



## Cultural Italian American Organization

P.O. Box 1005

Auburn, New York 13021

www.CayugaCountyCIAO.org

Newsletter, January, 2026

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### ***Ciao a tutti! Hello everyone!***

**Our next meeting will be our annual Membership Meeting/Dinner on  
Wednesday, January 7, 6:30 PM at Father Nacca Hall.**

As CIAO begins the new 2026 membership year, we would like to emphasize the importance of each member's continued support through their membership. Your contributions help CIAO make a positive impact in our community. Thanks to the financial support from paid dues, CIAO has remained strong and has been able to assist various charitable groups in need. CIAO's motto is "*Cultura and Caritas.*" **We would like to invite you to the dinner meeting on January 7, 2026, at 6:30 PM.** This event serves as a wonderful opportunity to enjoy a delicious dinner (compliments of CIAO) and pay your dues for 2026, while also fostering good company. The dinner will follow a brief meeting chaired by co-chair Tony Gucciardi, while Paolo, Giuseppe, *Pompiere*, and their crew will be in the kitchen preparing the meal. *Arrivederci! Venite ad adorare la serata* – come to enjoy the evening. It is a social evening to enjoy a nice dinner and also to pay the 2026 dues. **If you are unable to attend the dinner or meeting, please submit your dues by sending a check payable to CIAO to PO Box 1005, Auburn, NY 13021. Dues are \$40 for couples and \$25 for singles. Grazie mille! Va bene? Si, ok!**

Our **February 4, 2026** meeting will continue to be a fun night - a light dinner and the dice game LCR. There is no cost for the dinner, 6:30 pm, with LCR to follow. Hope to see you! More information in next month's newsletter.

### ***CIAO Scholarship in memory of Assunta "Gina" Mironti***

On November 26, 2025, CIAO lost one of our oldest members, 97, and one of the original charter members. Gina was very passionate about helping at every event she participated in, and she was very inspirational. Without hesitation, she was there until she passed away. With her warm smile, she connected with everyone, taking great pride in her Italian heritage. *Brava! Gina ci mancherai*, we will miss you.

In Gina's memory, her daughter Anna Mironti Saltarello, and her brothers Sandro and Neno, wished to set up a scholarship in remembrance of Gina through the CIAO Scholarship Fund. Many people kindly responded to the wishes of Anna and her brothers. Instead of flowers, as requested by the family, the generosity of donors in memory of Gina resulted in extending the CIAO Scholarship to three additional scholarships of \$500 each from the donations (\$2,500) received by the family. A very significant and kind gesture from the many people who contributed. *Dal profondo vero cuore, un grande ringraziamento a tutti!* Other donations were received and forwarded to Matthew House in Auburn. A very sincere appreciation to all who made this possible. Gina (Assunta) is smiling down on each one.

## 2025 Buon Natale Christmas party

The Buon Natale Celebration was once again enjoyed by those who attended (56), sharing *buona compagnia* – *amicizia* - good companionship. The menu was very appropriate for the Christmas celebration as the Osteria Salina staff very pleasantly served a *mangia e beve*, to eat, and *vino* served for all to enjoy. Mother and son team Carolyn and John Elice did once again an excellent job to fill the evening with plenty of Christmas gifts, cheerfully. *Grazie mille*, many thanks to Osteria, Guillermo and Gabriella Salinas, very cordially offering six \$50 gift certificates for the evening's prize drawings. Also received were two \$50 certificates from CIAO member Jerry Pettigrass, one to Rosalie's Cucina, won by Rose Baratolotta, the other for Kosta's Bar and Grill, won by Francesca Giudice of Hastings, New York. CIAO member Rocco Lattanzio of Nationwide Insurance donated a \$50 certificate for Osteria, won by Francesca Libertella. Our appreciation to Mamma Maria's NY Pizzeria, Iginio and Maria Labaro, who are always there to help CIAO, donating two gift certificates for the evening. Thank you to young Matt Bartolotta of Angelo's Pizzeria, who gladly donated two gift certificates. *Grazie!* Other winners were Sue Gatto, Giuseppe Casamassa, Amy Murtari, Maria Giudice, and Amedeo Libertella of Utica, NY. CIAO was glad to have as guests Father Frank Lioi and Father Joe Martuscello. *Tutti*, everyone enjoyed our Buon Natale!

### The Story of La Befana

According to legend, the story of La Befana begins at the time of the birth of Christ. The Three Wise Men were enroute to worship the Infant Jesus when they stopped to ask directions from an old lady who was busy sweeping her cottage. They asked her to join them but she was much too busy so the Wise Men and their caravan moved on. Soon after, Befana had second thoughts about joining the Wise Men on their trip to Bethlehem and hurried off to find them. She wanted to see the Christ Child and bring Him a gift. The way was long and difficult and the old lady got lost and never found the caravan. According to legend, Befana continues on her search and as she travels from house to house she leaves behind a gift. Befana realizes that her searching is not in vain, that in a way the Christ Child can be found in all children.

#### Januarium

The name for the month of January comes from the Latin words *Januarium* and *Janua*. The old Romans used the word *Janua* specifically to identify the first door of a residence from which a person would enter the home.

In the time of pagan Rome, their God Janus, was revered and invoked by the Romans to bring luck at each new initiative. Janus was also a divine guardian of the main gate of a home. His usual representation was in the form of two heads, each looking at the opposite direction because each door/gate would go in two directions.

The first day of the year was to honor Janus. The people would exchange gifts as a sign of good luck. The Arch of Janus, a monument to honor the Roman God Janus, was constructed in the fourth century. Today it still remains in the Roman Forum of Boriano, outside the city of Roma.

#### *Dicevano I Nostri Nonni*

#### Words of Wisdom from our old people

For the celebrations of Christmas

*Dopo la feste, dolori di testa e tasche vacante*

After the festivities, you attain headaches  
and empty pockets

#### *Auguri! Buon principio d'anno!*

Best wishes for a happy new year!

After the holiday hustle and bustle has passed,  
we hope that all your joyful memories will last for you  
to enjoy with your loved ones.

May you be blessed with every happiness.

*Buona salute! Semplicemente e sinceramente i piu fervidi  
auguri per l'anno nuovo, che poro tanto benessere! Auguri!*