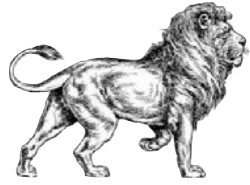


THE LION'S ROAR



AMERICA LODGE #2245

“AMERICA LODGE, WHERE FRIENDS BECOME FAMILY”



VFW Hall
68 Lincoln Road
Franklin Square, NY 11010

LIBERTY EQUALITY **FRATERNITY**

Volume 55
Issue 6
June 2026

Hello
JUNE

A M E R I C A L O D G E # 2 2 4 5

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Nancie Caracciolo, Mary Versaci, Dennis Lyons, Linda Camolli, Nicole Armocida. Alternates: Cindy Lampasi, Mary Rose O'Hara, Mary Sperrazza.

THE LION'S ROAR NEWSLETTER

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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.



SUMMER



This month we celebrate **Fathers and Founders**. When we joined this great fraternal organization, you often heard “you get out of it what you put into it.” Truer words were never spoken. For some of us, it’s sharing a hobby or idea which leads to a new club or committee. For others it’s volunteering to join the Council and help our Lodge grow and embrace the future. While others simply enjoy attending events, coming to meetings and being together. Many come to realize the truth in our motto: “*America Lodge: where friends become family.*”

The first Sons of Italy Lodge was founded 121 years ago on June 22, 1905 by six men. Dr. Vincenzo Sellaro was elected the first president. Today, the OSDIA has nearly 400 lodges throughout the U.S. and Italy, and more than 100,000 members and family affiliates. There is something here for everyone.

I want to thank the Per Sempre Lodge, where I serve as District Deputy, for their gracious recognition and honor at their annual Frank Alberti Memorial Golf Outing. This incredible occasion was wonderfully attended by so many of our brothers and sisters including our amazing America Lodge members. I was touched by everyone’s presence; what a fantastic occasion. It demonstrates the powerful significance of our membership and most importantly, you get out of it what you put into it.

As I am writing this article we are preparing for a membership drive on May 30th. We will be part of the Franklin Square Chamber of Commerce Spring Fair being held at Rath Park. In the past we have been successful at this event, bringing in new members and promoting the Order and America Lodge. At our May meeting we got closer to our goal of 250 members by initiating five new members. Our family keeps growing! To borrow, and slightly change that famous line from Jaws, which opened June 20, 1975, I think we’re going to need a bigger... table. Hey, we’re Italian.

We are wrapping up our raffle ticket sales with a drawing on June 17th at our General meeting. This year 25% of the funds raised will be donated to the newest NY OSDIA charity, the Marty Lyons Foundation. It is not too late to get tickets, see the flyer [here](#) for more information.

I am looking forward to our many upcoming events, starting with our fishing trip in July and our picnic in September. Tickets for the fishing trip are on sale now. See our event flyers in this newsletter! Believe it or not we have already started work on our annual Christmas party!

Welcome summer, our gardens have been waiting for you!

I hope to see you at our next meeting, if not before.

Fraternally,
Joe



WELCOME TO YOUR JUNE NEWSLETTER



When I hear “June,” I think of transition. The point where the year starts to feel fully alive instead of just underway. A few things come to mind right away: long evenings filled with the first real light of summer, school ending and graduations, thunderstorms rolling in after hot afternoons, fresh strawberries and farmers markets, and gardens finally beginning to flourish. June also brings weddings, road trips, beach days, and open windows at night, just to name a few.

On June 2nd, Italy celebrates *Festa della Repubblica*, one of their most important national holidays. Our informative article explores the history and significance of this special celebration.

Here in the U.S., we celebrate *Father’s Day on June 21st*. Check out our article for ideas on celebrating Dad with an *Italian-style outdoor dinner* perfect for the start of summer.

Also on the 21st, we celebrate the summer solstice, the longest day of the year in the Northern Hemisphere. Our article gives some summertime suggestions on how to make the most of this beautiful time of year!

