



**Reserve this month
for our annual crab
feed in February**

DANTE'S INFERNO



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Tom Novi

*We look back at our
successes and look
ahead to more in 2023*

It has been said that you don't want to begin the next chapter until you've finished the last chapter. So as we finish 2022, my hope is that everyone had a wonderful Christmas and brought in 2023 with hopes and plans for a happy and healthy new year.

As the days, weeks and months passed by in 2022, we should remember our accomplishments, successes and good fortune (and occasional stumbles). That way, we can really appreciate how fortunate and successful we've been as we look forward to 2023.

In early 2022, we faced the dual challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, with its masking requirements, and some major economic challenges, such as supply shortages and higher gas and food prices. The Dante Event

See PRESIDENT'S CORNER, Page 6



More than 200 members and guests, top photo, enjoy the Dante Club's annual Christmas celebration on Dec. 18. A highlight of the evening was jazz performed by area singer Cheryl Tiburzi and her band.

December sets the tone for event center future

December was filled with holiday cheer as the Dante Event Center hosted 36 special events, including weddings, Christmas balls, holiday celebrations, company Christmas parties and meetings.

"An impressive 207 members and friends attended the Dante Club Christmas party on Dec. 18," said manager Jennifer Peretti. "Everyone enjoyed an amazing performance that evening by Cheryl Tiburzi and Friends. What a season it has been!"

See DECEMBER, Page 8



NEWS, NOTES AND OTHERWISE

Advisory and finance, building fund

The advisory and finance committee reminds members that their \$100 dues for 2023 were due Dec. 31. Regarding dues payment, our bylaws state: "Dues will be paid annually in advance. A member who is in arrears in his dues one month will be considered delinquent and will be subject to the following restrictions: He will be ineligible for nomination and election to any office. He may not participate in the nomination or election of officers nor vote on the question that requires a two-thirds majority or the amending of bylaws. A member who is in arrears three months or 90 days (March 31) and has been properly notified by the financial secretary may be dropped from the rolls and lose all rights of a member."

Dues can be paid online at <https://danteclub.com/2023-membership-dues/> or by check payable to the Dante Club and mailed to: Dante Club, attn: Tom Mezzanares, 2330 Fair Oaks Blvd., Sacramento, CA 95630.

As requested by president Tom Novi, building and grounds committee chairman George Procida has developed a list of equipment and other items at the Dante Event Center that will need attention in the future, with estimated replacement dates and costs.

The advisory and finance committee estimates that over the next 15 years, repair or replacement of such items as air conditioning units and roofing will be needed, at an estimated cost of more than \$600,000. The committee has developed a plan to provide the needed funds.

Beginning this month, a separate reserve account will be funded by regular monthly payments. Funding of the current Building Capital Improvement Fund will continue, but the name will be changed to the Building Improvement/Maintenance Fund and will be used for building and grounds improvements and maintenance. Funding of both accounts to a comfortable level will take time, but the committee and the board of directors believe this will be a move in the right direction to keep the Dante Club running for many years.

The Dante Club received a building fund donation of \$150 from John Bertoni on Dec. 2.

Club apparel

The Dante Club works with Julie Brown at Premier Graph-x to brand clothing with our club logo, including hats, T-shirts, jackets and aprons in a wide array of colors. Members can order items online 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.



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

January 9

Ladies Auxiliary Dinner

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

Menu: House salad, rigatoni with marinara, chicken cordon bleu, seasonal vegetables, rolls with butter, chef's choice dessert

Cost: \$22 per person

Reservations closed Jan. 2.

January 16

Dante Members Dinner and Meeting

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

Menu: Caesar salad, meat lasagna, seasonal vegetables, rolls with butter, chef's choice dessert

Cost: \$25 per person

Reserve by Jan. 7.

January 27

Dante Jazz Society: Italian Jazz with the DeFazio Quintet

Times: 6 p.m. doors open, 7 p.m. show

Menu: Sips and bites; pre-orders of bites available

Cost: \$35 per person; purchase online or at the door

February 4

Dante Club Crab Feed

Times: 6 p.m. cocktails, 7 p.m. dinner

Menu: All-you-can-eat crab buffet with cocktail sauce, clarified butter and lemons; Caesar salad; rigatoni with marinara; seasonal vegetables; rolls with butter; chef's choice dessert

Cost: \$75 per person; tables of 10

Reserve by Jan. 22.

