



**Donate to the
Dante Club
Legacy Fund!**

DANTE'S INFERNO



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Ron Pane

Remodel, vaccine fuel optimism for 2021

I hope everyone had a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. The holiday season is my favorite because it provides a unique opportunity to spend time with family. I hope everyone found a way to do that given the current restrictions we're living with.

As I reflect on 2020, I found it challenging on many levels and for a wide variety of reasons. But I'm an optimist, and with the advent of the COVID-19 vaccine and the recent completion of our Dante Event Center remodel, I think we have cause for celebration.

The sheer number of bookings we've received, both returning customers and new ones, is an incredibly positive sign and will help us maintain the legacy of the Dante Club. I hope all our members will ask their neighbors, relatives and friends to consider holding their next event at what many now

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Masked and distanced Dante Club board members meet outside Dec. 20 to discuss plans for 2021.

Club makes rebuilding status as premier facility a top priority for 2021

Dante Club general manager Jennifer Peretti has a top goal in 2021 for the newly remodeled Dante Event Center.

"We want to continue striving for success, slowly working our way out of the shadows and rebuilding our reputation as Sacramento's premier event and meeting destination," Peretti said. "With all the indoor renovations coming to a close, the responses we've been getting from past clients is overwhelming — all high praise, and many left in awe."

Since the renamed Dante Event Center reopened in August, Peretti said the facility has hosted two memorials, five birthday parties, six weddings and 15 other events, including dinners, meetings and baby showers.

"Things will just continue to look up for the Dante Club as we keep our heads held high during these trying times," she said.

The latest plans to install a large outdoor party tent will ensure that

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NEWS, NOTES AND OTHERWISE

Advisory and finance update

Despite increased COVID-19 restrictions in December, the board has made progress on several items.

A redesign of the Dante Club website is nearly complete and should roll out by mid-January. Club policies have been consolidated, and event center employee and customer policies have been completed as well. These will be finalized as soon as the board resumes regular meetings and gives them a final review.

Although many social activities have been stopped, the Dante Event Center served more than 200 drive-by Christmas dinners Dec. 19, receiving positive feedback about the food quality and modest prices.

Logistical challenges made wait times for some guests unacceptable. Jennifer Peretti and her staff will address these concerns in an effort to streamline logistics for drive-by Sunday Family Night dinners planned for Jan. 10. Details will be sent to members soon.

The advisory and finance committee and the board have approved purchasing a foundation and tent that will be installed on the grassy area near the bocce courts. The tent will be used for weddings and other events and will provide shade for our bocce teams in the summer. The tent should be installed by late January.

Newsletter marketing

It's hard to imagine that our first year of *Dante's Inferno* advertising is coming to a close. Newsletter coordinator John Caselli offers thanks to these sponsors: Johnny

"the barber" Waldron, Tom "Mixed Bag" Novi, Jim Relles of Relles Florist, Mark Pedroncelli of Pedroncelli Chiropractic, Realtor Patrick Vogeli, Ladies Auxiliary board member Helen Manfredi of Medic Ambulance and Troy Milan of the Italian Cemetery in Colma.

With advertising exposure at meetings more limited in 2020, the board has extended the end date of existing contracts to March 31, 2021.

In the meantime, anyone who is interested in advertising their business in the *Inferno* should email John Caselli at Jac6652@aol.com.

In memoriam

Longtime Dante Club member George Plescia died Dec. 10. He was in good health but had recently fallen off a ladder in his garage while getting Christmas decorations down.

Before he passed, George told his daughter, Sarah, that he was extremely impressed by the quality of the remodeling work completed recently at the Dante Club, especially in light of his background in the construction business.

Sarah and son George will host a celebration of George's life on June 5, 2021, at the Dante Club.

Save pull tabs

Since Ron Cristoni challenged Dante Club members to collect aluminum can pull tabs to benefit the Ronald McDonald House, the response has been overwhelming.

To date, we have collected more than 1,250 pounds of pull tabs. Proceeds help assist parents who can't afford to stay at the Ronald



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

**ALL CLUB AND MEMBER
EVENTS ON HOLD UNTIL
FURTHER NOTICE**

McDonald House while their children are hospitalized at the University of California, Davis, Medical Center in Sacramento.

The \$1,250 raised has helped pay for more than 60 nights of lodging for parents.

Even though the resumption of indoor events is on hold at our club, members can reach out to Ron Cristoni or John Rosso about delivering their pull-tab collections.

