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Dante Club
Legacy Fund!**

DANTE'S INFERNO



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Tom Novi

Rules relax as weather warms up

When the first daffodils bloom and our governor announces that we're moving from a pandemic to an endemic, there is hope that spring is finally on the way and that the last couple of coronavirus-infused years may be in the rearview mirror.

Earlier this year we had to impose severe mask and social distancing restrictions at Dante Club events to better protect our members from COVID-19. Reactions from members ranged from "this is a pile of crap" to "thanks for doing what you can to prevent the spread while we try to enjoy life."

Then, as new cases of the virus decreased, we were able to relax our masking and social distancing requirements so we would be consistent with the latest Sacramento County guidelines. Although we still need to protect ourselves and

See PRESIDENT'S CORNER, Page 6



Chairs, top photo, are set up outdoors for an early-morning wedding ceremony Feb. 20. Guests toast the couple, above.

Bookings bode well for a busy March

January and February were a nice start to the 2022 event bookings year at the Dante Event Center.

Although the center did have a slight slowdown due to the Omicron scare, things have picked back up.

With a few weddings in February and the return of the Sacramento Regional Builders Exchange Crab Feed, center staff have kept busy with event bookings.

"March is starting to shape up nicely with the return of the Real Estate Appraisers Association and the Point West Partners in Leadership Conference," said general manager Jennifer Peretti. "March will also bring the Dante Club's signature annual cioppino dinner event on March 19. This popular dinner had be put on hold last year because of the pandemic."

See BOOKINGS, Page 3



NEWS, NOTES AND OTHERWISE

Advisory and finance update

The Dante Club's financial picture is positive overall, according to the advisory and finance committee.

At its last meeting, the committee welcomed the manager's report showing strong bookings at the Dante Event Center and favorable reviews for completed events. Members reviewed December financial statements from the club accountant showing restaurant profitability in 2021.

The committee also recommended to the board the passage of two policies relating to dues and the building fund.

Membership committee

The Dante Club honors Al Tirapelli, Frank Cemo and Sammy Cemo as our newest Lifetime Members.

Tirapelli joined the club 62 years ago, in 1960, and helped move the club to its present location. He is a member of the Italian Stallions bocce team. Fifty years ago, in 1972, the Cemos became members. Members are asked to congratulate these three at the next club dinner.

No member applicant interviews were held in February, but they will resume in March. Four applicants—Robert Rossi, Mike Folea, Jim Dubindorf and Frank Crandall—await interviews.

Applications for membership are available online, from the event center office or from the membership committee.

In memoriam

It is with saddened hearts and deep sorrow that we announce the passing of Frank Calcagno on Feb. 15.

Frank was an active Dante Club member for 20 years and served many years on the board of directors. He touched many lives as a friend, teacher, coach, father and family man.

Frank was a successful baseball coach at Grant High School before transferring to El Camino High School in 1974. At both schools, his teams won many championships, and many of his players went on to professional baseball and the major leagues. He won Coach of the Year awards and entry into the LaSalle Club's Hall of Fame.

During his 19 years serving on the Dante Club board, Frank assumed many leadership roles. As chairman of the membership committee, he recruited and interviewed many of our current members.

Close friend and fellow board member Jim Dimino sums up Frank Calcagno this way: "Having worked side by side in athletics and on the board with Frank for 50-plus years, I can say that he was a positive influence on all, and he will be missed by many."

Dante Club general manager Jennifer Peretti recalls how personable Frank was with everyone, including her staff.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Call 916-925-8230 or reserve and pay online at:
danteclub.com/members-event-calendar/

March 6

Sunday Family Dinner

Times: 3 to 4 p.m. to-go pickup, 4 p.m. cocktails, 5 p.m. dinner

Menu: Caesar salad, spinach- and ricotta-stuffed pasta shells with housemade meat marinara, seasonal vegetables, rolls and butter, red velvet cupcakes

Cost: \$15 adults, \$8 children age 12 and younger

Reservations are now closed.

March 14

Ladies Auxiliary Dinner and Meeting

Times: 5 to 9 p.m.

