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A Message From the President, Antonio Meucci Lodge #213



*January 2026
Issue 11*

Wishing you all a very Happy New Year. I can't believe it's 2026. Today in Italy they celebrate (Capodanno) with Family Feasts, Loud Parties, Fireworks, Prosecco Toasts, lucky foods like Lentils and Grapes, and sometimes quirky traditions like wearing Red underwear or throwing old items out the window to bring luck and shed the past. Ladies it's a widespread superstition that you shouldn't do housework especially cleaning, laundry or taking out the trash on New Year's Day. That's because it's believed to sweep away or wash out good luck for the coming year. You don't have to tell me twice to do housework on that day. I agree and will take a rest from cleaning. Too funny, but whatever you are doing today enjoy it with your family and friends.

Time is just flying by. It seems like yesterday we were enjoying the hot days of Summer, but Winter is definitely here, and of course with Winter comes the cold weather, and snow. A lot of our members have since left New York and escaped to the warmer weather of Florida. Those are our "Snow Birds", as we affectionally call them. But I know you will be back once the weather gets warmer. So enjoy the sunny weather of Florida and know lots of people are jealous including myself.



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The hustle and bustle of the holiday season for the most part is over, as people start to remove their holiday decorations. But there are some people like myself who will leave their Tree and Presepio up until after January 6th, when we celebrate the Feast of the Epiphany. This is also a National Holiday in Italy. Epiphany marks the end of the Christmas period and commemorates the Twelve Days of Christmas when the Three Wise Men arrived at the manger bearing gifts for baby Jesus. Believe it or not the true meaning behind the song *12 Days of Christmas* actually spans the period between the birth of Christ and the coming of the Magi, the Three Wise Men as they are known. The four weeks preceding Christmas are collectively known as Advent, which begins the four Sundays before Christmas and ends on December 24th. As the song goes the *First Day of Christmas my true love sent to me a Partridge in a Pear Tree*. Then the song adds a gift for each day, covering all twelve days, and here we all probably thought it was just a “whimsical” song to sing.

The month of December was actually a slow month at the Lodge, however there are some items I would like to mention. The Sons of Italy Foundation is offering Scholarship opportunities for our Children to take part in. The applications for the 2026-2027 academic year are now open to receive applications. In addition to the National Leadership Scholarships, for Undergraduates and Graduates students, the OSDIA has partnered with the *Swiss School of Management (SSM)* campus in Rome, which includes *Two Full*



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Tuition Scholarships for a Bachelor's and Master's Degrees in Business Administration. This is a once in a life-time opportunity for a bright, young Italian-American student to receive a World Class education. I encourage our members' Children or Grandchildren to look into these opportunities and perhaps apply. You can go on the [website](#) for all the particulars. Please note the deadline to apply is by February 27, 2026. The website to view both Scholarship applications is [OSDIA.org/sons-of- Italy-foundation](http://OSDIA.org/sons-of-Italy-foundation). It's also posted on our website as well. You just don't know, they could be a winner. Shortly our Lodge will announce our Scholarship opportunities. I will keep you posted on those opportunities for our members Children or Grandchildren.

In regards, to the OSDIA Foundation there was a recent press release out of Washington, DC that the Supreme Council of the OSDIA of Italy in America elected two new Trustees to its Philanthropic arm of the Foundation. One person recently elected was Giancarlo Arra from Naples, Italy , and the other Dr. Pierpaolo Sileri from Milan, Italy. Congratulations to both of these men, as I'm sure they will serve us proudly.

