



Roma
Lodge 1573
ORDER
Sons and Daughters of Italy
IN AMERICA

Le Notizie

A Publication of Roma Lodge #1573

March-2026



World Ag Expo-2026

Our chairs **Michael DePaoli**, **Melissa DePaoli-Watkins** and **Maci DePaoli-Daramy** have just completed their 13th year of serving as our show booth chairs and did a wonderful job in organizing, managing and working with lodge members in offering show visitors a great meal showcasing our Italian Culture.

Special thanks goes to our chairs and our junior members who helped out. **Nick and Ed Milaneseo** along with **David DePaoli** who arrived early each day and cooked onions for us. **Ben Filiponi**, **Nick Serafin** and **Joseph Goni** who boiled and barbecued the Italian Sausage and **Karen DeGroot** and **Joyce Hofstee** who prepared a great lunch on Sunday and worked the front counter each and everyday.

Giovanna DePaoli, **Leslie DePaoli**, **Tina Sparlin**, **Nicole Taylor**, **Gianna** and **Louie Benedetti** who made sandwiches or dished out pasta. **Dominic** and **Josh Pitigliano** who setup the burners and cooked pasta or ravioli each day. We had nearly 50 members who helped out during the show from cutting onions to cleanup.

We also want to thank our junior members led by **Giulia Watkins** who helped each day wait on customers.

More great photos on the Roma Lodge website:

[Home | roma-lodge \(romalodge1573.org\)](http://roma-lodge.com)

We also want to give special thanks to **Bill Benedetti** and **David Machado** for providing us with a golf cart to take our members to and from the parking area. We could not have done it without



their help.

Each of us have to remember there is more to being a Roma Lodge member than just paying our dues each year. Our food booth is one of our major fundraisers for the year. If you compare the group pictures from the last 15 years you will find the same members are in the picture each year. We need everyone to come to the show and help out by making it a pri-



Phillip Curti cleans the posts and pans at the show.

March Meeting
Monday-March 2, 2026
 WAE Social Hall
 6:00 PM
Potluck!

It's Personal

Presidents Message

Since 1992 I have had the privilege and honor to bid our final farewell to our departed members of Roma Lodge. My first was when my dad passed away and I took his place as Herald for the lodge. Since that time I have given our graveside ritual to nearly a 90 of our members over the past 33 years.

On February 7th lodge members were present to give our final tribute to our departed member **Carol McLafferty** who would have celebrated her 60th year of lodge membership next year. Carol put up a courageous battle against cancer for over 25 years. Sadly, she was expecting her first grandchild in March.



Carol was very proud of her Italian Heritage. So much that she minored in the Italian Language when she was a student at UCSB preparing for her teaching career. Although, she lived in Goleta she never forgot her valley roots and delighted in attending Roma Lodge



meetings and functions when she could.

Along with sisters **Giovanna DePaoli** and **Kathy Briano** she loved to work in the food booth at the World Ag Expo greeting customers and working with other lodge members to provide a great Italian meal to all those who attended. When her children were making her final arrangements they knew that her services could not be held during World Ag Expo week.

Carol and husband Bill attended the 75th Anniversary of Roma Lodge in 2000. Bill and their children **Anna Lisa, Angela, Francesca and John** were members of the **Santa Barbara Lodge** and Carol served as their State Deputy as a member of Roma Lodge. Roma Lodge welcomed Santa Barbara members to our lodge in 2009 when it closed



Carol served as Roma Lodge Queen in 1969-1970 and was crowned as "**Miss California**" at the Grand Lodge convention. She was a Roma Lodge scholarship recipient and was active in all lodge activities.



Through her long battle with cancer, Carol always had a smile on her face. She never complained about her health issues and worked with her doctors at City of Hope in Duarte, California by allowing them to treat her with all of the latest cancer drugs and treatments regardless of the side affects.

Anica Gentry said it best, "**No matter what event you were at, Carol always lit up the room and talked to everyone as though they were the only people there, as she always listened in such a caring and compassionate way. Carol was a beacon of light that everyone gravitated toward. Carol truly was the constant hostess making everyone feel important. She will be greatly missed.**"

Roma Lodge has lost one of its biggest supporters of our Italian Culture. No matter how many graveside services I have done over the past many years it is always more difficult to bid our final farewell to one of my family members. **Farewell Sister Carol McLafferty, may you rest in eternal peace.**

March Potluck!

We will have our traditional March potluck meeting on **March 2nd**. Bring your favorite main dish and salad or dessert. The lodge will provide plates, utensils, bread and drinks. We have some great cooks in the lodge so bring your favorite dish to share with everyone. **Joanne Beecher** is our chair for the potluck. Call her and ask if you can help.



