

Order Sons and Daughters of Italy in America

Royal Gorge Lodge #2866 - Happy 10 Year Anniversary!

2866 Still Here and Going Strong !!

Our Lodge has a lot to be proud of and a lot to look forward to, so come along and let's have a look

WHERE IT ALL BEGAN

The Very Beginning

The Order of Sons and Daughters of Italy in America is the largest and oldest Italian organization in America. The order was founded in 1905 by Vincenzo Sellero, to help immigrants assimilate into American Society.

The group established homes for the elderly, orphanages, credit unions and scholarships for Italian Americans. Today there are 400 lodges and 30,500 members.

How we began

In October of 2010, Bill Scutti, John Carochi and John Rigirosso began to assemble friends and family with an interest in founding a lodge in Fremont County. Founding the lodge meant something very special to each man.



Lodge Founders - John Carochi, Bill Scutti and John Rigirosso

John Carochi - Colorado Grand Lodge President

I was a charter member of the Southern Colorado Lodge, formed in 1999 as a men-only lodge. I became an officer and then went on to be the State President. On one trip home from a lodge meeting in Pueblo, I suggested to John Rigirosso and Bill Scutti that we should start a lodge in Fremont County. With help from family and friends, we began the task of looking for members and for a place to meet. Many phone calls and meetings later, we submitted a request for charter to the Order of Sons and Daughters of Italy in America National Office in October of 2010. The charter was approved by National on October 23, 2010, with 42 Charter members who were excited to have the opportunity to share their Italian heritage.

Bill Scutti - # 2866 Lodge President

It all began when I met John Carochi in WalMart. He asked me to attend a meeting of the Southern Colorado Lodge being held at DiRito's Restaurant in Canon City. I attended the meeting and joined the Lodge. I would attend the meetings in Pueblo with John Carochi and John Rigirosso. On the way home after a meeting John Carochi said we should start a Sons of Italy Lodge in Fremont County. We called everyone with an Italian name in the phone book. It took time but we got enough people signed up to start OSDIA Royal Gorge Lodge #2866. The Lodge was incorporated on October 23, 2010. This has been special to me. The Lodge started from ground zero. I was elected President. I have met many nice people from all over the state, and attended several conventions.

Later John Carochi, Rosie Scutti and I started the Lodge in Colorado Springs. We turned it over to them and after officers were elected it was my first time that I participated in installing officers. This whole experience and process has been life changing for me and my family.

John Rigirosso - #2866 Lodge Immediate Past President

When the idea of a local Sons of Italy Lodge in Fremont County first came up, I thought about the many Italian families in and around Canon City and Florence. A local lodge seemed like a real possibility. All three of us founders had belonged to the Pueblo Lodge # 2738 for several years. The goal and beliefs of the Sons of Italy support and celebrate our Italian heritage, a need in this local area. We could identify and invite enough families and individuals to give us a strong start. After developing a list of Italian surnames, we began to make personal contacts and do some local advertising. Sons of Italy Royal Gorge Lodge # 2866 was off and running.

On October 23, 2010, forty-two charter members formed Royal Gorge Lodge 2866, the 5th lodge created in Colorado. The lodge quickly became involved in community events and fundraising for scholarships for students of Italian descent as well as various charities.

And in 2020 we completed our 10th Anniversary year!!!!

From the beginning # 2866 worked hard to fund our Scholarship program

Our lodge has been proud to make its largest contribution to the Italian community in and around Fremont County in the form of scholarships awarded to students of Italian descent. These scholarships have always been fully funded by the efforts of the lodge and lodge members. The scholarships awarded to students of Italian heritage by the Royal Gorge Lodge have totaled \$35,000. Scholarships awards began in 2012, one year after the lodge was chartered. Lodge members have also provided \$4,200 to Pueblo Community College Fremont Campus providing assistance to students studying in programs like Fire Fighting Science and Nursing. Over the years, members of the lodge have personally funded private scholarships such as the Geoffrey & Bobby DiRito Memorial Scholarship. In the past, fund raisers were normally Spaghetti Dinners and Golf Tournaments, but because of Covid-19 restrictions, these wonderful fund raising events were temporarily suspended or moved to a revised format.

But that didn't stop the need for scholarships or the resolve of our members to fund them. The lodge now uses other options such as Drive Through Spaghetti Dinners or Raffles to fund our scholarships and keep our kids moving to the future. **You can't keep us down!**



Anna Paulino, Committee member
Tyler Faoro, Recipient

Did you know?



