



**We'll celebrate
Italian Heritage
Month Oct. 27**

DANTE'S INFERNO



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Tom Novi

Automotive leader, state senator to speak this month

One of the great Italian immigrant stories of the 20th century is that of Louis Niello, the son of Italian immigrants who settled in the San Francisco area in the early 1900s. Through hard work and business savvy, Niello bought and sold several automotive dealerships in San Francisco as he started what has become the Niello family of dealerships that we know today.

Starting in San Francisco and then moving to Sacramento, Niello's son, Richard, continued the tradition by creating one of the largest privately held automotive groups in California, focusing on premium brands such as Audi, BMW and Porsche, although price leader Volkswagen is part of the portfolio.

See PRESIDENT'S CORNER, Page 7

September a busy month for weddings and other special events

September kicked wedding season into gear at the Dante Event Center. The center hosted an assortment of other events as well, including a Department of Water Works information meeting, two C.K.

McClatchy High School class reunions and some birthday and anniversary parties.

"We also attended, for the second time, a Christian Brothers High School extravaganza, where our cannolis and mini-meatballs

were a hit," reported general manager Jennifer Peretti.

"We can't wait to see what the remainder of the year holds for us," Peretti said.

Reservations are open for the Italian Heritage Month dinner Oct. 27. Tables will be set up for 10 guests, and overflow guests will sit at adjoining tables.

Club members and their families and friends are encouraged to attend the Dante Craft Fair and Festival from



Dante events manager Annah Rose, right, runs a food booth at the Christian Brothers High School extravaganza. Cannolis and mini-meatballs proved especially popular among attendees at the annual event in September.

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NEWS, NOTES AND OTHERWISE

Buildings and grounds

During September, the Dante Event Center saw very little in the way of needed repairs. There was an issue with the air conditioning unit for the Tuscan Room, which Bullseye Mechanical came out and took care of.

The garbage disposal company accidentally hit the side of the building with its large truck. We are seeking quotes to make the necessary stucco repairs.

We had a couple of minor issues with the soda lines behind the bar and the main dishwasher in the kitchen area. Manager Jennifer Peretti handled both items, and all seems in order.

Italian Heritage Month

The Dante Club will mark Italian Heritage Month Oct. 27 with a special five-course, sit-down dinner, featuring osso buco and polenta.

Italian music for enjoyment and dancing also is planned.

Check the club website for further details and deadlines. We're reaching out to the Sacramento Italian community, so club members should place their reservations soon.

Advisory and finance committee

Despite the normally lean months of July and August, the Dante Event Center has finished in the black. Over the past few years, these have been months of financial loss that had to be recovered during the more profitable months of October, November and December.

This year September also looks good, with 30 events booked.

Club manager Jennifer Peretti's contract, which expired in September, has been renewed for five more years. The club has been doing well under her leadership for the past three years.

Save pull tabs

The Dante Club has always prided itself on

See NEWS, NOTES AND OTHERWISE, Page 3



UPCOMING EVENTS

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

October 1

Sunday Family Dinner

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

Menu: House salad, beef and cheese ravioli with Bolognese sauce, seasonal vegetables, garlic bread, chef's choice dessert

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

October 9

Ladies Auxiliary Dinner and Meeting

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

Menu: Italian lentil soup, rigatoni with Bolognese, herb-roasted pork loin with sun-dried tomato and artichoke Tuscan cream sauce, seasonal vegetables, rolls with butter, chef's choice dessert

Cost: \$22 per person
Reservations closed.

October 16

Dante Club Members Dinner and Meeting

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

Menu: Italian lentil soup, rigatoni with Bolognese, herb-roasted pork loin with sun-dried tomato and artichoke Tuscan cream sauce, seasonal vegetables, rolls with butter, chef's choice dessert

Cost: \$22 per person
Reserve by midnight Saturday, Oct. 7.

