



# DANTE'S INFERNO



## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

*Bob Guidera*

### *Goodbye to 2018, hello to prosperity and fun in 2019*

After 143 guests enjoyed our Dec. 16 Christmas dinner, one of 2018's most popular annual events, we closed out yet another year at the Dante Club.

The dinner, featuring a choice of prime rib or Cornish game hen, included some fine entertainment. Accordionist Dave Chelini played songs of the season as well as Italian favorites, closing out with dance music.

Event attendees had a very enjoyable evening indeed.

Significant management changes we've made recently at the club are moving along well.

Our capable interim team has made improvements in food, venue and staff morale. This has allowed us to get through our busy time of the year and come out ahead for the month, while also searching for a new general manager.

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## GIVING BACK TO THE COMMUNITY

### Club offers meal assistance to area housing program

With all the changes behind the scenes at the Dante Club, the board decided during the holidays to take advantage of an opportunity to help West Beamer Place in Woodland, a multifamily housing community for formerly homeless people.

The new community is a partnership of Mercy Housing and Yolo County Housing's New Hope Community Development Corp. to provide housing and social services support to people experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

In November, Tammi Lidie, residents services coordinator for the community, happened to visit the Dante Club, where her daughter works. While there, she thought she might get a few tips from our food services staff on how to prepare a meal for the residents of West Beamer Place.

Instead, our Dante Club staff offered to provide some of the food, as well as the utensils and cooking expertise needed to

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### Traditions reign at the holidays

Story and photos by Michael Micciche

**A**s the holiday season draws to an end, I thought we might like to consider how people typically celebrate the Christmas season in Italy.

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

But the best way to

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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 baby Jesus, Mary, Joseph and animals.



## NEWS, NOTES AND OTHERWISE

**Ladies Auxiliary**

The Ladies Auxiliary's annual Christmas dinner meeting Dec. 10 featured a magical performance by the St. Francis Italian Club singing Christmas songs signed in Italian.

Members also collected a large number of socks and toiletries for donation to a local charity. Thanks to all who contributed.

The auxiliary will install its new board officers and trustees at a dinner meeting Tuesday, Jan. 8.

Through June, the auxiliary will meet monthly on the second Tuesday of each month instead of the second Monday. The regular Monday schedule will return in September. No meetings are held in July and August. Callers will remind members of the meeting change during the year.

Women interested in joining the auxiliary may call or text Karol Rehm Buccola at 916-217-6124.

**Club apparel**

Members can buy Dante Club-branded clothing, including aprons and four styles of sweatshirts and polo shirts. Clothing comes in sizes for men, women and children.

Order from Ron Cristoni at 916-457-4516 or [roncristoni@aol.com](mailto:roncristoni@aol.com).

**New members**

At the December meeting, we honored longtime member Romano Lucchini with lifetime membership.

Romano joined in 1977, and his family have been loyal supporters of the Dante Club for generations.

To be eligible for lifetime membership, members must have been with the club for at least 30

years and be at least age 65. Most importantly, they must have served and contributed to our club.

Romano has far exceeded the requirements. Grazie to Romano!

Also at the December meeting, we interviewed Tom Mathews, sponsored by Jim Dimino, for membership. Tom has attended many club events and his wife, Jan, is a member of the Ladies Auxiliary.

Tom and Dennis Nord, sponsored by Pietro Pozzuto, will be inducted into the club this month.

We have several membership openings and a waiting list. Please encourage qualified local Italian-Americans to apply.

**Pull-tab generosity**

Over the past six months, Dante Club members have donated 120 pounds of aluminum can pull tabs to benefit the Sacramento Ronald McDonald House pull-tab program at the University of California Davis Medical Center in Sacramento.

The program recycles pull tabs and contributes all proceeds to the Adopt-A-Family Program, which helps subsidize lodging costs for families staying at the Ronald McDonald House near the medical center while their children are hospitalized.

We thank our club members for their ongoing participation in the program in 2018 and ask that they continue to save their pull tabs and bring them to our club events and meetings in 2019.

