

**Italian Society of Savannah
General Membership Meeting
July 14, 2014
Minutes**

1. Opening Remarks

- a. Meeting called to order at 6:35
- b. Pledge of Allegiance
- c. Opening Prayer by Lou Mollela
- d. The minutes of the January 13, 2014 meeting were duly approved upon proper motion.

2. Induction/Introduction of New Members

- a. *The Membership application of the following new Member was duly approved:*
 - i. Dale De Roia, who was sponsored by A.J. Balbo and Gary Balbo.

3. Attendees

- a. See attached sign-in sheet.

4. Committee/Officer Reports

- a. V.P.
 - i. Membership Committee Report
 - 1. Bob Lupacchino reported that membership is now at 64 resident-members, 1 non-resident and 1 emeritus. Over the last four years, the highest number of members was 73.
 - 2. Bob then led an exercise in which the tables discussed ideas and suggestion for retaining and increasing the Society's membership. The suggestions are as follows:
 - a. Group one:
 - i. Hold an event to celebrate Italian heritage, such as a wine tasting, bocce ball tournament, etc.;
 - ii. Incorporate heritage into the meetings;
 - iii. Reach out to other possible feeder organizations like Knights of Columbus; and
 - iv. A suggestion was made to find out what other Societies have done/are doing;
 - b. Group two:
 - i. Perform exit interviews to determine the reason(s) members are leaving (financial, did it for networking reasons but not successful, etc.); and
 - ii. Have a function at a member's house to bring in potential members;
 - c. Group three:
 - i. Have a membership drive – invite members and prospective members to a function with the concentrated effort to increase membership;
 - ii. Incorporate Italian heritage into the meetings (a speaker or discussions) – art, intellectual, regions, sports, etc.;

- iii. Determine incentives and protocol for bringing members to meetings, e.g., a discount (\$25?) if the guest joins within X number of months; and
 - iv. The banquet is a seller – everyone (guests) like it some have said they like it even more than the banquets held by other societies;
 - d. Group four:
 - i. Have meetings to discuss Italian heritage, e.g., a SCAD professor;
 - ii. Notify the membership that we have room to grow; and
 - iii. Have events (possible unofficial Society events) are new Italian restaurants – more laid back than the typical business-heavy meetings;
 - e. Additional suggestions made throughout the meeting:
 - i. Send more email notices about meetings;
 - ii. After the meeting, it was suggested that the amount of business conducted and discussed at the meetings should be minimized to only the business required to be brought to the general membership's attention.
- 3. The Executive Committee will take these, and all other, suggestions into consideration and will take steps to make the meetings more enjoyable and informative about Italian heritage. If you have additional suggestions, please contact Scott Lauretti.
- 4. VOICEexperience Foundation.
 - a. Letters were sent out to the Society's membership regarding upcoming events and the Society's commitment. There is another \$1,200 owed which can be made up by donations made by members. The total commitment was \$3,000 for sponsorship/partnership and entertainment at Society events, which commitment is for one year and can be reevaluated at the end of the year.
 - b. All who have attended VOICEexperience events have enjoyed them.
 - c. The Society's logo is on their correspondence which increases awareness of the Society.
 - d. August 16th is the finale event of which the Society is the signature sponsor and will be recognized as such.
- ii. Community Relations Committee Report.
 - 1. The committee presented to the Executive Committee the idea of creating a scholarship named the Frank Finocchiaro Memorial Scholarship, named after Frank who was a founding member and a graduate of Benedictine in order to cherish his memory.
 - 2. The scholarship will be awarded to the winners of an essay contest.
 - 3. The applicants must be juniors at B.C. and St. Vincent's with a student at each receiving a \$1,000 scholarship.
 - 4. The contest will be managed by the Savannah Community Foundation (a 501(c)(3) entity) at a cost of \$200 per year.

