



December 2025  
Volume 43 No. 12

# The News

THE AMERICAN ITALIAN HERITAGE SOCIETY

A Nonprofit Corporation; Omaha, NE



## Il Presepe: The Italian Nativity Scene

The Presepe is the traditional Italian Nativity Scene — but there's more to it than you might expect! Christmas in Italy, like many other aspects of Italian culture, is rich with tradition. One of the most loved holiday rituals for Italian families is the Presepe, or Nativity scene.

A Presepe — sometimes also called Presepio (both terms are correct!) — may seem like a simple festive decoration, but in Italy it is an art form, a family heirloom, and a cultural treasure that carries centuries of history and craftsmanship.

In Italy, December 8th, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, marks the beginning of one of the most beloved Christmas traditions: setting up the nativity scene. This special moment becomes a time of joy, creativity, and togetherness, involving the whole family in a ritual that connects generations and fills homes with the spirit of Christmas.

Dusty boxes are brought down from the attic or the basement, and precious treasures emerge: papier-mâché or wooden figures, tiny handcrafted houses, or even simple plastic figurines — each carrying its own history and memories, passed down from generation to generation. Many families add one new piece each year, a tradition believed to bring good luck.

The tradition of Nativity Scenes dates back to the 13th century. St. Francis of Assisi is credited with popularizing the Presepe when, in 1223, he recreated the nativity in a cave in Greccio using real animals and local villagers. His living nativity scene was meant to make the Gospel story more accessible and emotional — and it worked. Reports of miracles and healings spread, and the custom soon became a beloved Christmas tradition throughout Italy and Europe.

By the Renaissance and Baroque periods, aristocratic families and churches began commissioning elaborate nativity scenes, transforming them into masterpieces of art. Some noble families in Southern Italy competed to create the most spectacular Presepe, complete with silk robes, golden accessories, and detailed landscapes.

The News is a monthly publication of the American Italian Heritage Society, an independent, nonprofit organization, legally incorporated in Nebraska. The deadline for submissions is the second Wednesday of the month. Correspondence and articles can be sent to [secretary@omahaitaly.com](mailto:secretary@omahaitaly.com).



## THE AMERICAN ITALIAN HERITAGE SOCIETY

**UPCOMING EVENTS****December Membership Meeting**

Monday, December 8th

Social Hour 6:30 PM

Meeting 7:30 PM

*Italian Cookie Exchange after meeting. Bring a dozen, we will enjoy some and take a plate home.***Sausage Sale Pick-up Saturday, Dec. 13th  
10 AM—12 PM****Epiphany Celebration**

Sunday, January 4, 2026

Please RSVP by Friday, January 2nd

**No January Membership Meeting****November 2025 Membership Meeting Report**

The social hour was held before the meeting. Homemade foods, salads, bruschetta, Philly sandwiches, deli subs and snacks were brought by members. Delicious foods, conversations and camaraderie were enjoyed by all. The General Membership Meeting on November 10, 2025 was called to order by President Terry Bolamperti and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance with veterans John Portera and Joe Daniels as flag-bearers. John Portera gave a respectful tribute to the veterans that were honored today on Veteran's Day. After his talk we spent a few moments in prayer in their honor. There were 22 members were in attendance. A moment of silent prayer was observed for members that are ill and special prayers were also said for the mother-in-law of Board member Dave Fucinaro, Carol Betts. She passed away at the age of 95.

The minutes of last months meeting were read by Terry Bolamperti and approved by the membership. The **Treasurer's Report** was given by Terry Bolamperti and was approved by the membership. **Old Business** was discussed including the successful fall **Pasta Dinner** held on November 2nd We had a good crowd on a beautiful day. There were many compliments on the food. We served around 610 dinners. We had a wonderful group of volunteers that ran the entire fundraiser efficiently. I want to thank everyone that helped in any way to make the event a success. The successful Festa Report was given with most ticket money in and most bills were paid.

