



# JUSTICE

Giustizia



The Publication of THE COMMISSION FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

“FIGHTING BIAS, BUILDING PRIDE”

NYS CSJ

In Forefront  
In Fighting Discrimination

Louis Gallo

Appointed CSJ Chairman  
by State President Rondinelli

## Offensive Political Ad Removed from TV

### PRESIDENT RONDINELLI AND CSJ FORCE AD DROP

Thanks to the strong collaborative effort of NYSOSIA President Joseph Rondinelli, National CSJ Chairperson Santina Haemmerle, New York State CSJ Chairman Louis Gallo, and the filial lodge base, Adam Haber, the Democratic challenger for Nassau County Executive, dropped his TV ad in late June, attempting to associate Thomas Suozzi, his opponent in the upcoming primary, with Soprano-type characters.

On Wednesday, June 19th, Haber's campaign released a political TV commercial depicting a bunch of burly characters sitting in an Italian restaurant under a "Cinzano" sign, eating spaghetti and drinking wine, yearning for the election of Thomas Suozzi once again so they could get lucrative jobs and pay raises. When one of their number, a nerdy type, challenges their view because allegedly Suozzi increased Nassau taxes and debt, the others lean forward and sneer to intimidate the nerd. The nerd backs off and agrees to support Suozzi. The commercial ends with all of them toasting Suozzi, a voice-over message, and one of the characters slurping spaghetti from his plate.

On Monday, June 24th, Newsday broke the story about the ad from Haber. There was an immediate reaction within Democratic ranks. Lew Yevoli, a former Supervisor of the Town of Oyster Bay, commented, "As an Italian-American, I find the ad offensive. It shows Italians looking unscrupulous. And the message seems to be that Tom Suozzi has nefarious dealings." Haber's campaign manager Justin Myers called Yevoli's comments a "desperate attempt to deflect from the fact that Suozzi doled out millions in raises to himself and his cronies..."

On the same day National CSJ Chairperson Santina Haemmerle contacted New York State CSJ Chairman Louis Gallo and both collaborated on a joint statement to Newsday stating that the ad was "unfair, unjust and defamatory that insults not only Suozzi, but millions of Italian Americans. For years Italian Americans running for office have been disparaged by their opponents by misrepresenting them in ads as heavy-duty Italian men and intimating that they are somehow connected to the mob, thereby profiling Italian Americans. We ask you to join with us to help eliminate the constant barrage of anti-Italian sentiment and negative stereotyping of Italian Americans so prevalent in the news media and society today. We hope that Newsday will help to promote the positive image of Italian Americans."

Soon after, News12 Long Island picked up the story, and interviewed President Rondinelli in the Grand Lodge office in Bellmore. He said that we are trying to move forward and events such as these set us back. Haber on the telecast responded that he did not intend to offend anyone. At this juncture, Chairman Louis mobilized the filial lodge base by going viral on Facebook and wrote an immediate e-mail to all Executive Board members of the State CSJ Commission. He provided the membership and the Board with Haber's campaign address, phone number and e-mail address for Newsday. Members were encouraged to barrage Newsday with letters to the editor or Haber with letters and phone calls to his campaign. The reaction was instantaneous.

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Louis J. Gallo, Jr. was born the oldest of 6 children to Louis and Anne Gallo on May 1, 1946, at Mother Cabrini Hospital in New York City, the son of a tool-and-die maker and a full-time housewife who lived in the Bronx.

In 1954 the family moved to Plainview, Long Island, where Lou spent the next 14 years of his life. In 1963 he graduated from Plainview-Old Bethpage High School and went directly to Nassau Community College for 2 years and earned an A.A. degree in 1965. In the same year, he transferred to the State University at Albany and immediately met the love of his life Linda Della Villa of Schenectady. In 1967 he graduated from the University with a B.A. and in 1968 an M.A. in Social Studies Education.



