



**Commit to active participation in our Dante Club**

# DANTE'S INFERNO



## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Pat Orelli

*Rain doesn't stop kids from having fun hunting eggs*

Despite some morning rain, the Dante Club Easter Egg Hunt on March 30 was successful once again. It did not dampen the spirits of the 80-plus children who came to hunt eggs.

It did take some doing to hide the eggs indoors in the Venetian Room. The children had to be separated into two age groups. After the group of youngest hunters, ages 1 to 4, did their searching, there was an intermission when the remaining eggs and stuffed toys were hidden.

After the egg hunt, the sun finally put in an appearance while everyone was enjoying the free hot dogs, chips, ice cream, soda and beer the Dante Club provided. It was a good thing we finally had clear weather as the children were ready to enjoy the inflatable

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## BOUNCIN' AROUND



Kids, above, burned off energy in a bounce house at the Dante Club's Easter Egg Hunt. Longtime Dante member Jim Relles and his family, right, enjoy hot dogs, chips and lots of candy. From left are Jim, grandson JJ, son-in-law Nick, granddaughter Samantha, wife Marilyn and daughter Haley with granddaughter Cameron. At far right, Ron Grove, Joe Porata, social chairman Steve DeCristofaro and club president Pat Orelli are all smiles after planting eggs for this year's Easter Egg Hunt.



## ENHANCING OUR ITALIAN CULTURE

### Lowly breadstick has proud Italian history

By Susan Pricco

When you sit down to *secondo colazione* (brunch or lunch), *pranzo* (a more modern term for lunch) or *cena* (dinner), your Italian table will invariably offer bread and

*grissini*, those familiar crunchy breadsticks. You can munch the breadsticks, common in Italian homes, while you wait for dinner.

See BREADSTICK, Page 11



## NEWS, NOTES AND OTHERWISE

### Advisory and finance

The most recent meeting of the advisory and finance committee was devoted almost exclusively to a review of the club's financial statements and current financial situation. Although the club is in a much better position than it was in recent years, increasing costs of practically everything are taking a toll on profitability. A special board meeting has been called to consider the various solutions that have been proposed.

### Buildings and grounds

On April 2, the buildings and grounds committee assembled a large group of members to erect and prepare the outdoor tent for the many events booked for spring



Head groundskeeper George Procida supervises tent raisers George Zarzana, left, Don Agostinelli and Paul Pane.

and summer. The group completed the job in a little less than 90 minutes. A big thank you to these members who showed up to help: Don Agostinelli, Jim Brennan, Dan Calcagno, Nick Canepa, Jim Dimino, Matt Demino, Steve Lavezzo, Matt Longo, Tom Mezzanares, Paul Pane, Ron Pane, Aaron Patella, John Peretto, Frank Perri, Joe Porata and George Zarzana.

### General manager's report

April was a busy month at the Dante Event Center. We hosted the American Public Works Association for a three-day meeting, the Black American Political Association of California's annual shrimp and crab feed, and our monthly groups. We also hosted weddings and proms, including Luther Burbank High School and the Sacramento City Unified School District's Small Schools prom. We look forward to what the summer brings.

An increase in labor and food costs has led to an increase in the Sunday Family Dinner price for adults. It's now \$18. Children's meals remain at \$8.

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

#### May 5

##### Sunday Family Dinner

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

**Menu:** Summer pasta salad, creamy polenta, pan-seared Tuscan chicken, seasonal vegetables, rolls with butter, chef's choice dessert

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

*Reservations closed.*

#### May 13

##### Women's Auxiliary Dinner and Meeting

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

**Menu:** Italian salad with citrus vinaigrette, spaghetti with meatballs, seasonal vegetables, housemade garlic bread, chef's choice dessert

**Cost:** \$22 per person

*Reserve by midnight Thursday, May 2.*

#### May 20

##### Dante Club Members Dinner and Meeting

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

**Menu:** Italian chopped salad, spaghetti with meatballs, seasonal vegetables, rolls with butter, chef's choice dessert

**Cost:** \$22 per person

*Reserve by midnight Friday, May 10.*

#### June 2

##### Sunday Family Dinner

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

**Menu:** Housemade potato salad, slow-roasted barbecued beef brisket, macaroni and cheese, seasonal vegetables, cornbread, chef's choice dessert

