



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

DANTE'S INFERNO



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Ron Pane

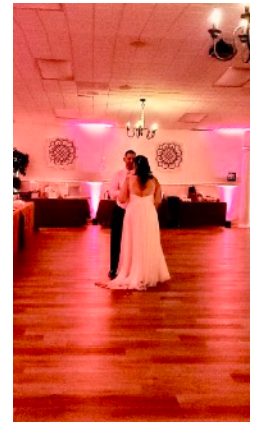
Vision of change almost complete

Since the Dante Club's transformation into the Dante Event Center began in March 2020, the board has had a vision for making the 1960s landmark a destination appreciated by members and guests into the 21st century.

That vision is almost complete. Ernie Tomassilli and his crew are focusing on finalizing a few external improvements. Within a few weeks, George Procida will landscape the area around the bocce courts and the event tent. The tent has risen and will be ready for use within days. And the list of final improvements goes on.

In April, indoor dining for Dante Club members returned after a long hiatus. Even during the pandemic, our multitalented general manager, Jennifer Peretti, was able to book a number of

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The Dante Event Center showcases an elegant red and white theme for a recent wedding reception.

Flood of bookings heralds a successful year for center

With special events bookings continuing to increase, the newly improved Dante Event Center is poised for a busy, successful year.

"With things fully opening again, our phones have been flooded with inquiries," said general manager Jennifer Peretti. "We've also received many emails, tour requests and inquiries through our newly designed website and third-party event-related sites, such as WeddingWire, TheKnot and Eventective."

With nine events booked in April and 16 more on the books, Peretti said she is now at the point

of needing more staff to keep up with the demand.

As a result, the Dante board officially approved the hiring of an event coordinator and banquet captain. This person will help guide the banquet team and assist Peretti in fielding the many inquiries received daily.

Among successful events hosted in April was a Sacramento Building Exchange crab feed. The Dante Event Center served more than 600 pounds of crab to nearly 400 guests.

Also in April, the center hosted 208 guests for a wedding ceremony and reception.

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NEWS, NOTES AND OTHERWISE

Advisory and finance update

During an April 12 meeting of the advisory and finance committee, Dante Event Center general manager Jennifer Peretti requested and received approval to hire a part-time event coordinator to help respond to a recent surge in requests for weddings, luncheons, banquets and memorial services.

Peretti plans to implement an online post-event evaluation questionnaire designed to solicit customer feedback and suggestions for improving future events. She said Facebook posts have provided some good feedback so far.

Treasurer Tom Mezzanares reported a positive revenue picture for the event center. He has identified approximately \$25,000 that could be used to complete remaining facility repairs and enhancements. Buildings and grounds committee chairman Ernie Tomassilli and Ron Pane will prioritize and cost out the remaining tasks and review this with the advisory committee.

Rich Battistessa and his entertainment committee asked that the definition of the Legacy Fund be broadened to include not only Dante facility improvements but also other approved expenditures that would benefit club members.

The committee recommended changes to encourage member attendance at meetings. Members who attend at least six of the remaining members dinners —

including the two steak feeds in July and August — would receive a complimentary Christmas dinner. Also, dinners would change to emphasize social interaction, including guest speakers at the meetings and card games afterward for those who'd like to play. Business items and committee reports would shift to written reports.

In addition, the committee recommended a major fundraiser for the Legacy Fund in 2022. Recognition bricks would be sold to build a piazza near the bocce courts. Details will follow later this year.

The advisory committee and the board both approved the recommendations.

Committee members discussed holding an open house for the business community and others to showcase the remodeled Dante Event Center. Peretti and John Caselli will prepare a proposal for the advisory committee to consider at its May meeting.

Bylaws in print

The new bylaws have been printed. Copies are available at the Dante Event Center.

Stop by and pick one up. We will try to have copies available at the May meeting.

Club apparel

The board recently expanded its opportunity to brand items with the Dante Club logo.

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UPCOMING DINNERS

Reserve and pay online at
danteclub.com/members-event-calendar/
or call 916-925-8230

May 2

Sunday Family Dinner

To-Go Meal Pickup: 3 to 4 p.m.