We will gather and donate the pull tabs on behalf of the club.

The Ronald McDonald program

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UPCOMING EVENTS  
Reserve and pay online at:  
<http://www.danteclub.com/calendar.php>

**January 14****Mini Jazz Concert**

**Time:** 7 p.m.

**Performer:** Jim Martinez Quartet playing Vince Guaraldi musical tribute to Charles Schulz

**Sponsor:** Sacramento Jazz Cooperative

**Cost:** \$25; get tickets [here](#)

**January 19****Crab Feed**

**Time:** 6 p.m. cocktails, 7 p.m. dinner, dancing after dinner

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

**Cost:** \$50 adults, \$25 children ages 5 to 10

*Reserve by 10 a.m. Tuesday, Jan. 15.*

**February 5****Tuesday Night Dinner**

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

**Menu:** Caesar salad, stuffed eggplant with Italian sausage, butternut squash risotto, zucchini ribbons, rolls, wine, tiramisu

**Cost:** \$26 adults, \$13 children ages 5 to 10

*Reserve by 10 a.m. Friday, Feb. 1.*

**February 11****Mini Jazz Concert**

**Time:** 7 p.m.

**Performer:** John Stowell Quartet playing Brazilian samba and bossa nova

**Sponsor:** Sacramento Jazz Cooperative

**Cost:** \$25; get tickets [here](#)

**HOLD THE DATE:**

**March 2:** Cioppino dinner

**President's Corner**

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December brought board election time. Our 2019 board is mostly the same as 2018's, except for one change: Ron Pane will replace Vic Brida, who has stepped down as our tour director.

We thank Vic for his many years of service on the board and to the club. He has served on the membership committee and was our official club tour guide, responsible for showing new members around our facility.

Ron Pane, a former board member and past president, will bring a great deal of experience and judgment. Welcome, Ron!

I briefly outlined some of the social committee's recent recommendations during our membership meeting in December. At our January general meeting, Tom Novi will discuss the finer points as well as possible changes. More details of the changes can be found on Page 6 of this newsletter.

As always throughout the year, please be on the lookout for good people who may be interested in joining our club. We will induct one new member at the January meeting and would love to welcome more.

To one and all, have a most happy and prosperous New Year 2019!

Andiamo avanti!



A sumptuous 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.

**Traditions**

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experience these traditions, of course, is to visit Italy at Christmas and stay through to Epiphany on Jan. 6.

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

Using a manger, or crib, to tell the Christmas story was popularized by St. Francis of Assisi in 1223. He had visited Bethlehem and saw where it was thought that Jesus was born.

Today, many Italian families display nativity scenes in their homes, as I observed during my only Christmastime visit to Italy.

The city of Naples in Italy is world-famous for its crib-making and cribs, 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 the home became popular in the 16th century, and its popularity continues.

A special feature of Neapolitan crib scenes is that they always include extra everyday people and objects, such as houses, food, animals and even figures of famous people and

politicians. The figure of the baby Jesus isn't added 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 visit Naples at Christmastime, be sure to see the street of nativity scene makers 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. This is the night for anyone who loves seafood.

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

On Epiphany night, children believe that an old woman named Befana brings presents for them, so they hang stockings by the fireplace for Befana to fill. In parts of northern Italy, the three kings might bring

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## 2019 DANTE CLUB BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### OFFICERS

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

### BOARD MEMBERS

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

## Premium winery, brewery and olive oil partners

### Wine

- Balletto Vineyards, Santa Rosa
- Bella Grace Vineyards, Sutter Creek
- Carvalho Family Winery, Clarksburg
- Galvan Family Cellars, Fairfield
- Karmere Vineyards, Plymouth
- 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
- Hoppy Brewing Co., Sacramento
- Lost Coast Brewery, Humboldt
- Mussetter Distributing, Auburn
- Out of Bounds Brewing Co., Rocklin
- Wildcard Brewing Co., Redding

### Olive Oil

- Olive Mix, Sacramento
- Maltese Olive Oil, Sacramento

### News, Notes and Otherwise

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collects only aluminum-can tabs instead of entire cans because collection and storage of the tabs is easier and more hygienic.

