

Before the night was out at Ken's Steak House in Framingham last Wednesday, February 6th, the Italian American Alliance had gained some 150 new Members who will surely be an active force in defending Italian Heritage in general while promoting Columbus Day.

Thanks to the wonderful generosity of Tim Hanna and the Hanna Family, attendees were treated to a complimentary buffet and an open bar. The event gave the Italian American Alliance Board of Directors a chance to mingle with the new Alliance members. At this point, there are some 320 Metro West area residents currently enrolled in the Framingham Chapter of the Alliance.

John C. Magri,, recently elected to the Alliance Board, will also lead the Framingham Council of the Framingham ALLIANCE Chapter whose purpose it will be to develop a Christopher Columbus Program in Framingham while extending its membership in both Framingham and Ashland. As membership continues to grow, Italian Americans as well as friends of Italian Americans will know who the adversaries of our heritage are at the polls when election day comes just a few weeks after Columbus Day.

Dr. Frank Mazzaglia, Chairman of the Board announced that the Framingham Chapter of the Alliance was particularly critical since Representative Jack Patrick Lewis (Ashland/Framingham) filed House Bill 3746 – An Act establishing an Indigenous People's Day. He was joined in that filing by Representative Denise Provost of Somerville.

While the Alliance has no objection to any holiday that would honor Native Americans, it is clear that the intent of the proposed bill is to replace Columbus Day. With that in mind, the Alliance will now focus on developing a strong membership group in Ashland as well as in Somerville.

"For too long," said Mazzaglia, "Italian Americans have been passive about attacks on their Heritage of which Christopher Columbus plays a central role. Those silent days are now over. In our experience, we find that Columbus is just a convenient code word used to discriminate against Italian Americans. In fact, we will not allow that to happen. For several decades, revisionists have distorted history and we are prepared to correct that,"

Rep Jack Patrick Lewis attended the University of Utah and received a Master of Education degree from Eden Theological Seminary in Webster Groves, Missouri, near St. Louis, Missouri. The seminary was established in 1850 and has a **Total Enrollment** of 148students. He worked for Howard Dean's presidential campaign and has taught English in Ghana and Egypt.

Rep. Denise Provost is a lawyer who went to Bennington College and the B.U. Law School.

The Italian American Alliance is today one of the fastest growing organizations of Italian Americans in Massachusetts. Membership is open to people of all racial and ethnic backgrounds.