In-House Dining: 4 p.m.

cocktails, 5 p.m. dinner

Menu: Mixed green salad, meat or vegetarian lasagna with roasted squash and peppers, French bread rolls and butter, housemade fudge brownies

Cost: \$15 adults, \$8 ages 12 or younger; wine for purchase
Reserve by midnight Tuesday, April 27.

May 10

Ladies Auxiliary To-Go Dinner

Meal Pickup: 3:30 to 6 p.m.

Menu: Caesar salad, rolls with butter, seasonal vegetables, garlic herb chicken, rigatoni with Bolognese sauce, tiramisu

Cost: \$20 per person

To reserve, members should call Debra Cattuzzo at 916-442-2266 by Tuesday, May 4.

May 17

Members Meeting Night Dinner

Times: 6 p.m. cocktails, 7 p.m. dinner, meeting to follow

Menu: Mixed green salad, roasted Italian sausage with peppers and onions, penne pasta with marinara sauce, seasonal vegetables, rolls with butter, spumoni

Cost: \$18 per member

Reserve by midnight Tuesday, May 11.



2021 Committees and Assignments

(revised 4.12.21)

COMMITTEES

ADVISORY AND FINANCE

Tom Novi, chairman; Pat Orelli, vice chairman

Members: Tom Mezzanares, Ralph DiLibero

BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

Ernie Tomassilli, chairman; Matt Longo, vice chairman

BYLAWS

Vacant position, chairman; Tom Novi, vice chairman

Members: Richard Battistessa, Ralph DiLibero

ENTERTAINMENT

Richard Battistessa, chairman; Jim Dimino, vice chairman

Member: Frank Calcagno

MEMBERSHIP AND INVESTIGATION

Dan Calcagno, chairman; Bob Guidera, vice chairman

Members: Frank Calcagno, Pat Orelli

PUBLICITY

John Caselli, chairman; Tom Mezzanares, vice chairman

Member: Dan Calcagno

SCHOLARSHIP

Richard Battistessa, chairman; Jim Dimino, vice chairman

Members: Phyllis Keilholtz, Nancy Doyle

SOCIAL

Joe Porata, chairman; Tom Novi, vice chairman

Members: Pat Orelli, Mark Pedroncelli

SPECIAL COMMITTEES

OUTREACH

Matt Longo, chairman; Bob Guidera, vice chairman

Members: Frank Calcagno, Ralph DiLibero, Mark Pedroncelli, Ernie Tomassilli

PERFORMANCE AND SUSTAINABILITY

Rich Battistessa, chairman; Ralph DiLibero, vice chairman

Members: Jim Dimino, Pat Orelli

ASSIGNMENTS

Ladies Auxiliary liaison, Rich Battistessa

Bocce, Rich Battistessa

Club check-in desk, membership and publicity committees

Club apparel, Mark Pedroncelli

Sergeant-at-arms, John Fiorica

2020 DANTE CLUB BOARD OF DIRECTORS

OFFICERS

- Ron Pane, president: repane@icloud.com
- Tom Novi, first vice president:
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- Patrick Orelli, second vice president,
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- Dan Calcagno, secretary:
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- Tom Mezzanares, treasurer:
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- John Caselli: jac6652@aol.com
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- Jim Dimino: jkdimino@sbcglobal.net
- Bob Guidera: robertguidera@att.net
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- Tom Novi: tomnovi@aol.com
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- Joe Porata: jporata@sbcglobal.net
- Ernie Tomassilli: ca.ernest@pacbell.net



Auxiliary members asked to vote on returning indoors

We had our monthly Ladies Auxiliary pickup dinner on April 14. Dinner included chicken marsala and a fabulous dessert of flan with raspberry sauce. Twenty-six auxiliary and two Dante Club members ordered a total of 77 dinners.

Of course, I always like to mention members who ordered multiple dinners. Top orderers were Tina Cates, with seven dinners, and Elaine Schaedler and Dante Club member Randy Canova, each with six. Ordering five dinners each were Carol Pesetti, Fran Kocheski and Ann Zacharias. Thank you to all members who participated.

