

February Questo Mese Newsletter

From Order Sons and Daughters of Italy in America <nationaloffice@osia.org>

Date Sunday, February 1st, 2026



February | Febbraio 2026

A MESSAGE FROM

National President, Comm. Thomas A. Lupo



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I hope that you have all enjoyed a peaceful and relaxing start to the new year. Over the past month, many lodges held their first meetings of 2026, with many beginning the nomination process to elect new officers. As new officers are elected and installed over the next two months, I extend my best wishes and warmest congratulations to everyone stepping into new roles.

On the subject of new beginnings, I am excited to announce that Buoni Amici Lodge 3021 of Newnan, Georgia, was officially instituted on January 24, 2026.

I would like to thank National 2nd Vice President Mark DeNunzio and New Lodge Formation Committee Chair Dan Kaestle for officiating the ceremony and welcoming the members of the Buoni

Amici Lodge to our OSDIA Family. In the coming months, our New Lodge Formation Committee will be instituting more lodges in the pipeline, including one in Wilmington, North Carolina.

As we enter the month of February, I am pleased to announce a variety of exciting updates. Firstly, our 37th National Education and Leadership Awards (NELA) Gala will be held on **Thursday, May 21, 2026** at the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center in Washington, D.C. Be sure to save the date and read further in this newsletter for more information on our flagship fundraising event.

Secondly, the Sons of Italy Foundation (SIF) scholarship applications will be closing on **February 27, 2026**, so be sure to get your applications in soon! Our full tuition scholarships in partnership with the Swiss School of Management's Rome campus will also stop accepting applications on that date. More information on applications for both scholarships are available further in this newsletter.

Later this month, I look forward to meeting with OSDIA National Officers, Grand Lodge Presidents and other leaders from throughout the U.S. and Italy for our Virtual Winter Plenary. This meeting is an opportunity to connect and share organizational updates and strategies for growth. During our plenary, I will be providing updates from the first six months of my term, and strategies to continue this growth over the next six months.

Throughout this month, I hope you will all stay tuned to the upcoming Milano-Cortina Winter Olympics, which will be held from Feb. 6 through Feb. 22 in the heart of Lombardy. Throughout the month, we will be providing periodic updates on the games through our official OSDIA social media accounts.

On a final and more serious note, I was deeply saddened to hear of the devastation Cyclone Harry has wrought upon large areas of Southern Italy, causing the region at least \$2 billion in damages. My thoughts and prayers are with all who have been impacted by this terrible disaster, and especially with the loved ones of those who have lost their lives as a result of it. The SIF has a long history of supporting our Italian brothers and sisters during times of crisis, and we plan to continue doing so by launching a national fundraiser in support of rebuilding efforts. Stay tuned for a formal announcement from the National Office on how you can help.

Fraternally,

Comm. Thomas A. Lupo

National President, Order Sons and Daughters of Italy in America



**Save the Date! Sons of Italy Foundation 37th
Annual NELA Gala**



Join us on **Thursday, May 21st** at the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center in Washington, D.C. for our **37th National Education and Leadership Awards (NELA) Gala!**

We will be honoring individuals who have made meaningful contributions to their communities and beyond. We will also be shining a light on the bright future of our Italian American youth and the impactful work of the Sons of Italy Foundation.

Mark your calendars and prepare for an unforgettable evening of recognition and giving back!

[Learn More & Become a Sponsor](#)

**Apply Today! 2026 Sons of Italy Foundation
Scholarship Applications Due February 27**



Final Month for Applications for the Sons of Italy Foundation's (SIF) 2026 National Leadership Grants

These merit-based scholarships vary from \$5,000-\$20,000 each year and are given to selected individuals* of Italian descent**, enrolled in 4-year undergraduate programs, graduate programs, or professional schools at an accredited academic institution for the Fall 2026 term.

Applications will close at **5:00pm ET on February 27th, 2026**, so get your application started today! For more information and details on applying, please click on the button below:

[Apply Here](#)

* U.S. Citizens and Green Card holders

* At least one Italian or Italian American grandparent



OSDIA & SSM Rome Offer Two Full-Tuition Scholarships



Photo courtesy of the Swiss School of Management.

Last Month to Apply for Full-Tuition Business Scholarships in Rome!

The Order Sons and Daughters of Italy in America® (OSDIA) and the Sons of Italy Foundation® (SIF) are proud to partner with the Swiss School of Management (SSM) in Rome, to offer two full-tuition scholarships for outstanding students of Italian descent pursuing business degrees at SSM's Rome campus, starting in fall 2026.

