



**Reserve early for
annual holiday
dinner this month**

DANTE'S INFERNO



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Tom Novi

New year to bring board's changing of the guard

As a wise man once said, invariably all good things must come to an end, so this marks my last message as your president.

In December 2021, our newly elected board of directors selected me to serve as president, a decision I saw as a great honor that carried great responsibility. At that time, we were just coming out of the pandemic and were in the midst of completely remodeling the Dante Event Center, which had been largely shut down. It was a challenging time for the Dante Club as we worked to get back to normal.

Our success in overcoming those difficult times is due to the efforts of numerous club members who stepped up and worked hard and smart in remodeling and updating the event center. Our Dante board contributed greatly to this effort,

See PRESIDENT'S CORNER, Page 7

WINTER READY



In photo at right, member volunteers George Zarzana, left, and Tom Mezzanares carry support poles during a tent take-down at the Dante Club on Nov. 13 in preparation for the winter months. A group of 12 men helped clean and dismantle the club's outdoor events tent. Participating along with Zarzana and Mezzanares were Jim Brennen, Dan Calcagno, Matt Longo, Jim Luttig, Joe Porata, George Procida, Tom Strobel, Ron Pane, Don Agostinelli and Ernie Tomassilli.

ENHANCING OUR CULTURE

Christmas season in Italy blends custom, folklore, religion and heritage

By Susan Pricco

We expect and cherish the annual sights, sounds and activities of the holiday season. In Italy, Christmas is a mix of religion, custom, folklore, culture and heritage. It's a family time, with all ages taking part in transforming the traditions of the past into memories that will continue to span generations.

Italians have a saying: *Natale con i tuoi, Pasqua con chi vuoi*—Christmas with your family, Easter with whomever you want. The translation ignores potential family squabbles and sibling rivalries, but you get the idea.

Italian towns and villages still mount elaborate public *presepe*, or Nativity scenes, as well as smaller

See CHRISTMAS, Page 8



NEWS, NOTES AND OTHERWISE

General manager's report

November was one of the Dante Event Center's best yet in the past few years, general manager Jennifer Peretti reported. The center hosted 30 events. Normally, it's lucky to get close to 20, she said.

"December is slotted to be a great month, with 37 events on the calendar and people contacting us every day to see if our facility is available," Peretti said. "We look forward to seeing everyone on Dec. 17 for the members Christmas dinner, with surprise guest performers."

Starting in 2024, because of the increase in labor and food costs, the Sunday Family Dinner price for adults will increase to \$18. Children's meals will remain the same, \$8 per child.

Also beginning in January, reservations for Women's Auxiliary, Sunday and Dante members dinners will be due by midnight on Fridays rather than Saturdays to ensure that the food and other products can be ordered without delay or issues.

The event center is booking into 2024 and 2025 and will begin to accept reservations for 2026 starting in March. Club members should mark their calendars for the Dante Crab Feed on Jan. 27.

Buildings and grounds

November was a light month for the buildings and grounds crew. Ron Pane made a few minor repairs to the kitchen equipment. All appears to be in working order now.

Nov. 1 marked the end of 2023 outdoor events, so it was time to take down the tent. On Nov. 7, Don Agostinelli, Ron Pane and George Procida spent a few hours washing the tent and getting it ready to be taken down for the winter months.

On Nov. 13, a larger group gathered to dismantle the tent. The process went smoothly, and the team worked well together. Thanks go to Jim Brennen, Dan Calcagno, George Zarzana, Matt Longo, Jim Luttig, Tom Mezzanares, Joe Porata, Tom Strobel and Ernie Tomassilli, along with Procida, Pane and Agostinelli.

Advisory and finance

The advisory and finance committee has reported

See NEWS, NOTES AND OTHERWISE, Page 3



UPCOMING EVENTS

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

December 3

Sunday Family Dinner

Times: 4 p.m. cocktails, 5 p.m. dinner

Menu: Classic wedge salad, spaghetti with meatballs and marinara sauce, garlic herb focaccia breadsticks, chef's choice dessert

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

Reservations are closed.

December 11

Women's Auxiliary Dinner and Meeting

Times: 5 p.m. cocktails and appetizers, 6 p.m. dinner and entertainment, followed by meeting

Menu: Cranberry mixed green salad, prime rib carving station with au jus, garlic mashed potatoes, vegetables, rolls with butter, chef's choice dessert

Cost: \$25 per person

Reserve by midnight Friday, Dec. 1.

