

December 2022
Volume 27
Issue 266

ITALIAN AMERICAN CLUB of JACKSONVILLE



Our Mission Statement – *The Italian American Club is dedicated to supporting American traditions in our community while maintaining our Italian heritage.*

Message From The President...

Dearest Members,

We are in the count down to the end of the year 2022. The last three months of the year is always a bit crazy as we get busy in our lives with family and at the club trying to make it memorable. Soon we will ring the new year of 2023. Along with it, I am hoping for better things to happen within our Club. 2022 brought us out of two years of having to hibernate because of COVID. Thankfully things have *almost* gotten back to normal.

Throughout the year we have been doing Spaghetti To Go. I want to thank each and everyone of our volunteers for their time and efforts. Without you we couldn't do STG. I am thankful for all of the volunteers because STG and rentals bring in at least two-thirds of the income that keeps the club going. Membership dues pay for the insurance for the club. At the November General Meeting there was a packet on your tables detailing the financial expenses and income for our Club. I hope you took the time to read it and understand the expenses and maintenance that keeps our club doors open. Thank you to Mike Matrascia, our club Treasurer, for his hard work and dedication in managing the Club's finances.

Now on to fun things! At our December 5th social we will be decorating the club for the holidays so please come and join us and get in the Christmas spirit! We have a very nice Christmas party planned for December. We also have a New Year's Eve party planned. We need 40 people signed up and prepaid otherwise the party will need to be cancelled. Please don't let that happen! Come ring in the New Year with your friends at the Italian American Club!

Wishing everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year !

Blessings to you all,

Melanie

OFFICERS

Melanie Matrascia

President

Mark Rose

Vice President

Mike Matrascia

Treasurer

Sal Santapola

Asst. Treasurer

Membership

Dir.

De Santapola

Secretary

John Corsi

Club Chef

Fr. Tom Cody

Club Chaplain

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jack Cosentino

Joe Farina

Eunice Manzo

Gina Mielech

Anne Stepp

Al Zammataro



Alhambra
theatre & dining

12000 Beach Blvd
Jacksonville, FL 32246
904-641-1212



Date - Saturday Matinee May 27th, 2023

Theatre opens 12pm - Lunch served until 1:20pm - Show begins 1:50pm

Cost \$70.00 per person

Includes: Show, Dinner & Gratuity

Alhambra has reserved 56 seats for us - Sold 42 to date - **only 14 left**

Contact Sal Santapola rsvp@iacofjacksonville.com

Make check payable to Italian American Club Attn: Jersey Boys

P.O. Box 600725 Jacksonville, FL 32260

On Pay by Credit Card

Compassionate Corner



Our condolences to Bob Magno for the passing of his wife Lois, a long time member of the Italian American Club.

Our condolences to Ned and Mary Ann Wetzel for the passing of Ned's sister Gloria

Much Sympathy to the family of former member Joe Cinotti on his passing.

Welcome New Members!



Scott & Jennifer Snyder

A Christmas Present for Joanie

By Carol Dodi

Original article appears on the Winter 2017 issue of Discover Smith Mountain Lake

Alessio Dodi, father of IAC member Joseph Dodi, was born in Piacenza, Italy, near the alpine mountains of Switzerland in the Emilia Romagna region. He was born to a large family of 16, some of them twins.

It was the custom at that time that the older children help support the family. At the age of 12 years, Alessio walked 100 miles from his home to Genoa, Italy. It was common knowledge in the community where he lived that if you wanted to earn a lot of money and were willing to work hard, America was the place to go.

Alessio stowed away on a luxury cruise ship and was soon found and ordered by the captain to work in the kitchen. At the end of the cruise the captain gave him money for his work. Alessio had never seen so much money and sent it home to his family. The captain asked him to stay and work in the galley as the chefs liked him & he quickly learned all their secret recipes and favorites. He stayed on the ships year after year. In 1930 he was given permission to become a resident of his new country.



In 1936 he married the love of his life, Stefana Mossaro, of Italian descent. They had 3 children, Joseph, Alexander & Joan (Joanie). In 1954 he became a us citizen.

He worked for many years in a restaurant in the theater district in New York City and his skills were well known. He became friends with Jimmy Durante, Red Skelton, Tyronne Power & George Raft.

It took Alessio 11 years by saving every penny to get enough money for passage on a ship to Italy for himself and his daughter. The boys were too old to get half fare.

