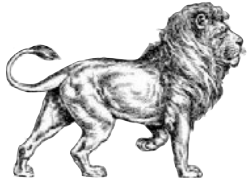
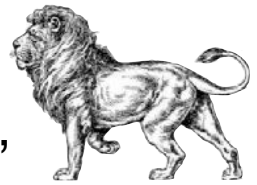


THE LION'S ROAR



AMERICA LODGE #2245

"AMERICA LODGE, WHERE FRIENDS BECOME FAMILY"



VFW Hall
68 Lincoln Road
Franklin Square, NY 11010

LIBERTY EQUALITY **FRATERNITY**

Volume 55
Issue 1
January 2026

Happy
New Year
2026
Buon Anno

AMERICA LODGE # 2245

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Phyllis Ann O'Connell.

THE LION'S ROAR NEWSLETTER

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Facebook: America Lodge #2245

America Lodge's mission is to celebrate our Italian culture and heritage by honoring our ancestors' visions of promoting, educating, supporting our members, and giving back to our communities. Joining together we create excitement, strengthen our bonds and advance the image of Italians everywhere.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Lillian and I would like to wish everyone a **happy and healthy New Year**. We hope you all enjoyed a wonderful Christmas spent with family and friends—and that Santa Claus was good to you as well.

At our last meeting, we kept things brief and then truly enjoyed one another's company with a festive celebration. Everyone brought their favorite and most famous Christmas desserts, and I can honestly say it was impossible to choose a favorite—though I certainly tried many of them! The evening was made even more special with a surprise visit from St. Nick himself.

2025 was a great year for America Lodge. Our membership grew by 32 new members, and we continued to support many of our long-standing events and clubs. We were also excited to introduce new activities, including **Carnevale** last February and our new **Mahjong Club**, both of which have been wonderful additions.

Looking ahead, I know that 2026 will be an even better year for America Lodge. We will continue to grow—both in membership and in activities for everyone to enjoy. I am truly grateful to belong to a group of members who are always willing to step up and help with whatever needs to be done.

As we tell all of our new members during initiation: **get involved**. We offer many activities, and if you have an idea for something new, please let us know. We are always happy to look into new ways to make our Lodge even stronger.

Here's to a fantastic year ahead!

Fraternally,
Joe

January 2026

We begin the year **Italian style**, celebrating **Capodanno** with traditions like wearing red for good luck and enjoying lentils for prosperity. The New Year is also a time for reflection and fresh starts, which is why we're sharing a story on the meaning behind **New Year's resolutions**—and we'll ask you, *what's your resolution for the year ahead?*



January wouldn't be complete without a nod to **La Befana**, the lovable witch who brings Epiphany to life. Though we've written about her before, her story is always worth retelling.

We also kick off the year by spotlighting a great Italian mind, **Galileo Galilei**, and his remarkable legacy of invention and discovery.

This month, we celebrate **Festa del Tricolore** on January 7, honoring Italy's iconic green, white, and red flag.

Lastly we share a new story about a winter tradition rooted in the life of a Christian monk.

Join us as we welcome the New Year with history, culture, and timeless Italian traditions. Enjoy your Newsletter!

Buon Anno!

Donna

Membership Corner



During our December 17th meeting, we installed 2 new members. Please welcome:

Graziella Montoni and Luchina Fabrizi. We also formally installed Rita and Claudio Fabrizi as members. When you see them at the next meeting, welcome them to America Lodge!

America Lodge Membership Dues were due on December 31st. Notices have been sent for dues payment. In order to remain a "member in good standing" please send in your membership dues immediately to avoid a lapse in your membership. Payment can be made to America Lodge #2245 and mailed to: Maria Passalacqua, 265 Cleveland St., Franklin Square, NY 11010.

Let's start 2026 with a membership drive by talking to your family, neighbors, friends, and co-workers about joining America Lodge #2245. Remember, new members are the key to keeping our Lodge vibrant and growing. If you have any prospective new members, please reach out to Jo Ann Maggio at (516) 850-5288 or madsav1128@yahoo.com for an application. You can also visit our website at www.americallodge2245.com/Membership. And if you're feeling neighborly, consider bringing a friend to our February 18th meeting!

