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A Message From the President.

Antonio Meucci Lodge #213



November 2026

Issue 21

Welcome to the November Edition of my *Newsletter.* Autumn is finally here, with cooler temperatures and shorter days. Before you know it Thanksgiving and Christmas will be upon us. The time is just flying by and the Lodge has been so busy with so many amazing activities and events. The month of October has always been a busy month not only for the Lodge but for all Italian Americans as we celebrated Italian Heritage and Cultural Month. There were so many Festivals, Parades and Cultural Events happening all across our area and for that matter around the State. We should be so proud as Italian Americans we can celebrate and share our Italian heritage with others.

We started the month of October, with our annual *Columbus Wreath* celebration on October 11th.This is where we got to pay homage to Christopher Columbus. This ceremony which has been performed by our Lodge for so many years, in fact I need to thank Brother Anthony Pilla who recently shared a photo of a ceremony going back to 1915 when the Statue was unveiled and a presentation was done in Columbus's honor in White Plains, and I'm happy to say 111 years later we are still paying homage to this great man. Unfortunately, on that Sunday we encountered such a downfall of

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rain, but it didn't stop some of our diehard members who came out in the rain to be there. Thank you so much. This year's guest speaker was Mr. Joseph Spedaliere, an educator who spent over 25 years teaching Italian to our children at White Plains High School. He was very interesting and shared some facts on Columbus that I'm sure many of us were not aware of. I also shared with our members his speech, and hopefully you get to read it. Thank you Joe. I also would like to thank Sister Rosalia Miceli for sending out letters inviting dignitaries to attend the ceremony that day. In attendance was Sister Lisa LaRocca, an Emmy Award Winning Television journalist formerly from Channel 12 News, Ms Karen Pasquale, Chief of Staff and Director of Operations for the City of White Plains, and Ms Stefania Mignone, Commissioner of Public Works, City of White Plains, along with Kathy Guglielmo who is running for Common Council of White Plains. Thank you all for attending and supporting the Antonio Meucci Lodge.

I would be amiss if I didn't mention that President Trump once again recognized Columbus Day on October 12th, by signing an official proclamation as well as hosting a White House celebration in honor of Columbus. He also announced that a 19th Century Italian marble statue of Columbus would be placed on the grounds of the White House Rose Garden. This is the third statue of Columbus he brought back from the ruins. Thank you President Trump for recognizing not only Christopher Columbus but all Italian Americans.

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The following day on Monday October 12th, we had the opportunity of marching in the *82nd Annual New York City Columbus Day Parade.* The theme for this year's parade was *"Two Flags, One Home: Celebrating 250 Years of Italian Contribution to America."* What a beautiful day it was to march down 5th Avenue after the miserable rainy day we had at the Wreath Ceremony. The parade, was hosted by the Columbus Citizens Foundation, which is the largest celebration of Italian-American culture and heritage in the nation. There was so many famous people and dignitaries at the parade this year, and our group even made the news on Channel 11. I need to thank those people who marched with me, Brothers Mario Cermele, Sergio LaNotte, Anthony Gerasia, Romeo Spiniello, Sisters Michelle Spiniello, Lynda Innocenzi, Cathy Grisanti along with 2 of her family members Mina Esposito& Leo Gismondo from Italy. They had a blast, and of course Brother Mario was the star on Channel 11 news. I also need to mention that Sister Vanessa Racci from our Lodge performed on the red carpet that day. Sorry we missed you Vanessa but our contingent was towards the back of the parade. I also want to recognize two others of our members who marched in the Parade. Sister Joan Prezioso Past President of the Italian Welfare League, and Sister MariaTheresa Quaranta who was on the Columbus Citizen Foundations float. No matter where we marched we were just so proud to be there to represent our Italian Heritage. I need to personally thank the Rockland Lodge from District V for their hospitality on the bus. State Principal Trustee Bill Barbera was a fantastic host to everyone and the Pizza that was served along with the Cannoli's and Cookies were simply delicious.

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Another first time event for our Lodge was on October 18th. The Lodge hosted a *Movie Night,* where we rented the LOOK Dine-In Cinema in Dobbs Ferry. Based on the survey that was taken by our members, the consensus was a comedy. So the movie we watched was "*It Started in Naples"* starring Sophia Loren and Clark Gable. We had a private screening of the movie, in very comfortable recliner loungers, and if you wanted you could purchase drinks, and food to be eaten while you watched the movie. I need to thank Sister Michelle Spiniello for bringing the idea to us and for hosting the event, and thanks for the goodie bags you provided to everyone in attendance. Based on the feedback from that night this is something our members would like to do again.

