.** In a medium bowl use a hand mixer to whip the cream cheese until it is soft and smooth. Add the sour cream and beat until well mixed. **3.** Drain off the excess liquid from the cranberry jalapeno mixture. **4.** Add the cranberry mixture to the cream cheese mixture and beat until combined and smooth. Serve right away on a platter or board with crackers and bread for dipping. Sprinkle with a tiny amount of fresh chopped rosemary. **5.** You can make this dip ahead one day in advance. Store in an airtight container in the fridge. Stir well before serving.

Dirty Santa

By LeeAnn Dittiro



Ingredients: 1.5 ounces vodka, .05 ounces lime juice, 1 ounce grenadine, Sprite to top, Coconut cream for rimming, Coconut flakes for rimming, Cherry for garnish.

Instructions: **1.** Coat the rim of your glass with coconut cream, then dip it into coconut flakes to create a snowy rim. **2.** In a shaker filled with ice, combine the vodka, lime juice and grenadine. Shake vigorously for 10-15 seconds until well chilled. **3.** Strain the mixture into the prepared glass filled with fresh ice. **4.** Add Sprite to fill the glass and gently stir to combine. **5.** Add a maraschino cherry for a festive finishing touch. Serve immediately and enjoy.

Christmas Ornament Exchange December Meeting

At the annual Feast of the Seven Fishes dinner (December 17th) we will have a Christmas ornament exchange. To participate, buy and wrap a Christmas ornament. At the meeting, you will be given half of a Christmas card picture. When you find the person holding the other half of the picture, you exchange ornaments. It is fun and some very nice ornaments have been exchanged.



The Lodge is Dressed and Ready for the Holidays

It is starting to look a lot like Christmas at the Denver Lodge. On Saturday, November 29, a group of volunteers "dressed" the Denver Lodge for all the upcoming Christmas and holiday events. Despite the cold weather, the mood was warm and festive. President Sal and Jack Roth provided breakfast burritos for the protein and necessary we needed! .. Thank you to all who came out. The hall is beautiful. The outdoors decorations will be equally as inviting and festive!



Do you know anyone who is looking to adopt a pet?

by Dr. Rita DeFrangé

Dear Brothers & Sisters,

As a "non-profit" the Sons & Daughters of Italy seeks to support others. As such, Davyd Smith and his non-profit, "No-kill Colorado" is running a campaign between now and Christmas in a connection to many animal shelters and as shown in the news-clip. They want to help over 150 pets find homes by Christmas. If you aren't looking for a pet, consider donating to this organization. See following links.

Join the event! <https://www.facebook.com/share/1APYooCKCq/>

The fundraising page: <https://www.coloradogives.org/story/2025nkchomefortheholidays>

The campaign page: <https://www.nokillcolorado.org/home-for-the-holidays>

Media you can use (and you can change this to add your logo or anything you

want: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1BH7m620EpbPLNZviQQDrrIzspo4mFP_y?usp=sharing

Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/@NoKillColorado/videos>



Winter Wellness

By Ellie Gaccetta

December is a busy month, and it is important to prioritize our health and protect ourselves during the winter months. Winter comes with many opportunities to get sick or catch someone else's illness. Mindful safety measures include using extra caution when walking outdoors to prevent slipping, or a fall, and keeping indoors safe by removing clutter and space rugs to prevent tripping. The number one reason seniors visit emergency rooms in winter is due to falls. It is also important to maintain a healthy lifestyle to support both physical and mental health during colder months. While I am focusing on the cold months and the winter season, these tips are important year-round. Below are tips how to best protect ourselves during the winter months (and all year):

Physical Health - Eat Well: Consume a balanced diet rich in seasonal fruits and vegetables, lean meats, whole grains. Because the days are shorter you may need a Vitamin D supplement or get some sunshine. **Stay Hydrated:** Drink plenty of water or hot drinks to maintain fluid balance, even if you do not feel as thirsty in winter. Dehydration is a major factor in elderly illnesses, so drink up. **Exercise Regularly:** Stay active, whether through indoor workouts, winter sports like skiing, or even just short walks, to boost mood, sleep, and immunity. YouTube has lots of indoor videos that are fun and easy. **Get Enough Sleep:** Aim for 7-9 hours of quality sleep per night to help your body rest and keep your immune system strong. **Practice Good Hygiene:** Wash hands frequently and stay home if you are sick to prevent the spread of germs. **Stay Warm:** Dress in layers, especially when going outside, and ensure your home is kept at a comfortable temperature. **Mental & Emotional Well-being - Manage Stress:** Practice stress-reducing techniques like mindfulness or meditation to support your immune system and overall well-being. That includes a bit of gratitude and prayer. **Embrace Light:** Get exposure to natural light or use a light therapy lamp to help with seasonal mood changes and boost serotonin levels. Winter is known as Sundowners season, so get plenty of light. **Maintain Social Connections:** Stay in touch with friends and family to combat potential feelings of isolation during the winter months. You are never alone with today's technology to stay connected. **Establish Routines:** A consistent routine can provide a sense of grounding and help manage mental health during winter. **Be Kind to Yourself:** Allow for rest and self-care and take time to enjoy simple pleasures. For many people this is not easy during the winter months. **Preventative Health - Get Vaccinated:** Stay up to date with recommended vaccines. Check with your health care provider for recommended vaccinations. **Take Care of Your Skin:** Combat dry winter air by using moisturizer, sunscreen, and lip balm to keep your skin healthy and hydrated. **Have a Plan:** Keep emergency supplies, warm clothing, and any necessary medication readily available, especially when traveling. Most of all, stay well!!



Community Events



December

December 6th (AM) - Children's Christmas Party (open to the public), OSDIA

December 6th (PM) - Adult's Christmas Party (open to the public), OSDIA

December 13th - Christmas Tea at the Sons & Daughters of Italy 11 to 2...

December 17th - Christmas Social Meeting, Dinner with the "Seven" Fishes starts at 6 PM

January

Mark your calendars for the **January meeting on the 21st** to kick off the 2026 Calendar Year!

Contact Us

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