On December 7th, Sister Pamela Danza and I hosted our annual *Children's Christmas Party*. This year we had 40 children in attendance, and needless to say every year it gets more spectacular. We're not sure who has more fun the Children or the Adults. This year we had Mr. Macaroni entertain the Children with his magic, and balloon making. He was very interactive with them and they were



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all laughing historically. As in the past the “*Antonio Meucci Theater Playhouse*” puts on our own version of a Christmas theme show. Of course it always has an Italian twist to it. The show featured some of our children, and members of the Lodge. The skit we did was “*Alfonso” Alvin and the Chipmunks*. The show was too funny with Brother Dominick D’Ambrosio as Alfonso, Sister Lina Amello as Simona, Sister Maria Malandro as Theodora, and Brother Adam Pacecca as Dave, and Sister Caroline Baviello as the Narrator who doubled as Mrs. Claus. The message of the show was “*it is so much better to give then to receive*”, since Alfonso gave his Harmonica up to a sick boy, but in the end he received a new one from Mrs. Claus. I have to thank the additional cast members Sister Roselle Cucuzza, Christopher D’Ambrosio, Georgiana and Leo Luca Cucuzza, Giada Gutta, and let’s not forget the puppy in the show which was Espresso. Too cute. I also need to personally thank all my members who volunteered to wear costumes, there was Brother Roberto Caso as Rudolph, our Christmas Tree Brother Marcello Correa, and the Snowman Oscar Martini. Also many of our other children who dressed as Elves, Gift Boxes, Candy Canes, and little Reindeers all in the spirit of good fun. But in order to do this show there were so many more people to thank like our Stage Production & Music help Brother Dominick & Sister Damiana DiMicelli, Sisters Pamela Danza, and Lynda Innocenzi. Special thanks to Sister Maria DiMicelli who was in charge of the desserts. I also need to thank all the additional members who helped set-up, breakdown and



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decorate that day. To Brothers Frank Autera, Mario Cermele, Gino DiMicelli, Mike DiSavino, Ray Tocci, Sister Lucy Tocci and Anthony who will become a new member at our next initiation in February. Thank you so much for your help. However, nothing was more priceless than seeing the excitement in the eyes of the children's when Santa arrived in his Sleigh. A special thank you to Brother Pat Carolini who has been playing Santa for the last 34 years. Thank you all again from the bottom of our hearts. Sister Pamela and I are already thinking of next year's extravaganza, so stay tune. I also need to thank the King of Hearts who donated \$1,100 towards the party. The donation helped defray some of the costs of buying some of the toys, the entertainment, the costumes and all the little extras we provided for the day.

The last event in December was on Wednesday December 10th, when I hosted my Officers Christmas Party. It was my way of saying Thank You to all of them as they helped me through my first year as President. It's been a wild ride, and I couldn't have done it without their support and help. I have to say we had a fun night celebrating with great food, traditional holiday sweets, singing, and of course the White Elephant Game. That was hysterically funny, especially when the person got the "gag" gift of a Charlie Brown Christmas Tree Plunger. I know for a fact it's on display in his bathroom. Too funny. Let's not forget there was even an



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appearance from Santa, where all our Officers got to sit on his lap and take pictures.

The Antonio Meucci Lodge will be starting the New Year off with a bang with another round of events for 2026. The first event we will have is *Comedy Night* Chaired by Brother Mario Cermele on Friday January 9th, 2026 which is back by popular demand. So mark your calendar and save the date so you can attend. For reservations please call **Brother Mario Cermele on 914 325-1239**. There are some other events in the works and U will keep you posted.

I would like to send Get Well wishes to all our members and friends not feeling well especially Sisters Betty Corvino, Ashley DiMatteo, Maryann Pellegrini, Vincenza Puja, Teresa Riverso, Brothers Tony Amato, Umberto Amato, Lucio Gatti, Vince Roselli and Nick Santoro. May you all experience good help real soon.

I would also like to extend my deepest sympathy to Brother Roberto Caso and his wife Grace on the passing of his Father-in-Law Bernardo Ferrera. May he rest in the arms of the Lord.

Deepest sympathies to the Tornatore Family on the passing of Carol Tornatore Mother to Brother Anthony Sr, and Grandmother



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to Brother Anthony Jr, and Sister Daniela. May she rest in the arms of the Lord.

Deepest sympathies to OSDIA National President Tom Lupo who's brother John Lupo passed away on Christmas Eve, may he also rest in the arms of the Lord.