February 12

Sunday Family Dinner

Times: 4 p.m. cocktails and to-go meals, 5 p.m. indoor dinner service

Menu: Caesar salad, spaghetti with meatballs and marinara, seasonal vegetables, garlic bread, chef's choice dessert

Cost: \$15 adults, \$8 children

Reserve by Feb. 4.



Father of Italian language celebrated

Editor's note: This article, which has been edited slightly for length, is reprinted with permission from the Italian Cultural Society, Sacramento.

In September 2021, Italy commemorated the Year of Dante on the 700th anniversary of the death of Dante Alighieri, considered the father of the Italian language.

Dante was born in Florence, Italy, in 1265 and died in 1321. Throughout its history, Italy has produced many outstanding writers, but the greatest name in Italian literature and one of the giants of western literature, Dante Alighieri, emerged in the 1300s.

Dante's masterpiece, "La Divina Commedia," or "The Divine Comedy," details his fictional journey through Hell (Inferno), Purgatory (Purgatorio) and Paradise (Paradiso) as he encounters figures from history and legend along the way.

Dante wrote his epic poem in the Tuscan language when Latin was the language of the educated. It achieved widespread popularity and became a unifying influence in Italian society at a time when Italy was fractured by political strife, and it helped establish Tuscan as the official language of Italy, even though many dialects were more commonly spoken. Poet T.S. Elliot once wrote, "Dante and Shakespeare divide the modern world between them. There is no third."

Dante's birthplace, the Museo Casa di Dante in Florence's medieval center, is typical of a 13th century tower house. Dante has a tomb in the Church of Santa Croce in Florence, where Michelangelo and other notable Florentines are buried, but his tomb is empty. He is buried instead in Ravenna, where he had taken exile during a political dispute.

Dante's image can be found on Italy's 2 Euro coin as depicted in a painting by Renaissance artist Raphael. Students of the Italian language can also celebrate Dante for making the beautiful Tuscan language the Italian they learn today.



Club member Carl DeNigris and his family, left, gather for wine tasting in Tuscany during an October trip to Italy. Baby Siena and her parents, right, enjoy the atmosphere of Siena's namesake city.



FAMILY ADVENTURE

Trip too short, but Italy doesn't disappoint

By Carl DeNigris

In October, my family and I were finally able to return to Italy after postponing the trip multiple times during the COVID-19 pandemic.

We started our Italian adventure in Northern Italy with a short one-night stay in Milan.

The next day we drove north, where we stayed in a house overlooking beautiful Lake Como.

During our time at the lake, we explored boutique shops, enjoyed lunch and aperol spritzes, and visited with four generations of Italian relatives.

From Lake Como, we drove south to Florence, taking a slight detour through Langhirano, 12 miles south of Parma,

See ADVENTURE, Page 6



Father and daughter discover "best in the world" prosciutto in Langhirano near Parma.



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, Ronnie Pane

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

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

SOCIAL

Joe Porata, chairman; Rich Battistessa, vice chairman

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

SPECIAL COMMITTEES

BOCCE

Rich Battistessa, chairman; Jim Dimino, vice chairman

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

GOLF TOURNAMENT

Members: Joe Porata, Frank Buccola, Rich Battistessa, Tom Mathews

DINNER PROGRAM

Rich Battistessa, chairman; Jim Dimino, vice chairman

Members: Don Agostinelli, Dick Zarzana

ENHANCING OUR ITALIAN CULTURE

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, Matt Longo and new members
- Club apparel: Mark Pedroncelli
- Sergeant-at-arms: open position

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: iporata@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
- Mark Pedroncelli: peddc@surewest.net, 916-812-6729
- George Procida: gprocida@gplandscape.com, 916-455-4738
- Dick Zarzana: razarzana@comcast.net, 916-683-4812



Festive dinner features carol singing and a raffle

I hope everyone had a wonderful Christmas. Our December Christmas dinner was an amazing prime rib meal. We had the largest crowd ever, 160 members and guests. We were treated to a fabulous vocal performance by the Italian Club of St. Francis High School. The girls provided everyone with a song sheet so members could sing along with the Italian carols.

In December we accepted three new auxiliary members: Emily Campoy Dees, Roslyn Ferro Elaiser and Caroline Schrader. Please join in welcoming them.



Italian club students from St. Francis High School regale auxiliary members with song at the Christmas dinner.