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

*Reserve by midnight Friday, May 24. Limited to 220 guests.*

#### June 10

##### Women's Auxiliary Dinner and Meeting

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

**Menu:** Summer citrus salad with balsamic, chicken saltimbocca, creamy polenta, seasonal vegetables, rolls with butter, chef's choice dessert

**Cost:** \$22 per person

*Reserve by midnight Thursday, May 30.*

#### SAVE THE DATES:

**Sausage festa, June 14**

**Members meeting and dinner, June 17**

**News, Notes and Otherwise**

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

A reminder: Dinner reservations for Women's Auxiliary, Sunday and members dinners are due by midnight Friday rather than Saturday. This is to ensure that food and other products can be ordered without delay.

The Dante Event Center is booking into 2026.

**Social report**

It was great seeing such a large turnout for the April Family Dinner, and a fun time was had by all. Don't wait to register for the members meeting this month. We have a lot more room for members who couldn't make it in April. Let's make filling the room a goal for May.

The Easter Egg hunt March 30 was a success even though it had to be held indoors because of rain. Thanks to all who assisted, and special thanks to Debra Cattuzzo and Jennifer Peretti.

Our sausage fest coming up June 14 is traditionally a must-attend event, with excellent food. More events are scheduled this summer, so stay tuned.

**Membership committee**

The year so far has been exciting for the membership committee. We have inducted eight new members. The latest is John Angella, sponsored by Randy Canova, who was inducted in April. All eight of the inductees attended the April dinner.

A new calendar year does see membership renewal challenges,

and we have to report some departures, more than we would like. Seventeen members, for various reasons, have decided to leave the club. Our numbers now stand at 228 active members and 21 Lifetime members, for a total of 249. This year, besides the eight inductees, we have one to induct and one to interview.

We encourage all members to bring family and friends to a dinner to see if they would make good additions to the club.

This month we interviewed Tony Guisti (no, not related to the Delta eatery). Sponsored by Don DelPorto, Tony was recommended to the general membership and accepted. We hope Tony will be inducted next month.

Our only waiting list applicant is Dave Rizzardo, John's son and Tony Guisti's friend. Dave has been waiting to be interviewed until he finishes his Italian language classes. We want to see if he's learned anything when we see him next month.

As always, applications can be obtained from the Dante Club website, the business office or the membership committee.

**Save pull tabs**

The Dante Club provides many activities that benefit the wider community—for example, the Ronald McDonald House Pull-Tab Program. For the past five years, club member Ron Cristoni has coordinated our participation in the program, which helps offset the cost of overnight accommodations for parents with a child hospitalized at UC Davis Medical Center.

The Dante Club has raised nearly \$2,000 for the program.

Dante Club and Women's Auxiliary members are asked to continue collecting pull tabs from their pet food, soda and beer cans and bring them to their meetings.

For more information, go online at [www.rmhcnc.org](http://www.rmhcnc.org). Select "Getting Involved" and scroll to box 5, "Pull Tab Program."

**Scholarship update**

The scholarship committee is putting final touches on winner selection for the scholarship awards. Recipients will receive letters early in May regarding their status. May 20 is the scheduled date for our presentation program.

**Newsletter advertising**

Newsletter coordinator John Caselli and the Dante Club board wish 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](mailto:jac6652@aol.com).

