



DANTE'S INFERNO

Annual dinner raises more than \$4,000



Ladies Auxiliary members, above, assembled raffle prizes galore for the Dante Club's annual cioppino dinner March 7. Keeping the wine flowing throughout the evening were, at left, Michael Micciche, George Zarzana and Dick Zarzana. Michael Talani and his crew prepared the tasty fish stew, and ace auctioneer Ronnie Pane called the bidding for three prizes in a live auction. Music kept guests dancing until after 10 p.m. Proceeds from the dinner, raffle and auction totaled more than \$4,000.

Claiming our heritage

Little Italy in Sacramento keeps spirit of homeland alive

Italian roots run deep in Sacramento. Italians were among the earliest pioneers of Sacramento and have settled here since the Gold Rush. Generations of Italian Americans helped shape the cultural and economic landscape of Sacramento.

Between 1850 and 1870, Italians were concentrated along the city's Embarcadero. By the early 20th century, they were concentrated in the Southside, Oak Park, Land Park, midtown and east Sacramento neighborhoods.

In the 1930s and '40s, members of almost half of the households in Oak Park had come from Italy. Many lived along 39th Street, then called Carmello Boulevard.

After World War II, the largest concentration emerged in east Sacramento.

See HERITAGE, Page 5

WE'RE IN THE NEWS!

If you missed it, read freelancer Becky Grunewald's feature story [here](#) about our club, published Feb. 26 in The Sacramento Bee.



NEWS, NOTES AND OTHERWISE

Ladies Auxiliary

The Ladies Auxiliary had another great turnout for its March dinner.

Chef Jessi Moreno served roasted chicken, polenta and swiss chard. Attendees played bingo and vied for raffle prizes, including an electric fry griddle.

Thirty-eight auxiliary members signed up to play bocce in a new women's league. Chairwomen Jodie Maita and Debra Duccini-Hansen will organize the league and announce practice times at the Dante Club bocce courts.

Members who didn't have an opportunity to sign up for the bocce league may still do so by emailing Debra Duccini-Hansen at dduc56@gmail.com or calling her at 916-956-6789.

Auxiliary board members decorated 36 baskets for raffle prizes for the Dante Club's March 7 cioppino feed.

Special thanks go to board member Anna Tenderella, who sought gift certificate donations from local businesses.

Proceeds from the cioppino raffle will benefit the Dante Club scholarship fund.

Some auxiliary members also helped set up tables for the cioppino feed, saving the club the cost of hiring outside workers.

Board members Debra Jefcoat and Brenda Gardner assisted during the dinner, and past president Karol Buccola and Gigi Piagentini helped sell raffle tickets at the event.

The auxiliary has decided to join the men by collecting

aluminum can pull tabs for donation to the Adopt-A-Family program.

Donations help pay for lodging at the Ronald McDonald House, where families whose children are patients at UC Davis Medical Center can stay. A collection box for pull tabs is available at the club's reception desk.

Honorary members of the Ladies Auxiliary are those who are older than 80 and have been paid members for 25 consecutive years. These members no longer have to pay annual dues.

Several honorary members are Denise Franzoia, Lee Cortipassi, Linda Van Reese, Leonora Larson and, of course, auxiliary bingo caller and joke teller Gloria Tomei.

Any member who thinks they qualify for honorary membership may contact president Debra Cattuzzo at tuzo56@hotmail.com or 916-442-2266.

The auxiliary continues to add to its growing numbers. New members in the past two months are Barbara Duccini Reali, Marissa Barone, Mindy Alberti Jung and Ann Zacharias.

In light of the coronavirus crisis, the auxiliary has canceled its April dinner but hopes to be back on track for its May Monday meeting.

Anyone interested in joining may call president Debra Cattuzzo at 916-442-2266 or email her at tuzo56@hotmail.com.

Newsletter ads welcomed

We continue to appreciate the seven businesses participating in our effort to make this newsletter a more interactive marketing vehicle



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

All club and members events are on hold until further notice.

for Dante Club and Ladies Auxiliary members.