For more information about the program, members can go to the Ronald McDonald House Charities, Northern California, website at www.rmhcnc.org. Click on "Getting Involved" and scroll down to "Pop-Tab Program."

Bylaws in the mail soon

Changes to our club bylaws were approved and are now being printed. Members will receive copies via mail along with their club cards when they pay their dues for 2021. In the meantime, members can review the bylaws online.

Club apparel

Members can purchase Dante Club-branded aprons and four styles

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2020 Committees and Assignments

(revised 10.19.20)

COMMITTEES

ADVISORY AND FINANCE

Tom Novi, chairman; Pat Orelli, vice chairman

Members: Tom Mezzanares, Ralph DiLibero, Frank Calcagno, Richard Battistessa, Jim Dimino

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

ENTERTAINMENT

Richard Battistessa, chairman; Jim Dimino, vice chairman

Members: Ralph DiLibero, Dan Calcagno, two vacancies

MEMBERSHIP AND INVESTIGATION

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, Dan Calcagno

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

SPECIAL COMMITTEES

PERFORMANCE AND SUSTAINABILITY

Tom Novi, chairman; Ralph DiLibero, vice chairman

Members: Jim Dimino, Rich Battistessa, Pat Orelli

VOLUNTEERS (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

- Ron Pane, president: repane@icloud.com
- Tom Novi, first vice president:
tomnovi@aol.com
- Patrick Orelli, second vice president,
pat@apcpagroup.com
- 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
- Ralph DiLibero: ralph.dilibero@dhcs.ca.gov
- Jim Dimino: jkdmino@sbcglobal.net
- Ron Fiorica: rbfiorica@frontiernet.net
- Bob Guidera: robertguidera@att.net
- Matt Longo: longomb@sbcglobal.net
- Tom Mezzanares: tjmezzan@gmail.com
- Michael Micciche: michael.micciche@gmail.com
- Tom Novi: tomnovi@aol.com
- Patrick Orelli: pat@apcpagroup.com
- Ron Pane: repane@icloud.com
- Mark Pedroncelli: peddc@surewest.net
- Joe Porata: jporata@sbcglobal.net
- Ernie Tomassilli: ca.ernest@pacbell.net



Many auxiliary board members formed friendships for life

I hope everyone had a nice holiday. I know it was difficult without Christmas parties and large family gatherings. With the vaccine, I look forward to resuming our monthly auxiliary dinners. I miss them so much!

I'm sorry to announce the loss of proud longtime auxiliary member Philomena Torchia Halsted, who passed at age 98.

Philomena graduated from Sacramento High School and worked for the state for 38 years. She enjoyed playing cards and bingo and volunteering at St. Patrick's Children's Home.

LADIES AUXILIARY NEWS

Debra Cattuzzo

This month I will introduce you to two auxiliary board members. Co-vice-president Heidi Pesce Veneman was born and raised in east Sacramento, where she attended St. Mary's Elementary and St. Francis High schools, as did many other members of our auxiliary board. She graduated from the University of California, Davis, and earned a teaching credential at UC Berkeley. She was an educator for

37 years before retiring in 2018. Heidi is married with one son and two stepchildren. She enjoys outdoor activities and traveling in her recreational vehicle.

Although both her parents were born in the United States, all four of Heidi's grandparents emigrated from Italy. Her fraternal grandparents came from the Piemonte region near Genoa. Her maternal grandmother was from Dissimo, a tiny town in the Italian Alps, who met her husband, a soldier from Rome, when he was stationed as a border patrol agent

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LADIES AUXILIARY BOARD

- Debra Cattuzzo, co-president: cattuzzod@gmail.com
- Carole Stefani Chivaro, co-president: cchivaro2@aol.com
- Heidi Pesce Veneman, co-vice-president: hpveneman@yahoo.com
- Helen Manfredi Pierson, co-vice-president: helen@medicambulance.net
- Tina Luchini Bowers, co-treasurer: rkb0719@sbcglobal.net
- Debbie Duccini Hansen, co-treasurer: dducc56@gmail.com
- Judy Farina, secretary: jfarina56@yahoo.com
- Rosemary Micciche, trustee/caller: rosemarymicciche@gmail.com
- Sandy Calcagno, trustee/caller: fscal@comcast.net
- Phyllis Kielholtz, trustee/caller: swedgewood@aol.com
- Mary Anne Chivaro, trustee/caller: mapc50@comcast.net
- Debra Jefcoat, trustee/caller: djefcoat6@sbcglobal.net
- Nancy Doyle, trustee/caller: ndoyle@stfrancisshs.org
- Janet Gatejen, trustee/caller: urbanhound@me.com
- Margaret Lynch, trustee/caller: gmlynch@sbcglobal.net
- Karol Rehm Buccola, past president
- Anna Tenderella, hospitality (with Linda Rariden and Diana Dionisio): annatenderella@sbcglobal.net
- Debra Duccini Hansen, bocce: dducc56@gmail.com
- Jodie Maita, bocce: jodie.maita@gmail.com

**President's Corner**

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consider one of Sacramento's premier entertainment venues.