On Wednesday October 21st, Westchester County, and County Executive Ken Jenkins hosted Italian Heritage month with the *Raising of The Italian Flag*. This is a night we got to celebrate our Italian Heritage in Westchester County. The ceremony was in front of the Michaelian Office Building on Martine Ave in White Plains, and after the Flag raising, the County had a reception for everyone to enjoy. At the ceremony, representing Brother Joseph Sciame, Ms. Lucrezia Lindia, an a Italian Educator and Board Member of the Italian Heritage and Cultural Committee (IHCC-NY) presented County Executive Ken Jenkins with a beautiful Anniversary Journal called *50th Anniversary Year, (50 Anniversario) 1976-2026)* in recognition of the IHCC-NY, work over the past half-century in promoting Italian and Italian American heritage and culture in the United States.

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Also in attendance was one of our Lodge members Sister Mara Persamperi President of the Westchester Coalition of Italian American Organization known as WCIAO, who helped to coordinate the program and arranged to have 2 students from local schools to sing the Italian and American National Anthems. Mr. John DeCiccio of DeCiccio & Sons Grocery Stores and his family donated $5,000 to be awarded to 10 worthy High Schools students in the surrounding Westchester County area on October 26th at Harrison High School. Thank you all who attended the ceremony, in support of our Italian Heritage.

On Thursday, *October 22nd*, the NY State Grand Lodge hosted Italian Heritage Night at the USB Arena in Elmont, NY located in Belmont Park where Hockey fans got to see the NY Islanders play against the Los Angeles Kings. Everyone who attended that night received a free T-Shirt and got to take a group picture on the ice after the game. It was an exciting game that night however the Islanders did lose in overtime 3-2. I want to thank Brothers Lorenzo Santoli and Mike DiSavino for attending in support of the NY State Grand Lodge Italian Heritage and Culture month.

On Friday *October 23rd,* we hosted another successful *Lobster Tail, Steak and Cigar night.* Everyone who did attend really enjoyed themselves. I need to thank Chairperson Anthony Miceli who put

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this event together along with his committee Brothers Frank Autera, Anthony Gerasia, Joe Griffo and Sister Rosalia Miceli. A special thank you to Brother Mario Cermele and his staff for preparing the food served and grilling those steaks to perfection. Congratulations to all the winners of those lovely Gift Baskets, and I'm also happy to say we may even get a new member to join our Lodge, the grandson of one of our long time members.

Another exciting event was our Children Halloween 'Boo-Bash", this past Sunday. There was 40 children in attendance all dressed in costumes even some of the adults came dressed as well. There were crafts, music, food and a Parade where they went to the pumpkin patch to pick a pumpkin to decorate. I need to thank Chairperson Christopher Famularo and his committee of Sisters Lina Amello, Pamela Danza, Tina Salerno along with his wife Jenny Famularo and Brothers Frank Autera, Joseph Salerno and Alex Famularo for helping that day. Also a special thank you to Brother Pat Carolini and Sister Tina Salerno for taking pictures. Everyone had a great time, and can't wait for next year.

I would like to send *Get Well* wishes to all our members and friends not feeling well especially Sisters Dora Pallagrosi, Brothers Joseph Amato, Lucio Gatti, Frank Landi, Vince Roselli, and Charles Tota. I would also like to send get well wishes to Rosa Filippelli mother to Sister Caroline Baviello. May you all experience good health real soon.

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To all our members celebrating November *Birthdays*, Buon Compleanno. I hope you all enjoy celebrating your Birthdays.

I would like to wish a very special happy birthday to Sister Anna Maria Forte who will be 85 years young this month, along with Brother Vince Roselli who just celebrated his 90th birthday in October. Wishing you many more years of birthday wishes.

Congratulations to all our November couples celebrating their anniversary, a very *Buon Anniversario*. I hope everyone has a wonderful time celebrating your Anniversaries, and your day is filled with Joy, Happiness, and most of all Love.

Congratulations to Brother Carl Calabro on his upcoming marriage to Richard this month. Wishing you both all the happiness in the world.

