

La Nostra Voce

Sempre Insieme ~ Always Together

American Italian Cultural Society
1918 Donmaur Drive • Crest Hill, IL 60403

President's Report January / gennaio

Hello Club Members,

I hope you had a wonderful holiday season and a great start to the New Year. 2026 is going to be full of events. Starting with La Befana- it's not just another event, it's part of our Italian culture. I would love to see you in attendance as well as your children/grandchildren to support and learn about her story and what she represents to the Italian community. La Befana will be held on January 4th starting with the traditional Mass followed by lunch, activities and of course, the game Tombola. VIVA VIVA LA BEFANA

Our spaghetti dinners have had a wonderful turnout since we began in September, and we truly appreciate all of your help in making them such a success. We hope we can continue to count on your support. If you're able to volunteer, please contact Dave Margliano, Andrea DiVecchio or myself to sign up for a shift. Although the dinner is served on Thursday, it truly takes teamwork from Monday through Friday to prepare, serve, and clean up. Your help makes all the difference. Please support our club- our next dinner will be held on January 8th.

We have done some upgrades to the kid's room. We installed an entertainment cabinet under the TV and the club purchased a 20k game-2 player gaming arcade machine. A few more upgrades will come after the holiday season is over. If you have any board games you would like to donate to the kid's room your donation would be greatly appreciated and would be a wonderful addition for possible "Game Nights" in the future.

I would like to officially welcome our new Board. We are all looking forward to planning a wonderful year together for our club. With Dominic Talarico stepping down to focus on his new career as a Joliet Police Officer- we are excited to have appointed Dane Carlyle to fill his position on the Board and know that he will be a great addition to our Board.

We are planning to share a list of main events with you by the end of the month. Super Bowl, St. Joseph's Table, Polenta Dinner, Easter Event, Steak Fry, Wine Contest, Club Picnic, and more. We will also continue our Heritage Dinner nights and our scheduled Paint and Sip event is February 6th. If you are interested in hosting or helping with an event, please let us know. We are more than happy to support you.

The Queen of Hearts board just reset a few weeks ago with a Joker pulled. The current pot is at \$9219! Don't forget to come join us on Monday nights for a chance to win the "Queen" and participate in the weekly 50/50 raffle. Congratulations to Stephane Talarico, winner of the pull tab Christmas Wagon. We still have a few purses left with the other pull tab game and we will have a new pull tab prize launching soon so stay tuned! Plus, one of our video gaming machines has been upgraded, so come check it out!

I hope to see you in the 2026 year at the club.

Dan Brandolino



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CLUB HOURS

SUNDAY

6:30 PM -11:00 PM

MONDAY

5:00 PM - 9:00 PM

THURSDAY

6:30 PM -11:00 PM

SATURDAY

6:30PM - 11:0 PM

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Fax: 815-725-9074

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officemanager@americanitalian.org

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UPCOMING EVENTS



QUEEN OF HEARTS EVERY MONDAY NIGHT 5-9 PM

Cut off time to purchase a ticket for the Queen is 7:30pm, with the drawing at 8:00pm

JAN 1 - THURSDAY	NEW YEARS DAY CLUB CLOSED	
JAN 4 - SUNDAY	LA BEFANA	12:30pm
JAN 7 - WEDNESDAY	BOARD MEETING	7:00pm
JAN 8 - THURSDAY	SPAGHETTI DINNER	11am-7pm
JAN 15 - THURSDAY	BOOK CLUB	12:00pm
JAN 22 - THURSDAY	GENERAL MEETING	7:00pm
SAVE THE DATE!		
FEB 6 - FRIDAY	PAINT & SIP	6:00pm

2026

Membership dues are now due.



Annual dues are required on or before December 31, 2025.

After that date, a \$10.00 late fee will be added. If payment is not received by January 31, 2026, membership will be dropped.

You can pay online by scanning this QR code.



**NOW HIRING
BARTENDERS**

Are you interested in becoming a bartender? We are now hiring bartenders. AICS will provide your certification and training. Please call Matt Mauzer 815-325-7631 or Dan Brandolino 815-919-5440 for more information.