December 17

Dante Club Christmas Dinner

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

Menu: Honey crisp salad; roasted Brussels sprouts; choice of steak with mashed potatoes, Cornish game hen with saffron risotto or cod with tomato caper relish and linguine with Parmesan cream sauce; and chocolate-dipped cannoli with pistachio crumble

Cost: \$38 adults, \$20 children age 12 and younger

*Reserve by midnight Friday, Dec. 8. **NOTE:** Dinner is open to club members and their guests, who can be nonmembers. Dinner isn't open to the general public.*

December 18

Dante Club Members Dinner and Meeting

Times: 6 p.m. cocktails, 7 p.m. dinner, followed by meeting

Menu: Caesar salad, prime rib carving station with au jus, rigatoni with marinara and Parmesan, herb-roasted zucchini and squash, rolls with butter, chef's choice dessert

Cost: \$22 per person

Reserve by midnight Saturday, Dec. 9.

January 7

Sunday Family Dinner

Times: 4 p.m. cocktails, 5 p.m. dinner

Menu: Tomato basil soup, chicken cordon bleu, penne pasta with Alfredo sauce, seasonal vegetables, rolls with butter, chef's choice dessert

Cost: \$18 adults, \$8 children ages 12 and younger

Reserve by midnight Friday, Dec. 29. Reservations are limited to 220 people.

**News, Notes and Otherwise**

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

some close calls by cars driving out of the Dante Club parking lot. The two-way stop the county has placed on the frontage road does not give the right-of-way to cars departing a private driveway, which is what our club has. The right-of-way goes to cars entering from Fair Oaks Boulevard. The cars may turn left or right or go straight into the Dante Club.

Members are advised that if a car is stopped at the stop sign before they enter the frontage road, that car has the right-of-way, as it arrived first. Members should not enter the frontage road until the car has cleared the intersection.

To encourage members to use caution when leaving our facility, the board decided to have a thick white line and the word "stop" painted on the paving at the gate.

Save pull tabs

The Dante Club has always prided itself on providing ways for members to give back to our community.

For the past five years, Ron Cristoni has worked with the Ronald McDonald House pull-tab program, which helps offset the cost of overnight stays for parents with a hospitalized child.

Cristoni reports that our total donations to date are 1,625 pounds, valued at more than \$1,625.

Members are asked to collect pull tabs from their canned pet foods, sodas and, of course, beer.

Dante Club and Ladies Auxiliary members can bring their donations to their meetings.

For more information, contact Ron Cristoni. Members also can review the Ronald McDonald House Center of Northern California at www.rmhcnc.org. Go to "Getting Involved" and scroll to box 5, "Pull Tab Program."

Membership committee

The November members meeting saw our newest inductee, Richard Marconi, getting involved and working the welcome table. Members who see a new person helping out should introduce themselves and make him feel part of the club.

Tom Strobel, another very new member, is answering the call for volunteer help and was around to take down the tent and do touch-ups in the building.

We were also able to interview Paul Turner, whose grandparents are from Italy's Lucca area and whose spouse is Women's Auxiliary member Anna Turner. Committee members found Paul to be good for Dante and were excited for him to join. The general membership all agreed and accepted the committee's recommendation.

A few inductions await. One person is waiting to be interviewed. Two applications were received at the November meeting, and a few more are in the mail. This is a great sign that members are reaching out to friends and family to expand our membership.

Celebrating an anniversary of membership of 25 years or more in December are:

- Life member Victor Stefani, 73 years
- Thomas Murphy, 38 years

Any member who notices an oversight in these recognitions should bring it to the membership committee's attention so it may update its records.

As always, applications are available on the website, in the office or from the committee.

Newsletter advertising

Newsletter coordinator John Caselli, along with the entire Dante Club board, wishes to thank our advertisers. Their support helps defray the costs of publishing the club's monthly *Dante's Inferno*. Prospective advertisers should email Caselli at jac6652@aol.com.

Bocce league

Bocce league play will resume in the spring, with open play in March and the league start in April.

In the meantime, the bocce courts are available to members who want to have some fun. Anyone who wishes to use the courts should contact Rich Battistessa. Weekday play is encouraged.

The bocce committee will offer clinics to teach the game to novice players, as well as those wishing to improve their skills.

Watch for news on upcoming tournaments. Two-person and mixed-team tournaments are planned. We also will host a blind draw tournament for those interested in experiencing the game.