LADIES AUXILIARY NEWS

Debra Cattuzzo

At every Christmas dinner for the past five years, members have donated socks and toiletries for children who have been removed from their homes by Child Protective Services. This year they outdid themselves, donating 20 extra-large shopping bags filled with goodies. Thank you so much!

Our beautiful table decorations were graciously provided by sunshine committee chairman Anna Tenederella and members Diana Dionosio and Linda Raridan.

We thank Anna, who went above and beyond, getting up at 4 a.m. on Black Friday for the sale of gorgeous poinsettias for the centerpieces.

Centerpieces were randomly won by a guest at each table. And our generous elf (member Laura

Scarrone) presented members with packages of "reindeer poop."

We also acknowledge three members who pulled the tabs off their aluminum cans and brought them in to donate to Ronald McDonald House: Denise

Franzoia, Ann Marie Faires

and Cathy Bertolani. Men's club member Joe Porata even dropped some in. Thanks to all.

And thanks again to Sue Pricco who always finds incredible raffle prizes (Arthur Court items this month), with wine bottles donated by Mia Franzioia and Hilary Bagley Franzioia, Swarovski crystal wine glasses donated by Kathy Holsberton, and a beautiful red and black glass



Large bags of donated socks and toiletries await delivery to Child Protective Services.

See AUXILIARY, Page 7

2022 LADIES AUXILIARY BOARD

- Debra Cattuzzo, president: cattuzzod@gmail.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
- Debra Duccini Hansen, co-treasurer: dducc56@gmail.com
- Judy Farina, secretary: jfarina56@yahoo.com
- Anna Tenderella, hospitality: annatenderella@sbcglobal.net
- Karol Buccola, past president: karolrb55@gmail.com
- Sandy Calcagno, trustee/caller: fscal@comcast.net
- Adrienne DeFazio, trustee/caller: adefazio73@gmail.com
- Nancy Doyle, trustee/caller: ncdoyle59@gmail.com
- Roseann Jamison, trustee/caller: rosieado@yahoo.com
- Susan Kasimatis, trustee/caller: sjk955@gmail.com
- Phyllis Keilholz, trustee/caller: swedgewood@aol.com
- Margaret Lynch, trustee/caller: gmlynch@sbcglobal.net
- Barbara Realì, trustee/caller: barbara.realì46@gmail.com
- Ann Zacharias, trustee/caller: anncecelia02@yahoo.com

**President's Corner**

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Center had to cancel events because of the pandemic, and the potential for harm to the Dante's business seemed real, with uncertainty the new normal.

But as we wrapped up 2022, these problems seem to be rapidly receding. Masking requirements have been greatly lessened, high inflation rates are declining, and food supply problems have also lessened. Our chef must really appreciate this as he prepares event menus.

In January 2022, the event center hoped for a positive year after struggling through a challenging 2021, but few would have predicted that 2022 would end up as one of the strongest years in event center history. The number of bookings and overall profitability far exceeded expectations.

Congratulations to general manager Jennifer Peretti and her staff for a job well done. This success also allowed the Dante Club board of directors to fund a wide range of repairs and improvements to the center facility as we work to ensure its continued success in the future.

To help ensure future success, the board has, for the first time, developed a 15-year equipment-replacement plan and a mechanism to fund it. It has established a fund that will be used to regularly maintain and improve the facility and grounds.

In 2022, the board made several decisions designed to improve member events, including improving the bocce experience by approving funding for the soon-to-be-installed court lights. We have approximately 50 members playing in the Dante spring, summer and fall tournaments, and many in the Ladies Auxiliary play in their tournament as well.

Another priority was improving member dinners by minimizing business discussions and adding interesting and

informative speakers. We celebrated our Italian culture and heritage with events in October, along with numerous articles in the *Inferno* newsletter.

Long-standing events, such as the newly renamed Vic Martinelli/Frank Calcagno Golf Tournament, were strongly supported, with the golf tourney generating thousands of dollars for scholarships.

The member-prepared cioppino dinner in March was outstanding and well attended, as were the July and August barbecues.

And members continued to opine on everything from dinner menus to social events. The board listened and made a number of changes to menus and events in an effort to enhance members' experience.

Finally, I would be remiss if I failed to recognize and thank Ladies Auxiliary members for their help with Dante Club events, including providing articles about Italy and Italian culture to the newsletter. Debra Cattuzzo has done a great job as president, and auxiliary members have pitched in time and again to help with club activities and fundraising events.