Menu: Braised corned beef and cabbage with roasted carrots, Brussels sprouts salad, boiled Yukon potatoes, rolls and butter, mint chocolate cupcakes

Cost: \$20 per member

Reserve by midnight Sunday, March 6.

March 19

Cioppino Dinner

Times: 5 p.m. cocktails, 6 p.m. dinner

Menu: Antipasto, insalata, risotto, cioppino, rolls and butter, dolce

Cost: \$60 per person

Reserve by midnight Sunday, March 6.

March 21

Members Dinner and Meeting

Times: 6 p.m. cocktails, 7 p.m. dinner with meeting afterward

Menu: Braised corned beef and cabbage with roasted carrots, Brussels sprouts salad, boiled Yukon potatoes, rigatoni station, rolls and butter, mint chocolate cupcakes

Cost: \$20 per member

Reserve by midnight Sunday, March 13.



March 17 signifies more than St. Patrick's Day

By Ralph DiLibero

Celebrations to recognize the time when a boy becomes a man and assumes the responsibility of adulthood are common among human societies.

The typical time to mark the milestone is late adolescence. Cultures and religious and governmental entities often ceremoniously recognize the milestone with unique rituals and fashions.

In Catholicism, the coming-of-age ritual is the Sacrament of Confirmation. The culturally Italian secular ritual dates to March 17 in ancient Rome, the beginning

of spring and the start of growth from fertility, in what is hoped to be a productive agricultural cycle.

On March 17, the ancient Roman world celebrated the Liberalia, dedicated to the god Libero (Liber Pater) and his wife Libera, who protected the germination of vegetables to maturation and children to adulthood, along with presiding over vineyards and wine production.

A boy-child Roman citizen routinely wore a charm of leather or a hollow gold amulet around his neck, supposedly to ward off evil

spirits from childhood innocence. The pendant was called a bulla praetexta.

The child also wore a grey toga praetexta with a purple border.

A temple to Dio Libero was constructed on the slopes of the Aventine in Rome during the ancient Latino-Aventine War. As part of the coming-of-age ceremony, a 14- to 16-year-old boy solemnly removed the bulla from his neck and placed the amulet on the temple's altar, along with some of his head hair and newly grown facial hair. He also removed his

See MARCH 17, Page 6

Bookings

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Weddings continue to thrive at the Dante Event Center, with more than 38 booked in 2022.

The Dante Event Center is booking events for 2022-2023. Peretti said any members who are planning to host a personal event should inquire about dates as soon as possible, as the calendar fills up quickly.

The process of hosting an event begins with an in-person meeting between the prospective host and either Peretti or event coordinator Annah Rose.

Available dates and rooms, the type of event, the estimated guest count, the event timing, any catering needs and other pertinent details are discussed.

"We then place the room and date on hold for two weeks to allow clients time to decide if the Dante Event Center is the best place for their event, without the date getting booked in the meantime," Peretti said. "At the end of the two weeks, if the security deposit hasn't been received, the event date will be released. To confirm an event, a security deposit must be paid, and a contract must be signed and dated."

Dante Club members can rent a banquet room at a 50% discount if they're hosting a personal event for themselves, immediate family members—including a spouse, parents or children—or a personally owned business.

Members with questions about the room rental discount can reach

See BOOKINGS, Page 8



A sign directs wedding guests to a Feb. 20 brunch buffet reception featuring French toast.



2022 Committees and Assignments

COMMITTEES

ADVISORY AND FINANCE

Pat Orelli, chairman; Joe Porata, vice chairman

Members: Tom Mezzanares, Richard Battistessa, George Procida, Tom Novi

BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

George Procida, chairman; Don Agostinelli, vice chairman

Members: Matt Longo, Tom Mezzanares, Joe Porata

BYLAWS

Ron Fiorica, chairman; Don Agostinelli, vice chairman

Members: Bob Guidera, Dan Calcagno

MEMBERSHIP AND INVESTIGATIONS

Dan Calcagno, chairman

Members: George Procida, Michael Micciche, Don Agostinelli, Dick Zarzana

► Member Involvement Subcommittee: Tom Mezzanares, Ron Fiorica

PUBLICITY AND MARKETING

John Caselli, chairman; Tom Mezzanares, vice chairman

Member: Michael Micciche

SCHOLARSHIP

Rich Battistessa, chairman; Jim Dimino, vice chairman

Members: Mark Pedroncelli, Mike Battistessa, Kyle Calcagno and auxiliary members Phyllis Keilholz and Nancy Doyle

