

ORDER SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF ITALY IN AMERICA
NYS CSJ Executive Board and
District II & III Liaison Meeting – Monday January 10, 2023, 7:15 P.M – 9:15 P.M.
Held at: Marco Polo Lodge, 3443 Hempstead Turnpike, Levittown, NY

Keith Wilson, OSDIA NYS CSJ Recording Secretary and CSJ District II Chairman opened the OSDIA NYS CSJ meeting with a prayer and Pledge of Allegiance.

Attendance was taken by asking all in attendance to sign in on sheets provided and then verbally Introduce themselves.

Those in attendance were:

NYS CSJ Executive Board Members:

Eleanor Jobbagy, Co-Chairperson
Keith Wilson, Recording Secretary and District II Chair
Geraldine Graham, Treasurer
Vincent Marmorale, Holocaust Committee Chair
Mary Ann Rispoli, NYS OSDIA/CSJ “La Bella Lingua Award” Committee Chair
Marianne Prince
Anthoey Rotoli
and
Bob Graham, CSJ Webmaster

District II Liaisons and/or Executive Board Members representing District II Lodges

CSJ District II Chairperson Keith Wilson and Rich Ravalico, Columbus;
Joann Grossman and Alison Vitucci Cellini;
Ann Acquaviva, and Lodge President John Simonetti, Marco Polo;
Marianne Prince, Marino;
Joann Manfredi, Mazza;
Bert DeTomaso and Julie DeTomaso, Verdi;
Vincent Marmorale, Gulotta;
Donation Chair Phyllis Cerullo, Glen Cove;
Patricia Edick and Recording Secretary Mary Ann Rispoli, Caboto.

District II Lodges **not** represented:

America, DaVinci, Galileo Galilei and Marciano.

Reminder for District II Liaisons: Please respond via e-mail to Keith Wilson at kwilson@optonline.net or call Keith at 516-633-1435 if you cannot attend a meeting, or ask your Lodge backup or President to attend in your place.

District III Liaisons (or Executive Board Member) and Lodges Represented

Eleanor Jobbagy, Lodge President Rosemarie Stathes and Diane Como, Per Sempre Lodge

Keith Wilson, CSJ Recording Secretary and District II Chair asked CSJ District II Recording Secretary to take minutes for this evening’s meeting.

District II Chairperson Keith Wilson welcomed all and thanked everyone for attending, and the Marco Polo Lodge, and President John Simonetti and Liaison Ann Acquaviva for use of their building.

Minutes from last CSJ District II meeting: The last NYS CSJ District II meeting was held on May 9, 2022. Minutes taken by CSJ District II Recording Secretary Mary Ann Rispoli were e-mailed to all. Minutes were accepted as written by District II Liaisons in attendance.

OSDIA CSJ Treasurer’s Report – Geraldine Graham

There was an audit in November and nothing was found to be “out of order.”

The Beginning Balance 12/1/22:	\$7,089.36
Journal Ad Deposit	\$2,100.00
Checks paid	\$-363.13
Ending Balance/ And Checkbook Balance	<u>\$8,826.23</u>
Columbus Account	<u>\$3,438.53</u>
High Yield Savings	\$3,597.52
Interest	.06
	<u>\$3,597.58</u>
<u>Total All Accounts</u>	<u>\$15,862.34</u>

Note: Funds available to:

District I - \$ 914.73

District II - \$2,428.32 - \$150 added from \$50 Donations from Caboto Lodge, Loggia Glen Cove, Cellini Lodge.

District III- \$ 826.55

A motion was made by Joann Grossman and seconded by Mary Ann to accept the Treasurer’s report – Accepted by all.

There was a discussion regarding the money in the “High Yield Savings” account and ways to gain more interest. Banks are offering 4% or higher. Money Market at Bethpage is 2%.

Vinny said he will talk with Treasurer Gerry after the meeting with suggestions.

Eleanor Jobbagy, OSDIA NYS CSJ Co-Chairperson - “Opening Remarks.”

On December 9th OSDIA NYS CSJ Chairperson John Fratta had his first surgery and was released from the Hospital on December 20. On December 23 John was taken to the emergency room and needed emergency surgery due to a “staple” getting loose causing an infection. John was released from the hospital on January 4th and is now building up strength for treatment that will begin in February. Eleanor spoke with John last Thursday when John stated he is “doing all right.” Please keep John in our prayers.