In 1968 he married Linda, moved to Suffolk County, Long Island, and began teaching Social Studies at Longwood High School in Middle Island, LI. He remained there for 33 years and retired in 2001. While at Longwood he coached baseball and football and was the Class Advisor for the Class of 1974. In that year the Class dedicated the yearbook to Lou. Throughout the 1990s he was selected by his students for the prestigious publication "Who's Who in American High Schools."

In the 1980's Lou became interested in politics, and in 1987 he was a candidate for Brookhaven Town Council and in 1989 the candidate in the 1st district for Suffolk County Legislator. He was appointed Brookhaven Town Chairman of the Accessory Apartment Review Board (1996-2002) and a member of the Zoning Board of Appeals (2002-2006). He was also the Executive Producer and Host of a public access cable television show in Suffolk County entitled "Republican Perspective" for 12 years.

Lou's involvement reached further into the community as the Vice-president for Special Projects for the Miller Place Civic Association in the 1980s, and in 2001 Brookhaven Town awarded him Volunteer of the Year for his leadership in establishing a summer youth program at Cedar Beach, Mount Sinai. In 2002 he joined the Rocky Point Lion's Club, became its President (2006-2008), and in 2008 the Suffolk County District Governor awarded Lou the Melvin Jones Award, the highest award in Lionism, one of only 3 in the club at that time since 1955.

As far as the Order is concerned, Lou has served in numerous lodge offices and committees. He was P. Vincent Landi Lodge President (2008-10), District 1 Chairman (2009-10), and is presently District 1 State Trustee since 2010. He was Co-Chairman of the State Public Relations Committee (2012-2013), Member of the Executive Board of the State CSJ, and is presently the Chairman of the Helen Keller Summer Camp Day for the State Gift of Sight Committee.

At the age of 65 in 2011 Lou started his own thriving expediting business, Lou Gallo Expediting, Inc., securing permits, variances and certificates of occupancy for his clients' properties.

Lou has 3 grown children and 4 grandchildren, and has resided in Miller Place, Long Island, with Linda for 40 years. ■

## CSJ Supporting Italian Language Programs

On June 11, 2013, District III CSJ took a trip to St. Clare's Elementary School, Staten Island, on Tuesday June 6th. They attended the First Grade Italian Class. A donation was made in memory of John Dabbene to the school's Italian Language Program to help them with their learning materials. What a great day watching the children going through their Italian lessons with great enthusiasm and lots of fun. The program teaches grade 1 through 8 twice a week and was only started last September. In attendance was: State President Joseph Rondinelli, State CSJ Chair Lou Gallo, National CSJ Chair Tina Haemmerle, Marcy Dabbene, Father Capodanno Lodge President Theresa Corey, Liaison Frank Cicero, and District III Chair Anthony Corsello.



District III Chair Anthony Corsello, is shown presenting a check for \$1,000 to school principal to enhance the Italian Language program.



*Fighting Bias...  
...Building Pride*



## District II CSJ Bella Lingua Achievement Award Ceremony



The 7th Annual NYS CSJ District II "Bella Lingua Achievement Award" Ceremony was held on June 20, 2013, at the Columbus Lodge Hall. This award is given to high school students who are studying Italian Language for a period of four years or more. This year, a special committee selected two students to receive this award (\$500.00 cash each): Sara Sticklikas, from H.F. Carey High School, Melissa Levine, from Great Neck South High School.

Pictured are the Committee, the student and guests: From left: Anna Aquaviva, Jean Gagliardo, MaryAnn Rispoli (Award Chairperson), Lee Cerullo (District II Chairperson), Miss Melissa Levine, MaryAnn Schwartz (Italian teacher at Great Neck South HS), Mary Abbey, Phyllis Cerullo, Carolyn Reres (NYS 1st Vice President); and Maria Marchese. The second recipient, Sara Sticklickas was unable to attend.