Congratulations to Marissa Cestone on her engagement to Vincent. Marissa is the granddaughter to Brother Tony and the late Sister Rita Cestone. Marissa is also any past Scholarship recipient of the Lodge. Wishing you both all the happiness in the world and I know Nonna is looking down on you sending you her many blessings. She was waiting for this for a very long time.

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Congratulations to Sister Lisa LaRocca who was just honored by the G. Caboto -C. Colombo Club in Harrison with their Italian-American Distinction Award. A well deserved honor Lis

Congratulations to Sister Charmaine Thomas who was awarded the 2026 W.O.W. Award from her company Amalgamated Family of Companies. She was recognized for her dedicated service to helping their customers achieve their insurance and benefit needs. Kudos to you Charmaine, keep up the good work.

I would like to extend my deepest sympathy to Brother Adam Pacceca, and his parents Laurie and Bob on the passing of his Grandfather Alfred Pacecca. May he rest in the arms of the Lord.

Deepest sympathy to Brother Joe Griffo and Sister Dora on the passing of Joe's Uncle Emilio Salandra. May he rest in the arms of the Lord.

I would also like to extend my deepest sympathy to the Sciorra family on the passing of Dr. Joseph Sciorra. Joseph was a Folklorist and Cultural Historian who was the Director of Academic and Cultural Programs at the John D. Calandra Italian American Institute for over a quarter century. He has written many articles, papers and books all surrounding Italian American culture. His sudden death leaves a big void not only to his family but to the many

students he taught at the John D. Calandra Institute. May he rest in the arms of the Lord.

In addition, I would like to send healing prayers to Pope Leo XIV who was just diagnosed with lung cancer and recently had his lower right lung removed. May you have a speedy recovery and may God look after the Holy Pontiff.

In celebration of Italian Heritage month Mother Frances Xavier Cabrini was recognized and honored for all her charitable deeds. Did you know she was the first U.S. Citizen to be canonized a Saint, and is widely honored by communities and cities as a powerful symbol of Italian American history and service? She founded the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and established 67 schools, hospitals and orphanages across the U.S., Italy, and Latin America to serve poor and discriminated Italian immigrants all before her death at the age of 67. I would also like to mention that Chicago's Near West Side neighborhood of Little Italy will get a beautiful and meaningful new public artwork that honors the real heart of the community. After years without a statue in Arrigo Park, where a statue of Christopher Columbus once stood before it's removal in 2020, the city's Park District announced that Mother Frances Xavier Cabrini will be immortalized there instead. It may

not be a Columbus statue but at least it is recognizing an Italian individual.

Also in celebration of Italian Heritage on October 1st, it was announced by Suffolk County Executive Ed Romaine official plans to build the county's first ever Italian American Museum to honor the region's largest ethnic Italian population. Working in collaboration with Dr. Joseph Scelsa Founder and Director of the Italian American Museum in Manhattan, the Order Sons and Daughters of Italy, the Italian American Action Committee, and the Suffolk County Parks Department this museum will finally come to fruition. Believe it or not Suffolk County is home to roughly to 320,000 to 325,000 Italian Americans making that County with the largest Italian -Americans population in the United States. More information to follow as to when the Museum will open.

Another little known fact was that Luigi Del Bianco an Italian-American Sculptor and Chief Carver of Mount Rushmore, was responsible for shaping the monument's most intimate details in the faces. It took 14 years and 400 workers to bring the colossal sculpture to life in 1941, and it still attracts about 2 million visitors each year. It's also interesting to note that he moved from Vermont to Port Chester, New York where he opened a monument carving studio. Interesting enough a taste of Italy is coming to America with Bialetti, the iconic Italian coffee brand best know for its Moka Express, as the company is planning to open its first retail store in

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the United States beginning in 2027. Founded in Italy in 1919, Bialetti is expanding international as part of a five-year growth strategy that also includes new coffee-making products. The company's famous Moka Express was invented in 1933 and has since become a symbol of Italian coffee culture in homes around the world. Both very interesting tidbits of information. Another interesting bit of trivia information is that iconic singer and songwriter Alicia Keys who is famous for singing her hit song *Empire State of Mind* that features the words *New York, New York* is of Italian descent. She was born Alicia Augello Cook. Her maternal family comes from Sciacca, Sicily and Calabria. Alicia is proud to celebrate her Italian ancestry honoring her family, history and sharing her heritage. This year she performed at the 2026 Sanremo Music Festival in Liguria Italy, and has done duets with Eros Ramazzotti on his song *L'Aurora,* as well as performed with Italian singer Giorgio on a bilingual song called *Preghieria, (I will Pray).* You just never know what someone's ethnic background is, and how they embrace their heritage and culture.