Club members Johnny "The Barber" Waldron, Tom "Mixed Bag" Novi, Jim Relles of Relles Florist, Mark Pedroncelli of Pedroncelli Chiropractic and Realtor Patrick Vogeli, as well as Ladies Auxiliary board member Helen Manfredi of Medic Ambulance, have all made annual advertising commitments for their businesses.

The Italian Cemetery of Colma also is an advertiser.

Any members with businesses who wish to participate as an advertiser in *Dante's Inferno* can email publicity chairman John Caselli at jac6652@aol.com.

San Francisco outing

Ladies Auxiliary member Gloria Tomei is planning a San Francisco outing Sunday, Aug. 9, to see *My Fair Lady* at the Golden Gate Theatre. The Lincoln Center Theater touring production is a revival of the 1956 Lerner and Loewe musical classic.

Participants will meet at 10 a.m. at the Target parking lot on

See NEWS, NOTES AND OTHERWISE, Page 4



2020 Committees and Assignments

(revised 3.28.20)

COMMITTEES

ADVISORY AND OPERATIONS

Tom Novi, chairman; Michael Micciche, vice chairman

Members: Tom Novi, Frank Calcagno, Richard Battistessa, Mark Pedroncelli

BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

Ernie Tomassilli, chairman; Joe Porata, vice chairman

Members: Ron Pane, Bob Guidera, vacancy

BYLAWS

Ron Fiorica, chairman; Tom Novi, vice chairman

Members: Michael Micciche, Richard Battistessa, Ralph DiLibero

FINANCE

Tom Novi, chairman; Pat Orelli, vice chairman

Members: Tom Mezzanares, Ralph DiLibero, Dan Calcagno

INVESTIGATION

Ron Pane, chairman; Bob Guidera, vice chairman

Members: Pat Orelli, Ernie Tomassilli, Frank Calcagno

MEMBERSHIP

Dan Calcagno, chairman; Bob Guidera, vice chairman

Members: Pat Orelli, Ernie Tomassilli, Frank Calcagno

PUBLICITY

John Caselli, chairman; Tom Mezzanares, vice chairman

Member: Mark Pedroncelli

SCHOLARSHIP

Rich Battistessa, chairman; Jim Dimino, vice chairman

Members: Joe Porata, Mike Battistessa, two Ladies Auxiliary representatives

SOCIAL

Michael Micciche, chairman; Joe Porata, vice chairman

Members: Pat Orelli, Mark Pedroncelli, Colin Orelli, vacancy, two Ladies Auxiliary representatives

PERFORMANCE AND SUSTAINABILITY (special committee)

Tom Novi, chairman; Ralph DiLibero, vice chairman

Members: Jim Dimino, Rich Battistessa, Pat Orelli

VOLUNTEERS (special committee to recruit members to assist with painting, plumbing, electrical, landscaping, social activities, internet, website and other club needs)

Ernie Tomassilli, chairman; Ron Fiorica, vice chairman

Members: Michael Micciche, Frank Calcagno, Jim Dimino

ASSIGNMENTS

Bocce: Rich Battistessa and Ladies Auxiliary

Dante Club apparel: Mark Pedroncelli

General membership meetings: John Caselli, Joe Porata, Ron Bacher

Sergeant-at-arms: John Fiorica, general meeting

Ladies Auxiliary liaison: Richard Battistessa

2020 DANTE CLUB BOARD OF DIRECTORS

OFFICERS

- Ronnie Pane, president: repone@icloud.com
- Tom Novi, first vice president:
tomnovi@aol.com
- Vacant, second vice president
- Ron Fiorica, secretary:
rbfiorica@frontiernet.net
- Tom Mezzanares, treasurer:
tjmezzan@gmail.com