One of the two CSJ displays at the NYS Grand Lodge Convention at Villa Roma. Positive image material was made available to all delegates and friends.

### *National OSIA Book of Month Selections*

**Venice** A New History By Thomas F. Madden

The rise and fall of Venice, its contributions, and remarkable people, who include Marco Polo and Casanova, is vividly told in this new history that covers the city's 2,000 years of history and achievements. It was a republic for more than 1,000 years, from the late 7th century A.D. until 1797, when Napoleon captured the city and gave it to Austria as part of a peace pact. But La Serenissima, as Italians call Venice, remains one of the wonders of the world. [\$35.00; hard-cover; 446 pages; Viking Press]

**Italians in West Virginia** - By Victor Basile & Judy Prozzillo Byers

Between 1910 and 1920, about 15,000 Italians immigrated to West Virginia to work as farmers, lumberjacks, miners and railroad builders. Most were from southern Italy, recruited by the state to develop its resources. Their history is revealed in this book through stories and more than 200 photographs from state archives and private families. Today, more than 70,000 descendants of these early immigrants still contribute to the state, including former governor and now U.S. senator Joe Mancin. [\$21.99; paperback; 128 pages; Arcadia Press]

For additional info and selections go to [www.osia.org](http://www.osia.org), click on Culture & History, and then click on Sons of Italy Book Club.

# Chairman's Corner



Louis Gallo

## “Fighting Bias, Building Pride”

### CSJ Chairman's Message

Greetings my brothers and sisters of OSIA!

It is with great excitement and anticipation that I write to you! I must thank President Joseph Rondinelli for my appointment on June 2nd at the state convention as your new New York State Chairman of CSJ. My mind has been racing ever since, and there are some notable achievements to share with you already.

We are involved in a transition right now. I have already appointed a dynamic team of 19 Board members who are already fulminating about what we should be doing and how we could revitalize the Executive Board. I've already told many of them to hold their fire for our first meeting in July, where all their creative ideas will be aired. From that sharing we will develop our programs. I am sure we'll have an array of exciting programs that will involve you and exhilarate the Order. In addition, I too am setting ideas on paper to share with the Board members that encompass our dual mission of promoting positive images of Italians and fighting defamation and stereotyping and have met with President Joe regarding his views. Soon I will contact District Chairmen all over the state for their input also. I think we have such a wealth of intellect, creativity, and experience in this state that I believe will strengthen CSJ and make it even more of an integral part of our Order you can be very proud of. So, we will inject bottom-up not top-down management.

Continuing this transition, I took the time to investigate our inventory at our storage facility in Freeport. We have records stored from previous chairmen that are a treasure-trove of material from which to draw ideas and restore some programs. We have plenty of bookmarks for students, but we have to restock some brochures, posters, and pamphlets. There's also much from our Medal of Honor program.

I have met with the previous financial team to transition our financial accounts from the past administration to the present one. An audit will be performed by our state trustees, and an expense policy and budget will also be drawn up. Furthermore, District Chairmen will be drawn into the process. I have appointed Joseph Vallone from the Papallo Lodge to act as our Treasurer, and I will soon select a Financial Secretary. I have also distributed to most Board members \$100 raffle tickets for support of the National CSJ. Please, if approached by a Board member, take a share to help finance our national team.

As far as other appointments, I have selected Keith Wilson from the Columbus Lodge to act as our Recording Secretary, who is already preparing himself and the Board in his role. I have also charged Board member Natale Mannino to investigate a program with Italian-American war veterans and our Medal of Honor program and Leo Cimini a program on Italian-American literary artists.

