



7130 Highway C
Racine, WI 53403

ROMA LODGE
HANDBOOK FOR APPLICANTS AND
PROponents

Adopted by the Roma Lodge Board of Directors
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ROMA LODGE HANDBOOK FOR APPLICANTS AND PROponents

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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 (21st 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. Some functions are limited to members only, some for members and their families, and others for members, guests, and the general 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.

In addition to Wednesday, Friday and Saturday dining in the Roma Café Members' Dining Room and entertaining in the Member's Lounge, the other activities the Roma Lodge sponsors at various times during the year include:

- *Annual Roma Lodge Italian Festival*
- *Columbus Day Banquet*
- *Men's Bocce League*
- *Couples Bocce League*
- *Children's Bocce*
- *Roma Lodge Picnic*
- *Adult Members Christmas Party*
- *Children's Christmas Party (for children and grandchildren of members)*
- *Installation of Officers Banquet*
- *New Member Initiation Ceremony*
- *New Year's Eve Party*
- *Mother's Day Brunch*
- *Racine Night at the Brewers*
- *Summer Bocce Invitational Tournament*
- *Men's Golf Tournament*
- *Couples Golf Tournament*
- *\$10,000 Raffle*
- *Senior's Club luncheons, events, and trips*
- *Bingo*
- *Super Bowl Party*

Roma Lodge Charitable Donations

One of the purposes of Roma Lodge is to support charitable causes. This is one way the Lodge can thank the local community for its support of Roma Lodge over many years.

Just some of the contributions made by Roma Lodge include:

- *Each year for the past several years a \$10,000 donation from Roma Lodge*
- *Festival proceeds has been donated to Wheaton Franciscan Health Care Network – All Saints*
- *Health Care Network, Inc.*
- *Hurricane Katrina Relief*
- *Joshua R. Lichtenwalmer Memorial Fund for Cystic Fibrosis*
- *Lincoln Lutheran Home Respite Services*
- *Mike Bencriscutto Jr. Master Golf Tournament*
- *Racine Unified Girls Gymnastic Program*
- *Racine Youth Sports*
- *Ronald McDonald House of Eastern Wisconsin*
- *Racine Literacy Council*
- *Racine Rotary Foundation*
- *Relay for Life*
- *San Juan Diego Middle School*
- *Serra Club of Racine*
- *Wisconsin Basketball Coaches Association – All State Athlete Sponsorship*
- *Christopher Columbus Memorial Statue (Kenosha)*
- *Safe Haven*
- *St Catherine’s High School*
- *Special Olympics of Wisconsin*
- *Sustainable Racine Make-A-Difference Day*
- *Wisconsin Veterans Home Bus Fund*

The Lodge will 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 nearly \$10,000.00 in scholarships to graduating high school seniors planning to attend a four-year college or university, and who are sons or daughters of Lodge members. Two \$4,000.00 scholarships, paid over four years in \$1000.00, plus three one-time \$500.00 scholarships are open to applicants.

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 Lode members and familiarize him with Lodge events and functions. The proponent should assist the new member meet his responsibilities during the two 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*
- *At the end of the Probationary Period, submit a report to the Membership Committee on the new member's activities during his probationary period.*

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.

In addition, all applicants must be sponsored by a regular member (proponent) who has been a member in good standing for the previous 24 months (two years).

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 24-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 four (4) Roma Lodge general membership meetings per year.
- Attend at least two (2) Lodge social or fund raising events per year.
- Volunteer to work at least two (2) 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, as of January 2005, members who join the Lodge must sell or buy their allotted number of Roma Lodge Italian Festival raffle tickets during each year of their membership in 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 and the non-refundable \$50.00 application fee from the Applicant to the Roma Lodge Membership Secretary. Applications submitted without the application fee will be returned to the proponent.

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 generally screens a maximum of three to four applicants a month. The Membership Committee is comprised of three to five Lodge members and the Membership Secretary. The Committee usually meets every third Tuesday of each month. The proponent will be contacted with 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 twenty to thirty minute interview will also focus on the applicant's understanding of the Lodge's purposes and activities as outlined in the Handbook.

The Interview will be divided into two segments .In the first segment, the Committee will first meet with the Proponent alone. During the second segment, the Committee will interview the Applicant and the Proponent together. Some typical questions may include:

Questions for the Proponent:

1. How long have you known the applicant?
2. What benefits of Lodge membership have you explain to the applicant?
3. Are you able to assist and monitor the applicant during his new member probationary period?
4. Why do you think this applicant would make a good member of the Lodge?

Questions for the Applicant:

1. Why do you want to join the Lodge at this time?
2. What activities, events, or functions of the Lodge are of particular interest to you?
3. What special talents or interests do you feel you can bring to the Lodge?
4. Can you meet the requirements for probationary membership that specified in the Application Form?

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 that recommendation. Neither the Proponent nor the Applicant is expected to attend this meeting.