Fran Kocheski was the winner of a beautiful metal tray donated by our vice president, Heidi Veneman. It was such a gorgeous tray, I wanted to take it for myself. Denise Franzioa won the

LADIES AUXILIARY NEWS

Debra Cattuzzo

imported Italian jams; her daughter, Linda Franzioa-Feil, won wine charms and cocktail napkins; Paula Buchignani, a set of cheese knives; Elaine Schaedler, a tassel necklace; and Cathie Agostinelli, a pink wallet.

In April, the auxiliary lost two longstanding members. Current member Lois Brady was described by her good friend, Gloria Tomei, as a "sweet woman who loved to laugh."

Lois also loved gambling and was always eager to go on auxiliary bus trips to Reno.

Josephine D'Alessandro hadn't been an active member for some time, but Denise Franzioa remembers Josephine and said she

was always continually active in the club. Also, her father was among the founding members of the Dante Club.

In response to those who are asking when the Ladies Auxiliary will return indoors for meetings, I have sent members an email request for them to vote for their preference. Quite a few members still haven't voted. Some of the members have said they're ready to return in May, but others want to wait until September. (We never meet in July or August.)

As we await everyone's votes, the board will meet and tally the numbers. It looks like May may be too soon for us to return, but we may try to meet inside for our normal Monday, which is June 14, one day before the governor reopens the state. Of course, we will let you all know as soon as it becomes official.

LADIES AUXILIARY BOARD

- Debra Cattuzzo, co-president:
cattuzzod@gmail.com
- Carole Stefani Chivaro, co-president:
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- Heidi Pesce Veneman, co-vice-president:
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- Helen Manfredi Pierson, co-vice-president:
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- Janet Gatejen, trustee/caller:
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- Margaret Lynch, trustee/caller:
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- Karol Rehm Buccola, past president
- Anna Tenderella, hospitality (with Linda Rariden and Diana Dionisio):
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- Debra Duccini Hansen, bocce:
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- Jodie Maita, bocce:
jodie.maita@gmail.com



Harvard academics launched America's first Dante Club

By Ralph DiLibero

In 1828, a 20-year-old man from the United States ventured to Italy to learn the Italian language.

The young man lived with an Italian family at Place Santa Maria Novella, No. 4600, just down the street from Florence's great Dominican Basilica.

About 19 years later, the man — poet and professor Henry Wadsworth Longfellow — initiated a core curriculum course on the works of Dante Alighieri at Harvard University.

Until 1846, Longfellow was assisted in his teaching endeavors by Pietro Bachi, the first Italian immigrant to become a professor and to teach Italian at Harvard.

Another Italian immigrant, Antonio Gallenga from Parma, worked with professor James Russell Lowell at the university from 1837 to 1839.

Longfellow began by translating parts of Alighieri's *Divine Comedy*. He lectured on its

concise and astonishing depiction of medieval art and architecture. He later addressed the classical, yet living, implications of Dante's *Inferno* for his classes.

By 1864, Longfellow and his university colleagues had translated and published the *Divine Comedy* in its entirety.

The next year, Longfellow became the first president of the first Dante Club in America.

The club met weekly and boasted as members such notable American authors as Lowell, Oliver Wendell Holmes Sr. and Charles Eliot Norton.

In 1881, Longfellow and other club members expanded their love of classical Italian literature by forming the Dante Society “to promote the study and appreciation of Dante Alighieri and his legacy.”

The society met in Cambridge and was closely associated with Harvard University.

When Longfellow died unexpectedly in March 1882, due

to the complications of peritonitis, his official inauguration as president of the society was instead marked by 48 mourning members after the event had been delayed until May.

The members then elected Lowell as the society's second president and opened the organization to men and women.

The Dante Society of America is alive and well today, following Longfellow's words from his epic poem *The Song of Hiawatha*: “All your strength is in your Union. All your danger is in Discord.”

Nearly a century and a half later, that message of unity and solidarity still rings strong and true.

The sentiment reminds our Dante Club membership to persevere and successfully accomplish our endowed purpose.

Ralph DiLibero is a member of the Dante Club board. This article is Part 7 of a series.

President's Corner

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events for this year and next that have helped our bottom line in a significant way.

With more business opening up almost daily, activity has increased to the point that Jennifer needs to hire an event coordinator.