Final Call for dues!

We want to remind everyone if your dues are not paid by **March 31, 2026** you will be dropped. Contact **Financial Secretary, Giovanna DePaoli** if you have questions.

Roma Lodge Scholarships

Roma Lodge Scholarship applications are due and must be postmarked by March 1, 2026. The applications are on the Roma Lodge website romalodge1573.org or by contacting chair **Melissa Watkins at 559-361-0811**. Late applications will not be accepted so make sure you get yours in before the due date of March 1st.

Making It A Priority!

Chair, **Michael DePaoli** will give a full recap of the finances of the WAE food booth at the March 2nd meeting. Although the food booth is one of our two major fundraisers for the year, the booth is our pri-



mary vehicle for showcasing our Italian Culture to Tulare County and the world.

Thankfully Michael and his family have conducted the show for the last 13 years doing all the work before, during and after the show. How long can we depend on Michael to take on this major responsibility is anyone's guess.



Roma Lodge has about 260 members. Of those members about 8% are over the age of 80, 23% are junior members and about 22% live outside of Tulare County. Another 5% of our members are volunteers at the WAE for other parts of the show.

Therefore, over 55% of our membership are probably unavailable to help at the booth. Roughly 120 members should be able to assist at some point during the show. Since we had about 50 members, who helped out at the booth, we are looking at about 40% participation rate which I guess is not too bad.

I remember when I taught in high school the band director had a sign above the door which said, **"RESULTS NOT EXCUSES"** All of us can think of excuses why we cannot help at the food booth. I have to work. I have to go to school. I'm too old to help out. I'm too busy. The list goes on and on.

I guess the question to ask is simply, have you ever taken off a day from work because you had something you needed to do because it had a higher priority? Have you ever taken your child out of school because something had a higher priority than having them in school that day? **Camden Taylor** learned more about math making change for customers than he would have



done at school. **We all need to make our Roma Lodge food booth a priority during the World Ag Expo.**





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Roma Lodge
PO Box 1337
Tulare, California 93275
www.romalodge1573.org

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625 N. Main Street
Porterville, CA 93257
tel. 559-784-9000
fax. 559-784-9092
karen@pinecpas.com
www.pinecpas.com

Certified Public Accountants

Pitigliano Farms

11586 Avenue 120 • P. O. Box 9
Tipton, California 93272

CHARLIE PITIGLIANO
Off: (559) 752-4319
FAX: (559) 752-3230

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Ken Curti
Owner

CURTICO ENT.

Mobile: 559-288-2144
Office: 559-688-0444
Fax: 559-688-0448
kcurti@globalnet.net

Mailing Address
2845 W. Sierran
Visalia, California 93291

Physical Address
6556 Avenue 192
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Dennis A. Mederos
Cathy M. Mederos

Benjamin (Ben) Curti
Cell: (559) 288-0587
Personal Email: bacurti@aol.com



18357 Road 24
Tulare, California 93274
Business Email: bencurtifarms@yahoo.com

Phone: (559) 992-5806
Fax: (559) 992-4882

BANK OF SIERRA

larry@bankofsierra.com

LARRY DUTTO, PH.D.
Director

85 N. Main Street
Porterville, CA 93257

559-791-4900
559-901-4683 c

Your Roma Lodge Officers 2025-2026

- | | |
|----------------|------------------------------|
| President | Larry Dutto (901-4683) |
| Vice President | Justin Curti-(906-9109) |
| Treasurer | Karen Pedroncelli (732-1591) |
| Recording Sec. | Renee Marinelli (732-8258) |
| Financial Sec. | Giovanna DePaoli (361-0640) |
| Orator | Anthony Chiamonte (217-4055) |
| Historian | Melissa Watkins (361-0811) |
| Guard | Frank Marinelli (802-0611) |
| Past President | David DePaoli (804-5443) |
| Chaplain | Nicole Taylor (804-7056) |

Trustees

- | | |
|--------------------|------------|
| Louie Benedetti | (827-1492) |
| Mike Saltzman | (686-4340) |
| Matt Watkins-Chair | (647-7161) |
| Dominic Pitigliano | (359-1907) |
| Michael DePaoli | (730-1168) |

Mistress of Ceremony

- | | |
|---------------|------------|
| Joann Beecher | (688-8380) |
|---------------|------------|

Next Meeting

March 2, 2026

6:00 PM

WAE-Social Hall

Potluck