Upon arrival Joanie met her grandmother who was soon to pass away. She gave Joanie a brooch to remember her by. Joanie still has the brooch. They stayed 4 months in Italy visiting relatives all over the country. Their return to the USA was delayed by a storm at sea.

Every Christmas Alessio would make a package filled with gifts to the family and wrapped them in tablecloths, scarves etc.

Aunt Mobbula slipped Alessio a package to give to Joanie at Christmas time. The package was given to Joanie and when she opened it, it was filled with several beautiful dresses that her aunt had made for her from all the material the packages had been wrapped in over the years.

Alessio retired to Pescara, Italy where he passed away at the age of 77 years.

This son of Italy, who by choice was an American citizen, also by choice returned to his homeland to remain forever.

New Year's Eve Party at the IAC!

Saturday, December 31st, 2022 @ 8:30 PM

Come join your friends ring in the New Year!

DJ, Dancing, Hors D'oeuvres, Champagne and best of all

Sharing fun times with friends and family!

\$35.00 per person, \$65 per couple. Pay in advance before December 22nd. You can pay cash or credit card at the Club or mail your check to:

Italian American Club of Jacksonville
PO Box 600725
Jacksonville, FL 32260



Justin Santos—Personal Chef/Catering

904-400-4599 ChefsantosJ904@gmail.com



SPAGHETTI TO GO!

Friday, December 16th,
2022

5PM to 7 PM

Stop by the Italian American Club on your way home from work, or wherever you're coming from and grab some dinner for the family! Pasta, 2 meatballs and bread!

Support YOUR Club!



Miranda Sparks—Realtor

904-449-0049

CLUB SOCIAL

Monday, December 5th, 2022 @1:00PM

Come join your fellow IAC members for an afternoon of fun and friendship. Play games, snack a little and laugh a lot. We will be decorating the club for the Holidays so bring your Christmas spirit! An Evite will be sent as a reminder. Bring a friend!



Christmas Party

Ugly Sweater Contest!

Italian Gift Exchange!

Sunday, December 11th, 2022 @ 1:00 PM.



MENU:

Antipasto, Lasagna, Garlic Bread

Dessert will be cookies made by our members!

HOST:

John Corsi & Melanie Matrascia



DONATIONS:

Members: **\$15**, Guests: **\$17**, 8-17: **\$8**, 7 & Under: **Free**

RSVP's are for maximum headcount of 90 people OR
Wednesday, December 7th, 2022 WHICHEVER COMES FIRST
 using Evite (preference) OR rsvp@iacofjacksonville.com
 OR call the Club at **904-586-2700**

Instructions to participate in the "Italian" Gift Exchange (aka: White Elephant or Chinese Auction)

If you would like to participate: **Couples** bring one (1) gift. **Single's** bring one (1) gift.
 Gifts should be generic and spend no more than \$10 - \$15, max. The gift can be funny or practical.
 Your gift should be wrapped or in a gift bag.

When you arrive at the club, there will be a designated location to leave your gift. Someone will greet you and give you a number.

The game will begin with the person who has #1. That person will select a gift and unwrap it so everyone can see it. #2 will be next and has the option to "steal" the gift or select an unopened gift. The game will continue by calling each number, numerically, until all unwrapped gifts are selected.
 Each person will have the option to steal a gift or select an unopened gift. If someone's gift is stolen, that person gets to select another gift - either one that has been opened or select an unopened gift. At the end of the game, #1 gets to select a gift (since they started the game and didn't have the opportunity to "steal" a gift).

Note:

Be sure to keep your gift visible for everyone to see.

A gift can only be stolen three (3) times. Once it's been stolen three times, the gift is FROZEN. It can no longer be stolen.

We will explain the game, again, at the Christmas party.

We hope you will join in on the fun ! !

Get Ready to Bake Your Famous Christmas Cookies!

We thought it would be fun this year for our members to bake their favorite (or famous) Christmas cookies as our dessert for our Christmas Party.

It will be so much fun to share cookies, recipes, traditions and baking stories with each other during the holiday season.

So, get out your rolling pins, aprons and cookie sheets! We can hardly wait to see the dessert table filled with our members favorite cookies!



Italian Heritage

Christmas in Italy

By Sal Santapola



Christmas is a major holiday in Italy. Italians celebrate lots of unique Christmas traditions! Across Italy, *Natale* (Christmas) tends to be a family-centric holiday, a time to stay at home with loved ones. But customs also vary from city to city, from exactly which dishes are served and when to open presents, making every region an interesting place to enjoy the holidays. Italians celebrate for much longer than other countries. Their festive season officially starts on December 8, celebrated with the Feast Day of the Immaculate Conception. It lasts right through until January 6, the Epiphany.