So as we wrap up 2022 on a very positive note, we need to look forward to the next chapter, 2023. The event center is showing strong advance bookings, with more than 25 weddings already on the schedule, and the board will continue its work on behalf of the membership.

But remember, the heart of Dante *is* the membership. So I ask that members willingly participate whenever possible, whether attending a member dinner or special event or responding to requests for help on an event or project. I sincerely thank all who have stepped up to lead or help on various committees and projects. You should be proud, and remember, as members you are Dante and Dante is you!

Grazie and be well.

Adventure

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

to taste what an Italian cousin referred to as "the best prosciutto in the world."

The cheese was amazing, too.

In Florence, we climbed the 463 steps to the breathtaking city views atop the Duomo.

We spent a day touring other parts of Tuscany that included seeing the Leaning Tower of Pisa and the medieval towers of San Gimignano, and watching my 18-month-old daughter run around the Piazza del Campo in her namesake, Siena.

And, of course, no tour of Tuscany would be complete without some wine tasting, so we stopped for lunch and vino at a small historic winery called Fattoria Saint Appiano.

We finished our trip in Rome, with visits to the Vatican, the Colosseum, the Trevi Fountain and the Pantheon.

Unique experiences

See ADVENTURE, Page 12



News, Notes and Otherwise

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

It isn't too late to order Dante Club apparel for Valentine's Day.

Annual dues

Membership dues for 2023 are \$100 and were due Dec. 31. Members can pay online or by check payable to the Dante Club of Sacramento and mailed to: Dante Club of Sacramento, attn. Tom Mezzanares, 2330 Fair Oaks Blvd, Sacramento, CA 95825.

Buildings and grounds

During December the buildings and grounds committee worked with Industrial Door Co. to check doors throughout the building to ensure that all hinges were secured and locks were operating properly. The company also installed weatherstripping on exterior doors and added closing mechanisms to a couple of interior wood doors.

Replacement of the refrigeration unit for the large kitchen walk-in box was completed during the last week of November. Bullseye Mechanical removed the old unit Nov. 22, and it was quickly apparent that some dry rot had to be removed.

During the Thanksgiving holiday week, Don Agostinelli, Ron Pane and George Procida removed the damaged wood and completely refurbished the interior of the refrigerator. We offer special thanks for their efforts.



Ron Pane helps refurbish the event center's walk-in refrigerator.

Membership committee

Members who know of prospective applicants can find our new-member

application form on the website. They also can contact any membership committee member: Don Agostinelli, George Procida, Dick Zarzana or Dan Calcagno. We look forward to expanding membership in 2023.

Save pull tabs

Since member Ron Cristoni challenged club and auxiliary members to collect aluminum can pull tabs to benefit the Ronald McDonald House, the response has been overwhelming.

To date, we have collected close to 1,500 pounds of pull tabs. We expect this number to rise in the new year.

Proceeds from this venture help parents who can't afford lodging costs while their children are hospitalized at the University of California, Davis, Medical Center in Sacramento.

The \$1,500 raised has helped pay for more than 60 nights of lodging.

Club and auxiliary members can bring their pull-tab donations to their respective meetings.

Learn more about the Ronald McDonald House pull-tab program online at www.rmhcnc.org.

Newsletter advertising

Newsletter coordinator John Caselli, along with the entire Dante Club board, wish to thank our nine advertisers. Their support helps defray the costs of publishing the club's monthly *Dante's Inferno*.

"We're always looking to expand the ranks," Caselli said.

Anyone interested in advertising in the newsletter in 2023 can email Caselli at jac6652@aol.com.

Bocce league

The Dante Bocce Club recently

See NEWS, NOTES AND OTHERWISE, Page 8

Auxiliary

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

art bowl with 35 red and gold ornaments donated by former Dante Club president Ron Pane.

Raffle winners were:

Laurtie Wagner, Arthur Court photo frame; Alyse DeFazio, fish tea towels; Gladys Daring, Precious Moments singing angel; Marilyn Ricci, Arthur Court Christmas ornament; Norma Cappello, red and black glass art bowl and Swarovski crystal wine glasses; Sharon Helton, Cabernet; Anna Tenderella, eight cocktail appetizer dishes; Peggy Alexander, La Marca Prosecco; Lisa Parrinella, free auxiliary dinner; Cathy Ranieri-Zerio, Arthur Court pie plate and trivet; Linda Banks, two crystal necklaces and earrings; and Debra Cattuzzo, red tea kettle.