Congratulations to Maestri di Bocce for earning the gold, Inferno for silver and Sons of Beocce for the bronze in last season's league.

See NEWS, NOTES AND OTHERWISE, Page 6



2023 Committees and Assignments

COMMITTEES

ADVISORY AND FINANCE

Pat Orelli, chairman; Joe Porata, vice chairman

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

BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

George Procida, chairman; Don Agostinelli, vice chairman

Members: Matt Longo, Tom Mezzanares, Joe Porata, Ron Pane, Bill Maffei

BYLAWS

Ron Fiorica, chairman; Don Agostinelli, vice chairman

Member: Dan Calcagno

MEMBERSHIP AND INVESTIGATIONS

Dan Calcagno, chairman

Members: George Procida, Don Agostinelli, Dick Zarzana

► Member involvement subcommittee: Tom Mezzanares, Ron Fiorica

PUBLICITY AND MARKETING

John Caselli, chairman; Tom Mezzanares, vice chairman

SCHOLARSHIP

Rich Battistessa, chairman; Jim Dimino, vice chairman

Member: Mark Pedroncelli

SOCIAL

Joe Porata, chairman; Rich Battistessa, vice chairman

Members: John Caselli, Matt Longo, Pat Orelli, Ron Pane, Mark Pedroncelli, Dick Zarzana

SPECIAL COMMITTEES

BOCCE

Rich Battistessa, chairman; Jim Dimino, vice chairman

Members: Dick Zarzana, John Rizzardo

GOLF TOURNAMENT

Frank Buccola, chairman; Rich Battistessa, vice chairman;

Member: Bill Maffei

DINNER PROGRAM

Rich Battistessa, chairman; Jim Dimino, vice chairman

Members: Don Agostinelli, Dick Zarzana

ENHANCING OUR ITALIAN CULTURE

Ralph DiLibero, chairman

Member: 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, Matt Longo and new members
- Club apparel: Mark Pedroncelli
- Sergeant-at-arms: John Rizzardo

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: tjmezzan@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
- Matt Longo: longomb@sbcglobal.net, 916-397-5869
- Bill Maffei: mrmaffei@sbcglobal.net, 916-488-6837
- Ron Pane: repane@icloud.com, 916-798-0111
- Mark Pedroncelli: pddc@surewest.net, 916-812-6729
- George Procida: gprocida@gplandscape.com, 916-455-4738
- John Rizzardo: sjrizzardo@gmail.com, 916-331-6391
- Dick Zarzana: razarzana@comcast.net, 916-683-4812



Current slate of board officers, members re-elected

In November, the Women's Auxiliary mourned the loss of longtime member Elsie DiBenedetto, who was the sister of member Barbara Ferro. Elsie was preceded in death by her husband, Pete; her son, James; and her sister, Ann Drummond. Elsie leaves behind her daughter, Sandy Metzger, who attended our dinner meeting as a guest of Barbara. We send our condolences to Sandy and her family.

We also added eight new members to the auxiliary within the past month: Francesca Carleson, Ellie Stockwell, Marina Costantini, Angelina Troja-Grant, Kathryn Beltrami, Dina Mercer, Janet Coriglia-Stevenson and Teresa Alberghini, our mercato Tupperware vendor.

With more people purchasing their dinners online, we have had four of our callers retire. We say



WOMEN'S AUXILIARY NEWS

Debra Cattuzzo

goodbye to Phyllis Keiholtz, Sandy Calcagno, Barbara Reali and Susan Quiarte. Both Phyllis and Sandy have been callers since 2016—that is such a long time! Barbara has been a caller since 2021 and Susan since 2022. We appreciate all the time they've donated to the auxiliary.

Our November raffle gave us these lucky winners: Janet Sellars, panettone set; Robin Mat, soup terrine; guest Carletta Puppo, pasta bowl, cookbook and tea towels; guest Jeanne Ireland, Leatherby's gift card; Peggy Alexander, pasta box and platter; Beckee Lienert, air fryer; Cathy Bertolani, \$25 cash; and Darlene Ryan, free dinner.

Thank you to Janine Orsi and Ann Zacharias for donating bags of aluminum pull tabs.

In November, the Women's Auxiliary also held its annual board meeting and elections. The current board was re-elected: Karol Buccola, past president; Debra Cattuzzo, president; Alyse Defazio, vice president; Susan Kasimatis, secretary; and Tina Bowers, treasurer.