What are some of the Christmas traditions in Italy?

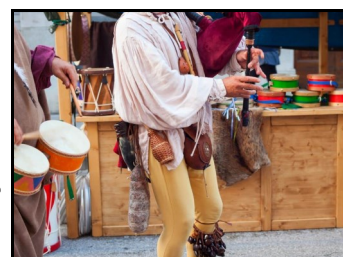
The Italians do not eat meat on Christmas Eve, or *la Vigilia*. Instead they eat a variety of fish dishes, sometimes up to seven courses of seafood! This is typical on the day and night before any religious celebration; you are supposed to 'eat lean' and purify your body ahead of the holidays! Popular fish dishes vary across the country. In Rome, they enjoy the local dish of *pezzetti*: artichoke, zucchini and broccoli fried together. Whereas in Naples, seafood and broccoli are sautéed. In addition to fish the Italians have pasta dishes on Christmas Eve. The specific pasta dishes varies depending on whereabouts in the country you are. Places like Piedmont and Lombardy in the north will eat lasagna filled with anchovies, while in Naples you are more likely to serve vermicelli with mussels or clams.



A popular Christmas tradition for those who live or are staying in Rome is visiting the Vatican for midnight mass with the Pope on Christmas Eve. This happens at 9.30pm, rather than midnight, and is free to attend. It is also televised in St. Peter's Square for those who do not manage to get into the basilica to see the Pope and participate in the mass. St. Peter's Square is even more magical at Christmas time, with its huge tree and nativity scene, and people celebrating the holidays as one.

While some Italians are attending midnight mass on Christmas Eve, others are whizzing down the slopes on Christmas Day. In northern Italy people ski down the mountains at midnight, carrying torches as a festive celebration!

In various Italian cities, and especially in Rome you are likely to find men playing bagpipes in the squares across town. Known as 'zampognari,' they dress as shepherds; this is because, traditionally, it was the shepherds who made the journey from their mountain homes into the piazzas to earn some extra money by playing the bagpipes to anyone who would listen. This was based on the story of the shepherds who visited Jesus on the night of his birth and played the bagpipes for him. The zampognari tradition dates to ancient Roman times, and it is so much fun to see it continuing in Italian cities and hillside towns today. The pipers wear short breeches with leather leggings, a sheepskin vest with a woolly cloak and a peaked cap.



It is not only Santa who brings Christmas gifts. Right across Italy, on January 6, marking the end of the holiday season there is a visit from *la Befana*. This translates as 'the good witch,' and legend says that on this date she would fill stockings with candy for the children on the good list, and coal for the naughty children.

But she did not stop there, as she would also sweep the floor: being a good housekeeper, as was in her nature, but it is said that this was also to sweep away the problems of the previous year and leave the family with a fresh slate to go into the year ahead. Her housework, according to the tale, stopped her from venturing out with the three kings on the night they went off in search of baby Jesus. She went off herself later, with a bag full of gifts for the newborn king.

At Christmas, the Italians are especially big on sweet food. Of course, it varies across the country from city to city, but they have a collective sweet tooth over the holidays! Panettone and pandoro, both examples of sweet bread, are popular across the country and enjoyed by all. But in Siena you will find *cavallucci* on offer: cookies decorated with the image of a house and on a tour of Rome city you are bound to spot someone eating spiced nut pastries known as *mostaccioli*.



In most Italian households you will find a **ceppo** on display during the festive season. Believed to have originated from the Tuscan area, a **ceppo** is a pyramid-shaped wooden frame which can be anywhere up to a few feet high. Within the frame there are shelves: the bottom shelf will display a small Nativity scene and those above will have candy, fruit, and small gifts on them. A star or little doll may be placed at the top, and sometimes candles are attached to the sides. Everyone does their **ceppo** slightly differently, but the basic premise is the same and they are a popular decoration in Italian homes during the holidays.



Best Places to visit for Christmas in Italy.

The **Dolomites**, Christmas markets, snow, and scenery. **Venice** quiet, romantic, lights and decorations. **Rome** religious celebrations, Christmas markets, decorations, and shopping. **Florence** Christmas lights, decorations, and shopping.