**New Business.** The **Sausage Fundraiser** was discussed which will be held Saturday, December 13th. Volunteers will be needed to help with meat cutting on Thursday, December 11, and earlier in the week for preparation of peppers and cracked olives. If anyone could help they were asked to call Beth, the AIHS secretary. The **Board Elections** were held this year at the November meeting. Ballots were given out, collected and counted. They were voted in unanimously. Congratulations to our new Board members Beth Gibbs, Lauren Orsi and Sara Bartolomei. Jim Mazzei and Tom Grasso discussed the plans for the car show. The **Italian Cookie Exchange** will take place at the December 8th Membership Meeting. All attending were encouraged to bring enough homemade Italian cookies to share with others. Members were reminded of the **Epiphany Celebration** which will be held on Sunday January 4, 2026 with food, drinks, Santa and the Befana. We sang Happy Birthday to Joe Daniels. How old ??

The meeting was adjourned and the Piece of the Pie winners were Beth Phillips & Wayne Moore. Additional panettones were donated by Anthony Espinosa and won by Jeff Ladwig, Dawn Abboud, Lisa Deren and Terry Bolamperti. All are welcome to attend the next meeting on Monday, December 8, 2025. The social hour food will be provided by the Society, members provide the Christmas cookies.

Submitted by President Terry Bolamperti



## Sausage Sale Fundraiser

**Saturday, December 13th from 10 AM - Noon**

**Sausage: \$33 / 5 pounds**

**Peppers: \$15 / quart**

**Olives: \$15 / quart**

**Spaghetti Sauce: \$9 / quart (2 or more \$8)**

**Frozen Meatballs: \$28 / bag of 25**

**Italian Salad Dressing: \$5 / 16 oz.**

Fresh Rotella Sausage Buns will also be for sale on a limited basis.

**We still need help cutting meat and packaging.**

Thursday, Dec. 11th from 8 AM to 4 PM

Saturday, Dec. 13th from 7 AM to 1 PM



The deadline to **order** our Society's fresh Italian Sausage is Wednesday, December 10th for pick up on Saturday, December 13th. To place an order email [Secretary@Omahaitaly.com](mailto:Secretary@Omahaitaly.com) or call Beth at the office at (402) 493-8888 x 1. Thank you!

## Epiphany Celebration

**Sunday, January 4th 12:30 PM to 3:30 PM**

Pasta & Meatball (or Sausage) Dinner served at 1:30 PM

Refreshments will be available

The Epiphany is one the best family events we hold!  
It's a true ethnic event and part of our Italian culture.  
The Befana and Santa will be visiting and giving bags of treats to kids under age 12.

Complimentary dinner for Paid Members.  
Guests Welcome with recommended \$14 donation.

Additional member donations appreciated.  
Reservations are necessary so all children get a giftbag. Please indicate the number of adults and kids under age 12.

Please email [Secretary@Omahaitaly.com](mailto:Secretary@Omahaitaly.com) or call 402-493-8888 x1 to make your reservations.

We hope to see you there!





THE AMERICAN ITALIAN HERITAGE SOCIETY

**Bow Knots (Crostilli)**

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AIHS Cookbook

by Rita Scalise

- |                      |                        |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| 1 1/2 c. sugar       | 1 stick butter, melted |
| 2 tsp. baking powder | pinch of salt          |
| 1 1/2 c. milk        | Approx. 2 1/2 c. flour |
| 4 eggs               |                        |

Mix all ingredients together except flour. Add flour to form dough and knead slightly. Roll dough very thin and cut into strips about 1/2 to 3/4 inch wide and 3 1/2 to 4 inches long using a fluted pastry cutter. Tie into knots and fry in hot oil until lightly brown. When slightly cooled, coat with granulated or powder sugar. This recipe may be cut in half; it makes a large amount.



**At the AIHS Membership Meeting on Monday, December 8th, there will be an Italian cookie exchange after the meeting.**

**So please bring your favorite Italian cookies to share with other members!**

**The Society will provide the social hour meal.**



**Mark you calendars for 2026 Society Events!**

- |                        |                      |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| Sunday, January 4h     | Epiphany Celebration |
| Tuesday, February 17th | Carnevale            |
| Sunday, March 8th      | Pasta Dinner         |
| Saturday, March 28th   | Sausage Sale         |
| Saturday, May 2nd      | Wine Tasting         |
| Sunday, June 7th       | Member's Picnic      |
| Saturday, June 27th    | Sausage Sale         |
| September 4, 5, 6      | FESTA                |
| Sunday, November 8th   | Pasta Dinner         |
| Saturday, December 5th | Sausage Sale         |

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## **FALL PASTA DINNER**

Our Fall Pasta and Meatball Dinner was held on Sunday, November 2, 2025. It was a very successful event and over 600 dinners were served. We want to thank all the members who sold tickets and attended the dinner. In addition we'd like to thank all the non-members, friends and neighbors who attended. All your support is truly appreciated.