I've also turned our scope to three events that occurred in June that required our immediate attention. Firstly, District 3 Chairman Tony Corsello is to be commended as the engineer of a fabulous program at St. Clare Elementary School in Staten Island recently. National CSJ Chairperson Tina Haemmerle brought to Tony's attention St. Clare's interest in establishing an Italian language program. Working with Liaisons Carl Ciaccio and Frank Cicero, the district decided to grant \$1,000 from its treasury to aid the school in perpetuating the program from K to 6th grade. Thanks to Tony's efforts, he organized a presentation and certificate at the school on June 11th and mobilized President Joe, Frank, Theresa Corey and Marcy Dabbene from the Father Capodanno Lodge, and me to attend the event. We were treated to a lesson of first-graders reciting Italian, singing in Italian, and playing the game "Simple Simon" in Italian! We took videos and pictures with the teachers and children and were enthralled by the whole experience. Kudos to all involved!

Secondly, thanks to the support of Event Chairpersons Sylvia Summa and John Fratta, I made a presentation at the mass of our annual Wreath-laying Ceremony celebrating our founding regarding Mother Cabrini and St. Francis of Assisi, our patroness and patron of our beloved Order. I felt it was the perfect time to demonstrate our homage and respect to these two Italian icons in our history and begin to

vividly promote a positive Italian image.

Finally, this new administration was tested early on, as many of you know already, by the release of a political ad by a candidate running for office in Nassau County that maligned his Italian-American opponent by suggesting he associated with Soprano-types, the proverbial Italian stereotype. Thanks literally to a spontaneous herculean effort by our state and national leadership and the mobilization of our local lodge base the candidate apologized and dropped the ad. His campaign manager resigned the next day. Undoubtedly, such a mass collaborative effort should serve notice to all that if you insult Italian Americans, they will not stand for it, and will take action. Remember "sempre insieme" (always together) no matter what we do.

So, we're on the move! Please look forward to any CSJ matters that come your way. We hope to provide you with stimulating material and events, and as always please provide input to your liaisons or to Board members. We don't have a monopoly on intelligence and creativity, and these Board members are looking to hear from you and share their thoughts. Remember as Past Chairwoman Stella Grillo used to always say, "If you're a member of the Order, you're a member of CSJ."

Fraternally,

Lou

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### TV AD (continued from Justice page 1)

Lodge members spread Gallo's message to their friends on Facebook and letters to the Newsday editor. Joseph Vallone from the Papallo Lodge wrote, "I am a proud Italian-American who is very deeply hurt by this TV ad. It depicts us as being ruthless and cunning. I strongly urge that Mr. Haber issue an apology to all Italian-Americans and remove the TV ad." Michael Santo, CSJ and Order Counsel and Board member wrote, "the advertisement by Mr. Haber's campaign is not only in bad taste, it's just plain dumb... The good citizens of this county need to understand that any person who is unable to be sensitive to the obvious insults does not possess the requisite judgment to manage our great county." Past State President Salvatore Lanzilotta and Past First Lady Rae wrote, "(Haber) did not intend to offend anyone? Here is a list of people we think he offended: Thomas Suozzi as an Italian American, my immigrant parents, my children, my grandchildren, myself, my wife and the Order Sons of Italy. He needs to remove the ad. It is discriminatory!"

President Rondinelli sent out a press release declaring, "We are demanding that Mr. Haber apologize at once and cease airing the ad... This has nothing to do with a political endorsement. We are defending our Italian heritage which has been battered much too long!" Chairman Louis wrote a letter to Newsday claiming, "Haber should be reminded that Italian-Americans will be voting in the September primary election. An action such as this will have no legs at all. On behalf of all Italian-Americans I implore Mr. Haber to apologize to all Italian-Americans and drop the ad forthwith." Newsday printed some comments from its subscribers on its website Newsday.com. One wrote, "The message is clear. When a pol cannot run on his or her own merit, they begin to produce silly, insulting sophomoric ads." Another wrote, "I am not Italian, but I have to agree with the Order Sons of Italy in America. This ad is offensive to Italians and Italian Americans and is a perfect reason not to vote for Adam Haber."