CALENDAR

January



2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 HAPPY new YEAR Club Closed	2	3
4 La Befana 12:30pm	5 Q O H	6	7 Board Meeting 7:00pm	8 Spaghetti Dinner 11am-7pm	9	10
11	12 Q O H	13	14	15 Book Clubs 12:00pm	16	17
18	19 Q O H MLK DAY	20	21	22 General Meeting 7:00pm	23	24
25	26 Q O H	27	28	29	30	31



The Feast of La Befana

Christmas season in Italy is more of a spiritual event, meaning that there is not as much gift giving and receiving as there is here in the United States. It's not that children do not know of Santa or "Babbo Natale" (they do receive small, useful gifts from him) but in many regions of Italy, the exchanging of gifts awaits the coming of La Befana the night of January 5th. That night the children hang their stockings hoping La Befana will fill them with sweets and other treats. Naughty children receive hard black candy called carbone (charcoal) as a reminder to do better. In exchange, grappa, bread and cheese are left out for Befana to help her along the way.

Tradition has it that La Befana, an old woman of modest means, lived in a shack at the time of the birth of Jesus Christ. One night, the Three Magi, on their way to find the Christ child, stopped to ask for directions to Bethlehem and for food and shelter. In exchange for her help, the Magi thanked the old woman and invited her to join them in search of the baby Jesus. La Befana initially passed on the invite, saying she had to catch up on chores around the house.

Later that night, while asleep, La Befana was awoken by an unusually bright light. Startled and afraid, she took it as a sign to follow the Magi in search of the Christ Child. Unfortunately, La Befana lost her way, failing to find the Wise Men or the manger. And so, the story continues: Each year on January 5th (the eve of the Feast of the Epiphany), La Befana takes to the skies and resumes her search of the Christ Child. As she travels from house to house, she drops off treats to sleeping children in hopes that the baby Jesus might also be with them.

EVENT INFORMATION ~ Don't miss out!



VIVA, VIVA LA BEFANA!

4 Gennaio 2026

Join us as we anxiously await the arrival of la Befana Sunday, January 4, 2026!
We will be celebrating and preparing for her arrival with mass, lunch, and fun activities for kids of all ages!!!
*Mass – 12:30pm

Tickets:
Adults Members - \$20.00
Non Members - \$25.00
Children 12 years old and under – Free

*Time of Mass is subject to change based on availability

For More Information call or Text:
Franca Libardi - 815.768.9812 or
Lynn Coladipietro – 815.530.3517

Follow link to purchase online or ticket purchase available at bar

SCAN ME



AMERICAN ITALIAN CULTURAL SOCIETY
1918 DONMAUR DR. CREST HILL, IL
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SPAGHETTI
dinner

THURSDAY
JANUARY 8, 2026
11AM - 7PM
(OR UNTIL WE RUN OUT)

\$13.00
CARRY-OUT OR DINE-IN



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Meatballs \$3.00 for 2 Sauce \$8.00/Quart
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or scan the QR Code to place your order

Some restrictions may apply



REMINDER

General Meeting

Thursday
January 22, 2026
7:00pm



Delicious Snacks will be served after the meeting!

Paint & Sip
AMERICAN ITALIAN CULTURAL SOCIETY



February 6th, 2026
1918 Donmaur Drive
6:00-10:00 pm
\$45.00 per member
\$55.00 per non-member

Ticket includes:
all paint supplies, a glass of wine & appetizers.

Scan me



For more information & to purchase tickets scan QR code

ITALIAN CUISINE RECOGNIZED BY UNESCO

Italian Cuisine Gets World's First UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage Tag

Italian cuisine has just made history by becoming the first food tradition in the world to earn UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage status. The recognition celebrates Italy's way of cooking and passing down of recipes through generations. It highlights the country's love for fresh ingredients, simple techniques and the deep sense of culture behind every dish.



Italian food has always enjoyed global love, but now it holds an honor no cuisine has ever received. UNESCO has officially inscribed "Italian cooking" on its Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity — making it the first complete gastronomic tradition in the world to earn this status. The decision was confirmed by Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, who called it a recognition of Italy's cultural identity. For Italians, cuisine is not just about eating; it is a way of living, sharing, remembering and caring. The UNESCO tag celebrates this deep relationship between people, ingredients and traditions.



Italy's bid was all about a 'living gastronomic landscape' a food culture that keeps changing but still leans on centuries of tradition. UNESCO highlighted a few things that make Italian food stand out. First, there's a real commitment to sustainability and honoring the diversity of local ingredients. Italian cuisine relies on seasonal ingredients, artisanal methods and minimal waste, reflecting a deep respect for the land.