The trustees re-elected were Adrienne DFazio, Roseann Jamison, Donna O'Neil, Nancy Doyle, Kathy Holberton and Anna Tenderella.

Every December we have collected socks and toiletries for Child Protective Services. This year we've adopted a new charity. Thank you to Phyllis Keilhotlz for suggesting the Bishop Gallegos Maternity Home.

See WOMEN'S AUXILIARY, Page 6

2023 WOMEN'S AUXILIARY BOARD

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| • Debra Cattuzzo, president:
cattuzzod@gmail.com | • Anna Tenderella, hospitality:
annatenderella@sbcglobal.net | • Kathy Holberton, trustee/caller:
crystalgal@yahoo.com |
| • Alyse DeFazio, vice president:
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| • Susan Kasimatis, secretary:
sjk955@gmail.com | • Nancy Doyle, trustee/caller:
ncdoyle59@gmail.com | |



News, Notes and Otherwise

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

Board elections

Elections will be held Dec. 18 for the Dante Club's board of directors for 2024 and 2025.

These club members were nominated in November: Pat Orelli, Tom Novi, George Procida, Dan Calcagno, Richard Battistessa, Jim Dimino, Bill Maffei, John Caselli, Mark Pedroncelli, Steve DeCristofaro, Ron Fiorica, Ron Pane, Dennis Noble and current treasurer Tom Mezzanares.

Still vacant are two openings for the board and one for secretary.

To serve on the board, a member must be in good standing for 24 months and not be an associate member.

There's still time to run for the board. Interested members should attend the Dec. 18 meeting and put their names on the list or reach out to Ron Pane via email at

repame@icloud.com or via text at 916-798-0111.

Annual dinner payments

In January, members will once again be able to pay annually for monthly meeting night dinners.

When paying in advance, members cannot receive a refund or a credit for any individual dinner they don't attend, but they don't need to tell the event center if they will or won't attend, as they have already paid.

For reservation substitutions, members must call 916-925-8230 by noon the day of the event and give the substitute's name. Substitutions not confirmed by noon can't be honored.

Club apparel

The Dante Club works with Julie Brown at Premier Graph-x to brand clothing with the club logo, including hats, T-shirts,

jackets and aprons.

Members can order clothing items at danteclub.shopgraphx.com or they can contact coordinator Mark Pedroncelli at peddc@surewest.net or 916-812-6729.

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

Order now for the holidays.

High school seniors:

Applications for next year's Dante Club college scholarships will be available starting Jan. 1, 2024.

Applications must be submitted to the scholarship committee no later than March 31.

Women's Auxiliary

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

Since 1992, the nonprofit, nondenominational home provides vulnerable pregnant women with shelter, food, safety, comfort and support during their pregnancies and for a short time afterward. The home has helped nearly 2,000 women and babies since its inception.

I've emailed auxiliary members a list of the supplies the home needs, but I'll provide it again here. For mothers: shampoo, conditioner and body wash to include in welcome baskets for new residents. For

babies: thermometers to include in congratulations baskets when the babies come home from the hospital, as well as baby wipes, diapers in sizes 3 months to 6 months, infant gowns, baby clothes and baby blankets. For the maternity house: bath towels that residents can take when they move on, air fryers as a healthier cooking alternative, bathroom rugs, Tide pods that are safe for washing machines and cleaning supplies, such as Pine Sol, Windex, bleach and dusting spray.

Members who want to donate something can bring items to our December dinner meeting or drop

them off at the Dante Club. Please call first to make sure someone is there to receive the items.

A major item the home needs is a washing machine. Anyone who knows of someone with one to donate should contact me. All donations are tax-deductible under tax identification No. 68-0315971. Thank you in advance.

It's time to start saving baskets for the cioppino feed raffle. We ask members who receive gift baskets for the holidays to please save them and donate them to the auxiliary.

Have a fabulous holiday season!



CLAIMING OUR HERITAGE

Study of Italian American experience needed in schools

One of the cultural successes of the past two decades has been the growth of Jewish, African American, Hispanic American, American Indian and Asian American studies programs in schools from elementary to

university. These programs are now well established and compete with other academic programs for status, funding and influence.

Italian Americans have been slow to develop and push for similar programs. As a

result, the Italian American experience is not well known by Americans or even by Italian Americans. Italian Americans have entered the mainstream of American life, but their experience and history are not included

in the educational experience of Americans.