SOCIAL

Joe Porata, chairman; Rich Battistessa, vice chairman

Members: Pat Orelli, Mark Pedroncelli, Dick Zarzana, John Caselli, Matt Longo, Bob Guidera, Michael St. John

SPECIAL COMMITTEES

BOCCE

Rich Battistessa, chairman; Jim Dimino, vice chairman

Member: Dick Zarzana, Bill Zellers, Don Agostinelli, John Rizzardo, Frank Bartucco

GOLF TOURNAMENT

Members to be determined

DINNER PROGRAM

Rich Battistessa, chairman; Jim Dimino, vice chairman

Members: Don Agostinelli, Dick Zarzana

ENHANCING OUR ITALIAN CULTURE

Michael Micciche, chairman

Members: Ralph DiLibero, Rich Battistessa

SPECIAL ASSIGNMENTS

• Ladies Auxiliary liaison: Rich Battistessa

• Check-in desk for club events and raffle: Joe Porata, chairman; Pat Orelli, vice chairman; members John Caselli, Bob Guidera, Michael Micciche, Matt Longo and new members

• Club apparel: Mark Pedroncelli

• Sergeant-at-arms: Michael Micciche

2022-2023 DANTE CLUB BOARD OF DIRECTORS

OFFICERS

- Tom Novi, president: tomnovi@aol.com, 916-961-6197
- Patrick Orelli, first vice president: pat@apcpagroup.com, 916-369-2327
- Joe Porata, second vice president: jporata@sbcglobal.net, 530-887-1583
- Ron Fiorica, secretary: rbfiorica@frontiernet.net, 916-687-6406
- Tom Mezzanares, treasurer: tmezzan@gmail.com, 916-467-7483

DIRECTORS

- Don Agostinelli: donjos451@aol.com, 916-451-1155
- Richard Battistessa: drbattistessa@comcast.net, 916-961-4854
- Dan Calcagno: dcalextra@aol.com, 916-481-8368
- John Caselli: jac6652@aol.com, 916-456-1253
- Jim Dimino: jkdimino@sbcglobal.net, 916-956-6691
- Bob Guidera: robertguidera@att.net, 916-451-1467
- Matt Longo: longomb@sbcglobal.net, 916-397-5869
- Michael Micciche: michael.micciche@gmail.com, 916-550-1122
- Mark Pedroncelli: peddc@surewest.net, 916-812-6729
- George Procida: gprocida@gplandscape.com, 916-455-4738
- Dick Zarzana: razarzana@comcast.net, 916-683-4812



Raffle gift donors and helpers earn our thanks

Happy spring! Can't believe it is already March.

As we prepare for the cioppino feed coming up March 19, I'd like to thank those who donated early in February for the raffle baskets.

Thank you to Antonetta Pozzuto, Cathy LaPietra, Fran Kocheski, Susan Pricco, Pat DeRobertis, Carole Stefani Chivaro, Nancy Doyle, Anna Tenderella, Phyllis Keilholz, Virginia Griffin, Cathie Agostinelli, Adrienne DeFazio, Alyse DeFazio, Susan Kasimatis, Sharon Helton, Judy Farina and Heidi Veneman for their donations.

I'm sure there will be additional people to thank as more donations come in before the event.

Thanks also goes to these board members who got together Feb. 21 to compile 26 amazing raffle baskets: Nancy Doyle, Phyllis Keilholz, Anna Tenderella, Judy

LADIES AUXILIARY NEWS

Debra Cattuzzo

Farina, Susan Kasimatis and Heidi Veneman.

Because quite a few members were uneasy about meeting in January due to Covid, and because our February meeting fell on Valentine's Day, we planned a pickup dinner. It was canceled due to low interest, unfortunately.

Most of the responses I received indicated that members enjoy the social interaction of our meetings, not just the food.

So we will have our March meeting for those who wish to attend. The menu will be corned beef, in keeping with the celebration of St. Patrick's Day.