And since June is the month when our Founder, Dr. Vincenzo Sellaro, organized the Order Sons and Daughters of Italy in America®, we’ve reprinted our article “*In the Beginning*” and more about Vincenzo Sellaro, his story and the vision behind the creation of OSDIA.

Since summer is just around the corner, we’re anticipating our summer bounty of vegetables with a seasonal recipe. Thank you to our 1st Vice President Maria Passalacqua for this delicious contribution to our newsletter!

Don’t forget, I am excited to see all the summer vegetables that our members have growing in their gardens! See the flyer in this newsletter for details on sending me your garden photos!

Lastly, time is running out to reserve your spot for our upcoming Annual Fishing trip! Please contact Michael Avallone and see all the event flyers starting on page 17. We have much to look forward to with our Fishing, Picnic and Dinner Dance events!

Enjoy your Newsletter!
Donna


HAPPY FATHER’S DAY!!

Happy heavenly Father’s Day to our
dearly departed fathers. 

Membership Corner

At our May 20th General Meeting, we installed 5 new members! Please welcome **Sandra D'Agostino, Anna Maola, April DeCiantis, Lisa Zupcich, and Patricia Vetter** to our America Lodge family!



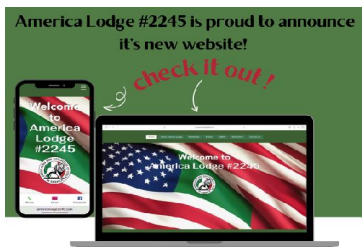
America Lodge #2245 is celebrating our Country's 250th birthday with a charge to our members....**Let's grow America Lodge #2245 to 250 members!** Honoring 250 years of the United States with Italian heart, rich heritage, and 250 proud members leading the celebration 
From tradition to togetherness, we're bringing the spirit of Italy to this historic American milestone—one unforgettable celebration at a time!



Let's keep the momentum going by spreading the word about America Lodge! Talk to your family, friends, neighbors, and co-workers about joining our *famiglia*—new members are the heartbeat of a vibrant and thriving Lodge. If you know someone who may be interested, visit our website www.americallodge2245.com/Membership for a membership application!

And if you're feeling especially neighborly, we'd love for you to bring a friend to our June 17th General meeting—we can't wait to welcome them!


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!



WWW.americallodge2245.COM



www.americallodge2245.com

 Find us on
Facebook
America Lodge #2245

UPCOMING EVENTS

- June 2, America Lodge Council Meeting, 7:00 pm. Franklin Square Library.
- June 3, Il Dolce Libro/Bocce Crossover event for Book Club members! See flyer, pg. 18.
- June 17, America Lodge General Membership meeting. 7:30 pm, Franklin Sq. VFW.
- June 21, Summer Solstice! See our article on pg. 10! **WELCOME SUMMER!!**
- June 25–28 NYS OSDIA Annual Convention, Albany, NY. America Lodge Delegates attend.
- July 15 America Lodge General Meeting/BBQ to celebrate America's 250th! **AMERICA LODGE MEMBERS ONLY!**
- July 25 America Lodge Annual Fishing Trip. See flyer pg. 17. **GET YOUR TICKETS NOW!!!**
- September 19 America Lodge Annual Picnic in the Park. See flyer pg. 17. **SAVE THE DATE!**
- October 18 America Lodge Annual Anniversary Dinner Dance. See flyer pg. 17. **SAVE THE DATE!**

visit <https://www.americallodge2245.com/events> for Lodge events and details!

America Lodge Mah Jongg Dates

- June 2, 16, 23
- July 14, 21, 28
- August 4, 18, 25

www.americallodge2245.com

America Lodge Bocce

Thursday's at Rath
Park 5:00 pm!

Buon Compleanno
HAPPY BIRTHDAY

TO OUR JUNE "GIUGNO" CELEBRANTS!

