



January 2026

Established 1920

Vol. XLVI No. 1

The Colombo Club
5321 Claremont Avenue
Oakland, California 94618

To Make Reservations:
www.thecolomboclub.com/
Calendar-of-Events/
(510) 653-9020 or (510) 653-9716

2026 Officers

Joe Ianora	President
Vince Fratangelo	First Vice President
Mark Rezente	Second Vice President
John DeRespini	Corres. Secretary
Perry Vittoria	Financial Secretary
Matthew Moran	Treasurer
Marc Emeldi	Sergeant-At-Arms

Board Members

Tony Ballesteros	2025-2030	Chair
Joe Guerrero	2024-2026	
John Mazibrook	2024-2026	
John Nardi	2024-2026	
Don Ceremello	2024-2026	
Albert Traille	2025-2027	
Nicholas Bloisa	2025-2027	
Dave Nardi	2025-2027	
Dino Rinetti	2025-2027	
Patrick Scalise	2026-2028	
Mark Amaro	2023-2025	
Michael Covione	2026-2028	
Nick Nicora	2023-2034	

Sunshine Chair, Gordon Bowman
gbowman999@yahoo.com

Birthday Dinners

Jan 8 and 22

Salad, Rigatoni and Chicken Cutlet, Dessert, Wine & Coffee

Birthday Dinners

Thursday, Feb 12 (Men only)

Thursday, Feb 26 (Co-ed)

Menu: Salad, Risotto Milanese, Roasted Chicken, Dessert, Wine and Coffee

2026 Dinner Start Time: 7 pm

New Start Time! 5:30 pm Cocktails; 7 pm Dinner

\$33 Members, \$38 Guests

\$16 Children 6-12 yrs

To Make Reservations:

www.thecolomboclub.com/*Calendar-of-Events/*

Thursday, Jan 8 (Men Only)

Thursday, Jan 22 (Co-ed)

For reservations, please use the website
www.thecolomboclub.com/*Calendar-of-Events*
Please use the phone as a backup only: (510) 653-9020.
To cancel reservations use the Contact Us tab on the website.
For a full refund, you must cancel by 7 pm, Sunday before the dinner.
Cashless policy will be followed.

It's Crab Feed Time!



Saturdays,

Almost SOLD OUT! January 17 - Scholarship Fund Raiser

February 7 - Colombo Club

Almost SOLD OUT! February 21 - Colombo Club

Make your reservations online at
www.thecolomboclub.com

Menu

Antipasto, Salad, Linguini with Clams, fresh Dungeness Crab, Wine, Coffee and Dessert

No-host Cocktails 5:30 pm
Dinner 7 pm

\$80 per person

Old Fashioned Family Dinner

Sunday, January 24

Antipasto,
Salad, Spaghetti
& Meatballs,
Dessert, Wine
and Coffee



Cocktails 4:00 pm

Dinner 5:00 pm

Tickets:

Members and Guests
\$25

Reserve your spot online now at

www.thecolomboclub.com/*Calendar-of-Events/*



Check the website

for our

Calendar of Events!

www.thecolomboClub.com

President's Message

Felice Anno! (Happy New Year!)

Wow, hard to believe a whole year has gone by! Thank you for making my first year as President a wonderful experience! I always look forward to our Thursday night gatherings – good food, good conversations, and GREAT people!

December's 74th Annual Children's Christmas Party was outstanding! A huge "Thank You!" to co-chairs Denise Picetti and 2nd-VP Mark Rezente for planning, coordinating, and organizing a great event!

Looking forward into 2026:

1. Dues are being accepted right now...online.
2. January is a full month at the club – Crab Feed (1/17), Thursday dinners (1/8 and 1/22), Saturday Family Dinner (1/25). Buy your tickets for these events, now...online.
3. Do you have a friend who wants to become a member? Have them fill out the membership form...online.
4. Celebrating a special event and need a place to have it? Book the club...online.

I hope you are sensing a theme. We have moved into the 21st century, so don't be afraid to join us here (it's okay if you don't, we still have the old reservation system).

We held our first ever "watch party." While the Raiders weren't much to watch, the concept was a success. We want to do more "big screen" events so please let me know what sporting events you would like to see!