5. O.C. Welch committed to an endowment of \$2,000 per year for the next 10 years and other members were challenged to contribute in addition to that.
6. No Society money is going to be used to fund the scholarships.
- iii. Speaker Committee Report
 1. Several ideas for a speaker for the Columbus Day Banquet are under consideration including multi-media event done jointly with SCAD. Idea is to make speeches more entertaining rather than pure lectures.
- b. Chief Steward
 - i. The idea behind the Spring Social was to get people outside in a fun atmosphere, which appears to have been successful.
 - ii. It was more difficult, time consuming and expensive to have this year's event than events in the past that were simply held at the Westin. However, it was a well-liked and well-attended event.
 - iii. Preliminaries regarding 2014/2015 event planning
 1. The banquet will be held at the Westin on Friday, October 10th. The menu each year will be based on different regions of Italy with this year's being based on Calabria.
 2. The next quarterly meeting will be on September 8th.
- c. Treasurer
 - i. The Treasurer noted that there is a protocol for bringing guests to meetings. It is \$25 per guest but a discussion could be had on whether to reduce that fee.
 - ii. Average attendance at meetings is approximately 38; however, only 18 attended this meeting. A suggestion was made to have members RSVP for meetings so the Society doesn't get charged for more members than attend the meetings.
 - iii. The bank account balance is \$24,839, with \$19,500 of that being principal that is carried forward.
 - iv. Though there have been some surpluses in the past, the Society has spent some of the principal over the last couple years due to deficits, increases in the cost of dinners, and planned spending to celebrate the Society's 10-year anniversary.
 - v. Dues – even though approval was given by the membership to increase dues by a maximum amount of \$50 per year, the decision was made not to increase dues.
 - vi. Dues statements were sent to the members, and 25 members have paid so far. Please pay your dues as soon as possible.
 - vii. Fiscal year runs from July 1 through June 30.
 - viii. The budget is a conservative-deficit budget.
 1. VOICExperience – have budgeted paying \$1,000 on that commitment.
 - ix. The budget will be posted on the website soon.
 - x. **The sign-in information for the website is as follows:**
 1. **Website:** www.italiansocietysavannah.org
 2. **Username:** member1
 3. **Password:** ciao1

5. President's Report

a. General

- i. Scott stated that he is excited about serving as the President of the Society.

b. Reiterated Five Initiatives

- i. achieve full and active membership;
 - 1. Membership slots are available;
- ii. establish a community outreach and Italian culture program;
 - 1. In place as the Community Relations Committee;
- iii. promote learning and use of Italian language;
 - 1. There is a language tutorial on the website;
- iv. enhance the culinary program to match the diversity of the various regions of Italy; and
 - 1. Regional focus on food;
- v. ensure prudent, forward-thinking financial stewardship – being done.

6. Old/New Business

- a. An event will be held at a Member's home;
- b. A member noted that on July 3rd one of the greatest Italian-Americans Louis Zamperini passed away. The book *Unbroken* was written about his life, which book remains on the best-seller list. It is being made into a movie and a suggestion was made to try to have a preview party or, at least, for a group to attend a showing of the movie together.

7. Meeting adjourned and dinner served at 7:54.

ITALIAN SOCIETY OF SAVANNAH
MEETING SIGN-IN SHEET
DATE:

Last Name	First Name	Last Name	First Name
1. De Roia	DALE	23.	
2. Balbo	GARY	24.	
3. MAGGIONI	RALPH	25.	
4. DIGIORGIO	Jim	26.	
5. SPARACINO	BEN	27.	
6. Molella	lou	28.	
7. BALBO	A.J.	29.	
8. Greco	Blake	30.	
9. Giorgio	Doug	31.	
10. Laurip	Scott	32.	
11. Szarecinski	Steve	33.	
12. Iocavozzi	Kim	34.	
13. Ron Lauretti	Ron	35.	
14. Grew	Rich	36.	
15. PELLICCIANI	David	37.	
16. CONTINO	Bob	38.	
17. Schivvero,	Bob	39.	
18. LUPACCHINO,	Bob	40.	
19.		41.	
20.		42.	
21.		43.	
22.		44.	