



7130 Highway C  
Racine, WI 53403

**ROMA LODGE**  
**HANDBOOK FOR APPLICANTS AND**  
**PROPONENTS**

**Adopted by the Roma Lodge Board of Directors**  
**September 2, 2003**  
**Revised June, 2021**

# ROMA LODGE HANDBOOK FOR APPLICANTS AND PROPONENTS

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Authored: September 2003, Revised October 2004, August 2005, August 2006, June 2021

## INTRODUCTION

*This Handbook is intended for perspective new members and their proponents. It outlines the benefits and responsibilities of being a member, and the responsibilities of the proponent of a new member. It also highlights history and purpose of the Lodge and the many activities and functions the Lodge offers its members. It is our hope that this Handbook helps both candidates for membership and their proponents understand the procedures for both becoming and remaining a member in good standing of ROMA LODGE.*

## **ROMA LODGE MISSION AND PURPOSE**

*Members of Roma Lodge share a deep appreciation of their Italian heritage and the continuing contributions of Italian-Americans to life in the United States. The Lodge is dedicated to its motto, "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity". It strives to enroll in its membership all men of Italian birth, descent, or lineage, regardless of religious faith or political affiliation.*

*The Roma Lodge By-Laws detail the purposes of the Lodge. Some of these include:*

- *Foster a pride in, and awareness of Italian culture through lectures, conferences, study groups, tours, and classes.*
- *Foster a fraternal relationship among its members, a commitment to the goals of the organization, and a feeling of pride in the value of the Lodge.*
- *Plan, promote, and carry out charitable events to enhance both the work of the Lodge as well as other community organizations*
- *Keep alive a spiritual attachment to the traditions and beliefs of our Italian ancestors.*

## **ROMA LODGE -A Brief History-**

*Italians began immigrating to Racine in the early 1900's. As with many European immigrants, the Italians came to Racine to improve their economic status. They left their homes in cities and farms in search of new opportunities in America and the industrialized Mid-West.*

*Racine at this time was becoming a heavily industrialized city. Most of these Italians did hard, manual labor for their livelihood. A high percentage of Italians found employment at Belle City or Lakeside foundries. Others found jobs at the J.I. Case South Works. They built roads and buildings, toiled in the fields, and worked in the shops. The first Italian immigrants, although unskilled, uneducated, and struggling in the New World, prospered largely by the sweat of their brows. Other Italians became small business owners of barbershops, restaurants, and grocery stores.*

*Italians in Racine established two distinct communities, Northside, and Lakeside. The Northside Italians lived near the foundries where most of the men worked. The area was bounded on the north by High Street and south by Prospect Street, and on the east by Milwaukee Street and on the west by Carlisle Avenue. The Lakeside neighborhood was located between the south city limits (21<sup>st</sup> Street) and Case South Works, Lake Michigan on the east side and the Northwestern railroad tracks on the west. These Italian neighborhoods became communities within the city of Racine. They were almost self-contained units, where a family could find nearly all the necessities and amenities of life.*

*In 1907, Northside Italians formed a mutual aid society, which later became affiliated with the national organization, the Order Sons of Italy in America. In 1923, a permanent Roma Lodge building was opened at 1300 North Memorial Drive. In 1917, the Lakeside Italians established Roma Hall.*

*Both the Roma Lodge and Roma Hall, as mutual aid societies, helped Italian immigrants find jobs and housing, paid sick and death benefits, provided instruction in English language and civics. They also helped preserve Italian customs, language, literature, and culture. As populations in Racine shifted and relocated, membership in Roma Hall declined. However, the Roma Lodge continued to grow and expand.*

*In 1979, the Roma Lodge began holding an annual Italian Festival to showcase Italian customs, food, and heritage within the Racine community. The Festival also served as a prime fundraiser for the Lodge, and its plan for future growth and expansion. The festivals proved to be great successes. The Racine community recognized the Italian Festival as an event that offered good food and entertainment for the entire family at reasonable prices.*

*With the growth in both membership and functions and activities, the Lodge was outgrowing the site on Memorial Drive. Plans for a new Lodge building at a new location were developed. In the late summer of 1987, the Roma Lodge moved to its present facility at 7130 Spring Street. Continued growth in the Lodge led to several additions to the original building, including a new Members Lounge and Dining Room, Hall of History, expanded and remodeled in-door bocce courts, additional storage facilities, and the remodeling of what is now the Vittoria Colonna Hall.*