**Annual dinner payments**

Members can pay monthly or annually for monthly meeting night dinners. When paying in advance, members cannot receive a refund or a credit for any dinner they don't attend, but they don't need to tell the event center if they can'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. Any

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## 2024 Committees and Assignments

### COMMITTEES

#### ADVISORY AND FINANCE

Dan Calcagno, 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; Tom Novi, vice chairman

Member: Steve DeCristofaro

#### MEMBERSHIP AND INVESTIGATIONS

Dan Calcagno, chairman

Members: George Procida, Don Agostinelli, Dennis Noble, Tom Mathews

#### PUBLICITY AND MARKETING

John Caselli, chairman; Tom Mezzanares, vice chairman

#### SCHOLARSHIP

Rich Battistessa, chairman; Jim Dimino, vice chairman

Member: Mark Pedroncelli

#### SOCIAL

Steve DeCristofaro, chairman; Rich Battistessa, vice chairman

Members: John Caselli, Matt Longo, Joe Porata, Ron Pane, Mark Pedroncelli

### SPECIAL COMMITTEES

#### BOCCE

Rich Battistessa, chairman; Jim Dimino, vice chairman

Members: Dick Zarzana, John Rizzardo

#### GOLF TOURNAMENT

Frank Buccola, chairman

Members: Bill Maffei, Rich Battistessa, Frank Bartucco

#### DINNER PROGRAM

Rich Battistessa, chairman; Jim Dimino, vice chairman

Member: Don Agostinelli

#### ENHANCING OUR ITALIAN CULTURE

Ralph DiLibero, chairman

Member: Rich Battistessa

#### SPECIAL ASSIGNMENTS

- Women's Auxiliary liaison: Tom Novi
- Check-in desk for club events and raffle: John Caselli, chairman; Matt Longo, vice chairman; and new members
- Club apparel: Mark Pedroncelli
- Sergeant-at-arms: Colin Orelli

## 2024-2025 DANTE CLUB BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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- Patrick Orelli, president: [pat@apcpagroup.com](mailto:pat@apcpagroup.com), 916-369-2327
- Dan Calcagno, first vice president: [dcalextra@aol.com](mailto:dcalextra@aol.com), 916-481-8368
- Ron Pane, second vice president: [repane@icloud.com](mailto:repane@icloud.com), 916-798-0111
- Joseph Pasquinelli, secretary: [jmpasquinelli@gmail.com](mailto:jmpasquinelli@gmail.com) or (708) 805-5242
- Tom Mezzanares, treasurer: [tjmezzan@gmail.com](mailto:tjmezzan@gmail.com), 916-467-7483

### DIRECTORS

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- Steve DeCristofaro: [stefanodad@gmail.com](mailto:stefanodad@gmail.com), 916-752-3247
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- Bill Maffei: [mrmaffei@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mrmaffei@sbcglobal.net), 916-207-6837
- Brian Noble: [ibnoble@gmail.com](mailto:ibnoble@gmail.com), 916-217-8836
- Dennis Noble: [d.noble35@comcast.net](mailto:d.noble35@comcast.net), 916-889-6677
- Tom Novi: [tomnovi@aol.com](mailto:tomnovi@aol.com), 916-961-6197
- Mark Pedroncelli: [peddc@surewest.net](mailto:peddc@surewest.net), 916-812-6729
- George Procida: [gprocida@gplandscape.com](mailto:gprocida@gplandscape.com), 916-455-4738



# Easter Bunny back on the job bearing treats for all

**W**e had a surprise visit from the Easter Bunny, aka Laura Scarrone, at our April dinner. Laura was finally able to return to the auxiliary and bring treats for everyone. Laura is recovering from an ankle replacement, but she was determined not to miss treating her ladies. It was great to see her up and about.

In April, we introduced 11 new members: Diane Sapienza-Boudy, Olivia Shirley, Meghan Giannotti, Eleanor Ford, Joan Aroz, Bobby Olwell, Karen Leschner-Lenoir, Eleanor Ford, Kristin Bruce, Lisa Issel and Linda Orr. Diane and Olivia helped prepare cioppino baskets even before they became members. Welcome, all. We hope you enjoy our club.

We also welcomed back a member who took a break and got married, went to Europe and



## WOMEN'S AUXILIARY NEWS

*Debra Cattuzzo*

traveled about. Welcome back to my ex-co-president Carole Stefani Meyers.