This year is shaping up to be financially great for the club.

So it's time for members to venture back to our improved facility and see for themselves. As they enter the grounds and then the building, they'll see that the Dante Event Center now has a strong wow

factor that hasn't existed there in a long time. I encourage members to come experience it firsthand.

On a sad note, we recently lost faithful member Johnny Rosso, who I used to kiddingly refer to as “the wrecking crew.”

Johnny was sometimes at the Dante Club almost seven days a week, regularly working eight hours or more a day to help with improvements. His carpentry and painting skills were impeccable.

May Johnny Rosso rest in peace.

I hope members will keep the Rosso family in their thoughts and prayers.



News, Notes and Otherwise

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

Working with Julie Brown at Premier Graph-x, we now have the ability to brand many types of items, including hats, men's and women's T-shirts, jackets and aprons in a wide array of colors.

Items can be ordered and delivered via our online store, and the variety of merchandise is endless.

Members can visit the club website or click here: danteclub.shopgraphx.com. Or they can call Julie Brown at 916-787-0603 or send her an email at julie@premieregraphx.net for special orders.

Board change

In a letter to the board, Ron Fiorica resigned as secretary, effective April 12. Dan Calcagno will fill the position on an interim basis. The board thanks Ron for his countless hours of service over the years as secretary and keeper of the bylaws.

Membership update

With the return of monthly members dinners, the membership committee has resumed interviewing applicants. Sixteen candidates are on the waiting list, with two others expressing interest. When their applications are received, they will be added to the list.

Interview sessions will be held on the second and third Mondays of the month so new member inductions can be handled by the summer.

Members interviewed Daniel Dalfonso in April and found him to be a great addition for the club. He will be inducted at the May meeting.

Save pull tabs

Since Ron Cristoni challenged club members to collect aluminum can pull tabs to benefit the Ronald McDonald House, we've collected more than 1,250 pounds' worth.

Proceeds help parents who can't afford to stay at the lodging place while their children are hospitalized at the University of California, Davis, Medical Center in Sacramento.

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

With the resumption of indoor events, we can give our collections to Ron Cristoni.

Members can learn about the Ronald McDonald House Charities of Northern California program at www.rmhcnc.org. At the upper right of the home page, select the "Get Involved" tab, then select "Pop Tab Program" in the drop-down menu.

Bocce update

The Dante Club bocce courts saw stellar play on April 16 from Jim Dimino and Frank Bartucco, whose team emerged with honors over Al Tirapelli and Steve Lavezzo.

Rich Battistessa and Tom Novi gave way to Doug Troughton and Pete Pesetti, losing by inches with the last roll.

With the season now off and running, we'd like to have one Friday night a month open for play. Cocktails and small antipasti plates would be available after the matches. Play would begin at 4 p.m. and end at 8 p.m.

Bocce organizers will put together a schedule to resume Saturday play. The schedule will be coordinated with managers booking dates to allow league play. All members are encouraged to use the courts. More information will be provided at the next general meeting.

Grazie mille to Frank Bartucco for grooming the courts. Great job.

In memoriam

Longtime member Johnny Rosso died April 17. Rosso was involved with the club on many levels, most recently with the building remodel. Members are asked to keep the Rosso family in their thoughts and prayers. A memorial service will be held from 4 to 7 p.m. Friday, May 7, at the Dante Event Center.

Buildings and grounds

A handful of external projects remain to be completed at the club. All will add more pizzazz to prominent areas of the grounds.

To enhance the bocce experience, the frame of the bocce courts and the area around the newly installed tent will be landscaped with an array of plants and flowers. Electrical power to this area will be installed

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News, Notes and Otherwise

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Landscaping will soon enhance the new outdoor tent area.

so outdoor events can take place regardless of the time of year.

A few behind-the-scenes repairs are scheduled over the next few months. The roofs of the main building and the Magpie School need attention before the next rain. The Magpie building, which needs a facelift, will be painted in the spring.

In addition, the walkway to the new tent foundation will be reconfigured for a smoother transition.

Members available to help with these final few projects can reach out to Ernie Tomassilli.