This past year I have been following the accomplishments of Kimi Antonelli a Formula 1 auto car racer. Well on Sunday October 25th, Kimi claimed his ninth victory of the 2026 season winning the United States Grand Prix, in Austin. Texas. The 20-year old Mercedes driver now holds a commanding standing with five races remaining. A ninth-place finish or better at next weekend's Mexican Grand Prix would secure his first World Championship.

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Antonelli is on the verge of becoming the youngest world champion in Formula 1 history and the first Italian to claim the title since Alberto Ascari in 1953. You go Kimi, we're rooting for you to win.

Before you know it November will be here and I want to mention some other events the Lodge will be hosting. Today *Sunday November 1st, at 10:30 am* at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church in White Plains, the Lodge will have its annual memorial mass. The mass will be performed in both English and Italian, and it is a time where we get to pay homage to our deceased Brothers and Sisters who came before us to make our Lodge what it is today. A Lodge that is over 112 years old, and filled with such rich tradition, and fond memories of what it was like before the modern digital world of cell phones, social media and AI. After Mass we will come back to the Lodge for some refreshments hosted by Sister Pamela Danza.This year alone, 4 of our long time members passed away, and we will give them their due respect at this memorial mass. Those that have passed away were Past President Teresa Riverso, Sisters Rita Cestone, Sister Grazia (Franca) Ricciardella, and Brother Ray Tocci. Hopefully, you will join us at this mass. *Don't forget to make sure you change your clocks. You need to go back 1 hour.*

On *Friday, November 6th,* we will host a Comedy night featuring Chris Monty, Joe Portillo, and Karen Margaret. The price is $45 per person. Reservations can still be made by calling Sister Roselle Cucuzza 917 440-9946 or Brother Anthony Gerasia 914 262-6693.

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So come and enjoy a night of fun and laughter.

Also let's not forget our always successful *Pocketbook Bingo* fundraiser. This event will be held on *Friday November 13th*, and sells out very fast. You can call Sister Pamela Danza on 914 980-1055 to see if there are anymore available seats. There will be 10 games of Bingo where you can win a Designer Pocketbook, along with Door Prizes, Raffles and so much more. So don't miss out on this Holiday Extravaganza of Pocketbook Bingo.

As we move into December the another event we do every year is our annual *Children's Christmas Party* for our members Children and Grandchildren from infancy to 9 years old. The event will be on Sunday *December 6th*, this year. I personally look forward to this event every year, especially when I see the children come all dressed in their holiday outfits to enjoy the festivities we have planned, and seeing their excitement when Santa arrives. As in the past, the "*Antonio Meucci Theater Playhouse*" will put on our version of a Christmas theme show, of course it always has an Italian twist to it featuring some of our children, but more importantly back by popular demand is Brother Dominick D'Ambrioso our featured actor. You can see our *Website* for the flyer, and reservations for your child can be made by calling President Camille 914 772-1768 or Sister Pamela Danza 914 980-1055.

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Also the month of November Italy features a few noticeable holidays such as All Saints Day (Festa Ognissanti), on November 1st, its a day for honoring all the Saints. Did you know it was Pope Gregory III who made this date change to officially honor all the Saints. All Saints' Day was officially added to the list of eight Christian Feasts celebrated by the Catholic Church. All Souls Day Souls Day (Il Giorno del Morti) is celebrated on November 2nd, for remembering and praying for all the deceased. Other celebrations include the Feast of Our Lady of Good Health (Festa della Madonna della Salute) in Venice on November 21st, which is a religious festival that commemorates the end of the 1630 plague inVenice. It also stands for gratitude to the Virgin Mary for saving the City from the devastating epidemic with the Basilica della Salute construction in her honor. Another holiday celebrated is the Feast of Saint Martin" (Festa San Martino) around November 11th, and its a festival deeply connected to agricultural traditions, especially wine and food which is marked by many festivals all across Italy especially in the smaller towns. I heard it through the "grapevine", that there was some spectacular wine made by some of our members. Perhaps we should have our own in-house wine tasting contest to see who would be the winner. It could be a fun night for everyone to enjoy.