Each scholarship covers full tuition for either the Bachelor of Business Administration or the Master of Business Administration program (housing and living expenses not included).

These awards celebrate the proud legacy of Italian and Italian American achievements while empowering the next generation of global business leaders.

Applications will close on **February 27th, 2026** so don't wait to apply! Click the button below to learn more and apply!

[Learn More & Apply](#)



Buoni Amici Lodge 3021 Instituted in Newnan, Georgia



From left to right: Dan Kaestle, Dr. Mark DeNunzio, Jennifer Petrino, Catherine Botticelli and Cyndi Conger pose for a photo with Buoni Amici Lodge 3021's charter.

On January 24, 2026, the Order Sons and Daughters of Italy in America proudly instituted Buoni Amici Lodge 3021 of Newnan, Georgia, during a ceremony held at the Peachtree City Public Library. The event marked a significant milestone for the charter members and the growing Italian American community in the region.

The ceremony was officiated by National 2nd Vice President Dr. Mark DeNunzio and Dan Kaestle, Chair of the New Lodge Formation Committee and President of Buona Fortuna Lodge 2835 in Pensacola, FL, whose leadership guided the lodge from vision to reality.

Reflecting on the occasion, DeNunzio stated, “Buoni Amici Lodge 3021 of Newnan, Georgia, was instituted on a strong foundation through the efforts of Dan Kaestle and Vincent Fauceglia of the New Lodge Formation Committee, along with the dedication and vision of its founders, Jennifer Petrino, Catherine Botticelli, and Cyndi Conger. I am confident the lodge is destined for a long and proud history.”

Thirty charter members were formally initiated, followed by the installation of the lodge’s first officers. Buoni Amici Lodge 3021—meaning “Good Friends”—begins its journey well positioned to foster fellowship, cultural pride, and community service for years to come.



OSDIA Spotlight: Future Of The Order (FOTO) in Florida



FOTO Chair Katie (left) shares her homemade pizzelle with National Executive Director Shayla Kaestle (right), National Trustee Gertrude Dorries (center right) and Past Grand Lodge President Carolyn Cianciotta (center left).

Katie, Chair of the Future of the Order (FOTO) Committee, was a featured guest at the Grand Lodge of Florida Trimester Meeting held in Orlando on January 9–10, at the invitation of Grand Lodge President Joseph Dente. Her visit offered members the opportunity to hear

directly from one of OSDIA's emerging leaders and to learn more about FOTO's role in strengthening the future of the Order.

During the meeting, Katie presented an overview of FOTO, highlighting how participants observe national proceedings, build relationships across Grand Lodges, and collaborate on initiatives designed to support OSDIA's long-term vitality. Her remarks emphasized cooperation, continuity, and respect for the traditions that have guided the Order for generations.

Beyond her presentation, Katie actively engaged with members throughout the two-day meeting, fostering meaningful dialogue and connection. A highlight of the weekend was her traditional pizzelle-making demonstration, which blended cultural heritage with fellowship and reinforced the importance of shared traditions. Katie's "*La Dolce Storia delle Pizzelle*" will be featured on the Resource Hub, FOTO's project for this term, which grew out of discussions at the FOTO Forum during August's Biennial National Convention. Her visit underscored the value of collaboration between established leaders and emerging members in advancing OSDIA's mission.

[Click here for "La Dolce Storia delle Pizzelle"](#)



Our Italian Roots | OSDIA Members Reflect on Their Ancestral Towns

• **Furnari, Messina | Region of Sicily**



Mary Jane Cambria (right) poses for a photo with her family in Furnari in a local coffee bar.

By Mary Jane Cambria

Renaissance Lodge 2259 | Orange, California

Reconnecting with my Italian roots happened totally by chance. A conversation in a bakery in my ancestral hometown led to finding my *famiglia*.

I met my Italian family by accident. While visiting my son in Palermo, we took a train to Furnari, Sicily to visit my grandparents' hometown. There was a *panificio* (a bakery) next door to our hotel. We entered the bakery and started chatting with the people behind the counter. Luckily my son speaks better Italian than me so we were able to discover that the owner's wife was a Cambria (my last name) and that they had another *panificio* up the hill. The next day, as we were walking up the winding road, a car stopped and a woman yelled "Los Angeles?" we answered yes, and she yelled "*aspetta!*" She returned and then drove us to her house. She invited us in and began to make pasta while we sat at the table. Soon all the family joined us. We ate and then began looking through photos.

While going through photos, we came across one of a man who looked just like my grandfather. On the back of the photo was written "Wheeling West Virginia" which was

exactly where he had gone after going through Ellis Island. We had found our family! Over the years we have returned many times, and we even went to attend my cousin's huge Sicilian wedding.