October 27

Italian Heritage Dinner

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

Menu: Antipasto, insalata Italiano, mezza rigatoni with marinara and fresh-shaved Parmesan, veal osso buco with creamy polenta, rolls with butter, tiramisu

Cost: \$50 per person
Reserve by midnight Friday, Oct. 13.

November 5

Sunday Family Dinner

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

Menu: Butternut squash soup, chicken Parmesan with fresh mozzarella, rigatoni with marinara, roasted green beans and corn, rolls with butter, chef's choice dessert

Cost: \$15 adults, \$8 children age 12 and younger
Reserve by midnight Saturday, Oct. 28.

**News, Notes and Otherwise**

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

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

September saw the restart of interviews for club membership.

Dan Michelotti, sponsored by Jim DiPinto, and Richard Marconi, sponsored by Joe Bonanno, came in for a chat.

The membership committee recommended both applicants to members, who voted them in. We hope to induct them during the October meeting.

In September, we did induct Tom Strobel, sponsored by Paul Jacobs

and spouse of Susan Kasimatis of the Ladies Auxiliary.

Tom was a middle school science teacher who will be a welcome addition to the organization.

We now have three on the waiting list. We hope to talk to Vincent Nocito in October. Both Paul Turner and Lucio Bricchetti will be out of the country next month so they will be scheduled for November.

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

- Life members Frank and Sammy Cemo, 51 years
- Peter Belli, 55 years
- Jim Relles, 50 years
- David Lucchetti, 43 years
- Kevin Procida, 32 years
- John Stassi, 30 years
- Mike Merri and Vito Parisi, 26 years
- Michael Strazzo and Tom Mantranga, 25 years

Members should continue to encourage their family members and friends to consider joining the Dante Club.

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

Dante crafts event

The Dante Event Center will host its inaugural Dante Craft Fair and Festival from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 22.

The fall event will feature crafts vendors, children's games, food trucks, music and raffles, with proceeds going to the Lupus Foundation.

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

Under the blazing and grueling sun, with adverse bocce court conditions and with steady nerves and keen eyesight, these teams have placed in fall league play:

- Maestro de Bocce, 5 wins, 1 loss
- Sons of Beocce, 4 wins, 2 losses
- Inferno, 4 wins, 2 losses
- Fratelli de Bocce, 4 wins, 2 losses
- Italian Stallions, 3 wins, 3 losses
- Avanti, 2 wins, 4 losses
- Dante Rollers, 2 wins, 4 losses
- Riolo Rollers, 1 wins, 5 losses

September 23 marked the end of Week 6 with four weeks remaining, bringing the fall season to a close on Saturday Oct. 21.

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2023 Committees and Assignments

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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

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Ron Fiorica, chairman; Don Agostinelli, vice chairman

Member: Dan Calcagno

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Dan Calcagno, chairman

Members: George Procida, Don Agostinelli, Dick Zarzana

► Member involvement subcommittee: Tom Mezzanares, Ron Fiorica

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John Caselli, chairman; Tom Mezzanares, vice chairman

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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

BOCCIE

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

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- 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

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- Dick Zarzana: razarzana@comcast.net, 916-683-4812



Auxiliary says goodbye to two special members

This was indeed a sad month for the Ladies Auxiliary, as we lost two special members.

Denise Franzoia was the longest-standing member of the Dante Club Ladies Auxiliary, having joined in 1972. That is 51 years, longer than some members have been around.

Denise was a character and had so much information on the history of the auxiliary. Her two daughters, Linda Franzoia-Feil and Suzie Franzoia-Roweski, as well as her granddaughter, Mia Franzoia, are currently members of the auxiliary.

Denise was married to Alfred Fanzoia, since deceased, and together they had six children: Alfred, Tom, Michael, Mark (Yogi), Linda and Suzie. She had 16 grandchildren, and nine great grandchildren.

Denise was of Irish and German descent—although you'd swear she was Italian! She was born and



LADIES AUXILIARY NEWS

Debra Cattuzzo

raised in Sacramento, the daughter of state Sen. Earl Desmond. Services were held Sept. 29 at St. Mary's Catholic Church.