Italian Americans are beginning to realize the importance of being included in school curricula along with other ethnic groups.

For one thing, Italian

See STUDIES, Page 10

President's Corner

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

as did Debra Cattuzzo and the Women's Auxiliary, along with Jennifer Peretti and her staff.

A big thank you goes to all the members who pitched in to work events such as the Cioppino Feed, the Vic Martinelli/Frank Calcagno Golf Tournament, the Sausage Festa under the big top, the bocce committee and numerous other activities that contributed to our success.

To get to where we are today, the board in early 2022 developed a business plan based on the guiding principles of the Dante Club—to be a social club for Italians, to encourage friendship, to provide activities for members, to sustain the Italian heritage and to be good citizens in the community.

As a result, we made a number of changes, including adding interesting speakers at the members dinners, reducing unnecessary business activities,

creating a bocce committee and Saturday morning bocce tournaments, and new events such as the Sausage Festa under the tent. We added articles to the *Inferno* about our Italian culture, along with a monthly recipe for sustenance. And for the first time we established a tradition of celebrating Italian American culture month each October with an evening of gourmet Italian food and songs to celebrate Christopher Columbus and contributions by members of the Italian American community.

Good citizenship was reflected in more than \$28,000 in scholarships awarded to 19 deserving students. And from a business perspective, for the first time we established two separate funds for the ongoing maintenance and repair of the event center.

Although we have made significant strides forward, I believe we still have more to do. Planning for the future development and enhancement of

the event center is critical to the Dante Club. So is the issue of membership, both in terms of numbers and involvement.

The event center has been completely remodeled, but if we don't plan for the future, the facility may become out of date and less attractive. Concerning membership, we do not have the number of members we could have nor do most members participate fully in the available social events and activities. Both areas call for study and change if the Dante Club is to become even stronger and more vibrant.

So as we wrap up these last two years and look forward to the future, I encourage members to commit themselves to Dante. Volunteer to help with activities and events, play hard and enjoy a very special experience in a truly extraordinary organization. And may the next hundred years in Dante be as fulfilling and successful as the last nearly one hundred years have been.

Grazie, farewell, and be well.



Christmas

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

versions in homes. Town squares erect huge Christmas trees and display large quantities of *Stella di Natale*, or poinsettias.

Christmas Mass is a must for devout Catholics, but attendance at midnight Mass is special, with parishioners sometimes accompanied by their sleepy-eyed minions in tow. Christmas carols, those “hymns of joy and gladness,” are reputed to have originated in the 13th century among followers of St. Francis of Assisi and created to honor the birth of the baby Jesus. Much of the holiday revolves around food traditions. It isn't uncommon for Italians to



A giant Christmas tree stands majestically in St. Peter's Square in Rome in one of the many holiday displays common throughout Italy.



Panettone is among the many seasonal treats Italians enjoy.

celebrate a meatless Christmas Eve with the serving of the Feast of the Seven Fishes, although families have their own traditions, too. Typically, seasonal treats include panettone, pandoro, panforte and torrone, along with roasted castagne, or chestnuts, and dried fruits and nuts.

Christmas Day supper is more of a gastronomic marathon. With Nonna or Mama in her apron presenting family specialties to those gathered around the table, chattering over the salatta, strengthening family ties, the meal can last the better part of the day.

Despite seasonal hustle and bustle—the obvious influence of retail shopping and the way we tend to get wrapped up in numerous activities—the simple and enduring traditions of Christmas can keep the holiday close to our hearts.

So be sure to preserve your Italian family memories as you celebrate a buon Natale.



A quinceanera, above, was among the many celebrations booked in November at the Dante Event Center. Other events and activities included a Nov. 19 wedding, far right, and the Dante Club's monthly meeting, center, where champs of the club's bocce league fall season were recognized. Sporting their medals of triumph are, from left, Frank Bartucco, Tom Mathews, Jim Dimino and Jim Dubendorf.

NOVEMBER AT THE EVENT CENTER





Tangy fish stew takes time to make, but it's worth it

This spicy and very hearty fish stew is an excellent winter treat, but be forewarned: It does take about 45 minutes to prepare.

