

**Italian Society of Savannah
General Membership Meeting
January 13, 2014
Minutes**

1. Opening Remarks

- a. Meeting called to order at 6:35
- b. Pledge of Allegiance
- c. Opening Prayer
- d. The minutes of the September 8, 2013 meeting were duly approved upon proper motion.

2. Induction/Introduction of New Members

- a. *The Membership applications of the following new Members were duly approved:*
 - i. Joe Encapara;
 - ii. Leo Esposito; and
 - iii. Mark Gerbino.

3. Committee/Officer Reports

- a. V.P.
 - i. There are now 68 members. Of those, 65 are resident members, 1 is a non-resident member and 2 are emeritus members. Thus, there are 10 vacancies for resident members and 24 for non-resident members.
 - ii. *Membership and Speaker Committees.*
 - 1. The Society is seeking volunteers to serve on these committees.
 - 2. The roles of the committees are set forth in the Bylaws.
 - 3. The Speaker Committee is working on getting a speaker for the banquet. They are in discussions with two senior leaders in the military on the Joint Chiefs of Staff as well as considering four other potential speakers.
- b. Chief Steward
 - i. The Chief's Steward's report was given by Lou Thompson in Doug Giorgio's absence.
 - ii. *Spring Social*
 - 1. The event will be on Friday, April 25th.
 - 2. The Stewards are considering new, fun ideas for the event.
 - 3. Details will follow as they are finalized.
 - iii. *Columbus Day Banquet*
 - 1. The event will be held on Friday, October 10th.
 - 2. The bi-annual golf tournament will be held on Saturday the 11th.
 - 3. Mass at the Cathedral will be on Sunday the 12th.
- c. Treasurer
 - i. Reported by the President, Scott Lauretti.
 - ii. The Society has approximately \$26,000 in the bank.
 - iii. The Society has a zero budget though last year there was a slight deficit because of the agreement to spend a little more on the banquet to celebrate the Society's 10-year anniversary. Nothing out of the ordinary is expected for this year.

- d. Corresponding Secretary
 - i. Tom Gustinella led the Society in saying an Italian phrase with the English translation: "I am Italian because the blood in my veins is Italian."
 - ii. *Membership Directory*
 - 1. Full participation has not been reached yet. Therefore, a request was made for the Members who have not done so to submit pictures and biographical information to Tom for the directory.
 - iii. *Committees*
 - 1. Tom reiterated the request for volunteers for the 3 main committees, Membership Committee, Speaker Committee and the newly-formed Community Relations Committee.
- e. Recording Secretary
 - i. The Minutes from the last general membership meeting were distributed.
- f. Archivist
 - i. The archive is current.

4. President's Report

- a. *General*
 - i. Scott stated that he is excited about serving as the President of the Society.
- b. *Five Initiatives*
 - i. Scott stated his 5-point plan, which is as follows:
 - 1. achieve full and active membership;
 - 2. establish a community outreach and Italian culture program;
 - 3. promote learning and use of Italian language;
 - 4. enhance the culinary program to match the diversity of the various regions of Italy; and
 - 5. ensure prudent, forward-thinking financial stewardship.
- c. *VOICEexperience Foundation*
 - i. As a result of the Members desire (communicated through the Member survey) for the Society to increase its community outreach and expression of our cultural heritage, the Society has agreed to support the VOICEexperience Foundation.
 - ii. The upcoming events are as follows:
(<http://www.savannahvoicefestival.org/prelude-to-the-festival.html>):
 - 1. The Prelude to the Festival on Saturday, January 25th at 3-4:30 at Christ Church located at 28 Bull Street;
 - a. Tickets are \$27.50;
 - 2. "Homage to Verdi" Film Special Screening on Tuesday, January 28 at 6:30-8:30 at Mickve Israel Temple;
 - a. Free admission; and
 - 3. Savannah VOICE Festival Artists featuring the Savannah Philharmonic Orchestra, "Scenes de La vie de Boheme," on Friday, January 31 at 7:30 at the Lucas Theatre for the Arts.
 - iii. Though some concerns were raised about awareness of the Foundation's events, it was noted that the Foundation is still in its infancy and is working on increasing awareness of its events. The Foundation is already included on Visit Savannah's website.
 - iv. Additionally, to assist in increasing awareness of the Foundation's events, the Society will circulate information about upcoming events to the membership

as well as including that information on the Society's website with a hyperlink to the Foundation's website.

- v. Several of the Members are involved with the Foundation.
- vi. It was reported that the Society's affiliation is our attendance, partnership and a pledge.
- vii. In exchange, the Society's logo will be prominently displayed.
- viii. **Any Member considering donating to the non-for-profit Foundation is encourage to do so through the Society. Contributors will be listed in the Foundation's marketing materials as donors and the Italian Society will receive credit towards its pledge to the Foundation. Checks should be made payable to the Savannah Voice Festival and sent to VP Bob Lupacchino at 48 Abercorn St., Savannah, GA 31401. Bob will forward to the Foundation.**
- ix. *Suggestions by the Members*
 - 1. Use public radio to increase awareness of the events since that is typically done for free; and
 - 2. Any attempts to increase awareness should also be focused on Bluffton.

d. *Community Relations Committee*

- i. Committees are the backbone of the Society and a request was made to approve the creation of a new committee, the Community Relations Committee, to explore and discuss what the Society's community involved should be, the affiliation with VOICEexperience, scholarships, etc.
- ii. This committee would enable the Society to consider ideas in a more organized manner. The committee members would investigate and discuss ideas and present proposals to the Members in a concise and organized manner.
- iii. After discussion, the motion to create the Community Relations Committee as a standing committee was duly approved.
- iv. A Chairman is needed, as are volunteers for committee members.

e. *Committees Manual*

- i. A manual is being created with the job descriptions and expectations of the committees.

f. *Policy Manual*

- i. A policy manual is also being created to track policies made over the years.

5. Old/New Business

a. *Adoption of By-Law Amendment*

- i. A motion to create the Community Relations Committee as a standing committee and to amend the Bylaws to reflect such was duly approved.

b. *Question regarding Credit to Members Unable to Attend Events*

- i. A question was raised about dues and whether they entitle Members to attend the Spring Social and Columbus Day Banquet or whether the costs of such are included in the dues. The Member suggested that a mechanism should be created to credit a Member's dues for the cost of an event if they are unable to attend it.
- ii. Most stated they believed the dues entitle Members to attend, rather than the proposed interpretation that the costs are included and, thus, should be refunded if a Member does not attend.

- iii. A suggestion was made that the Society consider permitting a Member to have a prospective member attend in his place if he is unable to make it.
- iv. A motion was duly approved to have the Executive Committee discuss this issue.

6. Meeting adjourned and dinner served at 7:25.