Grace Williams had been an auxiliary member for the past six years. She was married to Joe Williams for 67 years. They had three children, Sharon, Ken and Ronald, eight grandchildren and three great grandchildren.

Grace was one of 10 children born to Vincenzo and Grace Anazalone from Sicily. Her services were held Sept. 19 at St. Mary's Catholic Church.

Denise and Grace will both be greatly missed.

At our last dinner meeting, we had a wonderful chicken and polenta meal, topped off with an

incredibly dense and moist limoncello cake made by Jennifer Peretti, general manager of the Dante Club. A pastry chef earlier in her career, Jennifer is a woman of many talents who can feel free to bake me something anytime.

Once again, we had some great raffle prizes. Winners were: Roseann Jamison, Leatherby's gift card; Mia Franzoia, free auxiliary dinner; Laurie Wagner, Save Mart gift card; Conny Ortiz (guest), Corti's bottle of wine with grape plate; Barbara Longo, Rachael Ray plate sets; Kristi Calago, Corti's bottle of wine gift basket; Conny Ortiz (guest), ceramic crock with kitchen tools; Jerri Curradi, scarecrow fall decoration; and Susan Cappello (guest), \$20 cash. Congratulations to all the winners.

That evening, our bingo ladies, Suzie Rozewski-Franzoia and Linda Frazoia-Feil, were not

See LADIES AUXILIARY, Page 6

2023 LADIES AUXILIARY BOARD

- Debra Cattuzzo, president:
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- Alyse DeFazio, vice president:
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News, Notes and Otherwise

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Elections on the horizon

As we enter the fall and winter months, the days will grow shorter, the temperatures will get cooler, and the club will have its elections for 2024 and 2025.

We are looking for a few good men to serve on the Dante Club board of directors for those two years.

Any member interested in participating should contact Ron Pane by text at 916-798-0111 or email at repane@icloud.com.

Annual dinner payments

Members can now pay monthly or 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 in a wide array of colors.

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.

High school seniors: First notice!

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

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

Ladies Auxiliary

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

available, so our past president, Karol Buccola, along with members Mia Franzoia and Patrice Prest, led us through a lively game of bingo.

Thanks to Carole Orelli, Alyse DeFazio and Elaine Schaedler for bringing in pull tabs for donation to the Ronald McDonald House. Anyone who brought in pull tabs but weren't acknowledged should remember to put their names on the plastic bags or containers they bring.

These pull tabs go a long way to help parents and families stay at the Ronald McDonald House while their children are having surgeries or fighting cancer and

other illnesses at UC Davis Medical Center.

Three new members joined the auxiliary in September: Beckee Lienert, Terri Waldron and Marie Waldron-Booth.

We look forward to meeting all three at our October meeting.

Don't forget to tell everyone about our inaugural Craft Fair and Food Festival on Sunday, Oct. 22.

Event coordinator Annah Rose has arranged vendors in all the rooms in the Dante Event Center building and even the tent outside.

Drewski's and other food trucks will be available for bites to eat. Children are invited, as there will be a whole section of kid-oriented vendors with games.

And it's all free.

And, of course, Oct. 9 is our annual Ladies Auxiliary Mercato Italian Marketplace. Unfortunately, Connie Terry of Villa Biscotti cannot participate this time. I will miss my favorite treat—her Cuccidati or, as some call it, Sicilian fig cookies.

Some auxiliary members have graciously volunteered to make biscotti and other Italian desserts to sell at the event and to donate the proceeds to our club.

So check out the dolce table, and buy some goodies. The mercato will feature repeat vendors and a few new ones. Come early and shop!

Finally, our signature drink in the bar this month will be a limoncello martini. Yum!



PRESERVING OUR HISTORY

Italian Americans fight to keep statues of Columbus

The first voyage of Christopher Columbus across the Atlantic, on an impossible mission into the unknown to discover the American continent, is one of the most significant events in recorded history.