While reconnecting I learned a very fun fact: It turns out that my family made/makes all the bread for Furnari and surrounding towns and that "Furnari," the name of the town, is the Sicilian word for bakers!



Furnari town center with sign.



Furnari town center with a view of the Mediterranean Sea in the background.



The bakery where Mary Jane connected with her family.

"Our Italian Roots" is a series of stories from OSDIA members reflecting on their ancestral towns in Italy. The project, started by OSDIA's Culture Committee, was created to bring members closer to their roots and to highlight the vast cultural diversity of Italian towns and cities. Submissions from OSDIA members for this project will be requested in 2026.



January Lodge Anniversaries



This past month, the following lodges reached important anniversaries. The National Office congratulates these lodges on reaching these important milestones and wishes them the best for the years ahead!

- **115 Years:** Grand Lodge of New Jersey
- **115 Years:** Grand Lodge of New York



OSDIA Represented at IAFL 4



From left to right: Emerging leaders of the Italian American community Christina Chila, Jenna DeLuca, Dario Gagliano, Katie Swiger, Isabella Loparco, Vincent Fauceglia, Adam Pacecca, Salvatore Circosta and Dominic Ursetta.

At the recent fourth edition of the Italian American Future Leaders (IAFL) conference in, OSDIA was proudly represented by several of our emerging leaders. Acting as both participants and guest speakers, these members served as enthusiastic ambassadors for OSDIA, sharing their experiences and insights. Their contributions sparked meaningful dialogue and made a lasting impression on fellow rising professionals throughout the Italian American community.

OSDIA Interview from IAFL 4



Reminder: OSDIA Membership Pins, Banners & Regalia for Sale through Russell Hampton!



Calling all local lodge leaders!

In advance of local lodge elections, official OSDIA membership pins, banners, regalia and other branded merchandise are available for purchase through our partners at Russell Hampton.

If you are an officer at a local lodge, and are interested in these items for your lodge, please purchase directly through the link below!

[Order Through Russell Hampton](#)



Writers Wanted

Interested in writing for OSDIA's official magazine?

We want to hear from you!



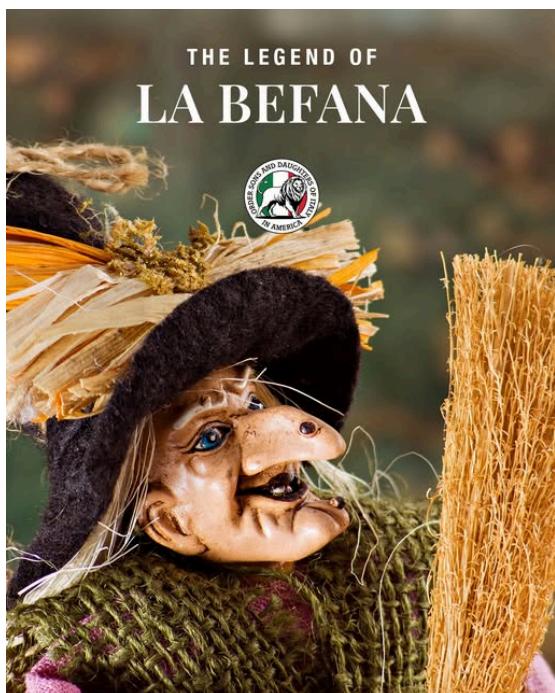
Do you have a story idea highlighting the impactful work of an OSDIA member or lodge in their community? Are you interested in writing for the most widely read magazine for people of Italian heritage in the United States? We want to hear from you! For consideration in *Italian America* magazine, which has a circulation of more than 25,000, and a readership of more than 100,000 each quarter, please submit your story pitches to italianamerica@osia.org.

Story pitches should be limited to 250 words and address topics pertinent to the Italian American community. Preference will be given to story ideas featuring OSDIA members or lodges, but all stories of interest to the Italian American community will be considered.



SOCIAL MEDIA

Post of the Month



Tonight is the night of La Befana!

According to Italian folklore, La Befana is an old witch who flies through the skies on Epiphany Eve (Jan 5), delivering sweets and gifts to good children and a bit of “carbone” (candy coal) to those who were naughty.

She was asked by the Three Wise Men to join their journey to visit the baby Jesus but initially refused. Later regretting it, she set out with gifts but never found the Christ child, and now she continues her search every year, leaving treats for children along the way.

A beloved symbol of Italian tradition, La Befana brings magic, fun, and a playful reminder of generosity and hope, marking the end of the Christmas season.

Buona Befana a tutti!

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