If the Board approves the applicant, the name of the applicant and his proponent will be announced at the Friday Membership Meeting. That information will also be published in the monthly Roma Lodge Newsletter. Currently, a maximum of three applicants are presented to the Membership each month. The membership vote to approve the applicant will be held the month after the name of the applicant is presented to the membership.

Below is an example of a time line for an application for membership:

March – Application submitted by the proponent to the Membership Secretary

April - Screening Committee interview the Proponent and Applicant

May - Board of Directors votes on the applicant. If approved, Applicant and Proponent names are presented to the Membership and published in the Roma Lodge Newsletter

*June - Membership votes on the Applicant. If approved as a new member,
The New Member is introduced to the Membership.*

THE NEW MEMBER'S FIRST MEETING

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 can not attend, a vote on the applicant will be scheduled for a future meeting.*

Membership Meetings 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 rate of \$10.00 per month. The next year's dues of \$120.00 will be due by January 31 of that year. The new member also has the option of purchasing a security key for the Member's Entrance. The fee for a security key card is \$15.00.

At his first meeting, the new member will receive his Roma Lodge Membership Card, instructions for using the security key, a copy of the Roma Lodge By-Laws, a copy of the Rules of the Lodge, and the latest issue of the Roma Lodge Newsletter. Future issues of the Newsletter will be mailed.

ATTAINING FULL MEMBERSHIP STATUS

At the completion of a new member's probationary period, the Membership Committee will request each new member's proponent complete the Probationary Member Activity Report which documents the activities of the new member during his probationary period (See below). This would 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 may explain those circumstances as part of his report.

Based upon the information submitted by the Proponent, the Membership Committee will recommend to the Roma Lodge Board of Directors whether or not full membership status should be granted. 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 insure that Roma Lodge remains the best organization of its type in the Racine area.



ROMA LODGE PROBATIONARY MEMBER ACTIVITY REPORT
To be completed at the end of the Probationary Membership Period

Name:
Address: _____

Dates of Probationary Membership:

Proponent:

NOTE: Please use the back of the form for any comments or, if necessary, to explain your responses:

Requirement: Attend at least four Membership Meetings per year

Report: List the Dates of Membership Meetings attended:

Year 1	Year 2
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Requirement: Volunteer for at least two Lodge Functions per year

Report: List the Lodge functions for which member volunteered:

Year 1	Year 2
_____	_____
_____	_____

Requirement: Sell (or buy) all assignment Festival Raffle Tickets (\$160.00 worth)

Report: Total dollar amount sold:

Year 1	Year 2
_____	_____

Requirement: Attend at least two Lodge functions per year

Report: List the Lodge functions attended:

Year 1	Year 2
_____	_____
_____	_____

Report completed by _____

Date _____



ROMA LODGE
APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP
Revised October 2004

For Lodge Use only:
Date Rec'd. _____
Initiation Paid _____
Screening _____
Membership Vote _____
Probation Ends _____
Full membership _____
Membership No. _____
Security Card No. _____

Applicant's Name (Last) _____ First _____ M.I. _____

Street Address _____

City and State _____ ZIP _____ Home Phone _____

Work Phone _____ Email _____

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 Italian or of Italian lineage
- Wife is Italian or of Italian lineage
- Adopted by an Italian parent or a parent of Italian lineage
- Wife was adopted by a person of Italian lineage

Last name of ancestor of Italian descent _____

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

Marital status

- Single
- Married Wife's name _____
Is your wife a member of Vittoria Colona Lodge? Yes No

Name 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 my membership on _____.
- I was previously a member and had my 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
- Dining and drinking
- Socialize with others of Italian descent
- Participate in Lodge fund raising activities
- Participate in Lodge social events
- Participate in Lodge sport events
- Participate in entertainment events

Have you ever been convicted of a felony? NO YES ____ If YES, explain _____

Proponent's Name _____ **Phone** _____

Proponents number of years of continuous Lodge membership _____

Number of years that the proponent has known applicant _____

Statement of understanding:

Applicant:

I _____ 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 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 the Roma Lodge, I am making a commitment to support the Lodge, regularly attend membership meeting, and volunteer my time and talents to assure the success of the Lodge events and fund raisers.
5. I understand that my first two years of membership will be probationary, during which time I will be expected to attend at least four (4) membership meetings per year membership meetings as specified by the Rules of the Lodge.
6. I understand that I am expected to volunteer to work at least two Lodge functions per year.
7. I understand that I must attend at least two (2) Lodge functions per year.
8. I will sell (or buy) all Italian (Roma Lodge) Festival raffle tickets.
9. I understand that failure to meet the requirements set for probationary membership may result in membership being cancelled by the Lodge.

Applicant's signature _____ **Date** _____

NOTE: A NON-REFUNDABLE \$50.00 APPLICATION FEE MUST ACCOMPANY THIS APPLICATION

Proponent:

I _____ 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 to Membership Meetings
2. Participating with him in Lodge events and fund raisers
3. At the end of the two year probationary period, submitting documentation to the Roma Lodge Membership Committee listing the applicant's activities that fulfill the requirements of a probationary member .

Proponent's signature _____ **Date** _____