



DANTE'S INFERNO



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Bob Guidera

The year winds down, but the fun continues

It seems like only just yesterday I was writing last year's December *Inferno* column. The year seems to have flown by. They say age has something to do with this, but I'm not admitting to that.

I'm pleased to announce that our traditional Christmas dinner on Dec. 15 will feature a menu choice of prime rib or Cornish game hen along with all the trimmings. I'm sure our chef, Jessi Moreno, will not disappoint us.

We'll also have some very fine Italian entertainment to set off this festive meal. I'm personally looking forward to the prime rib.

Also in December we'll host a fine Tuesday night dinner featuring radicchio and plum salad, charred squash, seafood risotto, sautéed spinach and tiramisu for dessert. Sounds good to me.

I'd like to mention how

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Hear ye, hear ye!

Club to complete nominations and elect new officers for 2020 during December meeting

At our Dec. 16 general meeting, we will conduct the nominating and election process for the 2020 Dante Club board of directors, treasurer and secretary positions.

It is most important that members attend and contribute their input for the guidance of the club in the coming year.

An initial slate of candidates was created at the Nov. 18 general meeting. As some potential candidates were not present, others

may be placed in nomination in December.

Candidates are asked to present a brief statement, either verbal or written, about their desire to serve the club.

Candidates should consider the level of involvement they wish to devote during the year.

All other members should make thoughtful decisions when nominating a fellow member and when voting for a candidate.

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Traditions reign at the holidays

Story and photos by Michael Micciche

As the holiday season quickly unfolds, we might like to consider how people typically celebrate Christmas in Italy.

In case we've forgotten our Italian traditions, I'll describe a few that we can share with our children and grandchildren.

But, of course, the best

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An array of fish dishes is presented during the Feast of the Seven Fishes, or Festa dei Sette Pesci. A popular tradition among many Italian-American families, the feast is served on Christmas Eve.



NEWS, NOTES AND OTHERWISE

Ladies Auxiliary

Ladies Auxiliary members held annual elections at their last meeting.

Reinstated in their positions are Debra Cattuzzo and Carole Stefani Chivaro, co-presidents; Heidi Pesce Veneman and Helen Manfredi Pierson, co-vice-presidents; Judy Farina, secretary; Tina Luchini Bowers and Debra Duccini-Hansen, co-treasurers.

Past president Karol Buccola returned to the board. Anna Tenderella also returned as hospitality coordinator.

Reinstated trustee board members (callers) are Sandy Calcagno, Rosemary Micciche, Phyllis Kielholz and Mary Anne Chivaro. New trustees are Nancy Doyle, Janet Gatejen, Debra Jefcoat, Brenda Gardner and Margaret Lynch. Welcome to the new board of 2020.

The auxiliary plans to offer a lot of entertainment at future meetings. On Dec. 10, the St. Francis High School Italian Club will sing Italian Christmas carols. Accordion players will perform in January, and dancers from the Italian Cultural Society will perform in February.

Auxiliary members want to celebrate their Italian heritage to the fullest.

Also on Dec. 10, the auxiliary will collect socks and toiletries suitable for infants to teenagers and donate the items to Child Protective Services of Sacramento County. Members also may drop off donations at the Dante Club before the meeting.

The auxiliary gained nine new members in the past couple of months. To build membership, the group encourages wives and daughters of Dante Club members to join.

Those interested may contact Debra Cattuzzo at 916-442-2266.



These are examples of Dante-branded clothing.

Club apparel

Just in time for the holidays, members can purchase Dante Club-branded clothing, including aprons and four styles of sweatshirts for \$55 and polo shirts for \$30.

Clothing comes in sizes for men, women and children.

To order items, call Ron Cristoni at 916-457-4516 or email him at roncristoni@aol.com.

Newsletter ads proposed

As mentioned at the October and November members meetings, the board has decided to make *Dante's Inferno* a more interactive marketing vehicle for club and auxiliary members.