The Christmas markets are in fact the most attractive proposal for those who want to spend Christmas day away from home and do not want to miss the magical atmosphere of this party. Those in Bressanone and Merano are among the most beautiful Christmas markets in Italy, along with those of Trento and Bolzano. In fact, in [Trentino Alto Adige](#) Region the German tradition of the Christmas market is extremely alive and ancient. But also, in the rest of Italy in recent years original Christmas markets have been organized that are worth visiting.

The Christmas market in **Bressanone** located in Northern Italy famous for its magical atmospheres, side events, and the best of the South Tyrolean Christmas tradition. Illuminations smells of cinnamon and ginger, apple fritters, strudel and other homemade desserts await you along with carriage rides and handmade nativity scenes. Surrounded by the cathedral of Bressanone, the church of San Michele, and the town hall, the Christmas market in Bressanone is one of the most beautiful in the Alps. The market stalls sell wood carvings, handmade ceramics, alpine herbs, soaps made with milk, felt slippers, typical Tyrolean Christmas tree decorations, decorated candles, hand-painted glass balls, nativity scenes, sweets and typical gastronomy of the area, all around the large Christmas tree in Piazza Duomo, accompanied by a cup of hot chocolate, apple juice or mulled wine (hot drink prepared with red wine and flavored with spices and citrus fruits, typical of mountain areas).



Venice is very romantic with beautiful holiday lights and decorations. Many other areas in Italy to consider visiting: Salerno, Torino, Florence, Lake Como, Tuscany, and Puglia.

The main cities of the Puglia Region are all dressed up, with luminous giant Christmas trees soaring in their central squares, with artisans' markets, street artists, and musicians playing all around. Just to mention a few, you will find stunning decorations in **Piazza Ferrarese in Bari**, **Piazza Sant'Oronzo in Lecce**, **Piazza Cavour in Foggia**, and **Piazza Immacolata in Taranto**. Visiting the towns nearby cities, because they get even more beautiful than they are during the holiday season with Christmas lights and garlands festooning houses, shops, and streets.

In **Itria Valley**, around Ostuni, Cistino, **Locorotondo**, **Alberobello**, and Fasano, you will feel the real magic of Christmas in Puglia between the colored markets stalls and the trulli, where the artisans show one of the best Apulian talents.



Rome is most popular during the Christmas Holidays with religious celebrations and beautiful Nativity scenes (presepi) and other cities that are outstanding to visit are: Assisi, Naples, Matera and Manora.



You can feel the real atmosphere of **Christmas in Assisi**. The city of St. Francis, the inventor of the first Christmas Crib, the reenactments of the Nativity are the protagonists of Assisi. The streets of the center and in the surroundings every niche, showcase or church houses a nativity scene. Most of these representations participates in a contest that every year rewards the best amateur crib. Not to be missed is the exhibition "**All nativity scenes of the World**" at the Portiuncula of Santa Maria degli Angeli in Assisi. Over the years, people from all over the world donated their crib to the friars of Assisi and, at Christmas time, the Portiuncula shows the best works in the path of the Rose Garden and in the cloister of the convent.

Another marvel is the *monumental crib* in the meadow of the Basilica of St. Francis in Assisi with human size terracotta figures, the huge Christmas fir tree at the entrance of the Lower Basilica and the artistic works that every year the Italian region chosen to honor the Patron of Italy gives the Convent. In the central squares you cannot miss the classic **Christmas markets** (*Santa Maria degli Angeli e Rivotorto di Assisi*) inherited from the Nordic tradition is where to buy the latest gifts. Do not miss the traditional live nativity scenes.

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Italian American Club of Jacksonville
PO Box 600725
Jacksonville, FL 32260
904-586-2700



www.iacofjacksonville.com

Club Social

Monday, December 5th, 2022 @ 1:00 PM

Board Meeting

Wednesday, December 7th, 2022 @ 1:00

General Meeting

Sunday, December 11th, 2022 @ 1:00 PM

Spaghetti to Go

Friday, December 16th, 2022 @ 5:00 PM

New Year's Eve Party!

Saturday, December 31st, 2022 @ 8:30 PM

December 2022

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3 Club Rented
4 Club Rented	5 Club Social 1:00PM	6	7 BOD Mtg 6:30	8	9	10 Club Rented
11 Gen Mtg 1:00PM	12	13	14	15 STG Prep 10:00AM	16 Spaghetti to Go 5-7 PM	17
18 Club Rented	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31 New Year's Eve Party 8:30 PM