Here are the winners of our April raffle: Linda Reardon, free auxiliary dinner; Katherine Paterson, four framed Italy postcards; Janet Stevenson, wine and wine glass set; Bianca Ferri, \$25 cash; Toni Groth, spring Easter basket; Silvana Cioli, two potted pansies; Virginia Petroli, two large framed Italy photos; Nancy Mazzier, \$25 Leatherby's gift card; Janet Sellars, spa gift basket; and Eleanor Ford, Arthur Court cheese board and knife.

Many members stayed around to play bingo at our April meeting. Winners of the four separate games were Debbie Massello;

Judy Semerjian, a guest of Susan Kansimatis; Silvana Cioli; and Debbie Duccini-Hansen. Congrats! My card never had three in a row!

Thanks to Kathryn Beltrami, Linda Raridan and Anna Tenderella for bringing in pull-tab donations. I held up the huge bags of tabs to show members how much we've collected over the year, and it was close to 10 pounds. The Dante Club management team was very impressed with the amount.

Remember, pull-tab donations don't have to come just from canned drinks. Cat food lids are aluminum as well. Anyone who has difficulty pulling off the tabs can bring in whole lids (please clean them first), and I will pull them off. It's such a good cause that we need to keep going.

Bocce has started amid beautiful weather. Auxiliary

See AUXILIARY, Page 7

## 2024 WOMEN'S AUXILIARY BOARD

- Debra Cattuzzo, president: [cattuzzod@gmail.com](mailto:cattuzzod@gmail.com)
- Anna Tenderella, hospitality: [annatenderella@sbcglobal.net](mailto:annatenderella@sbcglobal.net)
- Kathy Holberton, trustee/caller: [crystalgal@yahoo.com](mailto:crystalgal@yahoo.com)
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- Karol Buccola, past president: [karolrb55@gmail.com](mailto:karolrb55@gmail.com)
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- Tina Luchini Bowers, treasurer: [tebowers55@gmail.com](mailto:tebowers55@gmail.com)
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- Donna O'Neil, trustee/caller: [rtg4005@gmail.com](mailto:rtg4005@gmail.com)
- Susan Kasimatis, secretary: [sjk955@gmail.com](mailto:sjk955@gmail.com)
- Nancy Doyle, trustee/caller: [ncdoyle59@gmail.com](mailto:ncdoyle59@gmail.com)



# Speech spotlights timeliness of Italian Holocaust

**Editor's note:** *The following speech was presented at the Pirandello Lyceum I Migliori Awards ceremony on April 6, 2024, by the organization's president, Domenic Amara, PhD. The Pirandello Lyceum, based in Boston, Mass., is a group of academics and professionals who seek to maintain and share Italian American heritage in the United States and to recognize the contributions of Italian immigrants and Italian Americans to the United States. The I Migliori Award is considered one of the highest awards that can be conferred on an American of Italian descent.*

## THE ITALIAN HOLOCAUST The tragic, the heroic, the overlooked and the lessons

The history of Italy in World War II consists of many intertwined events—the tragic, the heroic and the overlooked—including the Jews in Italy, most of whom escaped the Holocaust because many Italians shielded them from Hitler's genocidal vision.

While Italy under Benito Mussolini instituted harsh discrimination laws in 1938, Italian authorities opposed or subverted the Nazis' extermination plans. Many ordinary Italians actively protected Jewish residents and refugees. Joseph Goebbels, the Nazi propaganda minister, railed loudly in 1942 of the lax Italian attitudes toward the Jews. Italy, after all, was supposed to be a loyal ally of Hitler. After the Nazi occupation of Italy in 1943, several thousand Jews were sent to Auschwitz and other camps to die.

Still, according to various estimates, about 80% of the roughly 45,000 Jews in Italy survived the war because an



extraordinary number of Italians did not abandon them.

How and, more importantly, why did they not abandon them? I found a quote that hints at an answer. It is from a Chicago attorney, Edna Selan Epstein, who was born in Yugoslavia and survived with her family as refugees in Italy under false identities provided by Italian authorities.

"Why," she asked, "was a culture so human and protective across the board as the Italians were, while another culture can be committed to sadistic horrors?"