On Wednesday, June 26th, just three days after Newsday broke the ad story, Newsday's banner headline read "Haber Pulls Suozzi Ad After Controversy." In the story Haber claimed, "The intent was never to offend any group... I apologize to anyone who has been offended." Chairwoman Haemmerle responded, "Haber did the right thing by taking that ad down... I'm glad he listened."

The next day Haber's campaign manager, Justin Myers, resigned. Chairman Louis in his Facebook post remarked, "Let this serve as a lesson to all. If you insult Italian Americans, they will not stand for it, and will take action My brothers and sisters of OSIA, bask in glory, but remember, stay ever so vigilant and sempre insieme (always together)." ■

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### Little Known Facts

by Richard A. Capozzola's  
Five Centuries of Italian American History

1946 - **Frances X. Cabrini** becomes the first U.S. citizen to be canonized a saint. Mother Cabrini, founder of the Sisters of the Sacred Heart, helped to organize 14 colleges, 98 schools, 28 orphanages, 8 hospitals, and was responsible for more than 1500 nuns who labored for her causes.

Book Review  
**A Vatican Lifeline '44**  
 Written by William Simpson

**W**illiam Simpson was a Scottish pilot in the British Air Force, and in 1943 was taken prisoner in North Africa and was held in an Italian prisoner of war camp near Sulmona, Abruzzo. In July, Mussolini was imprisoned by the King of Italy, and Marshall Badoglio was put in charge of the Italian armies. Badoglio surrendered to the allies and directed the Italian armies not to cooperate with Germany. As a result, many soldiers abandoned their posts and started going home. There were a few weeks of confusion, causing many prisoners to escape to the Abruzzo Mountains. William Simpson was one of these escapees. But soon, Germans took control of most of Italy north of Salerno by becoming occupiers rather than guests of Italy prior to Badoglio's signing of the armistice with the Allies on September 3, 1943.

The winter of 1943/1944 was bitter cold, and I remember that the Germans came to my town of Opi to get the remaining boys between 13 and 17 years of age to help remove snow from the roadways. Because my town was high up on a hill, the trucks made several turns before reaching the town. The young boys had time to escape into the mountains and hide. Upon their return, they spoke about meeting soldiers and escaped prisoners who happened to have radios and were able to monitor the progress of the war.

We never took these stories seriously because we were not aware of a prisoner of war camp in Sulmona which was on the Eastern side of Monte Marsicano, an area not passable by vehicular traffic. The mountain is 8000 feet above sea level and foot paths are passable only by mules.

William Simpson, with the help of Italian partisan, found his way to Rome, a four to five day trip on foot. Interestingly enough, Simpson made contact with people in the Vatican and remained in hiding helping other escapees in safe houses. The intrigue lasted several months, always being a day or two in front of the pursuing Germans. According to Simpson there were many escaped American and British prisoners hiding in many safe houses all over Rome. Simpson's job was to provide food, money, and news to the people hiding. The Vatican contact identified trustworthy Italians who provided shelter and gave Simpson a forged passport.

After the war, in 1947, Simpson was in the insurance business and came to live in Oyster Bay on Long Island. I'm sorry that he died a few years ago and I did not get a chance to meet him and talk about those terrible days which lasted only nine months during 1943/1944. Looking back at it today, it was a very short period; but the famine, suffering, and hardships were great for the Italians in that part of Italy in and around Rome!

Leo Cimini - NYS CSJ Executive Committee

**Little Known Facts**

by Richard A. Capozzola's - Five Centuries of Italian American History

1822 - **Giacomo Beltrami** arrives in America and plunges himself into the wilderness of Minnesota where he discovers the source of the Mississippi River. Covered with animal skins sewed with animal sinews, with the bark of a tree as a hat, hungry and tired, Beltrami returns to civilization in New Orleans. In 1828 Beltrami publishes *A Pilgrimage*, a two-volume account of his adventures.

