

# COLUMBIA ASSOCIATION

## POLICE DEPARTMENT ~ CITY OF NEW YORK

Incorporated in 1932 / Not For Profit 501 (c) (3) Corp  
P.O. Box 747699 • Rego Park, NY 11374



To Our Membership:

I think we're all in agreement that 2020 has been a pretty horrendous year. COVID has literally affected all of us, either through illness, cancellations of numerous family events, i.e. weddings, Christenings, graduations, and vacations, and, unfortunately for some, deaths to family members or friends with NO memorial services.

First the bad news: Our Children's Christmas Party is cancelled. General meetings are still cancelled until further notice. The Columbus Day parade was obviously cancelled. We truly want to start up meeting and events, but right now our hands are tied due to Governor Cuomo's "Executive Order of allowing gatherings of fifty (50) or fewer individuals." To give an example our general meeting attendance is often over three-hundred (300) people without counting board officers and guest speakers and our cigar night events are usually around two-hundred (200) guests. As president of this great organization I am unable to turn away so many card carrying members. Can you imagine a member driving from Staten Island with fresh mozzarella and prosciutto di Parma or after signing out from your day tour in the 50<sup>th</sup> Precinct with fresh cannoli and sfogliatelle and getting turned away at the door? I know it would just break the hearts of the board officers working the door.

Again, in hopes of some normalcy in 2021, we are planning one of our always successful and highly touted cigar events for late winter or early spring. Stay tuned.

The good news is that despite numerous roadblocks and limitations, our board officers are constantly working for the organization. We continue to strive for better communication for our members by enhancing our social media presence by increasing Facebook, Twitter and Instagram posts. An informed membership is a stronger membership.

We are in the process of constructing a Columbia Association app for both Android and Apple phones. This app will be free to download and will be for members only. We will utilize this app to make notifications relating to meetings and events. We can "push" a notification

should we have to cancel a general meeting for a snow storm or emergency, etc. Members will also be able to download our event flyers and be able to purchase tickets to various events. This application will be available early 2021.

We are also producing a video on the NYPD intranet to celebrate Italian heritage month. I believe that sometimes we need to be reminded of our incredible culture and history. Show this video to your children.

**JetBlue raffle:** We are still selling raffle tickets for two (2) roundtrip tickets to anywhere JetBlue flies. Chances are \$10 each. The original drawing was scheduled for our Dinner Dance on May 8, 2020, which was cancelled, another casualty of COVID. Tickets already purchased for the May 2020 dinner dance are valid and will be entered in next year's Dinner Dance drawing, planned for Friday, May 7, 2021. Please note that the honorees will be the same individuals as previously named for 2020. Our Man of the Year is Deputy Chief Chaplin Msgr. David L. Cassato, Patrolman Phillip W. Cardillo Humanitarian award will be presented to DEA President Paul DiGiacomo, Business Man of the Year will be awarded to Gianpiero Pagliaro of MSA Shipping and our Italian American Achievement award will be presented to Sal "The Voice" Valentinetti. Last year we introduced the Founder's Award This award is named after our three original founders: Captain James Giatini, Patrolman Maurice R. Sasso and Patrolman Thomas J. Julia. The Founders Award will be presented to Past Columbia Association President John Bucalo and strong supporter Pat Grande. Our medals of Valor will be presented to Steven M. Pedullo, Roger Coleman, Giovanni Cucuzza, Joseph Glorioso and John Desiderio. Hopefully by May there will be some sense of normalcy and we can properly acknowledge these most deserving individuals.

We have not forgotten any of our fallen. We still plan to do a memorial mass for Phil "Sundance" Panzarella. We are also planning our Sgt. Paul Tuozzolo Golf Outing for June 2021.

We would like to thank Joseph Quagliano & Lou Bernardi of the Italian American Baseball Foundation for supplying lunches to commands during this pandemic. It was particularly appreciated since many in our department have come to feel totally unappreciated, typical of how this year has been very bad for reasons beyond COVID.

We lost life member Police Officer Thomas F. Galati on April 13<sup>th</sup>. He was the father of Chief of Intelligence Thomas P. Galati, a class act who obviously was taught very well by his dad.

And last but certainly not least, our Columbia Board lost two of the great ones to retirement. 1<sup>st</sup> VP Louis J. Balsamo retired on June 30, 2020. It goes without saying that he was an incredible asset to me. He is affectionately referred to as "Mr. Italy" by many members. Louis ran multiple successful events. Originally appointed by former Columbia President Frank Ventura, he served as a board officer for over fifteen years, holding City Wide and Brooklyn trustee positions, Brooklyn Financial Secretary, Columbia News editor, Executive Secretary and finally, 1<sup>st</sup> VP. Louis was an architect of the often imitated, but never duplicated "Cigars Under the Stars" events. On a personal level, he was like a big

**brother to me and a great friend. In addition to Louie's retirement, Bronx Financial Secretary Richard Citarella also retired on October 28, 2020 after twenty-two years of service with the NYPD. Rich started out as a Columbia Delegate in P.S.A. 7 and then joined the board as a trustee for the Bronx. His last position was Bronx Financial Secretary. Rich co-chaired many successful Columbia events and will truly be missed by both the Board and the membership. We wish them both a long, happy, healthy and prosperous retirement. they certainly earned it!**

**Although it's been a truly tough year, let's look at the whole picture and focus on those things for which we should be thankful. Keep that in mind as we approach Thanksgiving. God bless and stay safe AND VOTE!**

**Fraternally,**

**Christopher J. Pizzo  
President**