In Israel, Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Museum and Memorial, lists more than 600 Italians as "Righteous Among Nations." They represent the many Italians who risked their lives to save Jews. Among them were Giocondo and Annina Marconi, simple villagers in Anghiari, Italy, who took in the family of 7-year-old Adina Sella.

They were not alone. Others also helped. When the Sella family arrived at Anghiari, they were desperate. They had been kept safe in their previous hiding place, a convent school, in the town of Arezzo. However, a

warning came that Nazis were coming, and they could no longer be protected. They fled to Anghiari where they were met by two Italian policemen. The policemen grabbed the men, leaving the women, and were gone, she recalled. One hour, two hours, three hours. The women were beside themselves. They had no money. They didn't know what to do or where to go. Three hours later, the men came back with false identities and rations books provided to them by the police.

There are countless stories, such as that of Ursula Korn Selig, who was hidden by an Italian family in the mountains. They were hidden in a bread-baking oven for three months until the American soldiers finally drove out Hitler's army. There's the account of Ida Lenti, who washed clothes of German soldiers to make money to support hidden orphaned children. She knew that if she was caught, she and the children would be slaughtered.

The town of Assisi was particularly active in hiding and evacuating Jews. It was a central point of assistance for Jews trying to escape a terrible fate. It was from there that hundreds of Jews were provided false IDs and safety in convents, private homes and hotels. It's estimated that nearly 300 Jews were funneled through Assisi to safety out of Italy.

One has to keep in mind that this was done in an environment where spies were everywhere. They were mingled with the citizenry. It was extremely

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**Auxiliary**

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players meet at 11 a.m. Tuesdays (coordinator Debbie Duccini5-Hansen, [dducc56@gmail.com](mailto:dducc56@gmail.com)) and at 5:30 p.m. Wednesdays (coordinator Susan Kasimatis, [sjk955@gmail.com](mailto:sjk955@gmail.com)). Come join in the fun!

Thanks to those who stepped up to help Anna Tenderella and her committee collect decorations from the tables at the end of the meeting. They do a lot of work shopping and preparing the decorations, decorating the day of the meeting and developing a new storage system, so they are exhausted by the end of the night. People helping collect decorations and bringing them to the side table makes it easier for the committee to organize them back into their storage bins. If members wouldn't mind doing that at every meeting, it would be so appreciated.

Please join us in celebrating spring and Mother's Day at our May dinner.

**Speech**

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

dangerous. Being discovered meant death for themselves and their entire family.

It should be clear, however, that five full years of war resulted in the deaths of 7,682 deaths of Italian Jews, most perishing in Nazi concentration camps in Poland and Germany. If it were only one death, it would still be an indictment, because the naked truth is that very few of these victims would have been captured without some form of Italian collaboration.

However, it must be stressed that even the most critical researchers of the Holocaust admit that most, if not all, of the remaining Italian Jews not captured—about 40,000 of them—were aided by other Italians at extreme peril to themselves and by a set of circumstances that supported their survival, including:

- the fact that the Holocaust began late in Italy
- the willingness of Italian Jews to accept that what was happening in other countries could happen to

them in Italy, even if they were loyal Italians and allied to Germany

• the characteristics of the Jewish community itself in Italy: They were few in number, they could be fed and hidden easily, and they retained their wealth because Italy had not ghettoized Jews as happened in Germany.

• very importantly, Italians have a cultural inclination to ignore unjust regulations even to the point of risking punishment. Susan Zuccotti, a researcher who wrote extensively on the subject, said "...Italians seem to have a natural spontaneity and self-assurance uniquely their own." During the occupation, this amiable inclination of Italians hardened into an iron determination to evade nonsensical laws. Italian Jews, being Italians, never had the inclination to obey their government's orders to report for internment in contrast to many Jews in other countries. Italian

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**President's Corner**

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slide and bounce house that appeared in the parking lot, despite the conditions.

Big thanks to the Women's Auxiliary for providing eggs, candy and stuffed toys and for assisting with the event.

Thanks also go to Steve DeCristofaro and his crew for their great work running the event.