Joseph Benincasa, Michael Brogna, Antonia
Croce, Katherine Falco, Rosalind Kelly,
Antonio Liberatoscioli, Anne Marascia,
Joann Bambino Marzocchi, John Paul Moryl,
Anthony Mossa, Sally Nicoletti, Victoria
Palumbo, Alfred Pittella, Patricia Vetter,
Dennis Walsh.

Good and Welfare



I would like to announce two engagements of my Granddaughters in May. My son, Ted and wife Julie's daughter, Emily Koziarz, became engaged to William Tkacs. And my son John and his wife's daughter, Angela Koziarz, became engaged to Daniel Iavarone. Congratulations to all!

~Annette Koziarz

Congratulations to Olivia Giordano, daughter of Past President Vincent Giordano, who received a *Programma Ponte* Scholarship Award. Olivia will travel to Italy next summer to study and experience the Italian language and culture firsthand.



Condolences and deepest sympathy to Mary Sperrazza and her family on the loss of her mother, Rosella. Our thoughts and prayers are with you and your family, Mary.

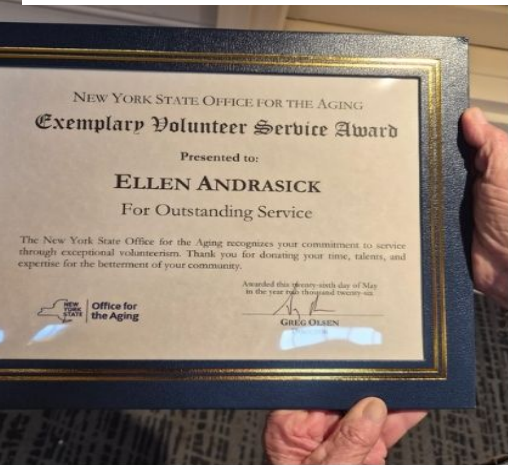


*With
Deepest
Sympathy*

America Lodge President, Joe Armocida, honored at the Per Sempre Golf outing.



America Lodge Sister, Ellen Andrasick, honored with a NY Exemplary Volunteer Service Award.



America Lodge members come out in support of Memorial Day.



AMERICA LODGE BOCCE CLUB!



Membership Information
Join America Lodge 2245
Order Sons of Italy In
America



AMERICA LODGE
at the
FRANKLIN SQUARE
CHAMBER of COMMERCE
SPRING FAIR!



by Mark Johnson

It's hard to believe that it's been over 50 years since *Jaws* debuted on the silver screen. As we now know, *Jaws* defined what it is to be a summer blockbuster. It set the bar. I can remember the lines at the movie theater stretching for miles, as everyone awaited hearing that unforgettable line: "Just when you thought it was safe to go back in the water ..."

Was it just me or did you think the fictional town of *Amity Island* was actually on Long Island?

Did you know *Jaws* was originally planned for a Christmas 1974 release? That would have changed everything! Before *Jaws*, the only films presented to the public during the summer were usually those of lesser quality. *Jaws* opened June 20, 1975 simultaneously in no less than 409 American theaters. In addition to that, the film premiered only after an expensive, elaborate and intensive marketing campaign which would later become the "ABCs" for blockbusters.

Once released, *Jaws* became the first film in history to earn \$100 million at the domestic box office. And it might be the first movie in history where the star of the film doesn't appear on screen until one hour and 21 minutes into the two-hour movie. And who can forget that musical motif composed by John Williams, those simple, relentless, two-notes alternating between *E* and *F* that mimics a heartbeat of dread and serves as an auditory stand-in for the shark's impending attack. The theme begins slowly and quietly, representing the shark lurking out of sight. As the predator closes in, the music accelerates in tempo, and the volume builds. Yikes!

The iconic decision to hide the shark for the majority of the film wasn't initially an artistic choice. The three 25-foot, 1.2-ton mechanical sharks frequently malfunctioned in the saltwater, forcing the crew to creatively rely on point-of-view shots and floating yellow barrels.