By now I'm sure you all have received a letter from the Lodge regarding that our annual dues need to be paid by December 31, 2026. I know this is something our Lodge has never done before as we always sent out the statements at the beginning of the new year.

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But it is essential we follow the NYS Grand Lodge protocol in order to get an accurate number of our members so we are assessed the correct per Capita Tax to pay in 2027. This year, for your convenience you can now make your payment by Zelle, or you can simply scan the QR Code from the letter, or email your payment to *antoniomeuccilodge213@gmail.com.* Of course you can still mail in your payment with the envelope provided. If you have any questions please reach out to our Financial Secretary Brother Joe Griffo on 914 275-3273. Thank you for your support and cooperation.

Also in November we will start the process to elect our Officers for the upcoming year. The Officers of our Lodge serve a two-year term and can run for another two years if they so choose. I can't believe come this March I would have completed my two years as your President. Where did the time go. The slate of Officers will be presented in January with Elections in February. I have already selected Sister Pamela Danza as the Nomination Chairperson, and she and her committee will be notifying our membership of the upcoming process if you would like to be considered as an Officer of the Antonio Meucci Lodge. I'm asking our membership to think about joining the Board. We are looking for talented *new* Officers to join the ranks of existing Officers to bring *new* ideas, *new* leadership styles and *new* perspectives. The Antonio Meucci Lodge has a wonderful 112 year history, rich with visions and ideas which have all come to fruition. We will never forget our past members who brought so much to the table but we need to build on it if we are to

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sustain our longevity. So I'm asking you to start thinking of being an Officer and join our ranks. Anyone can do it and our existing Officers are always here to assist and guide you along. Remember you are our future. Be proud to be a member of the Orders Sons and Daughters of America, and the Antonio Meucci Lodge.

In the month of November there are many National Health Days that are celebrated all month long, like American Diabetes Awareness, Lung Cancer Awareness, Pancreatic Cancer Awareness, Epilepsy Awareness, and Men's Health Awareness. The month of November is also Healthy Skin Awareness. It's really important that you listen and pay attention to your body for any signs and seek medical attention needed, especially when you see changes to your skin. Melanoma or skin cancer is the most dangerous and life-threatening type of skin cancer that can spread to other organs. Unfortunately, I am hearing more and more people being diagnosed with this type of cancer.

Of course, Italy is known to celebrate many foods in the month of November especially those items that surround the Harvest. These foods are earthy, comforting and seasonal flavors as cooler weather sets in around the area. Some of those items are White Truffles (Tartufo Bianco). White Truffles peak in regions like Piedmont, Tuscany, and Umbria, where shaved truffles top fresh pasta like Tagliolini, Risottos, or Fried Eggs. Chestnuts (Castagne) is always a classic autumn snack enjoyed either by roasting or boiling

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them. I know most of us enjoy eating them around the Holidays. Porcini Mushrooms is another item that is harvested in autumn and is used in creamy risottos, healthy soups, and simple olive-oil sauces. The month of November we also get to celebrate some guilty pleasures like National Sandwich Day on November 3rd, followed by National Candy Day on November 4th, and if that isn't enough sugar overload you have National Donut Day, and let's not forget all the good food we will eat on Thanksgiving Day. Another fun day we will celebrate in November is on November 18th as it is Mickey Mouse's Birthday and it's celebrated by drinking Apple Cider on that day. Too funny.

In closing, I would like to wish all our Veterans a very Happy Veterans Day. This is a very special day where we need to give thanks to all our Men and Women who so proudly served in our Armed Forces. We thank you for your Courage, Honor and Sacrifice in protecting our American freedoms.

Brother Frank and I would like to wish you and your family a very Happy Thanksgiving. This is another special day we should enjoy with family and friends and reflect on just how blessed we are and if possible we should try and give back to those less fortunate than ourselves. With that being said, the Lodge will be working on our annual Holiday Charity donations to help all those less fortunate than ourselves. I will keep you informed on what organizations we

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will be making donations to and how you my Brothers and Sisters can possibly help.

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

Sempre Avanti,
President Camille

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