Check out our Website and Facebook page! We post photos of our meetings and events, provide informative posts on our Italian Culture and Heritage and keep our members informed about Lodge and local events! Come log on and see what we're up to!



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UPCOMING EVENTS

- January 6th, 13th, 20th, 27th America Lodge Mah Jongg, 3:30-6:00 pm, Fr. Sq. Library.
- January 6th, America Lodge Council Meeting. Franklin Square Library. 7:00 pm.
- January 21st, America Lodge General Membership Meeting. Franklin Square VFW. 7:30 pm.
** Announcement of America Lodge slate of Officers**
- February 1st, Carnevale! **SAVE THE DATE** Details to be provided soon!
- February 3rd & 24th, America Lodge Mah Jongg 3:30-6:00 PM, Franklin Square Library.
- February 3rd, America Lodge Council Meeting. Franklin Square Library. 7:00 pm.
- February 18th, America Lodge General Membership Meeting. Franklin Square VFW. 7:30 pm.
- March 3rd, 24th, & 31st America Lodge Mah Jongg 3:30-6:00 PM, Franklin Square Library.

GOOD AND WELFARE

Buon Compleanno to our January Gennaio celebrants

Matthew Capp, Luchina Fabrizi, Ellen Andrasick, Nancie Caracciolo, Jo Falabella, Luchina Fabrizi, Anthony Fezza, Marie Geneva Frank, Gloriana Fratacangeli, Robert Goldmann, Marian Kacher, Bianca LaVeglia, Dennis Lyons, Mariana Marano, Mary Rose O'Hara, Angela Pinto, Paul Salerno, Marina Senatore, Lisa Spano, Maria Viti.

GET WELL SOON...WE'RE THINKING OF YOU...

Nancy Binda

Past President Sylvia Giglio

Past President Gloria Maffettone

Congratulations to Bruno & Nancie Caracciolo on their daughters recent college graduation !!



HAPPY NEW YEAR



*On behalf of the Officers of America Lodge
#2245 and President Joe Armocida, we wish
everyone a happy, healthy, and joyful New Year!*

*May the year ahead be filled with good times,
great memories, and best wishes for success in
the new year!*

CAPODANNO

Capodanno is the Italian word for New Year's Day, and it usually refers to both New Year's Eve (December 31) and January 1 celebrations in Italy.

“Capodanno” comes from Latin *caput anni*, meaning “head of the year”—the start of a new year.

For New Year's Eve (La Notte di Capodanno), families and friends gather for a long dinner late at night and people often stay up until midnight to celebrate together. At midnight fireworks are very common, people hug, toast, and say “Buon Anno!” (Happy New Year)!

Some traditional foods are believed to bring good luck, such as Lentils (*lenticchie*) which symbolize money and prosperity. Cotechino or zampone (types of pork sausage) which represents abundance, and grapes or sweets are also common to serve for a New Years celebration.

Wearing red underwear or clothing is a famous tradition and Italians believe that red symbolizes luck, love, and protection for the new year.

Many cities, like Rome, Milan, and Naples host free outdoor concerts with fireworks.

On January 1 (Capodanno Day) people usually rest, visit with family or go for a walk. It's a quiet day and a public holiday in Italy.

In some parts of Italy, there used to be a tradition of throwing old objects out of windows to symbolize letting go of the past—this is no longer practiced for safety reasons, but you might hear about it in stories.

Resolutions

New Year's and the Meaning Behind Resolutions

The New Year marks a moment of transition—one year ending and another beginning. Celebrated around the world on January 1, it's a time filled with reflection, hope, and the promise of fresh starts.

Across cultures, the New Year symbolizes renewal and possibility. It's a natural pause point, giving people the chance to look back on what they've experienced and think about what lies ahead. Many celebrations—fireworks, countdowns, special meals—are meant to mark this clean break between past and future.

Historically, New Year traditions go back thousands of years. The ancient Babylonians are often credited with creating one of the earliest New Year celebrations, where promises to the gods were made in hopes of good fortune—an early form of resolutions.

New Year's resolutions are personal goals or commitments people set for themselves at the start of the year. They often focus on improving health and well-being, learning new skills, strengthening relationships, and building better habits. At their core, resolutions represent a desire for self-improvement and growth.