The same summer *Jaws* came out, the United States recorded a visible decrease in the number of people enjoying themselves on American beaches. For me, the most interesting fact is that the movie's most famously unforgettable line, "You're gonna need a bigger boat," was completely improvised on the day of shooting.

Relax, enjoy the beach and water, after all - sharks are only fish. Happy Summer!



Celebrating the Summer Solstice

Hello, June!

As the days grow longer and the sunshine lingers a little later each evening, June invites us to slow down, step outside, and welcome the official start of summer. This month brings the **Summer Solstice** — the longest day of the year and a celebration of light, warmth, and new beginnings.

What Is the Summer Solstice? - The Summer Solstice occurs when Earth's North Pole tilts closest to the Sun, giving us the most daylight of the entire year. In 2026, the solstice falls on **June 21** and marks the astronomical beginning of summer in the Northern Hemisphere.

The word *solstice* comes from the Latin words **sol** ("sun") and **sistere** ("to stand still"), because the Sun appears to pause in the sky before reversing its seasonal path.











A Look Back Through History- For thousands of years, people around the world have celebrated the Summer Solstice as a time of abundance, renewal, and connection to nature.

Ancient civilizations carefully tracked the movement of the Sun and built monuments aligned with the solstice sunrise. One of the most famous is Stonehenge, where crowds still gather each year to watch the dawn break over the ancient stones.

Traditional midsummer celebrations were especially important in Northern Europe, where long winters made the arrival of summer something truly worth celebrating. Festivals often included bonfires, dancing, flower crowns, music, and feasts to honor the season's light and fertility.

Today, many people continue solstice traditions by spending time outdoors, hosting gatherings, practicing mindfulness, or simply enjoying the extra daylight with family and friends.

Seasonal Ideas for June - Here are a few simple ways to celebrate the start of summer this month:

-  Host a backyard picnic or barbecue
-  Visit a local farmers market
-  Take an evening walk during golden hour
-  Start a summer reading list
-  Enjoy seasonal fruits like strawberries and cherries
-  Plant herbs or summer flowers
-  Gather around a bonfire or fire pit with friends
-  Create the perfect summer playlist
-  Plan a weekend day trip or outdoor adventure
-  Spend a few quiet moments appreciating the longer daylight

"Live in the sunshine. Swim in the sea. Drink in the wild air."
— **Ralph Waldo Emerson**

The Summer Solstice reminds us to embrace the warmth, energy, and possibility that summer brings. Whether you're traveling, gardening, relaxing outdoors, or making memories with loved ones, we hope your June is filled with sunshine and joy.

Happy Summer!

SOURCE: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Summer_solstice

AN ITALIAN-STYLE FATHER'S DAY

<https://fonsinirestaurantgroup.com/blog/fathers-day-history-and-traditions-in-italy>

A Backyard Dinner Built Around Family

In the United States, Father's Day often arrives with familiar rituals: golf outings, neckties, restaurant reservations, and gift cards tucked into greeting cards. But there's another way to celebrate — one inspired by the rhythms of summer evenings in Italy, where the real centerpiece is rarely the gift itself. It's the table.

Italian Father's Day is traditionally celebrated on March 19, the feast day of Saint Joseph. The holiday has deep roots in family, food, gratitude, and gathering together. While Americans celebrate in June, borrowing some of that Italian spirit creates the perfect excuse for a relaxed backyard evening centered on connection instead of presentation.

And honestly, summer may be the ideal season for it. Picture a long table under string lights. Bowls of olives and warm bread passed hand to hand. Children darting through the yard while adults linger over wine and stories long after dinner should technically be over. No elaborate production. No rushed schedule. Just a celebration built around being together.

The Atmosphere Matters More Than Perfection. An Italian-style Father's Day doesn't require a sprawling vineyard or a chef-level menu. In fact, the charm comes from simplicity. A white tablecloth. Rosemary or basil in mason jars. Candles in old wine bottles. A playlist drifting quietly through the background featuring artists like Dean Martin or Andrea Bocelli. Family photos scattered around the table, especially older photos of fathers and grandfathers, add warmth and history to the evening. The goal isn't to impress people. It's to make them want to stay.