This month, our always popular Scholarship Crab Feeds will be held, on January 13th and January 20th; and, if you'd like to plan ahead, on February 17th! These events always sell-out, so please get your reservations in ASAP! To date, our members' generosity at these annual events has resulted in approximately \$400,000 in total scholarship awards. Scholarship application information, for both the Colombo Club/Colombo Club Auxiliary and Bossola Scholarship programs are available now; please check this newsletter for additional information.

If you have an idea for an event that you'd like to see held at our Club, and/or if you would like to volunteer at our Club, then please contact me at my email address, below.

I look forward to seeing you at the Club soon!

Ci Vediamo,

Joe Ianora

jianora1@gmail.com

Women's Auxiliary President's Message

Buon Anno! (Happy New Year!) Starting off our cold mornings with a cup of joe and a slice of panettone always sounds like a winter treat to me. As I get my motor running, I would like to remember all those people who have helped us through the year 2025. Our family, friends & neighbors who gave us love and support in times of need and spent time with us in cheerful moments as well. Who would we be without all the people we are keeping company with?

Italians also celebrate "Little Christmas" with the Feast of the Epiphany (La Befana or La Festa dell 'Epifania) on January 6th. It also happens to be Frances Bienati's birthday.

The 88th Anniversary Dinner Dance was such a great event. The I.A.F. Queen Giuliana had shared her words of wisdom and heartfelt memories with us. The Colombo Club cooks made the best meal and the dessert was scrumptious. We celebrated with many of the East Bay Italian American Club Presidents. We danced the night away to music of the George Campi Band (which we needed after all the delicious food).

Our 74th Annual Children's Christmas Party with Santa & Mrs. Claus was a great success. We celebrated with the kids beginning with the sitting of Santa's sleigh over San Francisco. We sang Christmas songs, had popcorn, cotton candy & Shirley Temples in the ballroom. There was even an Elf who passed out red noses as they sang the iconic song "Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer." When the children received their gifts and sat on Santa's lap for the family to take pictures, they descended into the dining room for a hotdog lunch with cookies, potato chips & juice boxes. If this sounds like fun, you are right. But you have got to make those reservations in early October.

January 2026 is a time when the days are shorter and whole lot colder. Our meetings will be via Zoom for January 21st and February 18th. The Auxiliary Scholarship Crab Feed is January 17th. Please make reservations soon.

We have our next Auxiliary Dinner in February, date TBA. It's Valentine's Day Dinner. Perfect for couples, families & friends to celebrate together.

Buon cumpeano a tutte le nostre amiche nate a gennaio!

Remember to let our Sick & Sunshine Ambassador, Elaine Kless, know if a member has been hospitalized or ill. Please call her at (925) 858-9245.

Auguri a tutti voi per il nuovo anno. (Best wishes to you all in this new year)

Renée M. Amaro

Colombo Club Auxiliary President

reneearamo@comcast.net

Buon Compleanno!

John B. Accinelli
 Richard Andres
 Mark Avila
 Daniel R. Bardon
 Brian Biancardi
 Jimmy Blythe
 Ron Borelli
 Ralph A. Brignone
 Victor Bullock
 Brian Calegari
 Gerard Callahan
 Vince Capurro
 Kevin Cardenas
 Gary Carlson
 Glen Cartwright
 Jose Cerda
 James Charlton
 Ronald Conte
 Aldo Corsi
 Carlo Crivello
 Michael Cusenza
 Gary Damele
 John M Davini
 Steven Dinelli
 Chris Dobberpuhl

Brian Ficarra
 Anthony Fiorica
 Joel Franciosa
 Vincent M. Fratangelo
 Jerry Garcia
 Christopher Gasparro
 Joe Grammatico
 Anthony Granelli
 Jonathan Hallin
 Adam Herbert
 Steve Hurlbut
 Charles Ingrao
 John Lucasey
 Chris Lucia
 Jeff Lucia
 James Machado
 Bob Mammarella
 Nicholas R. Michael
 Michael Mittelbuscher
 Gary Lester Mittone, Jr.
 Richard Moore III
 Ken Moudy
 David Norton
 Paul Nuti
 Joseph Orsi
 Dennis O'Sullivan
 R. Armond Ouellet
 Herc Pardi
 Damon Pellegrini
 Michael Perillo
 Dustin Perucca
 Dean Pichotto
 Dennis Popalardo
 John D. Ratto
 Michael Rodrigues
 Craig Rossi
 Patrick J. Sangiacomo
 Jim Scalise
 Ronald Scalise
 Nick Schapiro
 Steven Nello Siino
 Marco Splendorio
 Robert Thompson
 Sam Toriggino
 Ron Umile
 Roger W. Verducci
 Roger J. Verducci Jr.
 Steven von Stade
 Craig Walker
 Tom Wolf