*Today, Roma Lodge is one of the most successful fraternal organizations in Southeast Wisconsin. Members reside throughout Racine County and neighboring communities in Kenosha and Milwaukee counties. With changing demographics and more second, third, and fourth generation Italian-Americans as members, some of the original purposes of the Lodge as a mutual aid society have been dropped. The Lodge continues to provide a center for Italian-Americans to gather and foster Italian-American culture through social, cultural, and entertainment events, scholarships, and gifts to local charities. But most importantly, the Lodge membership continues to take pride in its Italian heritage and the Italian immigrants who strived so hard to find a place for themselves and their children in the United States.*

# **ROMA LODGE**

## **EVENTS AND FUNCTIONS**

*The Lodge offers a wide variety of activities and functions, including dining in the Roma Café, the Members' Dining Room, and entertaining in the Member's Lounge. Some functions are limited to members only, some for members and their families, and others for members, guests, and the public. The success of these events depends upon participation of the membership – both in attending and in volunteering to assist in presenting them. Events are announced at the monthly General Membership meetings and the in the monthly Roma Lodge Newsletter.*

### **Roma Lodge Charitable Donations**

*One of the purposes of Roma Lodge is to support charitable causes, such as, community-wide healthcare organizations and community fundraisers (i.e. Roma-Kiwanis Pancake Day), where part of the proceeds is returned to needy benefactors within the Racine area. This is one way the Lodge can thank the local community for its support of Roma Lodge over many years. The Lodge may also hold benefit dinners for members who need financial support because of some catastrophic occurrence such as severe health issues.*

### **Roma Lodge Merit Scholarship Program**

*Each year through its College Merit Scholarship program, the Lodge awards scholarships to graduating high school seniors who are children of Lodge members and are pursuing an advanced degree.*

## **REQUIREMENTS FOR PROPONENTS OF NEW MEMBERS**

*The Roma Lodge By-Laws state that, "All applicants must be sponsored by a regular member, who has been a member in good standing for the previous two years."  
(Article V, Section 2 A.)*

## **RULES FOR PROPONENTS**

*A Roma Lodge Member proposing a new applicant for membership is required to act as a model for the new member. He should introduce the new member to his brother Lodge members and familiarize him with Lodge events and functions. The proponent should assist the new member meet his responsibilities during the one-year probationary period.*

*Specifically, the Proponent is expected to:*

- *Explain the requirements of Lodge membership*
- *Describe the benefits of Lodge membership*
- *Attend monthly Roma Lodge Membership Meetings with the new member*

- *Participate with the new member in volunteer projects and Lodge functions*
- *Monitor the progress of the new member in meeting the requirements of Probationary Membership*

## **REQUIREMENTS FOR MEMBERSHIP**

*The Roma Lodge By-laws specify that any man may apply for membership if the following qualifications are met:*

1. *He has reached the age of twenty-one (21) years, and*
2. *He was born of an Italian parent, or a parent of Italian lineage, OR*
3. *He was adopted by an Italian parent, or a parent of Italian lineage, OR*
4. *He is the spouse of a person who is Italian, or of Italian lineage, OR*
5. *He is the spouse of a person adopted by a person of Italian lineage, OR*
6. *He submits the results of genetic testing that shows Italian ancestry.*

## **PROBATIONARY MEMBERSHIP**

*In March 2002, the Roma Lodge Board of Directors and the General Membership established new rules and procedures for attaining membership in the Lodge. These rules are intended to help new members and their proponents understand the privileges of membership and their responsibilities in helping to insure the continued success of the Lodge.*

*The Membership Rules establishes a 12-month probationary period for new members; beginning with the month the new member is elected to the Lodge membership. During that probationary period, the new member must fulfill the following minimum requirements:*

- *Attend at least two (2) Roma Lodge general membership meetings per year.*
- *Attend at least one (1) Lodge social or fund-raising events per year.*
- *Volunteer to work at least one (1) Lodge functions per year.*
- *Incur no reprimands from the Board for any violations of Roma Lodge By-laws or rules.*
- *Not be convicted of a felony.*

*In addition, all members are encouraged to sell or buy their allotted number of Roma Lodge Italian Festival raffle tickets. The member is also responsible for returning all unbought or sold tickets to the Lodge.*

## **THE APPLICATION AND SCREENING PROCESS**

### **COMPLETING THE APPLICATION FORM**

The Application Form must be completed in full and **signed by both the Applicant and the Proponent.** By signing the Application Form, both the applicant and proponent agree to abide by the requirements set forth in the By-Laws and Membership Rules.