Newsletter marketing

Eric Luchini's company, KOLAS, has been added to the rapidly expanding list of Dante Club advertisers, reports *Dante's Inferno* coordinator John Caselli.

Luchini is a past president and longtime supporter of the Dante Club, along with his entire family. Many thanks to him for his additional support.

New advertisers are always welcome. Anyone interested in advertising in the *Inferno* in 2021 should email Caselli at jac6652@aol.com.

Scholarship update

The scholarship committee is reviewing applications for Dante Club scholarships to be awarded for the 2021 school year. Students will be notified by the end of May.

The pandemic has made the review process slower than in past years, but we're pleased we will be able to honor students for their achievements.

New committee

Matt Longo and his newly formed outreach committee are looking for innovative ways to inform members of events and activities at the club.

Longo plans to use email and text messaging and is researching the availability of computer software.

Members may call Longo at 916-397-5869 or text him with their name, email address and area of interest and expertise, such as carpentry, painting, roofing or cleanup. He will compile all the information for future notifications.

Update: 2021 Legacy Building Fund

Many thanks to these members of the Dante Club and the Ladies Auxiliary who have contributed to the Legacy Fund, for a total of \$3,414.07, to date:

- Richard and Dianna Battistessa, \$200
- John and Kelly Procida, \$100
- Janet Mathews, in memory of Bonnie Stuto, \$100
- Janet Mathews, in memory of Charles Stuto, \$100
- John Bertoni, \$100
- James Riolo, \$100
- Matthew Longo, in memory of Joseph John Longo, \$1,000
- John Caselli, \$100
- Michael Micciche, \$100
- Lee Bennett, in memory of Shirley Pasquini Bennett, \$500
- Ron Pane, donated food costs for board dinner, \$218.70
- Ron Pane, donated partial payment of new desk for front office, \$569.41
- Ron Pane, donated office supplies from Office Depot, \$25.96
- Patrick Piacentini, \$200

We're very grateful for the generosity of these contributors.

Another way members can give back to the Dante Club is to make it part of their estate plans, creating a legacy for themselves with a heritage gift that provides the club with financial support into the future.

Gifts can help us maintain the Dante Event Center as a premier venue for club activities and events booked by the public.

It's a simple, meaningful way for members to have a lasting impact on their Italian heritage beyond their lifetimes.

Those who would like to make such a gift or inform us if they've already done so should email Dante Club treasurer Tom Mezzanares at tjmezzan@gmail.com.

**Center**

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"We've received nothing but praise from our clients these past few weeks," Peretti said. "We accept all feedback so that we can continue to better ourselves and stand out in the Sacramento community."

In addition, Peretti said, more local organizations have asked to resume holding their monthly meetings at the Dante Event Center. These include the Real Estate Appraisers Association, to return in August, and the American Public Works Association, to return in September. A few new groups have been added, too, including Shriners and the Legion of Honor.



One of the banquet rooms at the Dante Event Center is decorated in preparation for a wedding, one of nine special events booked at the center during April. General manager Jennifer Peretti has fielded an increasing influx of inquiries about the venue since it was extensively renovated and updated last year. More people throughout the Sacramento area are showing interest in the facility, Peretti said.

"We also hope to hear more great news from local Sons in Retirement groups as well," Peretti said.

The Dante Event Center has booked more than 40 weddings

and a growing number of baby showers, bridal showers and retirement parties.

"We're finally making a great name for the Dante Event Center," Peretti said.

DANTE'S REMINDERS

**Member volunteers**

To volunteer, contact Ernie Tomassilli for anything related to buildings and grounds and Joe Porata for anything related to social events. Reach Ernie at 916-541-9507 or ca.ernest@pacbell.com and Joe at 530-887-1583 or jporata@sbcglobal.net.

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 online at <https://danteclub.com/donations/>.

Dante Club apparel

Purchase club shirts and other clothing items by contacting Mark Pedroncelli at 916-812-6729 or peddc@surewest.net or by speaking to him at a members meeting. Cash or a check is needed 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. Members also can post news and photos on the Dante Club's Facebook page.

Contact information

Recently changed an address or phone number? Please alert Dan Calcagno at 916-481-8368 or dmcalcagno@aol.com.



Please patronize our paesanos