Considered the greatest navigator of his time, Columbus left a legacy felt worldwide today. He made four voyages across the Atlantic and opened the Americas to Europeans and the widespread transfer of people, plants and animals that affected every society on the planet.

Foods from the Americas, such as potatoes, tomatoes and corn, became European staples, while wheat from Europe became a main food source for people in the Americas. Coffee from Africa and sugar cane from Asia became major food crops for Latin American countries.

Europeans brought livestock unknown in the Americas, such as cows, pigs, sheep and horses. The introduction of the horse allowed native American tribes in North America to shift from a nomadic to a hunting lifestyle.

Although Columbus was from Genoa, he sailed for Spain, but his voyage was financed by Italian merchants.

Statues of the Italian explorer who discovered the New World are a mainstay in cities across America. Most statues of Columbus were created by the Italian American communities in those cities.

The creation of these statues and monuments to commemorate Columbus and the arrival of Italian immigrants gave Italian Americans a sense of unity, identity and pride. Today, Italian Americas

are the sixth largest ethnic group in the nation.

But the summer of 2020 defined how Italian Americans are viewed in this country. In an attempt to erase Italian American history and traditions, some U.S. cities and their mayors forced the removal of Columbus statues. This occurred in Hartford and New Haven, Connecticut; St. Louis, Missouri; Columbus, Ohio (where the name of the city is being changed); San Francisco, California; Baltimore, Maryland;

See COLUMBUS, Page 8

President's Corner

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The Dante Club is privileged to have Roger Niello, Richard's son, as our speaker at our Oct. 16 members dinner. Roger Niello is not only an officer in the Niello company, but he also is a newly elected state senator. I encourage members to attend the October meeting to meet Sen. Niello and discuss issues that affect their lives and their families' lives.

October is Italian American Heritage and Culture Month, celebrating the immense contributions Italians have made to American life. A gourmet dinner Oct. 27 at the Dante Club

will feature osso buco and will be accompanied by an entertaining sampling of traditional Italian songs, as well as those of such great Italian American crooners as Frank Sinatra, Tony Bennett and Dean Martin. Truly an evening of great food and entertainment. I promise it will not disappoint.

Board of directors elections, now held every two years, are rapidly approaching. Ron Pane heads the nominations committee, which also includes Dan Calcagno and Matt Longo. Serving on the board and helping steer the Dante Club in a manner that supports members' interests

is a great honor, and each election cycle we look to replace board members who can no longer serve. I encourage members to let Ron, Dan or Matt know that they're willing to serve. Remember, you are the Dante Club, and the Dante Club is you!

Finally, it was sad to hear that Dick Cristofani, a past Dante Club president, had passed. A life member, Dick had belonged to the club for nearly 40 years and contributed to its success. We ask members to remember Dick and his family in their prayers.

As always, please take care and stay well.



Event

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Oct. 22. The free public event will feature entertainment, arts, crafts, vendors and food trucks.

With heavy hearts, Dante Club members said goodbye to two longtime members and past presidents, Robert Guidera and Richard Cristofani.

A memorial service was held at the event center.

Finally, we are saddened to let members know that Annah Rose, our events manager, has decided to leave the Dante Club for a great job opportunity that will further her career.

Her last day will be Oct. 22, the day of the craft fair, so be sure to say goodbye to her.



A memorial event at the Dante Event Center celebrated the life of member Robert Guidera.

We continue to book special events and fill in the gaps on our 2023 calendar and also are booking events into 2024 and 2025.

Columbus

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Chicago, Illinois; Newark, New Jersey; Wilmington, Delaware; St. Paul, Minnesota; Richmond, Virginia; West Orange, New Jersey; San Jose, California; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Denver, Colorado; Boston, Massachusetts; and Sacramento, California.

Italian-American communities in each of these cities protested and

fought to save the Columbus statues but were met with disdain. As a result, Italian Americans are banding together to fight for their return and to protect remaining statues and the Columbus holiday.

