

The Italian Genealogy Society of New Jersey

ALBERT MAROTTA

The Italian Genealogy Society of New Jersey met on February 6, 2016 at its new venue, the Clifton Public Library. Nineteen people attended.

Maria Carparelli opened the meeting by conveying her happiness with the Society's new meeting room, which the members shared.

Judy Bonzkowski presented the treasurer's report. The ending balance as of February 6, 2016 is \$253. The chapter has 29 members; however, only 27 of these have kept their membership current with the payment of dues. Annual membership dues were collected.

This was the Society's annual business meeting.

Janine Marchetti initiated a discussion about possible ways to increase the Society's treasury in order to pay for quality programs. She favored an increase in dues. Sal Lagattuta suggested a possible fund raiser and someone thought that donations to a Speaker's Fund might be a possibility.

Another goal is to increase membership. Press releases about the Society and its programs are featured in local newspapers and on some online sites. Annita Zalenski and Carolyn McNamara continue to publicize the Society using these methods. Since the Society's new location is settled, Sue Berman's daughter, Olivia, will use her expertise to create a Facebook page for it. Also, the new brochure promoting The Italian Genealogy Society of New Jersey will be very useful in this regard.

A 20th anniversary committee was formed to make plans for the Society's anniversary and its chairperson will be Annita Zalenski. Janine Marchetti, Al Marotta, Corinne Martinelli, and Sue Berman are also on the committee. Mention was made to possibly update the Society's database booklet of members' research.

A Nominating Committee was formed to get together a slate of officers to be elected by the membership. Maryanne Graham agreed to take the role of Corresponding Secretary, since Sal will be unable to continue in that position. All the other officers will remain on the slate. The new slate of officers will take office February 2017.

The chosen officers are:

President: Maria Carparelli

Vice President: Susan Berman

Treasurer: Judi Bonzkowski

Recording Secretary: Albert Marotta

Corresponding Secretary: Maryanne Graham

Genealogical-related questions and suggestions arose as the meeting continued. Catherine Cavallo was considering obtaining dual citizenship, but wondered if it was possible, since her father might have renounced his citizenship when he served during World War II. She also wanted to know if foreign passport applications were available anywhere. Annita thought that, if you were born before your father became a U.S. citizen, you might be able to obtain dual citizenship, but she said that it would be best to contact the Italian Consulate with these questions.

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Joe Zitelli wanted to translate an Italian birth certificate and asked if there was a better translation than the one google provided. Trafford Cole's book, *Italian Genealogical Records: How to Use Italian Civil, Ecclesiastical & Other Records in Family History Research*, was recommended as containing excellent translations for these documents. Carolyn reminded members that PIE (POINTers in E-mail) is still active and is accepting questions.

Janine had questions about the use of DNA in genealogical research. Annita had used *23andme* for her DNA test. *23andme.com* is a personal genomics and biotechnology company located in California. It is named after the 23 pairs of chromosomes in a normal human cell. This company considers itself to be the first and only genetic service available directly to the client that includes reports that meet FDA standards. Annita had three different tests performed and found that she shared genetic material with Laplanders. Maria said that she had *AncestryDNA* perform her genetic tests. *AncestryDNA* is a gender neutral test and is based on autosomal DNA tests. It not only analyzes the Y-chromosome (for the direct paternal line) or mitochondrial DNA (for the direct maternal lineage), but analyzes the client's entire genome at over 700,000 locations. The company also compares the results to those of other clients and often finds matches. Sal, too, had DNA tests done. Maryanne said that she and her two brothers plan on getting their genetic testing through *AncestryDNA* and she hopes to report the results to the Society in May.

Annita encouraged members to write to the towns and provinces in Italy where one's ancestors originated. She showed members some items that she received. Italian towns love to share the history and beauty of their regions and often send a researcher free booklets. This can place one's research in necessary context and adds immensely to the understanding of our ancestors' lives.

Future meetings will be held on:

August 6, 2016
November 5, 2016
February 4, 2017
May 6, 2017

For details, see our website: <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~njigc/>