BOARD MEMBERS

- Richard Battistessa: drbattistessa@comcast.net
- Dan Calcagno: dmcalcagno@aol.com
- Frank Calcagno: fscal@comcast.net
- John Caselli: jac6652@aol.com
- Ron Cristoni: roncristoni@aol.com
- Ralph DiLibero: ralph.dilibero@dhcs.ca.gov
- Jim Dimino: jkdimino@sbcglobal.net
- Ron Fiorica: rbfiorica@frontiernet.net
- Bob Guidera: robertguidera@att.net
- Tom Mezzanares: tjmezzan@gmail.com
- Michael Micciche: michael.micciche@gmail.com
- Tom Novi: tomnovi@aol.com
- Patrick Orelli: pat@apcpagroup.com
- Ron Pane: repone@icloud.com
- Mark Pedroncelli: peddc@surewest.net
- Joe Porata: jporata@sbcglobal.net
- Ernie Tomassilli: ca.ernest@pacbell.net

**News, Notes and Otherwise**

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

Broadway and continue to the Dante Club parking lot.

Arrival in San Francisco is at 1 p.m., the show is at 2 p.m. and dinner is at 6 p.m. at Alioto's restaurant on Fisherman's Wharf.

Dinner will include tomato bruschetta, green salad with shrimp, rigatoni with pesto sauce, a choice of pan-fried petrale sole or chicken with sauteed mushrooms, and cheesecake.

Cost is \$195 per person. Reservations and payments must be received by June 25.

Mail checks to Gloria Tomei, 2785 14th St., Sacramento, CA 95818. Provide guest name, address, phone number, choice of dinner entree and whether pickup at Target is needed.

Questions? Call Gloria at 916-447-5559 or email her at gtomei@comcast.net.

In memoriam

Frank Vellutini, a member for more than 25 years, died Feb. 28. Members are asked to keep the Vellutini family in their thoughts and prayers.

Club apparel

Members can purchase club-branded aprons and four styles of sweatshirts and polo shirts in sizes for men, women and children. To order, email Mark Pedroncelli at peddc@surewest.net.

Save pull tabs

Members are asked to continue collecting aluminum can pull tabs for donation to the Adopt-A-Family

Program, which subsidizes lodging costs at the Ronald McDonald House near UC Davis Medical Center in Sacramento.

Parents traveling from outside the area so their children can receive medical care can stay at the house at low cost.

As of December, according to board member Ron Cristoni, the Dante Club has delivered 1,025 pounds of pull tabs since we started donating. Lodging costs \$20 per night for parents who can afford it. That means that if the program receives \$1 per pound of pull tabs, Dante Club members have donated 51 nights of lodging.

Annual dues overdue

Yearly \$100 membership dues are past due. Pay online at <https://www.danteclub.com/members.php> or by cash, check or card at the club. Mail checks to:

Dante Club of Sacramento
Attn. Tom Mezzanares, treasurer
2330 Fair Oaks Blvd.
Sacramento, CA 95825

Bocce break

All our paisani are encouraged to go to their closets or storerooms, and look for those marbles and steelies they've been hoarding for their grandkids. They should then proceed to the family room and roll a steely 10 feet. Then take the marbles and practice rolling to the palino.

Ah, bocce. We'll return to our courts as soon as the world settles down. Stay well.

Scholarship committee update

With the indefinite closure of area schools, we are adjusting our scholarship plans.

The scholarship committee will meet after the March 31 deadline. Let's see what the next few weeks have in store for our group.

Be patient. We'll get it done.

Buildings and grounds

The next time members visit the Dante Club, they'll see a fresh coat of paint brightening the entry hallway, bar and Sicilian Room.

The Venetian Room also has been repainted for an updated look.

This work was completed by a small group of dedicated members led by club president Ronnie Pane.

Among other items to be completed are cleaning out the sewer system for the whole facility, including kitchen and bathrooms, and replacing lightbulbs and thermostats in the Tuscan Room.

Completion of these and other projects is on hold due to the coronavirus.

Membership committee

At the next general meeting, the Dante Club will welcome Paul Jacobs into our membership.