At our April board meeting, Fran Koscheski, granddaughter of Victorio Panettoni, the first

president of the Dante Club, gave a short presentation on the creation of the club. Victorio was instrumental in getting our club off the ground in 1926, and his wife, Paolina, was the impetus in the creation of the Women's Auxiliary shortly thereafter.

Fran also presented an album of photos, circa 1927, including some showing the original Dante Club building and St. Mary's Catholic Church (Italian) and other Sacramento points of interest. The album will be included in our archives and

contribute to our centennial celebration in 2026. Thank you, Fran.

We offer a raffle at our members meetings and the Sunday Night Family Dinners. It was a pleasant surprise when new member Gary Savelli, attending his first meeting after being inducted, brought in a large box of various Italian items, including T-shirts and flag pins, to be used as raffle prizes. Thank you, Gary. We are always grateful to receive donations that can be used for our raffles.



# Ricotta gnocchi easier to make than potato version

This recipe for ricotta gnocchi is a favorite of Women's Auxiliary member Roseann Taverna Jamison, whose family hails from the Piemonte region of Italy. It was given to her by an Italian American friend of Tuscan origin.

This light and pillowy ricotta version takes less time to make than the potato version. The finished gnocchi freeze well, making them a great choice for a make-ahead company dinner or a quick and easy weeknight meal.

Dress gnocchi with a simple tomato sauce or fresh pesto. Or try the recipe for brown butter, sage and lemon sauce on Page 11.

## JUST LIKE MOM USED TO MAKE

Adrienne DeFazio

### GNOCCHI DI RICOTTA

#### Ingredients:

- 1 8-ounce container ricotta cheese, preferably whole milk ricotta, excess moisture removed (Roseann's quick method to remove moisture: spread ricotta on double layer of paper towels and gently press another double layer on top—repeat as needed)
- 2 eggs
- ¾ to 1 cup flour for dough, plus additional in case the dough is too sticky and to aid in forming the gnocchi
- ½ cup freshly grated Parmesan
- 1 teaspoon salt

- 1 teaspoon pepper
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder

#### Directions:

Reserve ¼ cup flour and mix the remaining ¾ cup flour and the rest of the ingredients in a bowl with a wooden spoon. It is normal if the dough is a little sticky, but if it is excessively sticky, add the reserved flour, a little at a time. Transfer the dough to a lightly floured wooden board. Divide the dough into four pieces. With floured hands, roll each piece of dough into a cylinder about ¾ inch to 1 inch thick. Flour hands and board again if necessary. With a knife or bench scraper, cut each cylinder

See JUST LIKE MOM, Page 11

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Speech

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Jews became as adept at fooling authorities as their non-Jewish compatriots; they were, after all, Italian as well.

- Italian Jews shared a character trait with their non-Jewish Italian neighbors. They were stubborn and individualistic. Italians—Jews or not—just don't like being told what to do.

All of this was not enough to ensure an 80% to 85% survival rate. The hunted could never have survived without help. Zuccotti believes that the decision to rescue Jews was usually an emotional one—spontaneous, uncalculated and not without some cultural basis.

Zuccotti writes that one of the most cogent factors to Jewish rescue must be placed in the context of the customs and tradition of Italy. The most pertinent was the significant

lack of anti-Semitism. For many reasons, pre-World War II Italy lacked an anti-Semitic tradition. The reasons are complex and beyond the scope of this piece, but suffice to say, the lack of an anti-Semitic tradition in Italy was a key factor in the way non-Jewish Italians behaved during those hellish times.

Let me add that if any want to delve into this more deeply, let me point out two individuals who are with us today who might be able to help: Tom Damigella, the de facto historian of the Italian American Alliance; Dr. Gilda Rorro, a published scholar who just happens to be a Pirandello Lyceum I Migliori Award winner; as well as another published scholar, Dr. Maria Lombardo, wife of Robert Trifiletti and member of the Pirandello board of directors.

The Jews in Italy before the Holocaust strongly resembled most

American Jews today. They lived in a society with relatively little prejudice and no formal barriers to their achievement. Yet the Holocaust did occur in Italy, and it behooves us to understand why.