Resolutions matter because they encourage reflection on the past year, help people clarify their values and priorities, provide motivation to make positive changes, and turn hope into intentional action.

Even if resolutions aren't kept perfectly, the act of setting them can increase self-awareness and inspire progress.

The New Year offers something powerful.. a psychological "reset." While change can happen at any time, January 1 feels like a shared beginning, making it easier to commit to new habits and outlooks.

Ultimately, New Year's and its resolutions are less about perfection and more about intention—choosing to move forward with purpose, optimism, and the belief that growth is always possible.

So, what's your New Year's Resolution?

La Befana: Italy's Beloved Epiphany Tradition

As the holiday season draws to a close in Italy, one final magical figure makes her appearance: **La Befana**. Celebrated on **January 6**, the Feast of the Epiphany, La Befana is a cherished character from Italian folklore who brings gifts, sweets, and a sense of wonder to children across the country.



La Befana is often portrayed as an elderly woman—sometimes described as a friendly witch—who travels on a broomstick. Though her appearance may seem unusual, she is known for her kind heart and grandmotherly spirit, making her a comforting and familiar figure in Italian culture.

According to tradition, La Befana's story begins with the Three Wise Men on their journey to visit the newborn Jesus. They stopped to ask an old woman for directions and invited her to join them. She declined, but soon felt regret. Gathering gifts, she set out to find the Christ child. When she could not, she gave her gifts to other children instead, hoping one of them might be Jesus.

On the night of **January 5**, La Befana visits homes and fills children's stockings with sweets, candy, and small toys for well-behaved children or "Coal" (usually sweet, candy coal) for those who were a little mischievous. This tradition is similar to Santa Claus, but uniquely Italian in style and timing.

La Befana blends Christian beliefs with ancient pagan traditions, symbolizing the end of the old year and the arrival of new beginnings. An old Italian saying captures this perfectly:

"L'Epifania tutte le feste porta via" — "Epiphany takes all the holidays away."

Across Italy, Epiphany is marked with festivals, markets, and parades. One of the most famous celebrations takes place in Piazza Navona in Rome, where visitors can enjoy sweets, toys, and performers dressed as La Befana.

La Befana remains a reminder that the holiday spirit doesn't end with December—it simply arrives on a broomstick a little later.

BUONA BEFANA!

Celebrating Festa del Tricolore January 7th

Every year on January 7, Italy celebrates Italian Tricolour Day, known as **Festa del Tricolore**. This special day honors one of the nation's most powerful symbols: the Italian flag, with its iconic green, white, and red stripes.

Italian Tricolour Day commemorates January 7, 1797, when the tricolour flag was officially adopted for the first time by the Cispadane Republic in Reggio Emilia. This historic moment marked the birth of the flag that would later become the emblem of a unified Italy.

The three colors of the Italian flag are rich in symbolism and meaning: **Green** represents hope, renewal, and the natural landscapes of Italy. **White** symbolizes purity, faith, and peace. **Red** stands for the blood and sacrifice of martyrs who fought for freedom and independence. Together, these colors reflect the ideals and struggles that shaped the Italian nation.

During the **Risorgimento**, the 19th-century movement that led to Italy's unification in 1861, the tricolore became a powerful symbol of unity and resistance. It represented the dream of bringing together Italy's many regions, cultures, and traditions into one nation.

As Giuseppe Garibaldi, one of the key figures of Italian unification, famously said:

“The tricolour is the flag of a free people.”

Today, the flag continues to represent national pride, shared history, and civic values. It is proudly displayed on public buildings, schools, and homes across the country.

Official ceremonies take place in Reggio Emilia, the birthplace of the tricolour. Schools organize educational activities focused on Italian history and citizenship. The Italian flag is raised and honored across the nation.

January 7 is also the day in 1610 when Galileo Galilei, one of Italy's greatest scientists, discovered Jupiter's four largest moons—making it a date that celebrates both Italian identity and Italian innovation. (read that story next!)

Italian Tricolour Day is a moment to pause and appreciate the beauty, history, and meaning behind the flag that unites Italy—past, present, and future.