Sponsored by James Leonard, Paul was approved in February and will wear Badge No. 16. Next time we gather, we all should make a special effort to welcome Paul.

We have a backlog of applicants. In the queue are Andy Danovaro, Daniel Dalfonso, Louis Lodi, Carl DeNigris, William Zeuars, Frank Lienert and Joseph Bonacci. The membership committee will work to interview these applicants as soon as possible once we reassemble.

Three other applicants will need to either request being put on hold or

See NEWS, NOTES AND OTHERWISE, Page 6



Changes to club bylaws proposed

Ron Fiorica and his bylaws committee have proposed these changes to our Dante Club bylaws:

Nonsubstantive, semi-technical

- changing the word “shall” to “may”
- renumbering certain agenda items
- combining the position titles of financial secretary and treasurer to treasurer/financial secretary

Substantive

- combining advisory and finance committees and their duties
- combining membership and investigating committees and their duties
- shortening the bylaws amendment process from three to two months by voting in the second month
- reducing the bylaws amendment vote requirement from two-thirds of those present to a majority of those present
- increasing terms of the board of directors from one to two years
- having club officers assume their duties at the time of election
- adding duties to the role of recording secretary
- changing the term “club room” to “Dante Club facility”
- changing the membership of certain committees

For questions or concerns, call Ron Pane at 916-798-0111 or email him at repane@icloud.com.

Heritage

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

After a major fundraising campaign by the Italian community, construction of a new St. Mary's Church in 1948 at 58th and M streets attracted Italians to Sacramento from other city neighborhoods.

St. Mary's Church had served as a spiritual, social and ethnic hub for the Italian community since 1906, when it was founded at Eighth and N streets. The church moved to Seventh and T streets in 1916.

As an Italian parish church, St. Mary's was staffed by Italian priests, and masses were conducted in Italian.

By World War II, east Sacramento was home to many Italian truck farms and already populated by Italians.

Some of the stone farmhouses built by Italians still exist around East Portal Park in the heart of the neighborhood.

The five existing stone houses, known as the “Stone Sisters,” were originally inhabited by Italian families with names such as Reali, Guidotti, Carli, Belluomini and Brida.

In 1946, across the street from the park on Rodeo Way, 20 homes were built on Anthony Zito's produce farm. Italian families with names such as Defazio, Luigi, DaPrato, Pane, Puccinelli, Stefani, Grida, Guidotti, Procida and Reali lived in the homes.

The high concentration of Italian families gave the neighborhood a distinctly Italian flavor as the core of Sacramento's Italian community.

Many Italian Americans still live in the area, and some still speak Italian. The Little Italy neighborhood, generally concentrated between 48th and 59th streets and bounded by J Street and Folsom Boulevard, grew and thrived through the 1950s, '60s and '70s and continues today.

Italians established many communal institutions in the neighborhood, in addition to St. Mary's Church. Giovanni Hall, a bocce club in East Portal Park, today has 65 league teams. Among schools are St. Mary's Elementary and St. Francis High schools, which generations of Italian American children have attended and that offer classes in Italian.

Italian American organizations operating in the area include the St. Mary's Italian Catholic Federation, Branch No. 45, established in 1936; the Dante Club, established in 1923; the Marsala Lodge, established in 1911; the East Portal Bocce Club, established in 1970; the Piemonte Reale, established in 1888; Arberesh of Sacramento, established in 1990; and the Italian Cultural Society, established in 1981.

The Italian presence in the Little Italy district continues with longtime residents and businesses. Many businesses, which grew up around the neighborhood to serve Italians, have operated along Folsom Boulevard and still dot the area.

Grocery stores with Italian goods have been a staple. They include the Corti family's Corti Bros. store at 59th Street and Folsom Boulevard; the Brida

See HERITAGE, Page 6

**News, Notes and Otherwise**

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

reconfirm their interest in joining the Dante Club.

At our next meeting, members will be asked to approve an applicant for lifetime membership. We also will welcome a member moving from associate to regular status because of an application oversight.