Build the Evening Around Shared Food. The Italian approach to entertaining is wonderfully unhurried. Meals unfold in stages, giving people time to talk, laugh, refill glasses, and return for another piece of bread they definitely claimed they didn't have room for.

Start with an aperitivo hour: olives, marinated vegetables, prosciutto and melon, focaccia, sparkling drinks or spritzes.

Then move into a family-style dinner: grilled Italian sausages with peppers and onions, rosemary chicken, steak sliced for sharing, pasta salad with mozzarella and basil, grilled vegetables, big bowls of salad dressed simply with olive oil and lemon. Nothing plated individually. Everything passed around the table. That's part of the point.

A Sweet Nod to Italian Father's Day Tradition. For dessert, consider serving Zeppole di San Giuseppe — the cream-filled pastries traditionally made for Italian Father's Day celebrations in March. Even in June, they make a meaningful connection to the holiday's Italian roots. Cannoli, tiramisu, or an affogato bar also fit beautifully into the evening. And naturally, espresso should appear at some point before the night is over.

The Most Important Ingredient: Stories! What transforms the evening from a dinner party into a Father's Day celebration is a simple moment of reflection. Before dessert, pause for a toast and invite everyone to share one brief thought: "One thing Dad taught me..." "My favorite memory with him is..." "Something I appreciate more now that I'm older..."

The responses are often funny. Sometimes unexpectedly emotional. Always memorable. Because while food may bring everyone to the table, stories are what keep family traditions alive.

In the end, an Italian-style Father's Day isn't really about recreating Italy. It's about embracing a slower, warmer way of gathering — one where the evening stretches comfortably into the night, conversation matters more than schedules, and appreciation is expressed not only through gifts, but through presence itself.

Or, as they might say before raising a glass: "Alla famiglia." To family.



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flag_of_Italy

On June 2, Italians celebrate Festa della Repubblica, one of the country's most important national holidays. Similar to Independence Day in the United States, it marks the birth of modern Italy as a republic.

The holiday commemorates a historic referendum held on June 2, 1946, just after World War II. For the first time in Italian history, both men and women were allowed to vote in a national election. Italians were asked a simple but powerful question: should Italy remain a monarchy or become a republic?

More than 12 million Italians voted for a republic, ending the reign of the royal House of Savoy and beginning a new democratic era for the country.

Today, Festa della Repubblica is celebrated throughout Italy with ceremonies, concerts, and patriotic displays. The largest celebration takes place in Rome, where a grand military parade marches through the city near the Colosseum. One of the highlights is the flyover by the Italian Air Force's aerobatic team, whose planes leave trails of green, white, and red smoke across the sky — the colors of the Italian flag.

One of the most recognizable symbols of Festa della Repubblica is the Italian flag, known as il Tricolore. Its three vertical stripes — green, white, and red — have represented Italy since the late 1700s and became the official national flag when Italy became a republic in 1946. While there is no single official meaning for the colors, Italians often associate them with important features of their country:

- Green represents the rolling hills and countryside of Italy
- White symbolizes the snow-covered Alps
- Red recalls the blood shed in the wars for Italian independence and unification

Others interpret the colors more symbolically:

- Green for hope
- White for faith
- Red for charity or love

During Festa della Repubblica celebrations, the colors of the Tricolore appear everywhere, hanging from balconies, decorating city streets, and soaring across the sky in the green, white, and red trails left by the Italian Air Force.

Many Italians spend the holiday with family and friends, enjoying the beginning of summer with picnics, festivals, and outdoor gatherings. It is both a day of remembrance and a celebration of Italian unity, democracy, and national pride.

Did You Know?

- The referendum of 1946 was the first national vote in which Italian women participated.



- Italy's official constitution came into effect on January 1, 1948.

- Italians often simply call the holiday "Il Due Giugno" — "The Second of June."