**Italian American Heroes**  
 Congressional Medal of Honor Recipients  
**Ralph Cheli**

Born - October 29, 1919 - San Francisco, CA  
 Died - March 6, 1944 - Rabaul, New Guinea

**Rank and organization:** Major, U.S. Army Air Corps. 405th Bombardment Squadron, 38th Bombardment Group, 5th Air Force. Place and date of action: Near Wewak, New Guinea, 18 August 1943. Entered service at: Brooklyn, N.Y in 1940.

**Citation:** "For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity above and beyond the call of duty in action with the enemy. While Major Cheli was leading his squadron in a dive to attack the heavily defended Dagua Airdrome, intercepting enemy aircraft centered their fire on his plane, causing it to burst into flames while still two miles from the objective.



His speed would have enabled him to gain necessary altitude to parachute to safety, but this action would have resulted in his formation becoming disorganized and exposed to the enemy. Although a crash was inevitable, he courageously elected to continue leading the attack in his blazing plane. From a minimum altitude, the squadron made a devastating bombing and strafing attack on the target. The mission completed, Major Cheli instructed his wingman to lead the formation and crashed into the sea."

Initially Cheli was believed killed in the crash, but post war evidence indicates that he survived the crash and was captured badly burned and in poor shape. He was taken to a Japanese prison at Rabaul, New Guinea. As the senior American POW at the time, he was interrogated and beaten frequently, but refused to give any information beyond name, rank and serial number. Cheli died while he was a war prisoner. There exist two accounts of his death: The more popular account of his death was that he was sent away to Japan on a Japanese ship which, in one of the great ironies of the war, was then bombed by American pilots. The ship bearing Cheli and American prisoners was hit and there were no survivors (a fate similar to a previous MOH recipient, Willibard Bianchi See Sept-Oct 2010 Navigator).

However, in 1950, remains were found at the prison camp in Rabul, where Major Cheli's name was listed as being executed in captivity as a Prisoner of War on March 6, 1944, at the age of 24. Those remains were brought back to America and interned in Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery in Saint Louis, MO.

Cheli was survived by his wife, Geraldine, and infant son, Ralph Jr. The Arnold Air Society chapter at his alma mater Lehigh University was named in his honor. Between 1947 and 1961 the United States Air Force operated the Cheli Air Force Station near Maywood, California.

Born in San Francisco, Ralph Cheli was of Italian descent of fair complexion. In his youth he travelled across the nation. In February 1940, 19-year old Cheli enlisted in the Army as a flying cadet in NYC. His wartime military service sent him across the globe, starting with anti-submarine patrols in the Caribbean to the Pacific War Theater as a B-25 pilot, eventually serving as the commanding officer of a Bombardment Squadron. The position he held on the day of his galant and heroic act.

In his short wartime service, Cheli amassed these other decorations: the Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal, Purple Heart (posthumous), American Defense Service Medal with foreign service clasp, American Campaign Medal with Bronze Service, World War II Victory Medal, Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with four Bronze Service Stars for participation in the Bismarck Archipelago, Northern Solomons, China Defensive and Papua campaigns, and Distinguished Unit Citation Emblem. ■

**Down Memory Lane**

At the 1999 NYS State Convention held at the Nevele Grande Resort in Ellenville, NY CSJ friends of Melissa Lutz (seated center), former Grand Lodge Office secretary, take time out from the State Convention to thank her for her work for the CSJ, and to wish her success in her future endeavors.

Amongst the many well-wishers are: seated from left - Richard Haemmerle, Frank Grillo, CSJ President John Dabbene, and Sylvia Summa. Standing from left - Larry Abbondandolo, Marjorie Moschella, Phyllis Curatola, Stella Grillo, (2 in rear are unknown), Josephine and Joseph Truglio, John Ranieri, Unknown, Santina Haemmerle, Anthony Summa, Stanley Klein (partially visible), Unknown, and Anthony Baffo.