There was an e-mail sent to lodges, etc. today stating that OSDIA NYS President Michele Ment requested that the CSJ Brunch scheduled for Sunday, January 29, 2023 be postponed. There will be a new date as soon as OSDIA NYS CSJ Chairperson John Fratta has recovered. All money deposited, and ready to be deposited, will be deposited and proceeds held for the future Brunch. Verdi’s has been very understanding. If someone cannot make the event on the new date, etc., their money will be refunded upon request.

CSJ Journal Chair Marianne Prince stated that she will update the Journal ad names with new Lodge and State Administration depending on the new date of the CSJ Brunch.

CSJ Brunch Chairperson Eleanor spoke with both honorees and they have agreed to go along with our plans for Brunch postponement and new date to be set.

CSJ Webmaster Bob Graham stated he will enter on the CSJ Website that the “Brunch is postponed and new date to be determined.”

CSJ Journal Chairperson Marianne Prince reported that we have received \$5,310.00 for Journal Ads and since the event is postponed more may be ordered. Marianne estimates the total will eventually be \$6,000.00.

NYS CSJ Co-Chairperson Eleanor Jobbagy gave update on Columbus Day and Columbus Statues

Co-Chairperson Eleanor stated that the Philadelphia Mayor has ordered that the box built to hide the Columbus statue be removed.

Syracuse did well with their efforts regarding their Columbus Statue - they won the case and they will keep their Columbus Statue.

District III Remarks - Per Sempre Lodge President Rosemarie Stathes:

Per Sempre Lodge President Rosemarie Stathes reported that she invited, by e-mail, all Presidents in her District. President Rosemarie stated that she was happy to be at the meeting.

Committee Reports

Geraldine Graham, John Dabbne Contest Chairperson - Report on the 2023 Essay Contest

This contest relies on the Individual Lodges to encourage their members to have eligible candidates participate. There is a change for 2023 - all High School students will be eligible to compete to receive their

District's \$200 award. Please tell your Lodge members that the material will be distributed in the summer. Presentations will be made in October during Italian culture month.

Vincent Marmorale, Holocaust Committee Chairperson - “The Italian Secret”

Vinny reported that being at Marco Polo Lodge brought back historic memories. It was in 1994 that Walter Wolf first spoke at Marco Polo Lodge about historic material that was planned to be included in the “Italian Secret.”

Vinny stated that he can make presentations at Lodge meetings with his 36-minute DVD. The Lodges must have available a DVD player and screen for presentation. Everyone must become aware of what Italians did during WWII to save the Jewish people. He also knows, from research and talking with survivors, that the information about the Pope or the Catholic Church is incorrect. Many of the clergy helped Jewish people in any way they could.

Vincent Marmorale plans to have a presentation at OSDIA GM Museum in April.

Vinny will be making presentations at Malloy in March and April and the Teachers Conference in March.

There was a brief discussion regarding US Representative George Santos and his claim that his family was Holocaust Survivors which is not true. Vinny wondered if this lie would warrant intervention by the CSJ.

We talked about the joint luncheon we used to have with B'nai b'rith. The reason this luncheon was discontinued was that not many Holocaust survivors are left and the turnout became poor.

Mary Ann Rispoli, NYS OSDIA/CSJ "La Bella Lingua Award" Chairperson

NYS OSDIA/CSJ "La Bella Lingua Award" Chairperson Mary Ann Rispoli gave a brief history of "La Bella Lingua Award." The Founder of the Award was then CSJ District II Chairperson Lee Cerullo. In 2003 or 2004 Lee presented his idea to the Liaisons in attendance at the Liaison meeting held at Marco Polo Lodge. Lee stated he wanted to encourage students to take the Italian Language in High Schools. Lee planned to give \$500 Awards to High School deserving graduating seniors with at least three years of Italian. Lee had fund raisers and asked people he knew to make private donations. Lee wanted "La Bella Lingua Award" to be an individual award program presented separately and not part of the State and/or Lodge scholarship programs.

Approximately seven years ago then OSDIA NY State President Carolyn Reres expanded the program to include all eight NYS Districts. "La Bella Lingua Award" program then began receiving funding from the NYS Grand Lodge Foundation enabling each District to receive one \$500 Award yearly.

Mary Ann reported that seven of the eight NYS Districts have a "La_Bella Lingua Award" Chair currently working on sending information to High Schools in their Districts that have an Italian Language Program. (A copy of "2023 Student Selection, Notification and Presentation Procedure" was attached to today's Agenda.)

For District II – Nassau County - Mary Ann stated that last week she personally mailed letters and applications to 58 High School Principals, Guidance Dept. and Italian Language teachers, inviting one of their graduating High School's students, completing at least three years of Italian Language Courses, to compete in the 2023 "La Bella Lingua Award" program.