Corpus Domini and Italy's Flower Carpet Traditions

During June, many towns across Italy celebrate **Corpus Domini**, a Catholic feast honoring the presence of Christ in the Eucharist. The holiday is marked by religious processions, church bells, music, and one of Italy's most stunning traditions: the Infiorata, or flower carpet festival. The word Infiorata comes from the Italian word fiore, meaning "flower."

For the Infiorata, entire streets are transformed into elaborate works of art made completely from flower petals, leaves, seeds, and natural materials. Volunteers spend all night carefully arranging colorful designs that often depict religious scenes, geometric patterns, or famous works of art.



Some of the most famous Infiorata celebrations take place in the towns of Spello in Umbria and Genzano near Rome. In Spello, artists and families begin working late in the evening, and by sunrise the narrow stone streets are covered in breathtaking floral mosaics stretching for blocks.

Artists creating the beautiful flower carpets for Corpus Domini use thousands, and sometimes millions, of flower petals gathered from fields and gardens across Italy. Common flowers include carnations (garofani), roses (rose), daisies (margherite), geraniums (gerani), wild broom flowers (ginestra), lavender (lavanda), poppies (papaveri), and sunflowers (girasoli). To create different colors and textures, artists may also use leaves, seeds, coffee grounds, wood shavings, herbs and grasses.

In many towns, families and volunteers begin separating petals by color days before the festival begins. Children often help prepare baskets of petals while artists sketch detailed designs on the streets before filling them in overnight. By morning, the streets have become temporary floral masterpieces filled with color and fragrance.

The tradition dates back centuries and combines faith, artistry, and community spirit. Although the designs are temporary and may last only a single day, thousands of visitors travel to see them each year.

Corpus Domini celebrations are a beautiful example of how Italian traditions blend religion, art, and local pride into unforgettable community events.

<https://www.gonomad.com/77318-spello-italy-infiorata-covers-streets-flowers>

Donna,

Welcome home!

I was reading through the May Newsletter for the second time. As always, I find something that I missed. Our book club is reading *Eternal*. In it, one of the main characters aspires to be a writer and she has an Adriano Olivetti typewriter! Thanks to you, I knew the history!

The “May in Italy” article was wonderful. Reading about *passeggiata* and remembering the walks I have taken with my family through the streets of Palermo makes me want to get out and walk!

Waiting for all the summer fruits and vegetables makes my mouth water. I’m sharing a great summer recipe which is an alternate way of using fennel. In Sicily, we have been eating this type of salad forever! Give it a try!

~Maria Passalacqua

SICILIAN FENNEL AND OLIVE SALAD WITH OR WITHOUT ANCHOVIES

Ingredients:

- 1 Medium Fennel bulb.
- 1 Tablespoon extra virgin olive oil, plus extra for drizzling.
- 2 teaspoons red wine vinegar.
- 1/2 teaspoon dried oregano.
- 1/4 teaspoon honey.
- 2 large oranges.
- 1/3 cup black olives or cracked Sicilian green olives.
- 1 oz. Anchovies packed in oil. (Optional)
- 1 handful of fresh mint leaves, torn.
- Salt to taste.

BUON APPETITO!

Directions:

1. Slice off the hard base of the Fennel, slice the rest of the bulb into thin slices.
2. In your serving bowl, whisk together the olive oil, vinegar, dried oregano, honey, salt.
3. Add the Fennel and toss.
4. Slice the oranges and make sure to catch the juice, then add the olives, anchovies (if using) and the torn mint.
5. Toss everything together, and let stand for 15 minutes to allow the flavors to meld.
6. Taste and add salt or more vinegar if needed.





In the Beginning...



These first three words from the bible help us understand creation. Everything has a beginning and for the Sons of Italy it happened when a pharmacist, attorney, sculptor, two barbers and a doctor came together. Each were from different regions of Italy but that didn't matter because,


“we are first and foremost Italians.” “The majority of us have come to these shores as the poorest of all Italians, and the least educated of most of Europe...we are also the most courageous for having made the decision to come here...not to find a new life, but to earn a better one.”