Looking forward to 2021, my primary goal is to continue our club legacy. The effort must come from members and the auxiliary, whom I consider our best salespeople. Members' promotion of the club within their communities and the interest they take in club operations will guarantee the legacy of the Dante Club for future generations of locals with an Italian heritage.

In the interim, the board met *al fresco* on Sunday, Dec. 20. Because a members meeting cannot take place until the current restrictions are lifted, the board decided that all board nominations for 2021 will be postponed. The 2020 board will remain in place until further notice.

The existing board also discussed the need for a grand reopening as we have a new name, a new look and a new general manager. Specifics are under discussion and will be shared with members upon completion.

In addition, a permanent recognition for those who have contributed to our Legacy Fund is planned. Details will follow.

Thank you for allowing me the privilege of serving as Dante Club president in 2020.

Immigrants suffered through post-Civil War padrone era

By Ralph DiLibero

An Italian-American padrone era began after the American Civil War left an enormous number of young American men dead and disabled.

The U.S. Congress sought a political solution for an immediate need to increase the lost manpower, enacting the Immigration Act of 1864 that allowed mass immigration of workers and large group labor contracts.

To facilitate the migratory economic process, a padrone or overseer system evolved.

Unfortunately, the Italian-American overseer agents controlled their fellow immigrants in ways that were similar to the methods of the

extortionist camorra organization in Italy.

Corrupt economic arrangements among agents in Italy and the United States led to human trafficking of large groups of Italian immigrant workers. The groups consisted of 80% *contradini*, or farm laborers, and 20% craftsmen, who mostly came from the Mezzogiorno, or Southern Italy.

Padroni contractually provided immigrants with transportation to America, resettlement in inadequate housing, jobs to American labor-employee groups and bank savings accounts, controlled by the padroni.

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Auxiliary

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in the area. All four of Heidi's grandparents came to America in the early 1900s.

Co-treasurer Debbie Duccini Hansen also was born and raised in Sacramento and attended St. Mary's Elementary School.

At St. Francis High School, she met the current board members, who have become friends for a lifetime.

Debbie is married with two adult sons and will soon retire from Wells Fargo after 45½ years of service. She enjoys playing poker and bunco, paint events, cooking and spending time with her family and friends.

Debbie's ancestors hailed from Lucca, Italy. Her nonnos (grandfathers) became friends when they immigrated to the United States in the early 1900s. When they sent for Debbie's nonnas (grandmothers), the families all settled in east Sacramento.

Eventually, two Duccini brothers married two Paolini sisters, and both raised their families in east Sacramento.

If auxiliary members have something fun or any news they'd like to share, they can email me at cattuzzod@gmail.com.

Someone suggested that we create a book of Italian family recipes. Who is interested?

**News, Notes and Otherwise**

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of sweatshirts and polo shirts for men, women and children. To order, email Mark Pedroncelli, peddc@surewest.net.

Membership update

The membership committee continues to wait until COVID-19 restrictions allow us to meet and interview applicants, but this hasn't stopped members from submitting applications for new prospects.

The latest comes from Dick Zarzanna presenting his grandson, Santino (Sonny) Stiriti. This brings the list to 14, with two more potentials.

Members are encouraged to keep the requests coming in. The committee will interview as many as possible when the time is right. It's a positive sign that members are anxious to get back to meeting nights and expand our ranks so more can enjoy our Italian heritage and camaraderie.

Applications are online. Contact Dan Calcagno for more information.

Buildings and grounds update

Ernie Tomassilli and his buildings and grounds committee once again offer thanks to all those who helped transform our facility in 2020.

We've come a long way since the journey began in March.

In 2021, the committee will focus on a few last-minute details and then move into a maintenance phase. The maintenance list includes these items:

1. The roof of the main building needs preventive measures to ensure its longevity. Needed work includes scraping, sealing, applying, replacing and inspecting.