Scholars hint that its roots lay in the way Italy's government, for financial and political power, imposed laws that brought the worst elements of society to the surface and intimidated others. It was endorsed by government, the press, the universities and thousands of ranting fanatics, and it was sustained by a terrorized, preoccupied or just indifferent society. You may notice some American parallels.

Yet, it was clearly opposed by courageous Italians who saved thousands at the peril and cost to their own lives. Indeed, most scholars agree that the Holocaust

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## News, Notes and Otherwise

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substitution not confirmed by noon can't be honored.

### Bocce

Bocce is again off and rolling, despite April showers causing a little hiccup for our second match of the season. We have two new entries in the Saturday league. Welcome to the Good Fellows and the Son of Bocce teams.

Our substitute pool also is growing to support our 50 rollers. More teams are on the way with the advent of Tuesday night bocce. Matches for this new group will begin at 6:30 p.m.

New players are welcome. Get signed up and roll under the stars.

### Legacy building fund

In past years, members of the men's club and the Women's Auxiliary donated regularly to the Dante Club Legacy Building Fund. Many thanks to those who donated to keep the club in good shape now and in the future.

We continue to encourage members to consider making the Dante Club part of their estate planning.

Members can create their own legacy by giving a heritage gift to the club. They can remember the club when writing or updating their wills or trusts, providing future financial support to the club and their Italian heritage.

Such gifts help us maintain the Dante Event Center as a premier venue for club and public events and activities. Including the Dante Club in an estate plan is a simple, meaningful way members can have a lasting impact on their heritage beyond their lifetimes.

Those who would like to make such a gift or let us know if they've already done so should email Tom Mezzanares, club treasurer, at [tjmezzan@gmail.com](mailto:tjmezzan@gmail.com).

### 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](http://danteclub.shopgraphx.com) or they can contact coordinator Mark Pedroncelli at [peddc@surewest.net](mailto:peddc@surewest.net) or 916-812-6729.

For special orders, contact Julie Brown at 916-787-0603 or [julie@premieregraphx.net](mailto:julie@premieregraphx.net).

## *Want to book a personal event? Don't delay*

The Dante Event Center is booking for the 2024 through 2026 event seasons. Any club members interested in hosting a personal event at the center should inquire as early as possible.

To host an event, a member must first schedule a meeting with general manager Jennifer Peretti or Dante event

coordinator Ashley Perham. Available dates and rooms, type of event, estimated guest count, timing, catering needs and other pertinent details will be discussed.

The member's desired room and date will be placed on hold for two weeks to allow time to decide if the center is the place for the event, without the

date getting booked in the meantime.

At the end of the two weeks, if a security deposit has not been 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, which include spouses, parents and children, or a personally owned business.

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

For event inquiries, send an email to [info@danteclub.com](mailto:info@danteclub.com) or call 916-925-8230.



**Breadstick**

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Enjoy them with a piece of cheese or wrap a slice of paper-thin prosciutto around one end for an appetizer called *fiammifero* (matchsticks).

These days, a tasty charcuterie board is trendy, but Italians have served *salumi* (cured meats) for decades, usually with *grissini* on the side. Of course, many a mama or nonna have used breadsticks to quiet a hungry toddler.

There are a few

theories about the origins of *grissini*. One dates to the 14th century when bread was sold by the loaf or roll and the price was fixed by the government. It was called *grissia*. Then currency lost value and the size of loaves diminished—hence, *grissini*.

Another theory: In the 1600s, Vittorio Amadeo II, the future Duke of Savoy and King of Sardinia, was a sickly child with chronic gastric issues who had great trouble digesting bread, fundamental to their

diet. A local baker created the longer, thinner, crispier version of the common baguette style, or *ghersa*, which was cooked longer to destroy germs and bacteria (*ghersin*).

There are probably more tales about the beginnings of the humble breadstick. But have we given it credit for its contribution to the Italian way of life?

Next time we thoughtlessly grab *grissini* off the table, let's appreciate it a bit more as a staple of our heritage.



Charcuterie boards are currently in vogue among dedicated foodies, but Italians have long served appetizers of cured meats and cheeses, typically with a side of crispy *grissini*, or breadsticks. As humble as they may seem, breadsticks are part of the Italian heritage.