In the beginning we gathered to, “become a very important part of American history.” And this was to be accomplished through education. “We must...insist that our children receive the best and highest education possible.” “One of our most important objectives should be to reclaim the rest of our family left behind and...to keep in mind that our presence in this great country, who has received so many of us, we must enhance its greatness at all times.


The first Sons of Italy Lodge founded June 22, 1905, was Lodge #1, was named after Mario Rapisardi an Italian poet and supporter of Risorgimento (Italy's unification). Rapisardi was a professor of literature at the University of Catania where he wrote philosophical and historical narrative poems which reconciled science and religion. He felt his duty was to express things as they are and represent reality as he sees and feels it, with complete sincerity, with heat and with the color of his soul. “*Love truth more than glory, more than peace, more than life. Make it your sword and your shield.*” Mario Rapisardi died seven years after the Sons of Italy in America Lodge was founded bearing his name. His funeral attracted over 150,000 people.

Today our missions include encouraging the study of Italian language and culture in American schools and universities; preserving Italian American traditions, culture, history, and heritage; and promoting closer cultural relations between the United States and Italy.

I guess we could say the Sons and Daughters of Italy in America has come full circle where we now have a Chapter in Palermo, Lodge 3009, which is named after the founder of the Sons of Italy, Vincenzo Sellaro. Dr. Sellaro's vision for Italians to become a very important part of American history has been exceeded. We continue his call to promote education where OSDIA members have given **tens of millions of dollars** to educational programs, disaster relief, cultural advancement, and medical research. Dr. Sellaro knew the importance of family and wanted everyone to be together. The OSDIA is one big Italian family who gather and celebrate everything it means to be Italian. Lastly, he wanted us to enhance the greatness of America and as members of the Sons and Daughters of Italy in America, we exemplify *the very best of what it is to be Italian American*. Thank you, Dr. Sellaro, for sharing your vision and compassion, and allowing us to continue your worthy mission.



DR. VINCENZO SELLARO: THE VISIONARY BEHIND THE ORDER SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF ITALY IN AMERICA



June is a special month for Italian Americans because it marks the founding of the Order Sons and Daughters of Italy in America (OSDIA), the nation's oldest and largest organization dedicated to preserving Italian heritage and supporting Italian-American communities.

At the heart of this historic organization was one remarkable immigrant physician: Vincenzo Sellaro.



Born on April 24, 1868, in the Sicilian town of Polizzi Generosa, Sellaro earned his medical degree from the University of Naples Federico II in 1895. Like millions of Italians seeking opportunity at the turn of the twentieth century, he immigrated to the United States in 1897 and settled in New York City.

What he found in America was both hopeful and heartbreaking.

Italian immigrants often faced poverty, discrimination, unsafe working conditions, and language barriers. Many could not communicate with doctors, government officials, or employers. As a physician treating immigrant families in New York's Little Italy, Dr. Sellaro witnessed these struggles firsthand. In hospitals, misunderstandings between Italian-speaking patients and English-speaking medical staff sometimes became life-threatening.

Rather than simply observing the problem, Sellaro took action.

He organized bilingual Italian-speaking physicians and helped establish the Columbus Italian Hospital in New York, where immigrants could receive care in their own language. This was groundbreaking at a time when many immigrants felt isolated and unwelcome in American institutions.

But Sellaro believed Italian immigrants needed more than medical care—they needed unity, dignity, and a support system.

So on June 22, 1905, at his office and residence on Grand Street in New York's Little Italy, Dr. Sellaro and five fellow immigrants founded what was originally called *L'Ordine Figli d'Italia in America* ("The Order Sons of Italy in America"). A week later, Sellaro was elected the organization's first national president.

The organization's mission was ambitious and deeply compassionate. It helped Italian immigrants learn English, become American citizens, obtain health and death benefits, find educational opportunities, and successfully adapt to life in the United States while preserving pride in their Italian heritage.