The Proponent should submit the completed application form by the application date specified on the Membership Committee Interview Schedule for the desired month to the Roma Lodge Membership Secretary.

## **THE MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE INTERVIEW**

After reviewing the Application Form for completeness, the Membership Secretary will schedule the proponent along with the applicant for an interview with the Membership Committee. Every effort will be made to schedule the interviews in the order in which the Membership Secretary receives the applications. The Membership Committee is comprised of active Lodge members and the Membership Secretary. The proponent will be contacted by the Membership Secretary when the application is accepted along with verification of the date and time of the interview. **Both the proponent and the applicant must attend the interview.**

Purpose of the screening interview is to ensure that both the applicant and the proponent understand their responsibilities during the new member's probationary period as outlined in the application form. The interview will also focus on the applicant's understanding of the Lodge's purposes and activities as outlined in the Handbook.

## **APPROVAL OF APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP**

After the Membership Committee has completed the interview, the Committee will make a recommendation on admitting the applicant to the Roma Lodge Board of Directors at its next regularly scheduled Board meeting.

The Board of Directors meets on the Tuesday immediately preceding the Friday monthly Membership Meeting. The Board will review the recommendation of the Membership Committee and vote to accept or reject the recommendation. The Proponent and the Applicant are not expected to attend this meeting.

If the Board approves the applicant, the name of the applicant and his proponent will be included in the monthly newsletter and announced at the Friday Membership Meeting. The membership vote to approve the applicant will be held the month after the name of the applicant is presented to the membership.

## **INITIATION INTO THE LODGE**

### **INTRODUCTION TO THE MEMBERSHIP**

*Both the Proponent and the Applicant must appear at the Membership Meeting at which the vote on the applicant is scheduled. **It is the responsibility of the Proponent to notify the Membership Secretary if either he or the Applicant is unable to attend the meeting.** If either one cannot attend, a vote on the applicant will be scheduled for a future meeting.*

*Membership Meetings are the second Friday of the month and begin at 7:00 pm. Prior to the start of the meeting, a member of the Membership Committee will meet with the Applicant and Proponent and review what will occur at the Membership Meeting. The Applicant will be taken to a waiting room to await the results of the vote.*

*Immediately following the membership vote, the Applicant will be informed of the results. If the application is approved, the new member will be brought before the Membership and introduced by his Proponent. The new member will then briefly explain his reasons for joining the Lodge. The new member can then be seated with the Membership.*

## **PAYMENT OF DUES**

*Immediately following the Membership Meeting, the new member must report to the Membership Secretary to pay his dues. The first year's dues are prorated for the remaining months of that year at the current annual rate. The next year's dues will be due by January 31 of the subsequent year. The new member also has the option of purchasing a security key for the Member's Entrance.*

At his first meeting, the new member will receive his Roma Lodge Membership Card and instructions for using the security key. The current ~~copy of the~~ Roma Lodge By-Laws, a ~~copy of~~ the Rules of the Lodge, and the latest issue of the Roma Lodge Newsletter can be found on the Roma Lodge website ( <https://www.romalodge.com> ). Future issues of the Newsletter will be emailed.