BRODETTO DI PESCE

Ingredients:

- 1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1 medium onion
- 1/3 celery stalk
- Chopped parsley
- 4 cloves garlic, lightly crushed
- 1/2 teaspoon crushed red pepper
- 1/4 cup white wine
- 3 sprigs fresh oregano
- 3 fresh bay leaves
- 2 1/2 cups clam juice or seafood stock

JUST LIKE MOM USED TO MAKE

Richard Battistessa

- 2 cups diced or crushed canned tomatoes
- 1 pound scrubbed mussels and squid tentacles cut into rings
- White fish of choice
- Lemon juice
- 8 pieces wholegrain baguettes

Directions:

Cook vegetables, garlic and red pepper in the olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat until tender, roughly 15 minutes. Increase heat to medium high, add wine and cook for 1 minute. Add seasoning, and cook for 30 seconds. Add stock and

tomatoes and bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce heat to a simmer, and cook until slightly thickened for 20 to 25 minutes.

Add clams and mussels, cover and cook for 5 minutes. Add squid and fish and the remaining clam juice. Cover and cook until the fish is just cooked through, 8 to 12 minutes. Remove and add lemon juice. Rub baguettes with garlic, toast, place in a bowl for serving each portion and top with the stew. This dish is not difficult to prepare, but it does take a little time and focus. It's very good, so it's worth the effort. Enjoy it with a glass of good Italian wine. Buon appetito!

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Studies

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

Americans are the fifth largest ancestry group in the nation, according to the 1990 census. The Italian immigration to North America was the largest migration in history of a people from one continent to another.

Over 70 years, 12 million people went through Ellis Island and almost a third of them were Italian. The settlement of the United States by Italians during the latter part of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century changed the history of the United States.

Although the United States is often described as a nation of immigrants, the peoples who came to America during the great wave of immigration from

Southern and Eastern Europe around the turn of the century are missing from the school curriculum. Previous ancestry groups from Europe, Africa and Asia are included as are later ancestry groups from the more recent immigration. If any group symbolizes the impact of this wave of peoples on the course of American history, it is the Italians, the largest group in that wave and the last large European group to come to America.

For much of California's history, Italians were the largest of the immigrant groups to settle in the state. They came to California early and established successful economic and cultural communities in virtually every town and city. They played a significant role in the

development of California, where many of the state's basic industries, such as the wine, fishing, agricultural, canning and banking industries, were developed by the Italians.

Another good reason for including the contributions and experience of Italian Americans in the school curriculum is to overcome the effects of the humiliating and degrading media images of Italian Americans. Recent studies indicate that the self-esteem and academic achievement of Italian American school children suffers as a result of these negative images. This places Italian American children at a disadvantage.

Italian Americans have learned that if their experience is

See STUDIES, Page 11

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**Studies**

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

not specifically required in school curricula, it is usually excluded.

Establishing Italian American educational programs in the nation's schools is at the top of the Italian American agenda.

John Carroll University in Cleveland recently established a professorship in Italian American studies to develop a full program of undergraduate courses about the Italian American experience. Lehman College in New York has created an endowed chairman in Italian and Italian American studies. DePaul University in Illinois offered a summer program about Italian American values and history that included the effects of

American culture on Italian American immigrants and the evolution of the Italian community. The City University of New York has both an academic Italian American studies program and a university-wide Italian American institute.

California State University at Long Beach has established the George L. Graziadio chair of Italian language studies funded by a \$500,000 donation from the Italian American community in Southern California.

Still, very few universities offer courses about the Italian American experience. Nor is our experience required to be included in the grade school curriculum

These programs are vital to the future of the Italian people in the United States. Without them, our memory about the people who came here from Italy will be lost.

Most Italian Americans would agree that it is important for our story to be included in the school curriculum. They can organize effectively in support of the simple goal that our schools and colleges provide studies that meet our educational needs.

For now, they do not. For us and for the nation, Italian American studies are an idea whose time has come.

—*Edited and reprinted with permission from the Italian Cultural Society, Sacramento*

DANTE'S REMINDERS

**Member volunteers**

To volunteer, contact George Procida for anything related to buildings and grounds and Joe Porata for anything related to social events. Reach Procida at 916-455-4738 or gprocida@gplandscape.com and Porata 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

To purchase club shirts and other clothing items, contact Mark Pedroncelli at 916-812-6729 or peddc@surewest.net or speak to him at a members meeting. Cash or checks are needed to place orders. Members also can order through the Dante Club website at danteclub.shopgraphx.com.

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 Tom Mezzanares at 916-467-7483 or tjmezzan@gmail.com.