

## CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE 11/4/13

Greetings, My Brothers and sisters of OSIA

This past quarter was quite busy with a wide range of activities that kept us at a heady pace. A committee headed by Board member Jean Gagliardo, who literally investigated scores of storage facilities by phone, took the time to personally investigate a few of these storage sites in the Farmingdale, Long Island area. Board member Leo Cimini and I joined her in the quest, and we will make a recommendation to the Board to select a new site to store our positive image materials, which will be more centrally located for members of the Board and save us lots of money. Thank you Jean and Leo!

As stated in previous reports to you, I have been traveling around the districts and meeting with presidents and liaisons to truly make CSJ a statewide organization. I have attended meetings in Districts 2, 3, and 4. We should all be so proud of our leadership and liaisons in these districts! Chairpersons Lee Cerullo (2) and Tony Corsello (3), and District 4 have prepared agendas, and liaisons are very responsive and articulate regarding CSJ matters! There are no shrinking violets here! They are passionate and suggestive as far as what should be done. I really enjoyed myself at their meetings, and I cannot wait to visit the other districts too. At the last plenary session of the Order I made contact with District Chairpersons Susan Alicea (5) and Joe DiCarlo (6) and discussed with them a future visit to their districts very soon. Kudos to all and keep up the passion! Strong liaisons at the grass roots will make CSJ prominent in our local lodges and communities.

At each of these meetings I orient our liaisons by presenting them with guidelines and responsibilities to follow to accomplish their tasks effectively and to make a worthy impact. CSJ pins were also distributed, and liaisons were encouraged to wear them to demonstrate their pride and to stimulate conversation with whomever they meet. Chairpersons and liaisons have communicated with me already over the quarter regarding paths and plans to follow as far as CSJ is concerned and have requested positive image materials for local projects. The bond between top management and grass roots liaisons is now simmering!

We have also taken the time to update a few matters. Thanks to the efforts of our District 3 Chairman Tony Corsello we have updated and printed our new CSJ brochure. We have dropped off some at the Grand lodge office, and we have many at our Freeport storage facility. Anyone who needs a copy please feel free to contact your liaison, District Chairperson, or an Executive Board member. Thanks to the supreme diligence and efforts of Board member Terry Tanzer we now have an updated website that is also linked to the Grand Lodge website. Investigate and take note of our complaint directory page for one can now register any derogatory or defamatory issue or event right on that page. We've already had someone from the public register a complaint about New York City mayoral candidate Bill DeBlasio's comments about Columbus Day, which I responded to. (See inset article)

Turning our sights in another direction, we spent money to further our causes. At the August National Convention in Philadelphia, Pa. our national delegates pledged \$2,000 to the National CSJ in the name of our own Immediate National CSJ Chairwoman Tina Haemmerle as she ended her term. Our Board wholeheartedly concurred and sent the money. Hopefully, this gift will boost the programs of the National CSJ. St. Clare's Elementary School in Staten Island needed more help in launching its Italian language program. In June thanks to the efforts of District 3 Chairman Tony Corsello and district

liaisons \$1,000 was sent to the school, and in September the Board matched the offer with another \$1,000. Good luck St. Clare! In fact, the principal of the school Jo Rossicone has requested that we join them in a program in November that will include the children, the parents, and us. Tony will head up that effort.

Continuing on the positive image track, on September 15<sup>th</sup> thanks to the efforts of Mona Splendore (2) and Board member Liz Rizzo CSJ set up a table on positive image materials at the Hofstra University Italian Festival in Uniondale, L.I. and much was taken. At our September meeting Board member Vinnie Marmorale informed us that his documentary on Saving the Jews in Italy During WW2 is now completed. We hope in the near future to share this memorable classic with the members of the Order! On October 8<sup>th</sup> Board members attended Italian Night sponsored by Nassau County Executive Ed Mangano who honored State President Joe and the Grand Lodge Foundation. October 17<sup>th</sup> was our banner event for the month. In honor of our Italian Culture and Heritage Month District 1 Chairman Charlie Lucie and I launched a Tribute to Italian-American War Veterans at the Sachem Public Library in Holbrook, L.I. An exhibit and film were shown about the Italian recipients of the Congressional Medal of Honor, but the highlight of the evening was the personal testimonials offered by ten local Italian-American war veterans regarding their service and war record. (See inset photo). Certificates of Appreciation are now being prepared to be sent to these vets. Thanks Charlie for all your help! It should also be noted that thanks to District 1 Deputy Janice Sabilia the same Medal of Honor exhibit was hung at the Smithtown Public Library. Thanks Janice!