## **ATTAINING FULL MEMBERSHIP STATUS**

*At the completion of a new member's probationary period, the Membership Committee will discuss the Probationary Member Activity with the applicant and proponent and will present their findings and recommendation to the Roma Lodge Board of Directors. Factors utilized in making the decision to approve the applicant include:*

- *Membership meetings attended*
- *Lodge events attended*
- *Functions for which the new member volunteered*
- *Evidence of sale of all allotted Raffle Tickets (as reported by the Festival Committee)*

*If there are circumstances that prevented the new probationary member from accomplishing all these requirements, the new member will be given an opportunity to explain those inconsistencies to the Membership Committee. circumstances as part of his report.*



*If full membership is denied, dues will be refunded on a pro-rate basis. Denial of full membership may be appealed to the Membership Committee. If the appeal fails, the probationary member, with the sponsorship of a proponent, may reapply for membership after one year.*

## **CONCLUSION**

*Thank you for considering membership in Roma Lodge. It is our hope that your participation in the Lodge will help ensure that Roma Lodge remains the best organization of its type in the Racine area.*



**ROMA LODGE**  
**APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP**  
Revised June 2021

For Roma Lodge Use only:  
Date Rec'd \_\_\_\_\_  
Screening \_\_\_\_\_  
Board Vote \_\_\_\_\_  
Membership Vote \_\_\_\_\_  
Probation ends \_\_\_\_\_  
Full Membership \_\_\_\_\_  
Membership card No. \_\_\_\_\_

Applicants Name (Last) \_\_\_\_\_ First \_\_\_\_\_ MI \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

City and State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP Code \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Age \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Place of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

Place of Employment \_\_\_\_\_ Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

Check the criterion that determines your eligibility for application to the Lodge

- Born in Italy
- One or both parents are of Italian descent
- Wife is/was of Italian descent
- Adopted by an Italian parent or a parent of Italian lineage
- Wife was adopted by a parent of Italian lineage
- Genetic testing (i.e. *23 and Me*)

Last Name of ancestor of Italian descent \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship (i.e. father, mother-in-law, wife, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

Marital status

- Single
- Married
- Divorced

Wife's name \_\_\_\_\_

Is your wife a member of Vittoria Colonna Lodge? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

Names and ages of Children:

Name	Age
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Previous Membership:

- \_\_\_\_ I have never been a member of Roma Lodge
- \_\_\_\_ I was previously a member of Roma Lodge and voluntarily terminated by membership on (date) \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_ I was previously a member of Roma Lodge and am divorced from a woman of Italian descent and I wish to be reinstated.
- \_\_\_\_ I was previously a member and had by membership terminated by action of the Lodge.  
Date terminated \_\_\_\_\_  
Reason \_\_\_\_\_

Which of the following are reasons why you wish to be a member of Roma Lodge?

- \_\_\_\_ Foster Italian heritage
- \_\_\_\_ Participate in Lodge social events
- \_\_\_\_ Dining and drinking
- \_\_\_\_ participate in sporting events
- \_\_\_\_ Socialize with others of Italian descent
- \_\_\_\_ Participate in entertainment events
- \_\_\_\_ Participate in Lodge fund raising events

Have you ever been convicted of a felony? No \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ If yes, explain

\_\_\_\_\_

Proponent's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Proponents number of years of continuous membership \_\_\_\_\_

Number of years proponent has known applicant \_\_\_\_\_

Statement of understanding:

Applicant:

I (Name) \_\_\_\_\_ have read the requirements for membership in Roma Lodge and affirm that:

1. I believe in the government of the United States of America and pledge myself to conform to and obey the Constitution and laws of the United States.
2. I believe in the concept of respect for the country of Italy, knowing the contributions of the Italian civilization and Italian Americans to the greatness of the United States.
3. I pledge to adhere to and obey all the laws and rules of Roma Lodge as they exist today and as they may be revised or modified in the future.
4. I understand that, in becoming a member of Roma Lodge, I am making a commitment to support the lodge, regularly attend membership meetings, and volunteer my time and talents to assure the success of Lodge events and fund raisers.
5. I understand that my first year of membership will be probationary, during which time I will be expected to attend at least 2 membership meetings.
6. I understand that I am expected to volunteer to work at least one (1) Lodge function.
7. I understand that I am expected to attend at least one (1) Lodge function.
8. I will attempt to sell (or buy) all Italian (Roma Lodge) Festival raffle tickets every year of my membership.
9. I understand that failure to meet these requirements may result in cancellation of my membership

**Applicants signature** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

Proponent:

I\_(Name)\_\_\_\_\_ understand my responsibilities as a proponent for this applicant, and \_\_\_\_\_ promise to assist him in meeting the requirements of Lodge membership by:

1. Accompanying him toe Membership Meetings
2. Participation with him in Lodge events and fund raisers

Proponent's signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_