Within only a few years, lodges had spread throughout New York and neighboring states. By 1911, the organization even stationed representatives at Ellis Island to assist newly arriving Italian immigrants.

One especially interesting aspect of Sellaro's legacy was his belief that Italian Americans could be proudly Italian and proudly American at the same time. He encouraged assimilation into American society while also preserving Italian language, traditions, family values, and culture. That balance remains one of the defining characteristics of OSDIA today.

Dr. Sellaro's humanitarian efforts earned widespread respect. In 1928, New York Governor Alfred E. Smith presented him with the Key to the City of New York in recognition of his medical and social contributions to immigrant communities.

Sellaro passed away in 1932 at age 64, but his influence continues more than a century later. The organization he founded has grown into a nationwide network dedicated to scholarships, charitable work, anti-defamation efforts, Italian cultural preservation, and community service.

Today, when Italian Americans gather for festivals, scholarship dinners, parades, cultural events, and lodge meetings, they continue the work begun by a Sicilian immigrant doctor who believed that helping one another was the path to success.


Dr. Vincenzo Sellaro did more than found an organization—he helped build a community and a lasting Italian-American identity.

<https://nysosdia.org/about-us>

<https://osiaca.org/about-us>

<https://osiamd.org/history>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vincenzo_Sellaro



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Save the Date

Sunday, October 18th, 2026
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Contact Karen Mollish
Annual Dinner Dance Chairperson
(516) 852-2823

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Your photos will be added to an upcoming Newsletter!

IL DOLCE LIBRO / BOCCE CROSSOVER EVENT

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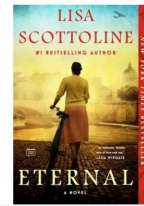
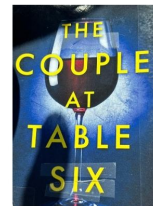
Our next book club meeting is a bocce crossover!!!

Wednesday June 3 (rain date June 4)
Rath Park picnic area at 6 pm to play some cornhole, bocce and discuss our 2 next books which is a two-fer!

We are doing a "trash to treasure" read!
Our "trashy" book is **THE COUPLE AT TABLE 6** by Deirdre Whalen and our "treasure" book is **ETERNAL** by Lisa Scottoline.

This event is \$5 p/p and we will have an Italian/American hero and drinks.

CONTACT MARY SPERRAZZA
(516) 993-8453
TO JOIN THE BOOK CLUB AND ENJOY THIS EVENT!



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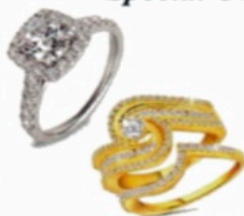


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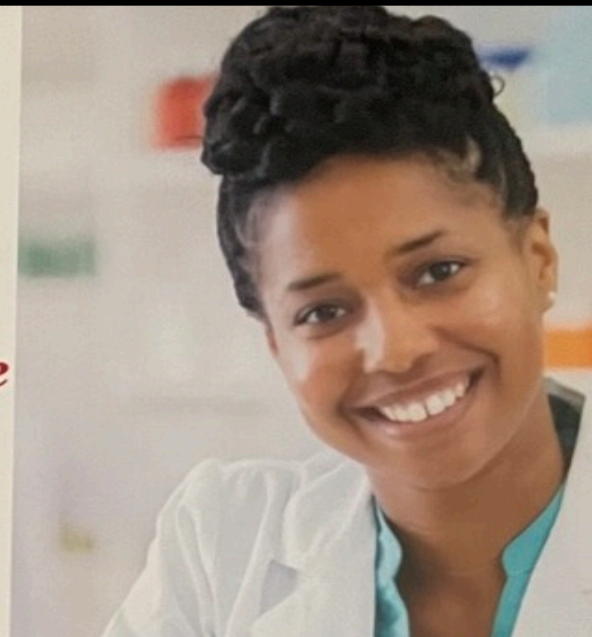
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