



NEBRASKA

A fund-raising gala last November kicked off a campaign to raise money for a documentary about the city's Italian immigrants. The initiative is headed by a committee of members from the city's three leading Italian American organizations: **the Santa Lucia Festival Committee, the Sons of Italy; and the American Italian Heritage Society.** All proceeds go to the **Nebraska Independent Film Project**, a non-profit organization that is making the film. They need \$40,000 to finish the film this spring and then will sell it on DVDs, according to committee member **Jeremy Caniglia** of the **Colombo Lodge #1419.**

In the 19th century, about 6,000 southern Italians immigrated to



Working on the documentary are (L. to R.) Oscar-winning cinematographer Mauro Fiore; Jeremy Caniglia, and writer/producer/videographer Mike DiGiacomo

Omaha to work for the Union Pacific Railroad and in the stockyards. Today, the city has 35,000 Italian Americans that still celebrate the Santa Lucia Festival, now in its 88th year.

SOUTH CAROLINA

Benvenuti to our newest lodge in Surfside Beach. Founded by **Paul Juliano, Jr., Fred Nesta, and Charlotte Ciappetta**, the **Grand Strand Lodge #2868** was formally launched September 24, 2011 when OSIA National First Vice President **Anthony Baratta** installed its first officers and presented them with its charter. The lodge has 63 members, bringing to six the lodges in S.C. National 3rd Vice President **Dan Longo**, 4th National Vice President **Tony Spaziani** and **Mr. and Mrs. Nick Ameli** travelled to South Carolina to attend the ceremony.



National First Vice President Anthony Baratta (R) presents the lodge charter to its new officer and guests.

NEW YORK

In memory of his father, a long-time lodge member, actor **Paul Borghese** of the **Rockland Lodge #2176** in Blauvelt, has built and donated a bocce court near the lodge building. The *Nunzio L. Borgese Bocce Ball Park* hosts leagues, playoffs and championship games. Paul's father died in 2009 at age 95.



Tournament bocce players debate a point at the Borgese Park behind the lodge's meeting house.



SONS OF ITALY SUPPORTS ALZHEIMER'S RESEARCH

(L. to R.) OSIA National President **JOSEPH DiTRAPANI**; **PRINCESS YASMIN AGA KHAN**; **HARRY JOHNS**, president and CEO of the Alzheimer's Association (AA); and OSIA/SIF CEO **PHILIP R. PICCIGALLO** at the AA's annual Rita Hayworth Gala in New York City October 25, 2011. The Sons of Italy presented a check for \$90,000, raised by its members. OSIA/SIF has already given \$1 million to the AA and has pledged another million dollars over the next 10 years.



SPECIAL RECOGNITION

UMBERTO ABRONZINO, a long-time OSIA member who died at age 85 in 2006, was honored by San Jose, CA, along with A.P. Giannini and 23 other Italian Americans for his contributions to the city, which also has named a soccer field in his honor. He is in the U.S. Soccer Hall of Fame for his lifelong dedication to the sport.

LAWRENCE BRANCHETTI, an At-Large member in Miami, received the 2011 U.S. Commerce Association Award in Entertainment and Production. He sings the classics of George Gershwin, Cole Porter and Henry Mancini in the style of Frank Sinatra and Dean Martin. See www.branchetti.com.

TOM FIGLIUZZI, an At-Large member in Moorhead, MN, received the city's Human Rights Award in September, 2011 for his work with U.S. military veterans.

RICHARD FURIA, Esq. of the Ivy Ridge Lodge #251 in Philadelphia, died September 16 of lung cancer at age 66. He held various offices with OSIA, including national orator; was honored by his lodge; helped establish the Justinian Foundation, which gives scholarships to Italian American law students; and with his family, was a generous philanthropist.

THEODORE GRIPPO, Esq., an At-Large member in Chicago, has been invited to join the advisory board of Northwestern University Law School's "Center on Wrongful Convictions," which works to release wrongfully convicted people. He is the author of *With Malice Aforethought* on the Sacco and Vanzetti case, and once sued "The Sopranos" for defaming Italian Americans.

JOHN MURRO, 93, of the John Michael Marino Lodge #1389 in Port Washington, NY, is the oldest living sandminer in the city, who helped dig over 140 million cubic yards of sand used for 90% of the concrete in New York City's skyscrapers, subways, roads and bridges during the 1930s. He was one of hundreds of Italian Americans, many from Sardinia, who were paid 90 cents an hour for the dangerous work. Murro was present at the rededication of the Sandminers Monument in Port Washington last summer.

JOSEPH SOPRANI, of the Benvenuto Lodge #2572 in Havertown, PA, is a world-class accordionist, arranger and teacher, who performed last October at a benefit that unveiled a portrait of Pavarotti at the Union League in Philadelphia. He performed five times with the great tenor and is the only featured solo accordionist ever to perform with the Philadelphia Orchestra under Eugene Ormandy. See www.joesoprani.com for details.

ALBERT D. ROSELLINI, the former Democratic governor of Washington State, died in Seattle from pneumonia at age 101 last October. The son of Italian immigrants, who put himself through law school, he governed from 1957 to 1965. Rosellini improved prisons, hospitals and juvenile homes and helped establish a floating bridge across Lake Washington that bears his name. He was a long-time member of the Seattle Fedele Sons of Italy Lodge #1390.

COLORADO

Robert Cancellieri of the Southern Colorado Lodge #2738 in Pueblo is a descendant of a decorated Garibaldi Red Shirt, who fought for the unification of Italy 150 years ago. At age 19, his great-grandfather, Carmelo Cancellieri, of Santa Caterina Villarmosa in Sicily, earned five medals. His son, Gaetano, immigrated to America in 1907; and his son, Carmelo fought in WW II. Robert continued his family's tradition of service. He is a retired US Air Force lieutenant colonel. The lodge displayed the medals at the state convention last spring, reports lodge member Sam Pisciotta.



Carmelo Cancellieri with his medals

GOT A GOOD STORY?

Have you or your lodge done something remarkable that makes a difference to your community or promotes our heritage? Send details with your lodge's name and number (photo optional) to: ITALIAN AMERICA Magazine, 219 E Street NE, Washington, DC 20002 or E-mail ddeasantis@osia.org. Include daytime phone no. Entries not acknowledged and photos not returned unless requested.