Cooking is a communal activity in Italy. Picture a family at home on Sunday, everyone gathered around the stove, stirring ragù or rolling out fresh pasta. Nonna and Nonno teach the children how to make classic dishes. Food brings everyone together. It's about roots and tradition as much as taste. This UNESCO nod comes as Italy pushes back against 'fake' Italian food such as packaged carbonara sauces or non-authentic olive oil. Getting recognized helps Italy protect what's real: the products and traditions that make Italian cuisine special.

Italy already has 21 other traditions on the list, including the art of Neapolitan pizza making, the art of glass beads, the practice of opera singing and manual bell ringing. However, it is the first country to be recognized for its cuisine in its entirety rather than for a single tradition or recipe.

This honor is a timely reminder of food's power to bring people together across generations and different backgrounds. As UNESCO puts it, "Italian cooking gives communities an outlet to share their history and share the world around them." Italian food is not just a way of eating, it's a way of living, celebrating culture and tradition. Italian cuisine will continue to inspire and nourish generations to come.

AICS NEWS



The new AICS Officers and Board Members were sworn in at our December meeting. Congratulations to Dan Brandolino (President), Marco Coladipietro (Treasurer), Carla Montagano Liburdi (Sgt-at-Arms), Paolo Binkley (BOD 18-40), Dane Carlyle (BOD 18-40), Zak Kohlhagen (BOD 41-60), Franca Liburdi (BOD 41-60) and Sharon Muhich (BOD 61 & over).

Grazie, to outgoing Officers and Board Members Frank Pehlke, Gary Binkley, Norbert Likar, Brian Okon and Dominic Talarico for serving on the board.

We would like to extend a warm welcome to the new members of AICS, Gary & Mary Fecarotta, Silvana Wanner, Gina Corbin, Rita Ardaugh and Paula & Jason Taylor (not pictured). We look forward to getting to know you better and making lots of new memories at our Club!



Club members Steve and Kathy Joutras had an experience of a lifetime. In October they made a pilgrimage to Italy with members of St. Jude New Lenox Church including John Prevost, the brother of Pope Leo XIV. While in Rome, they had the opportunity to personally meet and visit with the Holy Father (it helps when his brother is travelling with you!) Steve and Kathy also enjoyed many other unique and spiritual experiences on their pilgrimage which they will cherish forever.

Congratulations to club members Ante Acosta and Dominic Talarico who were sworn in as the newest members of the Joliet Police Department. Officer Acosta and Officer Talarico will be attending the police academy for their training. JPD is gaining two fine young men in their department. Stay safe Ante and Dominic.

Your friends and family at AICS are very proud of you!



AICS was honored to donate our club hall for the sorting and packaging of the toys for the Miracles for Mya toy drive. Miracles for Mya is in memory of Mya Tinajero who lost her more than 6-year battle with stage IV Neuroblastoma, in March of 2017 at the age of 10 years. During her years of fighting cancer, one of Mya's favorite comforts was choosing a toy at the hospital or clinic. She began collecting toys for her birthday when she was 6 years old, to donate to other children at the clinic. Keeping with that spirit, her parents started a foundation to help families and children who have pediatric cancer. Mya was the niece of the late Christine Egizio.

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT...

FAMILY CHRISTMAS PARTY

The club was filled with Holiday Cheer on December 7th at our family Christmas party! Club members enjoyed a pot luck supper, a visit from Mr. & Mrs. Claus, games for the kids, hot chocolate bar, ugly sweater contest and Christmas carols featuring Tony Brandolino on the accordion. Thank you to Robin Margliano and her helpers Vanessa Pascente and Andrea DiVecchio for hosting this holly, jolly party.



MARTINI'S & MISTLETOE



AICS took 1st Place (for the second year in a row) at Martini's and Mistletoe! This annual charity event was held on December 8th. Our Holy Cannoli Martini was a winner with the crowd thanks to our mixologists Anna Binkley, Ali Brandolino, Andrea DiVecchio, Sandi Doyle, Christina Hayden & Vanessa Pascente. What will they do next year for a "three-peat"?