A most memorable event for me this quarter was the invitation by Dr. Arthur Flug of the Holocaust Center of Queensborough Community College in Douglaston, Queens, to participate in a seminar with interns who are studying defamation and discrimination. They had previously met with law enforcement agencies regarding bias crimes, and my presentation was the premiere of non-profit organizations and how they address these subjects. I taught them the various dimensions of defamation and asked them to respond as to what solutions they would propose for their generation to address these problems. In a round-robin discussion they said that the best way was to re-educate young people about empathy for all ethnic and racial groups. That is, get young people to understand and feel what it is like to be in the shoes of another ethnic or racial group with these problems. This occasion worked so well that Dr. Flug wants me to return for another session.

While on the subject of defamation and discrimination, it should be noted that there have been new developments in the Wandering Dago food truck case. I finally received a letter from a Schenectady County legislator and former Schenectady Mayor, Karen Johnson. In a letter written on October 28<sup>th</sup> she stated that she turned the matter over to the legislature's attorneys to see how the legislature could be helpful. However, the lawsuit filed by the owners of the truck complicates the issue. She felt that attempting to withdraw the food permit now would leave the county on shaky ground, unless there was a direct health threat. She will follow the case and see if other areas of support could be available for us. Since the food truck also offered a "polack menu" I finally made contact with the Polish-American community in Floral Park, L.I. after much research. I want to thank President Tony Gallo of the Perry Como Lodge for providing me with contact information about the Polish American Congress. I spoke at

length with my counterpart Frank Milewski who is very interested in the issue and will do research to update himself. We intend to collaborate and share information.

Mille Grazie to all the brothers and sisters of our lodge base who contacted me about the Ally Bank TV ad! Ally Bank is an online bank that launched an ad about a prospective customer who had a Mafia father. Flashbacks regarding the father's criminal past were part of the ad. In an e-mail blast I contacted the Communications Chief of the company, an Italian-American woman, and told her that with a management position she holds she could have advised company executives about the negatives of such an ad. She and an executive responded that there was no intention to defame, they apologized, and dropped the ad a few days later. Keep up the vigilance!

The latest development is that the Greece School District outside Rochester is steadily eroding the Italian language program. The community is 30% Italian! A teacher of Italian contacted Jennifer Rube', the President of the Vincent Lombardi Lodge, who contacted me about the issue. I called the teacher and discussed at length the scope of the issue. The superintendent and the principals of the schools are not offering Level 1 Italian as the years go by due to budget constraints and right now Italian in this district is ranked second in enrollment behind Spanish. Whatever Level 1s that do exist will be phased out and as Level 2 and 3 students graduate there will be no Level 1s to replace them! In short, over time the program will die! Jennifer, the teacher, and residents are organizing teachers and taxpayers to attend a November 12<sup>th</sup> school board meeting to protest. I have placed a call to a school board member of the district who was a graduate who took five years of Italian and is wholeheartedly against the district action. I will be advising him to organize the other Board members. I have already advised Jennifer and the teacher on what they have to do, and I will contact the residents' representative on what they have to do. All are to keep me posted about the organizing and the results of the board meeting. I will write an e-mail blast to the superintendent before the board meeting and advise her to drop the action. Hopefully, through all of this hullabaloo we will achieve a desirable result. We'll keep you posted.

As one can see, the functions of CSJ are literally never-ending, but we forge on. SEMPRE AVANTI!

Fraternally,  
Lou