Lawsuits have been brought in South Philadelphia, Pittsburg and West Orange. Boycotts of St. Paul and Richmond have been called until the statues of Columbus are returned.

Italian Americans deserve to be included in the story of America. If U.S. society and its political class continue to hold Columbus and Italian Americans guilty for the grievances of other ethnic groups, there will be no justice for any American. The result will be to erase Italian American culture and history and substitute it with a hateful anti-Italian American racial agenda.

Let's restore our heritage. The Italian communities need financial support to protect their unique heritage and preserve the history of Italian Americans.

People can help save their history, traditions and culture by supporting local Italian American community organizations.

—Edited and reprinted with permission from the Italian Cultural Society



Apples and spinach add tasty touch to seasonal ravioli

The end of summer and the start of fall is a wonderful time of year. It's just the season for whipping up some fall ravioli.

This recipe isn't a traditional ravioli dish, but it makes for a nice and easy dinner.

FALL RAVIOLI

Ingredients:

- Butternut squash ravioli, 10 ounces fresh or frozen (or get creative and use wonton squares)
- 2 teaspoons olive oil
- 1 pink lady apple (sounds

JUST LIKE MOM USED TO MAKE

Richard Battistessa

like a trip to Apple Hill), cored and sliced thin

- 1 teaspoon vanilla bean sea salt
- 1 tablespoon garlic herb blend seasoning, dried
- 2 cups spinach
- 3 tablespoons pumpkin seeds
- 2 tablespoons goat cheese, crumbled
- 1 to 2 tablespoons crisp pear balsamic vinegar

Directions:

Cook the ravioli for a little less time than the package indicates. Drain and dress with the olive oil to prevent sticking. Set the ravioli aside. Add the apples and season with the vanilla bean sea salt and garlic blend. Then, caramelizing the apples is a good thing. In a separate pan, add the spinach to wilt it—about a minute. Return the ravioli to the spinach and apples, and toss. Place on a serving dish, garnish with the pumpkin seeds, drizzle the balsamic—and mangia bene!

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RECORDING OUR HERITAGE

Professors' book captures the Italian American experience

By Tom Novi

Many of you have asked about my source for the “famous Italians” articles I often provide to the *Dante's Inferno* newsletter.

The source for many of them is a wonderful book on the five centuries of the Italian American experience: *La Storia* by Jerre Mangione and Ben Morreale.

The authors are professors of English, literature and history—Mangione at the University of Pennsylvania and Morreale at the State University of New York at Plattsburgh.

The essence of the book may be summarized by this excerpt: “It is the contributions of the great majority that are most difficult to record—those millions of anonymous immigrants who took part in building railroads, tunnels and skyscrapers, who worked in factories and farms, helping to clothe and feed the country, and who are old men and women

today ... We record their saga, as well as that of their American children ... not only to show what it meant to be alive during the period of migration from Italy to America but also to document the inner migration from Abruzzese, Genovesi, Napolitana, Toscana or Siciliana to Italian, Italian American and, finally, American.”

The authors write that the Italian American experience is truly a story of people, ranging from the unsung to the talented and celebrated, such as Verrazzano, Da Ponte, La Guardia, Sinatra, DiMaggio, Puzo, Iacocca, Cuomo, DeNiro, Scorsese, Madonna and many more who have touched the lives of millions of fellow Americans.

This is an extraordinary volume of work that I will happily share with any of you who want a greater understanding of the Italian American experience and the contributions of famous Italians to the fabric of American life.

Please patronize our paesanos

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TIE-ING ONE ON

Dante Club member and "everything Italian" expert Ralph DiLibero explains the history of Italian neckwear during a special presentation at the September members meeting. DiLibero showed examples of the various materials, unique colors and Italian symbols used on neckwear by designers such as Ferragamo and Armani. And, of course, he explained the difference between a cravat and a tie.

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.