To all our members celebrating January Birthdays Buon Compleano. I hope you enjoy celebrating your Birthday.

Wishing all our January couples a very Buon Anniversario. I hope everyone had a wonderful time celebrating your anniversaries, and your day is filled with joy, happiness, and most of all love.

I would also like to send Congratulations wishes to Brother Frank Amato and his wife Krista on the recent engagement of their daughter Julia to Gaetano. Julia is also the Granddaughter of Brother Tony & Sister Tina Amato and the niece to Brother Joe & Sister Toni-Marie Amato, and to Brother Dr. Pat & Sister Diana Eglau. Congratulations Julia, I know you will have fun planning your up coming wedding.

Congratulations to Brother Carlo Riccobonno who was re-elected as President of the West Harrison Volunteer Fire



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Department. I also want to congratulate his son Anthony who was just hired by the Westchester County Police force. So proud of both of you.

Congratulations to Sister Maria Theresa Quaranta who wrote her second book which is a Christmas book for Children called Festeggiamo Il Natale Con Mari!!!. The book can be purchased from Amazon. It's a cute Bilingual Adventure book where the children learn Italian and Money Skills.

Congratulations to Sam Pezzullo son of Brother John Pezzullo who wrote and directed a Mockumentary called The Premier and was most recently interviewed on Good Day NY by News Anchor Rosanna Scotto. You made us proud Sam.

Besides the Epiphany which is celebrated across Italy, Italy will also celebrate on January 17th, The Feast Day of Saint Anthony the Abbot. It's a significant religious day where people bless their domestic animals, especially cats, dogs and pigs, under his protection as the patron Saint of animals, a tradition linked to medieval origins where monks cared for the sick and the animals. Many Christian Churches in the US and throughout Europe particularly in Italy honor this tradition.



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If you are looking to do something on Thursday nights you can join some of our members who get together to play Scopa or Briscola which is Italian Cards. Did you know that before Scopa, and Briscola there was another classic Italian hand game played called Morra. This hand game goes as far back to Ancient Rome The game is played with your fingers not with cards. You need at least two players or can be played in teams of four. Each using one hand to throw zero to five fingers. At the same moment, players call out in Italian the total number of fingers that they immediately think will appear. If someone guesses correctly, they earn a point, single play continues until one player reaches three points. If no-one guesses correctly, hands are thrown again immediately. Just a fun fact I found interesting and wanted to share.

In closing, Brother Frank and I would like to wish you and your family a very Happy New Year. May the new year bring good Health, Peace and Prosperity. New Years is another special days we should enjoy with family and friends and reflect on just how blessed we are to share time with our love ones. I also would like to mention that our Lodge is very fortunate that we can give back. In December we made a \$2,500 to an organization called *Friends of Karen*. Friends of Karen is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization that provides



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comprehensive support to families with a child diagnosed with life threatening illness such as Cancer. At our Officers Christmas party the King of Hearts added an additional \$400 to the organization. So that organization actually received in total \$2,900. The additional funds were definitely appreciated. On December 16th, some of our Officers went to *Rosary Hill*, in Hawthorne NY, to make another Holiday donation of \$1,000 plus Cookies and Chocolate for the patients, and Staff. Thank you Brothers Ray Tocci, Mike DiSavino, Sisters Lucy Tocci and Cathy Grisanti for joining me. Needless to say it was a very touching, emotional and spiritual time spent with the Dominican Sisters. It's amazing how they care for these terminal ill cancer patients, making there final days of life as comfortable as possible. They treat them with dignity, respect and love right until the bitter end. Each patients bedroom was decorated with a lighted Christmas Tree, and a Christmas Afghan on their bed as well as other holiday decor like Presepio's, Poinsettia Plants, Musical Figures etc., but to me the highlight is their small Chapel with stained glass windows and a white marble sanctuary before the altar. Thank you guys for going with me and experiencing this humble gesture of kindness and giving back to those in our community.

To all my Brothers and Sisters may you always remember our motto **Liberty, Equality and Fraternity.**

Sempre Avanti,
President Camille



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