SPAGHETTI DINNER

Our December Spaghetti Dinner was a fun and festive day. Both volunteers and patrons alike were filled with the holiday spirit. We would like to say a special thank you to all of our volunteers who work our spaghetti dinner month after month. It's because of all of you that our "Spaghetti Day" is so successful!



WHITE ELEPHANT GIFT EXCHANGE



On December 15th we had a White Elephant gift exchange during our QOH. We exchanged a wide variety of fun and "unusual" gifts and shared a delicious array of appetizers and desserts while sampling our award winning Cannoli Martini.





Sunshine Report



Victor Corsetti - 1st
Kathleen McCune - 1st
Jancie Amaro - 2nd
David Alberico - 4th
Gina Rolih - 5th
Therese Stellato - 5th
Ralph Cardone - 6th
Denise Maffeo - 6th
Caterina D'Amico - 7th
Franco Franchi - 8th
Lucia Ross-Nichols - 8th



John DiVecchio - 9th
Pat Sclingo - 9th
Geraldine Timm - 9th
Nicholas Giordano - 11th
Joe Governale - 11th
Dinah Archambeault - 12th
Nino Corsetti - 12th
Matthew Starr - 12th
Jason Doyle - 14th
Michael Bank - 15th
Tony Brandolino - 16th



Dale Rodeghero - 16th
Curtis McCune - 17th
Bridgette Sprovieri - 19th
Joseph Babich - 21st
Tony D'Amico - 21st
Debi Petrella - 24th
Dominic Talarico - 24th
Kathy Hanneman - 25th
Michelle Picard - 25th
Peter Corsetti - 26th
Vincent Brandolino - 28th



Rosemary Devine - 28th
Tim Delrose - 29th
Rose Ciancanelli - 30th
John Kohlhausen - 30th
Rich Serdar - 30th
Pam Kohlhausen - 31st
GET WELL SOON!
Judy Moroz
Joanne Suriano
Jim Alberico
Rosa Conte
Geri McGinn



Jackie DiNardo and family on the passing of her husband Vittorio. Vic was a long time member of our club and will be greatly missed

Teresa and Joe Alberico on the passing of Teresa's sister Franca Danese

Sandra Kimak on the passing of her son and Mary Susan Valerugo on the passing of her nephew, club member Steve Kimak

If you are having, or know someone who is having a milestone birthday or anniversary, or know of an illness, condolence or a special congratulations for our members or if you want to be excluded from the Sunshine Report please contact
Anna Binkley (815) 342-6524 / Email: anna9108@att.net or
Robin Margliano (815) 531-9116 / Email: rmargliano@aol.com



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WORD SEARCH

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L R S C E T A R B E L E C S C A R F	CELEBRATE
C O B S M C Y Y D R C C Q R E M M R	CHILLY
C S R R G W I I E J K L A Y H W H O	COLD
T T A A C I R G O O F R W D L O C Z	EARMUFFS
V Y R A U N A J N W A E K X T N A E	FREEZE
B O B T E T S P M R N N E C B S Y N	FROSTY
O T R S L E D D I N G N O F I N K E	FROZEN
O E M A I R T E Y P R C X J O O F Y	GLOVES
T G L O V E S G G W O F D R E W M P	HAT
S W X H G I P B N A R E H E N F L E	HOT COCOA
G R E K L A F X S N O W B A L L S C	ICE
D J T E D R K A O S F F U M R A E S	ICICLE
Y D R C E Q R S U M I C E L C K R R	JANUARY
I E J E L A S N O I T U L O S E R G	NEW YEAR
H E Z C I R R O Q L I E J K L A N H	RESOLUTIONS
E E I U D S T W A A C A S G O I F R	SCARF
I T Y R E P P I L S W T A P I Q J N	SKIING
W A E K X V E N C S G E L K B T E R	SLEDDING
C H I L L Y E G B O Y K S N O O T R	SLIPPERY
	SNOWBALL
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	SNOWING
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	WINTER

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electronically from now on, please send an email to:
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CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS

Our spaghetti dinner is held the 2nd Thursday of the month from September until May every year. We are looking for more student volunteers to work in the dining room. If you can help or know any high school student who would like to work a few hours, please contact: **Robin Margliano**
815-531-9116

Did you know you can access member information from our AICS website? You can see pics from the club, download a new membership application and see copies of our newsletters. There's a member portal where you can sign up with your email.

Member access code is AICS2024
Please contact:

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for more information.

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