CSJ District II "La Bella Lingua Award" selection committee members are: Phyllis Cerullo, Ann Acquaviva, Chair. Mary Ann Rispoli (and Founder Lee Cerullo). Selection committee members will receive all material to review before the Selection Committee meeting. The Award ceremony will be in May before the Convention.

There was discussion regarding the poor attendance of District II's Presidents, Deputies, District II Trustees, and State and CSJ Executive Board members at the "La Bella Lingua Award" ceremony held last June at Marco Polo Lodge. OSDIA NYS CSJ District II Liaisons, one President (John Simonetti), One Deputy (Anthony Capriola) and Joseph Rondinelli was in attendance.

A suggestion was made by CSJ District II Chairperson Keith Wilson to have "La Bella Lingua Award" presentation done at the Lodge closest to where the student lives as part of their Scholarship night. I replied that last year for the first time a student from Baldwin High School was the award recipient. There is no District II Lodge that includes Baldwin High School in the Scholarships they present, and that would have been uncomfortable to explain to the family why Baldwin HS was not included.

It was brought out by CSJ District II "La Bella Lingua Award" selection Committee Members Phyllis Cerullo, Ann Acquaviva and Mary Ann Rispoli that there is lot of time and effort that goes into the selection and preparation for "La Bella Lingua Award" Presentation; therefore, the Presentation ceremony should continue to be separate. Every CSJ Liaison should attend and make sure their President, VP or Lodge officer also attends. Phyllis reiterated that this is an Award earned by the student, which is different from a scholarship.

The importance of "La Bella Lingua Award" must be presented to all Lodge Presidents, Deputies, District II Trustees and Executive Board Members by District II CSJ Chairperson Keith Wilson, etc.

Marco Polo President John Simonetti offered use of Marco Polo Lodge again for the ceremony in 2023.

Keith Wilson, CSJ District II Chairperson reported on the “Hero Book” and CSJ Literature and Storage

Keith stated if Lodges need OSDIA material to contact him. There is material in the Farmingdale Storage unit and Bellmore office. Keith asked Liaisons to be active with their home-town libraries to put up a display in October for Italian Culture month. Materials are available including bookmarks. The total display depends on what the individual library allows

OSDIA NYS CSJ Chairperson John Fratta ordered 100 “The Hero” books to be distributed to all Presidents. The book reports on the real, and documented, truth about Christopher Columbus.

Liaison Positions needed to be filed by District II Lodges

Keith has been in touch with Presidents that do not have CSJ District II Liaison representation. They all stated they are working on getting Liaisons to represent their lodge.

CSJ Liaisons Reporting at their Meetings

District II CSJ Chairperson Keith Wilson reminded all Liaisons that it is important to make a CSJ report at their meetings. The Liaison can use meeting information, CSJ minutes or NYS OSDIA CSJ Chairman John Fratta’s “Golden Lion” Column for information.

Chairperson Wilson asked each Liaison individually if they make a report at their meetings and they replied that they do.

Donations from District II Lodges

Recording Secretary Mary Ann Rispoli sent e-mails and US mail letters to all Presidents last May asking for a “suggested donation of \$50” as done in years past. To date we received \$50 donations from: Caboto Lodge, Loggia Glen Cove and Cellini Lodge.

Alison Vitucci, Liaison, reported on Columbus Day as Listed on Nassau County School Calendars

Liaison Alison Vitucci stated that at the request of District II CSJ Chair Keith Wilson she researched the 56 School Districts in Nassau County to see how they listed Columbus Day on their 2022-23 Calendar.

Alison put together a list noting which district named October 10, 2022 either:

1. Columbus Day,
2. Indigenous People’s Day
3. Both Columbus Day and Indigenous People’s Day
4. Schools Closed.

Alison stated Districts that list ‘Schools closed’ do the same for all holidays to avoid problems.

Alison is also checking with schools as to which schools offer Italian, at what grade level, and if they have Italian Clubs.

Liaison Alison also talked about some articles she read that she previously presented regarding inappropriate reference to Italians.

Keith Wilson - “Complaint Directory for the NYS Commission for Social Justice”

A copy of "Complaint Directory for the NYS Commission for Social Justice" was distributed to all in attendance. The procedure noted should be referenced and followed when reporting valid complaints that need fighting and eradicating of bias and bigotry. The complaint does not have to only relate to Italian Americans, but to all groups. that warrant intervention by the CSJ.

Minutes submitted by NYS OSDIA CSJ District II Recording Secretary Mary Ann Rispoli 1/14/2023.