**Rice**

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

into 3/4-inch to 1-inch pieces. Lightly dust *gnocchi* with flour so they won't stick together.

Optional: Roseann uses a fork to form lines or indentations on one side of the *gnocchi*. She presses, then rolls each dough piece on the curved part of a fork. This step is not required, but it helps the *gnocchi* "catch and hold" the sauce. A *gnocchi* board or the small-hole side of a cheese grater also can be used.

Put the finished *gnocchi* on a lightly floured cookie sheet. They can be used right away or refrigerated for a few hours. For longer storage, Roseann puts them on a cookie sheet lined with parchment paper, freezes them in a single layer, transfers them to a

ziplock bag, then stores them in the freezer. They will keep well there for at least two months.

When ready to cook, bring a large pot of water to a boil and add *gnocchi*. As they cook, they will rise and when they come to the top, they are done. Frozen *gnocchi* might take an extra minute or two to cook.

Drain *gnocchi* in a colander and serve immediately with a favorite sauce. Makes four servings.

**Brown Butter, Sage and Lemon Sauce**

- 8 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 20 large fresh sage leaves
- 1/4 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes (optional)
- One fresh lemon
- Freshly grated Parmesan

- Sea salt and black pepper to taste

Grate zest from lemon, avoiding white part of peel. Squeeze juice from lemon. Set aside zest and juice. Heat butter in large sauté pan over medium-high heat. When butter has nearly melted, add sage leaves and optional pepper flakes. Cook 2 to 3 minutes until butter turns a light brown color and sage leaves are crispy. Don't let the butter burn. Remove pan from heat and add cooked and drained *gnocchi*, lemon zest and juice. Mix well and add salt and pepper to taste. Top each serving with some grated Parmesan.



## Speech

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

in Italy was a blend of incredible courage and incredible cowardice, nobility and degradation, self-sacrifice and opportunities. They also agree that, in contrast to other countries, the worthy behavior outweighed the unworthy, but the horror was nonetheless real.

All of this brings us to the question of how Italians behaved from the onset of Fascism. Did they recognize the first signs of danger with the first denial of liberty and free speech, and when they first observed unequal justice? Did they do as much as they could have done?

We might also ask ourselves whether we would act as most Italians did under similar pressures. Would we risk our lives

for persecuted Jews or any minority for that matter? Would we be more sensitive to the first assaults on our liberties when the only ones being hurt in the beginning were “other people”?

For Italian Americans, the issue of anti-Semitism is not simply academic and goes beyond the moral imperative. If we need an intimate reason, consider that anti-Semitism is anti-Italianism—or any other “ism” turned inside out. We saw it when our grandparents and parents were denied, threatened and even murdered in America. We see it in another form when we see the symbols of our faith and heritage desecrated and disaffirmed.

If there is a lesson to be learned, it is that the monster of

anti-Semitism in Italy—past or present—or in America or anywhere—is an issue for all, because it is a chameleon, a shapeshifter, the social manifestation of dissimulation, and it can show up anywhere.

I submit to you that in light of the rise in anti-Semitism in this country, the questions I posed earlier must be answered by every single person in the quiet of our own thoughts if we are to avoid an American cataclysm similar to what I have described. I submit to you that in your quest for answers that you pay attention to history—our Italian history. We have much to learn from it.

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*Italian American Alliance*

## DANTE'S REMINDERS



### Member volunteers

To volunteer, contact George Procida for anything related to buildings and grounds and Steve DeCristofaro for anything related to social events. Reach Procida at 916-455-4738 or [gprocida@gplandscape.com](mailto:gprocida@gplandscape.com) and DeCristofaro at 916-752-3247 or [stefanodad@gmail.com](mailto:stefanodad@gmail.com).

### 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](mailto: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](http://danteclub.shopgraphx.com).

### Newsletter photos and news

Submit photos and news items for *Dante's Inferno* to John Caselli at [jac6652@aol.com](mailto: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](mailto:tjmezzan@gmail.com).