### Dues deadline coming

Annual club dues of \$100 are due by Jan. 31. Members can pay by credit card [online](#) or by check, payable to the Dante Club. Mail checks to: Dante Club of Sacramento; Att. Tom Mezzanares, Treasurer; 2330 Fair Oaks Blvd.; Sacramento, CA 95825.

Dues also can be paid in person to Tom during club meetings.

### In memoriam

Longtime Ladies Auxiliary member Genevieve Mary "Gen" (Domich) Dallosta died on Thanksgiving Day.

Dante Club member John Giordano died Dec. 6. Club members, please keep the Dallosta and Giordano families in your thoughts and prayers.

### Sick list

Marco Ambroselli is resting at home after spending some quality time in the medic's tent. Please keep Marco in your thoughts and prayers.

### Scholarship applications

Scholarship applications will be available on the club website after Jan. 1. Members with candidates in mind should keep a watch out.

### Officers for 2019

Club officers for 2019 are Bob Guidera, president; Bill Giovannetti, first vice president; and Ron Cristoni, second vice president.

We also welcome to the board Ron Pane, a past president. We're sad to say goodbye to Vic Brida, who decided not to run this year. We wish him good luck in the future.



**Giving back**

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prepare and serve a dinner for the residents and their family members.

Afterward, Lidie sent the Dante Club this letter of thanks:

“What an amazing experience we had yesterday! A great turnout and so much laughter filled the room for this event. I spent the morning reflecting back with such gratitude and appreciation for all who pitched in and helped to make this event possible for our tenants.

On Saturday, Nov. 17, I had the opportunity to stop by my oldest daughter’s place of business in Sacramento—the Dante Club, a special-events center. I had run over on the off-chance I could talk with the chef to get some ideas on how to most effectively pull off a dinner for all of the tenants at our new community, West Beamer Place.

When I arrived, I was able to meet with Chef Jessi Moreno and her cook, Dawn Emerick. I shared that our staff had volunteered to each cook various portions of the meal in their homes and bring them to our property to provide a Welcome Home Holiday Meal to our formerly displaced and homeless residents.

Many of us have cooked for large families but not on a scale of 100 to 125 people and with limited resources. We wanted to make sure we were educated and ready to put forth our best efforts.

When Jessi asked me what specifically we were doing, I shared that we hoped to host a community dinner for no less than 100 to 125 residents and family members.

“

*We so appreciated the generosity, respect and grace shown to our tenants by this amazing business. Please remember the Dante Club in your thoughts of gratitude, community service and stewardship.*

”

After just minutes of explaining what Mercy Housing does and our mission and values, the Dante Club stepped up and volunteered to not only donate some turkeys and side dishes to our event but also to prepare, transport and serve the food to our entire property.

When I reminded them that we hoped to serve this meal in just three days, they unanimously and eagerly insisted that they wanted to be a part of our event.

To ensure they had the full support of the Dante Club board, Kim Guterding and Jessi Moreno sent a quick email to the board to get permission. Within minutes, they received notification granting them full support and permission to make the donations and to open up the Dante Club facility to cook our meal. There was not even a brief hesitation when I explained that our property was in Woodland, 31 miles away.

At 4 p.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 20, their team arrived with the food

they generously donated and took the additional responsibility off our staff for the balance of the meal preparations. They prepared the entire meal and loaned us hot plates, linens, utensils, serving dishes and other necessary materials to present our dinner as if we were a full banquet location. It was such an amazing opportunity to come together and be able to offer this meal to our community.

Our Yolo County partners not only attended our event, but some of the case managers, Sammy Hawk and Rosie Morales, pitched in and served and prepped some of the meal with us.

We feel very blessed by our partnerships. We so appreciated the generosity and respect shown to our tenants by this amazing business. Please remember the Dante Club in your thoughts of gratitude, as it truly demonstrated generosity, community service and stewardship kicking off this holiday season.”