The response has been positive. Members Johnny "The Barber" Waldron, Jim "Relles Florist" Relles and Tom "Mixed Bag" Novi have all stepped up and made annual advertising commitments for their businesses. Many thanks to them for being our first sponsors in the *Inferno*.

Other members with businesses who would like to participate should contact John Caselli at Jac6652@aol.com.

New members

In November, we interviewed Jason Klier and Carlo Pane, sponsored by Ron Pane. In December, we will interview two more candidates, and we plan to

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UPCOMING EVENTS
Reserve and pay online at:
[http://www.danteclub.com/
calendar.php](http://www.danteclub.com/calendar.php)

December 15**Annual Christmas Dinner**

Time: 6 p.m. cocktails, 7 p.m. dinner

Menu: Choice of prime rib with mashed potatoes and glazed carrots or Cornish game hen with root vegetables and wild rice pilaf; winter greens salad, rolls, sweet potato casserole with vanilla ice cream, ice tea, coffee, red and white wine

Cost: \$35 adults, \$20 children ages 12 and younger

Reserve and pay by Tuesday, Dec. 10.

December 16**Meeting Night Dinner**

Time: 6 p.m. cocktails, 7 p.m. dinner, 8 p.m. meeting

Menu: Salad, rolls, sauteed chard, creamy potatoes, chicken saltimbocca with lemon caper sauce, tiramisu

Cost: \$13 in advance, \$18 after deadline

Reserve by 10 a.m. Friday, Dec. 13.

January 24**Crab Feed**

Time: 6 p.m. cocktails, 7 p.m. dinner

Menu: All-you-can-eat crab, antipasto, mixed salad, rigatoni with meat sauce, seasonal vegetables, rolls, spumoni, coffee, wine

Cost: \$55 adults, \$25 children ages 5 to 10

Reserve and pay by 10 a.m. Sunday, Jan. 19.



Nativity scenes like this are popular traditions in Naples. Families display the scenes in their homes, often adding figures of everyday people and objects in addition to the usual figures of the baby Jesus, Mary, Joseph, shepherds, wise men, angels and animals.

Holidays

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way to experience these traditions is to make a special trip to Italy at Christmastime and stay through until Epiphany on Jan. 6.

One of the most important and colorful ways Italians like to celebrate Christmas is with nativity manger scenes.

Using a manger, or crib, to tell the Christmas story of Jesus' birth was popularized by St. Francis

of Assisi in 1223.

The previous year, St. Francis had visited Bethlehem and saw where it was thought that Jesus had been born.

Today, many Italian families display nativity scenes in their homes. I observed this firsthand during my only visit to Italy for the Christmas season.

The city of Naples in Italy is world-famous for its crib-making and cribs. These cribs are known as presepe Napoletano, or

Neapolitan cribs.

The first crib scene in Naples, in the Church of Santa Maria, is thought to date back to 1025.

Displaying cribs in people's homes became popular during the 16th century, and its popularity continues.

An unusual feature of Neapolitan crib scenes is that they often incorporate additional figures of everyday people, and even figures of famous people and politicians, as well as ordinary objects, such as

houses, food and animals. Personally, I would avoid having our politicians in my manger!

The figure of the baby Jesus isn't added to the crib until the evening of Dec. 24.

Naples also is home to the world's largest crib scene, with more than 600 objects in it.

If you ever have the opportunity to visit Naples at Christmastime, be sure to look for the street of nativity scene makers

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**President's Corner**

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popular bocce has become at the club during its first full year of regular games, including the launch of our own league.

After we installed our Dante Club bocce courts in midsummer 2018, interest in them has really taken off, providing much enjoyment over the past year for the teams and our league.

With championship play completed in September, many members are now anxious to start again in the spring.

Just last week I got a call from Debra Cattuzzo, co-president of the Ladies Auxiliary,

expressing interest in their members joining the fun.