Some people may not know that St. Patrick was actually Roman. His

parents, Calpurnius and Conchessa, were Roman citizens living in Britain at the time of his birth.

Historians say that at age 16, St. Patrick was captured and taken to Ireland, where he was a slave for seven years.

Although Italians wear green for St. Patrick's, two days later they wear red to celebrate St. Joseph's Feast, an honor to Mary's husband, who was also a foster father to Jesus.

The Italian Americans in New Orleans have a big parade every year in honor of St. Joseph.

We have sad news to share. One of our board members, Sandy Calcagno, lost her husband, Frank, in February.

Frank, a longtime member of the men's club, will be missed. Sandy and Frank were very active in the Dante Club and in their neighborhood.

See AUXILIARY, Page 6

2022 LADIES AUXILIARY BOARD

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| • Debra Cattuzzo, president:
cattuzzod@gmail.com | • Judy Farina, secretary:
jfarina56@yahoo.com | • Roseann Jamison, trustee/caller:
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| • Heidi Pesce Veneman, co-vice president:
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| • Helen Manfredi Pierson, co-vice president:
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| • Tina Luchini Bowers, co-treasurer:
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| | • Nancy Doyle, trustee/caller:
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anncecelia02@yahoo.com |

**Auxiliary**

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

The Ladies Auxiliary sends its sincere condolences to Sandy and her family.

Our bylaws committee, vice president Heidi Veneman and trustee Phyllis Keilholz, spent time updating our bylaws, which were quite outdated. A copy of the proposed amendments was emailed to members in January. The bylaw changes also will be available at the March meeting, and we will vote on them at the April meeting.

Anyone with comments or suggestions about the changes can email me or share them at the March meeting.

March 17

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

childhood toga, which was then replaced with a pure white toga virilis, or "man's gown."

The Italian Liberalia festivities included feasting and processions with a portable shrine paraded through the neighborhoods. Elderly priestesses resembling modern nonnas distributed their secret recipes of homemade honey cakes, sweetmeats and desserts.

The Roman god of fertility and wine, Liber Pater (Free Father) or Dio Libero, was joined by his wife, Dia Libera, to officially consecrate the ceremony. Afterward, a public adornment featured masks, wine and music, including vulgar songs.

In ancient Lavinium, festivities continued for a month to ensure the

growth of germinated vegetation and a good year for wine production.

During the maturation ceremony, the bulla was routinely snatched away by the boy's mother and kept in a safe place, awaiting a day when her mature son might be honored with a public triumph and she could again display the bulla.

There's an Italian connection to St. Patrick's Day, March 17. Patrick, Ireland's patron saint, was born to a wealthy Roman family living in Britain at the end of the 4th century—so Patrick was actually Italian!

Ralph DiLibero and Michael Micciche form a new Dante Club committee focusing each month on Italian culture from many perspectives and including topics such as food, art, architecture, history and regionalism.

President's Corner

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

others, we also want to look forward to living full and robust lives. Hopefully, this is the direction we are now heading with the decline in infections.

Remember, the vast majority of COVID-19 cases in hospital intensive care units these days are people who are unvaccinated. So please get vaccinated, and stay healthy and safe.

It was with great sadness that we learned in mid-February of Frank Calcagno's passing. Frank was a member of the Dante Club for more than 20 years, serving for much of that time as a board member while chairing various committees.

Frank contributed greatly to the club and had a memorable career as an educator, a coach

and, most importantly, a husband to Sandy and a father to his three sons. He will long be remembered and truly missed.

At the board's February meeting, costs related to member dinners were carefully examined. It costs approximately \$26 in direct expenses, not counting Dante Event Center overhead, for each monthly member dinner served. The dinner price that members pay is only \$18.

Our policy to charge half price for drinks at our dinners further contributes to the deficit. Adding to the problem is that prices for food and labor are rapidly escalating.

As a result, the board voted to increase dinner prices for members to \$22 starting in April. Revenue from event center activities will continue to help

subsidize our dinners, so please thank our manager Jennifer Peretti and her staff for all they do in making the center profitable.