**Club seeks applicants for manager position**

The Dante Club is looking for a new general manager after the departure of Allison Nord, who held the position since January 2018.

Club members are asked to encourage any qualified people they know to apply.

Prospective candidates should send their resumes to [sendyourresume2us@gmail.com](mailto:sendyourresume2us@gmail.com).

Applicants should not contact the Dante Club directly.



# Board approves changes after social survey

## MEMBERS ENCOURAGED TO KEEP THEIR IDEAS AND SUGGESTIONS COMING YEAR-ROUND

At its December meeting, the Dante Club board approved several changes designed to better meet members' needs and expectations.

The changes are based on responses to a social activities survey that members completed in November. Here's a summary of the approved changes:

1. A three-member committee will monitor and direct the quality and Italian authenticity of food served at Tuesday Night and member dinners. Committee members Richard Battistessa, Michael Micchiche and Michael Talani will work with the club manager and cook to set menus and recipes. They also will listen to member comments and provide feedback to the manager, cook and advisory committee. Members are encouraged to share opinions and suggestions about meals.

2. A floor manager will oversee dinners to help ensure that members have an exceptional experience.

3. The price for member dinners will be \$13 with a reservation and \$18 without. This is designed to encourage reservations, so the club manager can better estimate food purchases. Complimentary beer and wine with dinner will continue, as will half-price drinks for members. Typical pricing for comparable private-event dinners is \$35 to \$40.

4. The Tuesday dinner price will be reduced from \$28 to \$25.

5. The board will monitor the sound system, but speakers should speak into the microphone. Anyone

in the back of the room who can't hear should stand up and say so.

6. An Italian flag will be on display at all member events.

7. Pitchers of water will be on tables at all member events.

8. Members will be asked about starting member dinners earlier, at about 6:30 p.m.

9. Members will be asked about serving spumoni for dessert.

10. Free hot dogs, beer and soft drinks will be served during the club's annual Easter egg hunt.

11. Members will be asked about moving the annual Mother's Day brunch from Mother's Day to the Saturday before.

12. The Viva Vino event will be held on a Saturday in October in an effort to improve attendance.

13. Member events will feature more Italian music.

14. Dante Club at the River Cats will be a day game this year, on a Saturday or a Sunday, so more families and children can attend.

15. At the July and August steak barbecues, cooks will fire up the grills earlier and include mushrooms and onions as accompaniments.

16. The golf committee will consider moving the tournament closer to the Dante Club. It's now held at the Bartley Cavanaugh Golf Course in south Sacramento.

17. Members will be asked if their younger sons and grandsons should be allowed to attend the Sausage Stag Feed with their parents and grandparents.

18. Members will be asked about having bocce ball before member dinners.

19. The price of the Christmas dinner will be kept as low as possible, and large families will not be split up.

20. The bar service will be improved to ensure faster and better service for members.

21. The board will consider increasing member benefits in the coming year. Members can now get reduced-cost dinners, half-price drinks and room rentals for member events, free beer at member dinners and other free or reduced-cost social events.

22. Leftover food will be put in take-home containers and sold to members for a moderate price.

23. The new manager will be charged with developing and implementing a comprehensive marketing program to better publicize the Dante Club as a banquet facility and to improve the club's business performance.

24. The board will examine the costs and benefits of establishing a modestly priced Dante Club private-label wine.

The Dante Club board of directors thanks everyone who participated in the survey and who offered suggestions.

Social chairman Tom Novi and his committee hope the changes the board has approved will help improve members' experience at the Dante Club and better serve all members in the coming year.



## 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](mailto:robertguidera@att.net) or 916-451-1467 and Tom at [tomnovi@aol.com](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:tjmezzan@gmail.com).

### Traditions

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presents rather than Befana.

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

These are just a sampling of Italian Christmas traditions, and each region has its unique variations. And, of course, in Italy, traditions, religious observances and celebrations are always accompanied by generous offerings of great food and wine.



Celebrating Christmas in a traditional Italian manner can be lots of fun. Next year, why not give it a try?

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