I was delighted to hear this and referred her to Rich Battistessa and Dan Calcagno for details. It will be nice if auxiliary members use and enjoy our facility, too.

Special thanks to George Procida for his landscaping work in front of the Magpie Preschool. We've heard many compliments about the much-improved look. We do appreciate it, George!

Frank Calcagno tells me that our membership applications have picked up a bit and that we have several new people coming to join our club in January.

This is great news, as we always need good people. I hope

members will keep that in mind if they have friends who might be a good fit for our club.

This month we will continue nominating people for our 2020 board of directors.

A nominated person must be a member in good standing for at least two years and have an interest in the welfare of the club. The person also needs to be present when nominated.

Members who need a venue for a special holiday party should check with us as we may be able to accommodate. We can waive the room-rental fee for members.

I would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from the board and staff of the Dante Club.

Buon Natale!

Elections

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These are the important takeaways of the process:

- Candidates must be regular members of the club for at least 24 months to qualify to run.
- Associate members may vote but cannot be nominated.
- Members must attend in December to vote.
- The top 15 vote-getters will be elected to the board of directors.
- The treasurer and secretary positions are filled through individual election processes.

These names of prospective board of directors candidates were submitted during the Dante Club's November members meeting:

- Ron Bacher
- Richard Battistessa

- Frank Calcagno
- John Caselli
- Ron Cristoni
- Ralph DiLebero
- Jim Dimino
- John Fiorica
- Bill Giovannetti
- Bob Guidera
- Michael Micciche
- Tom Novi
- Patrick Orelli
- Mark Pedroncelli
- Joe Porata
- Ernest Tomassilli

All candidates should consider their roles and try to be the most active they can to ensure the greatest good of the club.



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- Merlo Vineyards, Redding
- Morse Wines, Fiddletown
- Pedroncelli, Geyserville
- Perry Creek Winery, Fair Play
- Sean Minor, Napa
- Secret Ravine, Loomis
- Taylor Family Vineyards, Napa
- Taylor's Market, Sacramento

- Yorba Wines, Sutter Creek
- Young's Vineyard, Plymouth

Beer

- Blue Note Brewing Co., Woodland
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ADVERTISER LISTING

MIXED BAG gift shop, 24th and K streets, Sacramento
916-447-6123, mixedbagsac.com
10% discount to Dante Club members



News, Notes and Otherwise

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induct six new members in January.

We thank the Ladies Auxiliary, which has provided great support to many of our activities. A reminder: Husbands of auxiliary members are eligible to apply for membership in the Dante Club.

In memoriam

The Dante Club Ladies Auxiliary recently lost two members, Leola Gardner and Agnes Rouillard. We ask our members to please keep the Gardner and Rouillard families in their thoughts and prayers.

Save pull tabs

Members are asked to collect pull tabs from aluminum cans for donation to a Ronald McDonald House program at the UC Davis Medical Center that recycles pull tabs to raise funds.

Proceeds support the Adopt-A-Family Program, which helps subsidize lodging costs for families staying at the Ronald McDonald House.

New committee created

The board recently created a committee to look at the Dante Club's performance and sustainability.

The committee has offered its recommendations at several board meetings. So far it has reviewed the club's wine and beer policies, marketing efforts and room-rental fees for members, among other items.

Participating on the committee are Ron Pane, chairman; Richard Battistessa; Dan Calcagno; Jim Dimino; and Tom Novi.