Committee chairmanship transferred in March from Frank Calcagno to his brother, Dan. Frank will continue to participate in a slightly less active role.

Questions? Contact any committee member: Bob Guidera, Frank Calcagno, Pat Orelli, Ernie Tomaselli or Dan Calcagno.

Everything Italian

Sacramento has several other Italian social groups that may interest our members:

- Arberesh — arbereshofsacramento.org
- Italian Cultural Society — Bill Cerruti, executive director, italianculturalsociety.com
- Piemonte Reale — Andrew DeFazio, president, andrewdefazio@gmail.com
- Romulus Club — John L. Boze, Romulus Club, 400 Capitol Mall, Suite 1850, Sacramento, CA 95814

Heritage

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

family's Quality Market at 51st and Folsom; and the Velo family's Italian Importing Co. at 51st and Folsom.

Other businesses were the Stefani family's Square Deal Restaurant at 58th and Folsom, the Espanol Italian restaurant at 58th and Folsom, Relles Florist at 52nd and Folsom, Lagormarsino Seed at 51st and Folsom, Pietro Tallini Nursery at 56th and Folsom, Italian Law Office at 49th and Folsom, Pesce Locksmith at 53rd and Folsom, Nicoletti Funeral home at 54th and Folsom, Frank Lettini's Automotive at 52nd and Folsom, Bertolani Travel at 57th and J, Mario Duchini's Gas Station at 57th and H, Archie Bugatto Hardware at 56th and J, and Affinito's Italian Corners shopping complex at 51st and Folsom. A Bank of America branch was staffed by Italian branch managers operated at 53rd and Folsom, as did an Italian Vice Consulate office at 54th and Folsom. Many of these businesses still maintain the Italian heritage of the area.

The story of east Sacramento's Little Italy neighborhood should be claimed, told and kept alive to inspire the future of the Italian community.

Reprinted with permission from Bill Cerruti, executive director of the Italian Cultural Society, Sacramento.

DANTE'S REMINDERS

**Member volunteers**

To volunteer, contact club president Ron Pane or social chairman Michael Micciche to offer your services. You can reach Ron at 916-798-0111 or repane@icloud.com. You can contact Michael at 916-550-1122 or michael.micciche@gmail.com.

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 Mark Pedroncelli at 916-812-6729 or peddc@surewest.net or speak to him at a members meeting. You must present cash or a check to place an order.

Newsletter photos and news

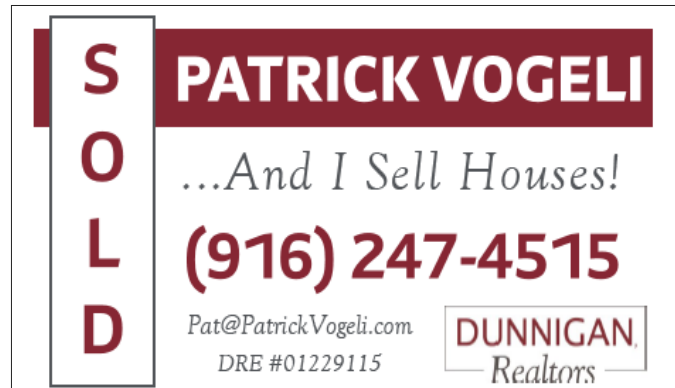
Submit photos and news items for *Dante's Inferno* to John Caselli at jac6652@aol.com. Items must be received by the 20th of each month to be considered for the following month's newsletter. Publication depends on available space and is not guaranteed. To post news and photos on Facebook, log in to your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



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ADVERTISER LISTING

Mixed Bag. Gifts for all reasons. 24th and K. 9-6 M-SA, 10-5 SU. 10% discount to club members. Tom & Linda Novi, proprietors. 916-447-6123. mixedbagsac.com.

THIS SPACE AVAILABLE
For details, contact John Caselli at
jac6652@aol.com or 916-217-6482.