Members' guests also won these prizes: red and gold ornaments, espresso maker, \$20 cash, and Arthur Court tray.

Because so many members who didn't show up in November had to back pay for their dinners, outgoing vice-president Heidi Veneman came up with a solution. Instead of reminding members repeatedly to respond to callers, when a member responds after the reservation deadline, they will be placed on a waiting list. If members cancel after the deadline, those on the waiting list will be called to take their

See AUXILIARY, Page 10

**December**

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Peretti said the event center is off to a great start for 2023, with 29 confirmed events so far in January alone. On Feb. 4, the center will host the annual Dante Club Crab Feed. Reservations can be made online, by phone or in person.

"We can't wait to see where 2023 takes us," Peretti said. "December was booked to the gills, and we're booking solidly for 2023."

The event center is booking events into 2024, so Dante Club members interested in hosting a personal event this year at the center should inquire soon.

To host an event, a member must first schedule a meeting with Peretti or center event coordinator Annah Rose. Available dates and rooms, type of event, estimated guest count, timing, catering needs and other pertinent details will be discussed.

"We will then place the room and the date on hold for two weeks to allow time for the member to decide if the center is the best place for the event, without the date getting booked in the meantime," Peretti said.

"At the end of the two weeks, if the security deposit has not been



John Caselli and Denis Zilaff toast the season during the Dante Club's annual Christmas dinner.

received, the date will be released. To confirm an event, a deposit must be paid and a contract signed and dated."

Members can rent a banquet room at a 50% discount for a personal event for themselves, family members — including spouses, parents and children — or a personally owned business.

Members with questions about the rental discount can contact club president Tom Novi at 916-961-6197.



Guests dance to the music of Cheryl Tiburzi and her band.

For booking inquiries, email info@danteclub.com or call 916-925-8230.

News, Notes and Otherwise

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

completed its third year of play under the direction of commissioner Rich Battistessa and committee members Jim Dimino, Frank Bartucco, John Rizzardo, Don Agostinelli, Dick Zarzana and Bill Zellars.

At a recent meeting, the committee discussed subjects relating to the closing of the 2022 fall season and improvement plans for the 2023 spring season. Specific plans will be announced at a future date.

Special thanks to team captains and co-captains for their leadership: Ernie Tomassilli, Jim Dimino, Steve

Lavezzo, Frank Bartucco, Joe Porata, Nick Canepa, Jim Riolo, John Rizzardo, Rich Battistessa, Tom Mezzanares and Carl DeNigris. Special thanks to all players for their commitment and competitive spirit.

Any club members who would like to join the bocce league are welcome.

Scholarship applications

Dante Club scholarship applications are available online and in the club office. Graduating high school seniors are eligible. Applications must be submitted by midnight March 31.



To kick off the new year, make spaghetti limoncello

This recipe for spaghetti al limoncello is always a favorite and a highlight when served. It's a little time-intensive to make, but it's oh so good. Buon appetito!

SPAGHETTI AL LIMONCELLO

Ingredients:

- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 16-ounce can of chopped Italian tomatoes
- 1 1/4 ounce of tomato paste
- 2 cloves garlic
- 1/4 glass limoncello
- 1 large onion
- 1 chili pepper
- 1/2 cup fresh parsley
- pepper
- salt

JUST LIKE MOM USED TO MAKE

Richard Battistessa

- handful of ground pistachios
- 1 pound of spaghetti
- clams, mussels, prawns and small squid, if desired
- 1 lemon

Directions:

Finely chop the onion and mince the garlic. Heat the oil and add the chopped onion until it's transparent. Drop in the garlic.

After three minutes, throw in the clam shells and cook them until they open up. Once they open, add the

limoncello and cook until the liquid begins to evaporate.

Next add the chopped tomatoes and tomato paste, pistachios and half the parsley. Add chili pepper, mussels, squid and a little salt and pepper to taste. Cook for five more minutes.

Add in the prawns and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer for 35 minutes while you prepare the spaghetti. Cook the spaghetti with a tablespoon of coarse salt added to the water, until the pasta is al dente.

Drain the spaghetti, place in a big bowl and mix with the sauce.

Remember to add a little more parsley and a squeeze of fresh lemon to each serving.