The Tuscan Room has a bright and updated look, with new flooring and Italian-flavored wall hangings and lighting.

2. The Magpie School building needs a facelift, including replacement and upgrade of fascia boards, roof maintenance and fresh paint to match the main building.

3. The dishwashing room needs ongoing maintenance.

4. Venetian Room walls and doors need prepping and painting.

5. Tuscan Room walls and baseboards need caulking and painting.

6. Eight sections of fencing need replacing. Outdoor lighting on the building and in the parking lot needs improvement.

Members who can spare time to help with these tasks should contact Ernie Tomassilli at 916-541-9507.

Annual dues due

Yearly \$100 membership dues are due Jan. 31. Members can pay at <http://www.danteclub.com/members.php>.

To pay by check, make payable to the Dante Club and mail to: Dante Club of Sacramento; Attn. Tom Mezzanares, treasurer; 2330 Fair Oaks Blvd.; Sacramento, CA 95825. Or pay in person by cash, check or credit card.

New committee

The advisory committee has established an entertainment committee responsible for bringing guest speakers and performers to special events. The committee, led by Rich Battistessa, includes members Dan Calcagno, Ralph DiLibero and Jim Dimino.

Rebuilding

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

the Dante Event Center name will continue to circulate throughout the Sacramento area.

"Our center has already booked a surprise birthday party in August that will use the tent to accommodate more than 200 people," Peretti said. "This client had attended an event here in the past and was blown away by all the changes that have been made."

The new year is just beginning, and already the Dante Event Center has 20 weddings on the books, with more inquiries daily, along with six birthday parties, two memorials, two reunions and two returning annual crab feeds. Inquiries have come from other new groups as well, including Shriners.

"Once we're able, we will be excited to welcome back eight of our longstanding groups, with more being contacted," Peretti said. "We are also excited to bring back the Arberesh Club for their semiannual events."

With the continued support of members and past clients, Peretti predicts a successful year for the Dante Event Center.



Financial update from Tom Mezzanares, treasurer:

These have been trying times for the Dante Club. We've kept our doors open, but we still need your help.

Please donate to the Legacy Fund online at <http://www.danteclub.com/donation.html> or send a check payable to the Dante Club, marked "Donation."

You also can create your own legacy by including the club in your estate plans, providing future financial support to your club and your Italian heritage. Your gift will help us maintain our facility as a premier venue for club and public events. This is a simple, meaningful way to make a lasting impact beyond your lifetime. Also, I am now collecting 2021 membership dues, so sending a check or making a payment online at <http://www.danteclub.com/members.php> will help as well.

Payments on our Small Business Paycheck Protection Program loan have been deferred for at least 10 months from the end of our covered period (early December). Our lender, Banner Bank, is working under the belief that Congress will pass legislation giving everyone full forgiveness.

But even if Congress doesn't pass such legislation or if the President doesn't sign it into law, we can apply for loan forgiveness. We won't have to begin making payments during the forgiveness application process if we apply within 10 months after the last day of our covered period, or December 2020. Furthermore, payments will continue to be deferred during reviews of our application — up to 60 days for Banner Bank and up to 90 days for the U.S. Small Business Administration.

I'm keeping a close watch on our payroll and utility costs. We need to be at 60% minimum payroll and maximum 40% utilities for complete paycheck protection loan forgiveness. We're at 80% payroll and 20% utilities through October 2020, which meets their qualifications.

I'm also monitoring the possibility of obtaining additional paycheck protection and Economic Injury Disaster Loan funding that the Small Business Administration might make available soon. Our best option is additional paycheck protection rather than a disaster loan, because the former can be forgivable while the latter must be paid back over a period of time.

Dante Club Legacy Building Fund

These members of the Dante Club and the Ladies Auxiliary have contributed to our Legacy Building Fund since January 2020, for a total of \$14,352.14 as of Dec. 20. Many thanks to our generous donors for their continued support:

- Steve Lavezzo, \$700
- Bill Maffei, \$200
- Thomas Matranga, \$100
- Tom Mezzanares, \$100
- Michael Micciche, \$100
- Tom Novi, \$100
- Patrick Orelli, \$200
- J. Paul Pane Jr., \$250
- Ron Pane, \$3,507.38
- Ben Parisi, \$200
- Vito Parisi, \$200
- Donald Pasquini, \$150
- John Patella, \$100
- Peter and Carol Pesetti, \$200
- Joe Porata, \$250
- Pietro Pozzuto, \$200
- Peter and Linda Raridan, \$100
- Jim Relles, \$100
- Tom Relles, \$100
- James Riolo, \$100
- John Rosso, \$1,097.45
- Elaine Panattoni Schaedler, \$500
- John Skinner, \$100
- Anna Tenderella, \$100
- Ernie Tomassilli, \$121.31
- Gloria Tomei, \$300
- George Zarzana, \$100
- Richard Zarzana, \$100
- Don Agostinelli, \$250
- Anonymous, \$300
- Frank Bartucco, \$200
- Lee Bennet, in memory of Shirley Bennet, \$500
- John Bertoni, \$200
- Frank Calcagno, \$100
- Kyle Calcagno, \$100
- Nicholas Canepa, \$150
- Randy Canova, \$150
- John Caselli, \$101
- Beverly Catchpool, \$100
- Debra Cattuzzo, \$500
- Kenneth Cemo, \$25
- Ron Cristoni, \$250
- Steve DeRoss, \$200
- Jim Dimino, \$100
- Nancy Doyle, \$100
- Ron Fiorica, \$100
- Joseph Guzzo, \$250
- Vince Heater, \$100
- J.A. Kaminski, \$100
- Richard Kinzel, \$100
- Fran Koscheski, \$500

**Immigrants**

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

The contracted immigrants labored as indentured servants for various employers.

Most of the jobs consisted of working in coal mines, laying track for the U.S. railway system or farming in plantation-like settings.

Labor contracts lasted from one to seven years. The padroni extracted advance payments and various fees from the paychecks of the indentured workers.

For the majority of Italian immigrants, the arrangement was their only chance for sustained survival in a foreign country whose customs and language were unknown to them.

Signing a padrone contract seemed a golden opportunity for impoverished Italians to provide a better life for their families — and worth the calculated risk.

Working for a padrone in Italy paid about \$8 per week, while working for a padrone in America paid about \$18 per week, before deductions per contract.

Signing a padrone contract seemed a golden opportunity for impoverished Italians to provide a

better life for their families — and worth the calculated risk.

Eventually, Italian immigrants politically advanced a bill to abolish the system of human trafficking through the passage of the Padrone Act on June 23, 1874.

By 1885, importing contract labor became illegal. In 1886, Celso Caesar Moreno persuaded a Massachusetts Congressman, Henry Lovering, to “end Italian slavery” and “stop nefarious traffic in human flesh” by passing legislation to permanently ban contract labor and “per se,” both imported and domestic.

Author Ralph DiLibero is a Dante Club board member. This article is the fourth in a series.

DANTE'S REMINDERS

**Member volunteers**

To volunteer, contact Ernie Tomassilli for anything related to buildings and grounds and Michael Micciche for anything related to social events. You can reach Ernie at 916-541-9507 or ca.ernest@pacbell.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

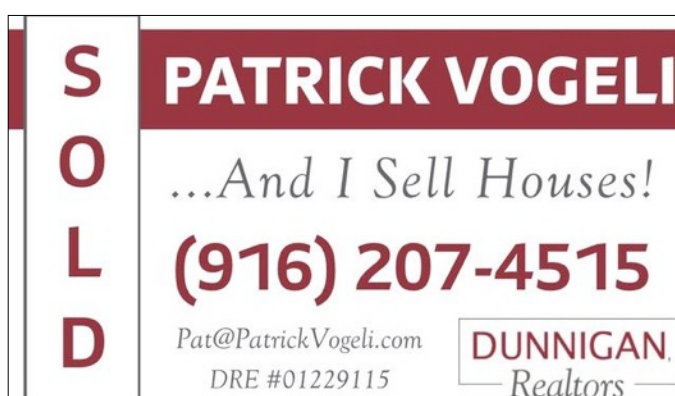
Submit photos and news items for *Dante's Inferno* to John Caselli at jac6652@aol.com. Items must be received by the 20th of each month to be considered for the following month's newsletter. Publication depends on available space and is not guaranteed. To post news and photos on Facebook, log in to your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

Contact information

Have you recently changed your address or phone number? Please alert Dan Calcagno at 916-481-8368 or dmcalcagno@aol.com.



Please patronize our paesanos



LED LIGHT BULBS: SUCH A DEAL!

The Dante Club has found a cache of LED light bulbs that we no longer need.

Members can buy them for \$1 each. Available for purchase are a selection of 12.2-watt, 13.5-watt and 30.7-watt bulbs.

For more information, call
Ernie Tomassilli at 916-541-9507.