In Memoriam
C.M. Cronin **Rich Puppione**
 Member since 2010 Past Club President, Past Club Chairman

felice
 anno
 n2026

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Grazie Mille Incentive Program Donors

Thank you to these generous donors who contributed to our incentive program in December: Tim Tomei, Stefan Molnar, Vincent Traverso (Kingfish Pub & Cafe), John Porras (Crown Wine & Spirits), Heffernan-Brignole Insurance, Aaron Yang, Dino Rinetti, Michael Covione, Fredi Moehl, James Bartha, Joe Gennaro, Jerry Jennaro, John & Kelley Beauford, Ugly Duckling Racing, Walnut Creek Bulldogs.

2026 Scholarship Applications Available!

1) Colombo Club/Colombo Club Auxiliary 2025 Scholarships:

Applicant Requirements:

- Must be the child or grandchild of a current Colombo Club or Colombo Club Auxiliary member
- Must be a high school senior who is graduating from a high school accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges.
- Must provide completed application, including required attachments, before March 15, 2026.

Scholarship applications are available at the Colombo Club at the bar in the Club Room. Any questions, contact Tony Ballesteros at ballesteros@protonmail.ch.

2) The Bossola Scholarship for 2026

Applications are available by sending an email request to bossolascholarship@gmail.com. The deadline for completed applications is March 15, 2026.

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Our Cultural Heritage

by Rich Puppione

Colombo Club Events in January throughout the Years

In January 1923, it was decided that members' children would be admitted free of charge to the dinners and dancing until they reached the age of 16, but they were not allowed on the dance floor if the ballroom was full.

In January 11, 1949, the club held a cioppino banquet. The cost was \$1 per person. A large number of members and wives of the members attended the event. When the banquet came to an end, "armoniose melodie" (harmonious melodies) were played by accordion player Mike Giacobetto. The evening reached its climax when the well-known soprano Antoinette Bottana, among great applause, sang soft arias of Italian composition. The evening ended with toasts and cheers for head chef Mike Roggero for making the cioppino.

January 1954, Mario Lovisone made several changes to club policies. The first was to hold the Board meetings in English. Members who still wanted to speak Piemontese at the meetings were allowed to do so. It was decided at the meeting that no politician would be allowed to speak at the club about political issues, but they were allowed to attend events as guests. The Board also decided that they would give out cigars to each of the members at the birthday dinners. It was at this time that a decision was made to hang pictures of all past presidents on the walls in the club room.

On January 9, 1958, the club held a special sports night to honor local baseball great, Cookie Lavagetto. Rocky Marciano, who was in Oakland to referee a local wrestling match at the Oakland Auditorium, decided to attend the event. Eddie Basso remembered that Ernie Lombardi, one of the greatest

baseball players of all time, was also at that dinner. Ernie's wife had just passed away, and he was in a deep depression. Word started getting around that Ernie Lombardi was at the club and when it reached Marciano, Rocky jumped up from his chair and rushed over to Lombardi and kissed him and said, "You are my hero!" It seems that Rocky had grown up watching Lombardi play catcher for the Boston Braves. Ed Basso said, "That night Ernie Lombardi came out of his depression. It was such a great night."

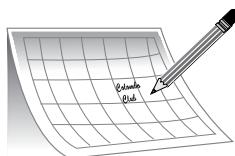
The retired and undefeated heavyweight boxing hall of fame champion Rocky Marciano was again in the Bay Area in 1969, and this time the Board voted to pay him \$500 to attend a sports night benefit dinner. It took place at the annual sports night on January 24, 1969.

In January 1998, the club dues were raised to \$75 per year.

In January of 2009, the club updated the reservation procedures and started a new policy to charge members \$10 for each no-show at dinners.

In January 2015, the price for members and non-members at the birthday dinners were increased by \$4 to adjust for the minimum wage rate in the city of Oakland.