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**Auxiliary**

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place. That way, the original RSVP number will stay the same.

We hope that people who get sick and cannot come will not have to pay for their dinners.

Unfortunately, that doesn't address those who just don't show up the night of the dinner. They will still have to pay, as it will be too late to have someone take their place.

In March, the Ladies Auxiliary will sponsor some raffle prize donations for the cioppino feed, the Dante Club's largest fundraiser.

We will start collecting items to put together baskets for the raffle.

We ask members to save any baskets or containers they receive with gift baskets or items they receive that they have too many of or don't need.

We will take leftover gifts. We put together all kinds of themed baskets so new or slightly used items are accepted. They can be dropped off at the club anytime. Call first to make sure someone is there or bring items to the Jan. 9 dinner.

At the dinner, we will say goodbye to some board members and install new ones, as well as callers.

I hope everyone experiences wonderful things in 2023.

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Italians specialize in festivals of all types year-round

By Susan L. Pricco

Need a reason to celebrate? Take a trip to Italy, where Italians love their festivals.

You may have heard of the swanky Truffle Festival in Alba, Carnevale in Venice and other locations, and Palio d'Asti in Siena.

But other historic and regional festivals have kept tradition for centuries. Here are a few:

In the Canavesan region of Piemonte, where zucchini is translated as "cusat" (coo-sot), the big summer celebration is the Cusaterra, or festival of the summer squash.

A queen and her court, usually preteens and teenagers in traditional costumes, lead a colorful parade preceding the festival of dancing, music, food and merriment.

Since 1808 in Ivrea, a tradition on the Sunday before Lent is a re-enactment of sorts involving a medieval revolt, led by a miller's youthful daughter, against an evil duke in the 1100s.

On carriages and horses, as well as on foot, in team tunics and gear, nine Arancieri teams battle across the city, pelting each other with oranges for three days in a unique food fight.

Environmental note: The oranges are not suitable for commercial purposes. Also,

On carriages and horses, as well as on foot, in team tunics and gear, nine Arancieri teams battle across the city, pelting each other with oranges for three days in a unique food fight.

throwing oranges at the treasured horses is strictly prohibited.

It is estimated that 7,000 people visit this small town annually (except from 2020 to 2022) to witness the battle.

Until the fall of the Republic of Venice in 1797, the Doge of Venice would declare the city's maritime dominance by tossing a gold ring into the Adriatic.

Now Sposalizio, or Marriage of the Sea, is re-created on the feast of the Ascension, with the mayor, attired in full royal regalia, acting as the Doge.

La Quintana is a medieval jousting tournament and procession, complete with costumes and ceremony, held in August in the Marche region.

In October, near Mt. Etna, the town of Bronte hosts the Pistachio Festival where you can find the nuts in granita, Nutella, pesto and gelato.

May brings the Cannoli and Cassata Festival to the south, and the Artichoke takes center stage in Cerda every April 25.

Lactose intolerants—and a significant number of Italians are—beware! The Sicilian town of Vinzinni celebrates the Sagra Della Formaggio and Ricotta Festival every April. For three days, there's music, cultural events and (no surprise) cheese, cheese, cheese.

Religious-based festivals, such as those celebrating the Ascension and the Epiphany, are common in Italy. Many small towns honor their patron saints with parades, music, Mass and regional and historical costumes, such as in Santa Rosalia in Palermo, San Giorgio in Ragusa, San Gennaro in Naples and San Giovanni (St. John the Baptist) in several locales.

This is how Italy perpetuates its culture and traditions. In recent years, the Ravenna Festival has even spotlighted a certain historical figure of whom you may have heard: Dante Alighieri (wink).

Susan Pricco is a member of the Dante Club's Ladies Auxiliary and the former president of Piemontesi Nel Mondo of Northern California.



Adventure

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from my prior trips to Rome included a guided tour of the Galleria Borghese, with its incredible collection of art from Italian masters, such as Bernini, Caravaggio, Raphael and Titian, and staying in a boutique hotel in the Trastevere neighborhood, commonly referred to as



The DeNigris family took in many impressive sights, including the Duomo in Florence, above. Lake Como, left, provides a beautiful backdrop for exploration and reuniting with relatives.

the heart of Rome. Although our trips to Italy never seem long enough, we had a memorable time with great food, wine and visits with family. Looking forward to the next Italian adventure!

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.