Galileo Galilei

and the Telescope that Changed the World

January holds a special place in the history of science, thanks to the work of Galileo Galilei, one of Italy's most famous inventors and scientists. Best known for his improvements to the telescope, Galileo used this instrument to make discoveries that transformed humanity's understanding of the universe.

Although Galileo did not invent the very first telescope, he was the first to significantly improve its design and use it for scientific observation. In 1609, after hearing about a simple Dutch "spyglass," Galileo redesigned the instrument using higher-quality lenses and precise calculations. His version could magnify objects up to 20–30 times, far surpassing earlier models.

This improved telescope allowed Galileo to observe the sky in ways no one had before. In January 1610, he made one of his most important discoveries: four moons orbiting Jupiter. This observation challenged the long-held belief that everything in the universe revolved around Earth. It provided strong evidence that celestial bodies could orbit something other than our planet.

Galileo's telescope also revealed mountains and craters on the Moon, showing that it was not a smooth, perfect sphere as previously believed. He observed the phases of Venus, which supported the idea that planets orbit the Sun, and discovered that the Milky Way was made up of countless individual stars rather than a cloudy band of light.

These discoveries had a profound impact. They supported the heliocentric model of the solar system and helped lay the foundation for modern astronomy. More importantly, Galileo's work changed how science itself was practiced—emphasizing observation, measurement, and evidence over tradition and assumption.

In addition to the telescope, Galileo also designed other scientific instruments, including the geometric and military compass, further strengthening his reputation as both a scientist and an inventor.

Galileo Galilei passed away in January 1642, but his legacy continues to shape science today. His improved telescope opened the door to a new way of seeing the universe—and reminded the world that curiosity and innovation can change everything.

FUN FACT! Galileo named Jupiter's four largest moons the "Medicean Stars" to honor the powerful Medici family of Italy. This helped him gain their support—and even earned him a prestigious position as court scientist!

Festa di Sant'Antonio Abate

A Winter Tradition Rooted in Community

Every year on **January 17**, many towns across Italy—especially in **central and southern regions**—celebrate the **Festa di Sant'Antonio Abate**, a deeply rooted tradition that honors rural life, animals, and community spirit. While the scale of the celebration varies from place to place, it remains particularly meaningful in small towns and agricultural areas.



Sant'Antonio Abate was a Christian monk who lived between the 3rd and 4th centuries. He is widely known as the **protector of animals, farmers, and rural life**, and is often depicted with a pig, which became his enduring symbol. For centuries, people have turned to Sant'Antonio Abate for protection over their livestock, pets, and livelihoods.

One of the most striking features of the celebration is the lighting of large **bonfires**, known as *falò*. These fires are usually lit in town squares or open fields and symbolize purification, protection, and the burning away of misfortune from the past year. The warmth and light of the flames bring people together during the cold days of winter and mark a hopeful transition toward the coming agricultural season.

Another important tradition is the **blessing of animals**. In many communities, residents bring their pets, farm animals, or even photographs of animals to be blessed by a priest. This ritual reflects the deep respect for animals and their role in daily life, especially in farming communities.

Religious processions are also common, with statues of Sant'Antonio Abate carried through the streets accompanied by prayers and music. These processions strengthen the sense of shared identity and tradition within the town.

The celebration often extends beyond religious observances to include food, music, and local culture. Towns may host fairs or festivals featuring traditional foods such as bread, roasted chestnuts, and regional specialties. Folk music and dancing add to the festive atmosphere, turning the day into a joyful community gathering.

At its heart, the Festa di Sant'Antonio Abate is a celebration of respect for nature and animals, the rhythms of the agricultural calendar, and the importance of community bonds. Even today, this centuries-old tradition continues to connect people to their land, their history, and one another.



AMERICA LODGE #2245



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Save the Date

FEBRUARY 1, 2026

Contact Chairperson Karen Mollish (516)
852-2823 or ckcmm7091@aol.com with
questions or to reserve your tickets!



Thank You!

This year's Annual Christmas Party was another wonderful success, with 98 members, family, and friends in attendance. We were honored to host NY State OSDIA President Arthur Spera and State First lady Joanne Spera, along with members of OSDIA sister lodges. It was truly our pleasure to chair this celebration, and Debra Goldmann and I extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who attended and helped make the evening so special.