Everything Italian

We like to think the Dante Club is the best Italian club in Sacramento, but several other groups in the area may interest members, too:

- Arberesh — arbereshofsacramento.org
- Italian Cultural Society — italianculturalsociety.com
- Piemonte Reale — John Lancara, Societa Piemonte Reale, 3621 E. Lincoln Ave, Sacramento, CA 95818
- Romulus Club — John L. Boze, Romulus Club, 400 Capitol Mall, Suite 1850, Sacramento, CA 95814

2019 DANTE CLUB BOARD OF DIRECTORS

OFFICERS

- Robert Guidera, president: robertguidera@att.net
- Bill Giovanetti, first vice president, building and grounds: wgiovanetti@comcast.net
- Ron Cristoni, second vice president, club clothing: roncristoni@aol.com
- Ron Fiorica, recording secretary, scholarships: rbfiorica@frontiernet.net
- Tom Mezzanares, treasurer: tjmezzan@gmail.com

BOARD MEMBERS

- Ronald Bacher, admission ticket chairman: ronald.bacher@gmail.com
- Richard Battistessa, advisory, social activities: drbattistessa@comcast.net
- Ron Pane, tour director: repane@icloud.com
- Dan Calcagno, Easter Bunny: dmcalcagno@aol.com
- Frank Calcagno, membership: fsca@comcast.net
- John Caselli, publicity: jac6652@aol.com
- Jim Dimino, advisory committee: jkdimino@sbcglobal.net
- John Fiorica, sergeant at arms: jfpacificrr@yahoo.com
- Matt Longo, building and grounds: longomb@sbcglobal.net
- Michael Micciche, corporate travel: Michael.micciche@gmail.com
- Tom Novi, social activities: tomnovi@aol.com
- Patrick Orelli, finance: pat@apcpagroup.com



**Holidays**

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called the Via San Gregorio Armeno.

For many Italian-American families, a big Christmas Eve meal of various fish dishes—known as the Feast of the Seven Fishes, or Festa dei Sette Pesci—is now a popular holiday tradition.

The feast, which seems to have its roots in southern Italy and Sicily, was brought to the United States by Italian immigrants in the 1800s.

I must say, if you're a lover of scrumptious seafood, this is your night.

In Italy, Christmas celebrations start eight days before Christmas with special novenas, a series of prayers and church services.

Epiphany also is important in Italy.

On Epiphany night, children believe that an old woman named Befana will bring them presents, so they hang their stockings by the fireplace in the hope that Befana will fill

them up with goodies.

In parts of northern Italy, it's believed that the three kings bring presents rather than Befana.

On Christmas Day, Babbo Natale, or Santa Claus, might bring children a few small gifts, but the main day for giving presents is Jan. 6, Epiphany.

These are just a sampling of Italian Christmas traditions. Each region has its unique variations.

And, of course, in Italy, any tradition,

religious observance or celebration is always accompanied by generous offerings of wonderful foods and wines.

Remembering and celebrating Christmas in a traditional Italian manner can be a whole lot of fun. So this year, why not give it a try at your home?

Buon Natale!

Editor's note: Parts of this article come from a public domain site and are intended to be shared.

DANTE'S REMINDERS

**Member volunteers**

To volunteer, contact club president Bob Guidera or social chairman Tom Novi to offer your services. You can reach Bob at robertguidera@att.net or 916-451-1467 and Tom at tomnovi@aol.com or 916-961-6197.

Donations

Donate to our scholarship or building funds in memory of a loved one or a friend to keep their legacy going. And buy raffle tickets! Donations can be made easily online at <http://www.danteclub.com/donation.html>.

Dante Club apparel

If you'd like to purchase club shirts or other specialty clothing items, contact Ron Cristoni at 916-457-4516 or roncristoni@aol.com or speak to him at a members meeting. You must present cash or a check to place an order.

Newsletter photos and news

Submit photos and news items for *Dante's Inferno* to John Caselli at jac6652@aol.com. Items must be received by the 20th of each month to be considered for the following month's newsletter. Publication depends on available space and is not guaranteed. To post news and photos on Facebook, log in to your Facebook account and search for "Dante Club."

Contact information

Have you recently changed your address or phone number? Please alert our club treasurer, Tom Mezzanares, at 916-467-7483 or tjmezzan@gmail.com.