Cannolis for First Responders

Our lodge is well known for its large fundraisers, *Spaghetti Dinners and Golf Tournaments*, and its large community events, *Festivals and Wine Tastings*, **But Did You Know?** Members of our lodge also participate in tons of other events and charities in our area, such as:

Community Events: Orchard of Hope, Blossom Day, Fremont Foundation, and others

Community Services: Cannolis for Front Line Workers (we took our show on the road to St. Thomas More Hospital), Spaghetti Dinners partnered with St Michael's Church, Military Comfort Boxes

Working with other Lodges: Sky Socks Fun Days, State Conventions, Columbus Day Tributes, helping Charter Colo. Springs Lodge.

Personal Services by lodge members: Reroofing 4-H building, cooking for Elks Club events, and cooking for weddings, and funerals for the lodge and community.

How We've Grown!

Membership: We have grown from 42 Charter Members and 29 Continuing Members, when our Lodge was Chartered in 2010, to 127 Adult Members, 17 Junior Members and 8 Associate Members today. We are especially proud of our junior membership and hope they will continue into the future as lodge members. **Thank you to every one of us for keeping our lodge vibrant and moving forward.**

Spaghetti Dinners: One of the two events during the year designed as a fundraiser was a September 2020 Drive Through Spaghetti Dinner (partnered with St Michaels Church) which served around 370 people!

Golf Tournaments: Also a Fundraiser! Nine Golf Tournaments so far, averaging 80 players each! Spaghetti Dinners were served at 8 events and Sausage sandwiches at one.

Festivals: 2019 Festival boasted approx. 3,000 attendees, 40 vendors, and great local entertainment. Also, Aaron Caruso and Graziana Lazzaro who traveled to Canon City from the eastern U.S. (Graziana was born in Massafra, Taranto, Italy.)

Wine Tastings: Approx. 200 folks attend to taste imported and domestic wines with amazing food provided by Phil Pantleo. **Yumm!**



*** 2019 Poster ***

Our lodge also supports National Sons and Daughters of Italy in America charities such as: Cancer Research, Alzheimer's Research and others.

Still Growing and Learning New Things

COME ZOOM WITH US!

Covid has kept us apart for a while and it may be a while before we can all get together again. Soooo, come join us on ZOOM for Board meetings, Committee meetings, Youth Group meetings, Convention meetings, and possibly General meetings.

ZOOM meetings are free to participants, can be attended on Laptops, Desktops (Windows and Mac), iPads, iPhones and Android Phones.

Contact Bill Scutti 719-269-3519, John Carochi 719-275-3219, or your Committee Chair to let them know if you are interested in joining a zoom meeting, **it's easy peasy!**

So, COMB YOUR HAIR! We are all looking forward to "seeing" you on ZOOM, "The next best thing to being there."

OUR YOUNG ITALIANS

Our lodge has an amazing group of young members. To encourage these future leaders in the lodge and community, the lodge is beginning a program exclusively for them. The program will include **FUN** ways for young members to learn about their lineage, customs from their Italian region, food heritage and language. Members will be invited to attend in person or by ZOOM as they wish. A short survey has been offered to parents to help program leaders know individual info and interests.

COME HAVE A LOOK AT OUR NEW WEBSITE

On January 17, 2020 a lodge committee met to review and update the lodge website. **Now it has a whole new look!**



Type "Royal Gorge Lodge 2866" on your browser

Connect to main website pages by clicking on menu symbol at top right (three horizontal dashes)

Check out the events Calendar for the year, tributes to past events (**great photos of members having fun**), links to other lodges, scholarship applications and tributes to past recipients, and community events.

Heritage Page Includes: Area to share family photos and stories, links to family history and genealogy websites including Florence and Canon City Archives and Museums, and a link to the National OSDIA website for heritage extending back to Italy. Websites offer: Family files, photos, yearbooks, address files, maps and historical information.

Festival Page Includes: Downloadable Posters, Vendor Packets with Applications, **Photo Book that documents the Festival from start to finish, planning, set-up and fun, fun for participants.**

Looking Forward

As allowed by State and Local restrictions, Plans for 2021 include:

- ** Best Thing: A 10 Year Anniversary Party! We have a lot to celebrate!**
- ** Youth Group:** Planning to start meetings in April
- ** 2nd Drive through Spaghetti Dinner:** Planning for sometime after April
- ** Golf Tournament:** Planning tournament for June
- ** Wine Tasting:** Plan ongoing, Location and Date to be determined
- ** Festival:** Planning in process, Date: Sept 10, 11 at Veterans Park

Website: Our website will get even better! Additions will include articles each month written by **Ed Westwater highlighting the lives and accomplishments of Italians in the area.** And don't forget to use the Royal Gorge Regional Museum and History Center link, under the Heritage Tab, to connect to fascinating articles about regional history by Kathleen Keaton, Museum Education Coordinator and Loretta Stevens Bailey, local historian.

Board Meetings: Board Meetings have been ongoing. Thanks to ZOOM! Meetings will continue on ZOOM until it is appropriate to meet in person.