Many people contributed to the success of this event - from our members who generously donated items to the raffle table, to those who assisted with the planning, setup, and cleanup. Mostly, the LaVeglia family and Marie Geneva Frank. Your time, effort, and generosity did not go unnoticed and are greatly appreciated.

We would also like to thank our local restaurants and businesses for their generous donations of gift cards and certificates. If you were one of the lucky members who won, please remember to thank the business for their support!

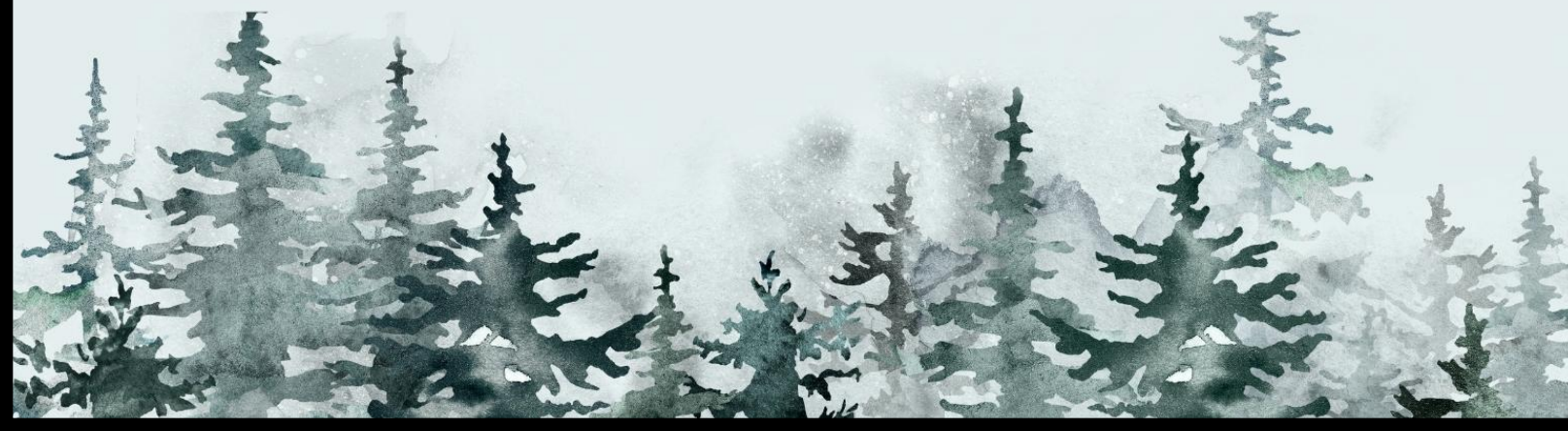
A special thank you to Romeo's Pizzeria for preparing our delicious dinner and for donating a \$100 gift certificate to their restaurant.

Overall, the event was a tremendous success. We raised \$340.00 for our Scholarship Fund, and with raffle and 50/50 ticket sales, our combined profit for the day totaled \$3,382.00.

Events like this remind us of the strength of our lodge and the sense of fellowship that brings us together. Thank you all for your continued support, and we look forward to celebrating many more occasions together. A sincere thank you to President Joe Armocida, who once again placed his trust and confidence in me by allowing me to Chair this event. And thank you to Anthony Spano for giving us all the treat of his special magic entertainment!

Lastly, it was truly a pleasure to have Debra Goldman co-chair this event, and our success was largely due to her generosity, thoughtful input, dedication, and tireless efforts—thank you, my friend.

Maria Passalacqua
Christmas Party Chair



AMERICA LODGE DECEMBER GENERAL MEETING



AMERICA LODGE DECEMBER GENERAL MEETING



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America Lodge Book Club "Il Dolce Libro" is hosting a movie night event at Regal Cinemas, Lynbrook on February 12th, at 7:50 pm. Group seats are \$10.00 per person. See Mary Sperazza for details.



SAVE THE DATE
APRIL 18, 2026



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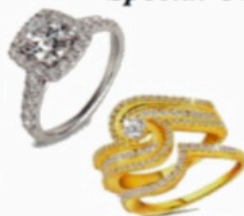
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