The food was delicious and enjoyed by all who attended. As usual we received many positive compliments on the food from the guests that attended. We want to thank all those volunteers that helped in the days and weeks before the dinner, including the crews who cooked the sauce, the crews that made the meatball mixture and those that rolled, baked and bagged the meatballs, those that made the salad dressing and also the crews that precooked the pasta and helped set up the tables in the ballroom. Sincere thanks also goes out to the volunteers helping the day of the event including the kitchen crew, the salad crew and all those that helped on the serving line, the take-out area, the bake sale and the bartenders. Thanks to those that helped run the front desk with ticket sales and selling the specialty food products. A very special thanks goes out to all those who helped with clearing tables and those very few who stayed late with banquet hall and kitchen clean-up.

It takes many, many volunteers to put on this event and we want to thank each and every one of you who helped in any way. The success of this Pasta Dinner is due to our wonderful, dedicated and hard working volunteers. We can't thank you enough for all the service you offer to the Society throughout the years.

Many thanks once again to member Lou Rotella of Rotella's Italian Bakery for his generosity in donating the bread for the dinner. His continued support is sincerely appreciated. Mille Grazie!

Submitted by President Terry Bolamperti





### PRAYERS FOR OUR MEMBERS

Please keep in your thoughts and prayers our members who are ill, including Ted Bolamperti, George Grillo, Cookie Mascarello-Ladwig, Geno Crisafulli, Maria Leo, Margo Pirruccello, Ann Marie Falco-Marr, Judge Joe Troia, Tara & Tim Virgilito, Cecilia Bellinghiere, Sam & Lucy Marasco, Lou Buda, Joan Gentzler, Kathy Eichelberg, Leo Fascianella, Tony Anderson, and Heather Goertz— daughter of Gary & Mary Kay Ford.

### CONDOLENCES

Please keep members David and Diane Fucinaro in your thoughts and prayers. Diane’s mother. Carol Elizabeth Johnson Betts, 95, passed away surrounded by her loving family on November 9, 2025 in Omaha, NE.

### WELCOME NEW AIHS MEMBERS

We would like to warmly welcome our new members; Ruth Molina and Linda & Charles Ternent. We look forward to seeing you at our upcoming events.

### PLEASE CONSIDER ADVERTISING WITH US

We are looking for additional businesses to advertise in our monthly newsletter. If you have a business or know of one that would like to advertise in our newsletter, we encourage you to call the office at 402-493-8888 x 1 or email Secretary@Omahaitaly.com.

### AIHS COOKBOOKS FOR SALE

Our original cookbook “A Taste of Italy” is still available for sale for \$25.00 tax included. There are many great authentic, family recipes and Society specialties.

### WELCOME NEW BOARD MEMBERS

We are pleased to Welcome our newest Board Members, Beth Gibbs, Lauren Orsi and Sarah Bartolomei . They were voted in unanimously at the November Membership Meeting. We look forward to working alongside these great ladies!



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THE AMERICAN ITALIAN HERITAGE SOCIETY

**CHARLIE VACANTI TURNS 90!**

Charter Member Charlie Vacanti celebrated his 90th Birthday at The Palazzo on Saturday, November 1st.



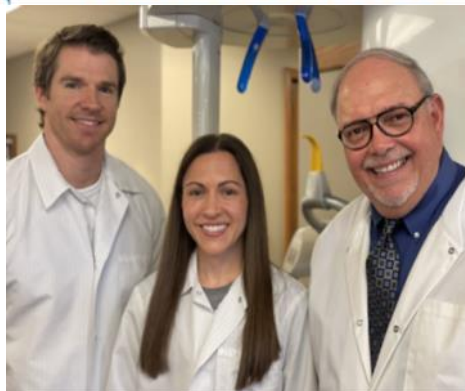
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