Starting in January 2022, only credit cards and checks were accepted payments for dinners at the ticket booth. Also, for the first time, members were now able to pay their yearly dues with a credit card online through the Colombo Club's website.



Mark Your Calendar

Birthday Dinners, *Chicken Cutlet, Rigatoni*

Jan 8 - Men Only
Jan 22 - Co-ed

Jan 17 - Scholarship Crab Feed, *Linguine & Clams, Fresh Cracked Crab*

Jan 24 - Old Fashioned Family Dinner, *Spaghetti and Meatballs*

Feb 7 - Scholarship Crab Feed, *Linguine & Clams, Fresh Cracked Crab*

Birthday Dinners, *Roasted Chicken, Risotto Milanese*

Feb 12 - Men Only
Feb 26 - Co-ed

Feb TBA - Auxiliary Valentine's Day Dinner

Feb 21 - Colombo Club Crab Feed, *Linguine & Clams, Fresh Cracked Crab*

Birthday Dinners, *Corned Beef & Cabbage* **Mar 12** - Men Only **Mar 26** - Co-ed

Mar 21 - Family Dinner *Surf & Turf, Clam Risotto, Steak and Shrimp*

Mar 28 - Auxiliary St. Patrick's Day Dinner

Make reservations and see additional events on our website at www.thecolomboclub.com/ Calendar-of-Events/

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Christmas Party Reflections 2025

What an incredible turnout—and an even more incredible display of teamwork. For 74 years, this event has been one of the Colombo Club's most meaningful traditions, and this year's Children's Christmas Party was a beautiful continuation of that legacy. About 150 children attended The Colombo Club & Women's Auxiliary Children's Christmas Party, and an additional 30 presents were delivered to children who were unable to be there in person. Counting parents and guests, we welcomed more than 450 people into the Club for this special tradition.

This year was also a first for me: for the first time in many years, I wasn't the emcee. And while I missed being up front with the microphone, it gave me a different kind of joy—watching the night unfold from the floor, seeing the teamwork, the smiles, and the magic that this Club creates when we come together.



A heartfelt thank you to the Women's Auxiliary for purchasing, wrapping, organizing, and handing out every single present. Thank you as well to the many

Colombo Club members who helped set up, clean up, and handle the countless details that make an event like this run smoothly. And to the volunteers from both organizations who prepared and served lunches in the main dining hall—your time and effort made a huge difference. The event was an incredible success because of you.

Special appreciation goes to the Verducci Family for continuing their long-standing tradition of working this event, and to the Bradley and Moehl Families, who welcomed guests and helped distribute programs and candy canes. Your warmth and attention helped ensure each child and family felt the spirit of Christmas from the moment they arrived.

One of the best parts of the evening is still the same: watching each child climb the stairs, peeking around the shoulder of the person in front of them, trying to catch that first glimpse of Santa and Mrs. Claus. Then comes that moment—receiving a present, walking shyly to Santa, offering a quiet “thank you,” or answering a question with the kind of seriousness only kids can bring to the stage. And as they step away, so many can't resist one last look back and a final wave before heading down to the main hall to unwrap their gift.



It's equally fun to watch the parents and grandparents—phones up, cameras clicking—capturing every second. Later, seeing families gather around the Christmas tree or in Santa's sleigh for a group photo is a reminder that this night isn't just about presents; it's about memories.

As I reflect on the years I brought my own three children to this celebration, I can't help but smile. I'm grateful to be part of a Club that protects traditions like this—and keeps them strong, year after year. Thank you to the Colombo Club and Women's Auxiliary for continuing to give our families a Christmas event that's truly meaningful, joyful, and unforgettable.

Because this party has so many moving parts, it's impossible to name everyone without accidentally leaving someone out—but I do want to recognize a few who were especially helpful: Marc Emeldi, Denise Picetti, Tony Tedeschi, Mark Rezente, Don Ceremello, and Dianne Marangio.

And a big THANK YOU to those who served on our Kitchen Committee, our amazing cooks (Rick Caula and Bob Novich) and bartenders, the toy wrappers, elves, floor committee, and to Mike Covione for the popcorn and cotton candy. We truly couldn't do it without you.





If you'd like to volunteer at next year's Children's Christmas Party, please let me know. It's one of the most rewarding events we do—and I promise you'll be glad you jumped in.

Sincerely,

Joe Ianora,
Colombo Club President
jianora1@gmail.com