Finally, I encourage all members to read the article about our Italian heritage in this issue of *Dante's Inferno*.

Written each month by Michael Micciche and Ralph DeLibero, the articles help us remember and appreciate our heritage.

In addition, Rich Battistessa has been contributing wonderful family recipes to the newsletter that even Stanley Tucci would praise. So please prepare and enjoy the dishes!

If you have any questions or suggestions, please email me at tomnovi@aol.com. Grazie, and stay well.



News, Notes and Otherwise

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2



Frank and Sandy Calcagno enjoy a River Cats game in August 2017. Frank's Feb. 15 passing has left his many friends and colleagues saddened.

"Frank was such a delight to be around," she said. "He will be greatly missed by the family here at the Dante Event Center."

The Dante Club board will donate to the club's Scholarship Fund in Frank's name.

Peretti asked Dante members to keep the family of Michael Huizar in their thoughts and prayers as well. The longtime banquet server at the club also died Feb. 15. Peretti said his loss is great for her Dante Club team.

At presstime, we also learned of the passing of another longtime Dante Club member, Pietro Pozzuto.

According to his daughter, Angela, funeral plans are pending and will be announced soon.

We ask members to please keep the Pozzuto family in their thoughts and prayers.

Club apparel

The Dante Club is working with Julie Brown at Premier Graph-x to brand many items with our club logo, including hats, T-shirts, jackets and aprons in a wide array of colors.

Members can go online to order items at danteclub.shopgraphx.com or contact Mark Pedroncelli at 916-812-6729 or peddc@surewest.net.

For special orders, contact Julie Brown at 916-787-0603 or julie@premieregraphx.net.

Bocce update

Spring bocce is just around the corner. Play will begin March 26, and we hope for great weather and a large turnout. We cater to beginners as well as more experienced players.

To sign up for bocce, contact Rich Battistessa at drbattistessa@comcast.net or 916-961-4854.

Outreach committee

The outreach committee, led by chairman Matt Longo, seeks help to improve communications about activities and events. Members can call or text Longo at 916-397-5869 with their names, email addresses and skills, such as carpentry, electrical and plumbing. The information will be used to create email and text notifications. Members also can give contact information updates to Tom Mezzanares at tmezzan@gmail.com.

Newsletter marketing

Insurance agent Tom Mathews is the newest advertiser in *Dante's Inferno*. New advertisers are always welcome. Anyone interested in advertising can email John Caselli at jac6652@aol.com.

Scholarships

Midnight March 31 is the deadline for area high school seniors to apply to the Dante Club's annual scholarship program. Applications are available online or at the Dante Event Center office. Email questions to Rich Battistessa at drbattistessa@comcast.net.

Revue on the boards

Dan Aykroyd is on location, and John Belushi has left the building, but Dante Club member Michael St. John has scheduled the Briefcase Blues Brothers Revue at the Dante Event Center on March 25.

The Las Vegas-style dinner buffet show, featuring guest comedian **EVENT CANCELED AT PRESSTIME** Steve Barkley, will begin at 6 p.m. in the Venetian Room. Tickets range from \$30 to \$70, and club members can get a discount.

For more information, go online at eventorite.com and search for the Briefcase Blues Brothers Revue on March 25 or click [here](#).

See NEWS, NOTES AND OTHERWISE, Page 8

**News, Notes and Otherwise**

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

Save pull tabs

Since member Ron Cristoni challenged club and auxiliary members to collect aluminum can pull tabs to benefit the Ronald McDonald House, we've collected close to 1,300 pounds of pull tabs.

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

The \$1,300 raised so far has paid for more than 60 nights of lodging.

Members can give their collections to Cristoni. They can learn more about the Ronald McDonald House Center of Northern California pull-tab program online at www.rmhcnc.org. Click "Get Involved" and scroll to "Pop Tab Program."

Buildings and grounds

We've begun to prepare for the rush of event bookings for our new outdoor pavilion. We will set up the tent in mid-March in readiness for the first bookings in April. Those able to help should keep an eye on email updates with the details.

Cioppino dinner

After the pandemic put many Dante Club member events on hold for a year, the club's signature annual cioppino dinner will return on March 19.

We look forward to a great turnout for this member event. More than 300 members and friends attended the last outing, which always features dancing, food prepared by Michael Talani and his crew, and a raffle.

Look for more information about the event in the coming weeks.

Guest speak series

Our guest speaker series will continue this month with retired educator Jim "Jorgy" Jorgensen scheduled for the March 21 members meeting.

Jorgensen grew up in Gustine in the San Joaquin Valley and graduated from Gonzaga University in Pullman, Wash. He was a teacher and counselor in San

Juan Unified School District and later served as vice principal at Mira Loma High School.

Jorgensen was a skilled football and basketball official who became a commissioner in the Northern Coast Officials Association, which trains and assigns officials to high school and college games in the San Joaquin Section/Sacramento Valley area.

Jorgensen will speak about how the pandemic has interfered with high school and college sports programs.

Members should reserve early, as his talk will likely be a big draw.

Scheduled to speak in May is Scott Moak, a Sacramento Kings announcer and TV personality.

Dues now overdue

Membership dues of \$100 for 2022, which were due by Jan. 31, are now in arrears. Delinquent members will now receive an invoice for \$125 via first-class mail.

Those who do not pay by March 31 will be dropped from the club roster.

Bookings

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

out to club president Tom Novi. Booking inquiries can be sent to info@danteclub.com or members can call 916-925-8230.

"We look forward to hosting your event," Peretti said.

Consistent with Sacramento County guidelines, the Dante Club had previously asked members to wear masks at the upcoming members dinner and to move directly to their tables.

The county guidelines, however, have recently changed, and only unvaccinated members are asked to wear masks at next month's dinner.

Also, socializing in the bar area will now be allowed if members choose.

Of course, any member who feels more comfortable wearing a mask and moving directly to his table is welcome to do so.



Herald spring with easy-to-make cannellini bean salad

January marked the arrival of this new column, and the response has been positive.

Dante Club and Ladies Auxiliary members were happy to see that we're returning to our gastronomical roots.

For our third installment, we offer a tasty, refreshing salad that would look nice on the family table on Sunday, March 20, the first day of spring. Popular in

JUST LIKE MOM USED TO MAKE Richard Battistessa

northern Italy, the salad is simple and quick to make.

CANNELLINI BEAN SALAD

Ingredients:

- 1 cup white Italian beans
- 1 large red onion, sliced thinly
- 1 can tuna, drained
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Oil and red wine vinegar

Rinse beans in a bowl of cold water and drain. Soak onion strips in cold water for 30 minutes, then drain and dry. Combine beans and onion strips in a bowl. Flake the tuna and add to mixture. Season with salt and pepper. Add some oil and red wine vinegar. Toss gently. Add a touch of balsamic vinegar, a few capers and some baby arugula, if desired. Combine all ingredients. Serve salad at room temperature. Serves six.

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Building Capital Improvement Fund

Board members decided in February to change the name of the Legacy Building Fund to the Building Capital Improvement Fund to better reflect where the funds are spent—specifically, on extraordinary expenses related to repairs and maintenance of the building and equipment.

Members of the Dante Club and the Ladies Auxiliary gave more than \$4,000 to the Dante Club Legacy Building Fund in 2021. Many thanks to all those who donated to keep the club in good shape now and in the future.

In January, we spent \$3,705 to service the kitchen fan blower, replace 60-amp breakers in the kitchen sub-

panel, replace a roof air conditioning disconnect with a new 90-amp one and install a 40-amp, 240-volt coffee maker circuit.

We encourage members to consider making the Dante Club part of their estate plans. A donation offered through a will or estate plan can help us maintain our facility as a premier venue for member and public events. It's also a meaningful way members can have a lasting impact on their Italian heritage.

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

PANDEMIC PROTOCOL

Last month, consistent with Sacramento County COVID-19 guidelines, we asked Dante Club members to wear masks at members dinners and to move directly to their tables after arrival.

County guidelines have now changed. Only unvaccinated members will be asked to wear masks at upcoming dinners. Also, socializing in the bar area will be allowed if members so choose.

Members who prefer to wear masks and to move directly to their tables are welcome to continue that practice.

Thanks to all of our members for their cooperation.

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