



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

# DANTE'S INFERNO



## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

*Pat Orelli*

*From mild weather  
to yummy food,  
festa's a success*

In the middle of June, we had our Dante Club Sausage Festa under the tent. Fortunately, the weather cooperated by giving us a mild evening, and everyone present had a good time.

The food was excellent, consisting of a well-dressed tossed salad (I really hate when the salad doesn't have enough dressing to even taste it), green beans in a wonderful garlic tomato sauce and rigatoni with a sauce that received many compliments. There also was extra sauce available if you wanted it, which I think most did.

And, of course, there were the very delectable sausages.

Food portions were large enough, as was evident by the number of to-go boxes visible when dinner was over. Oh, did I forget to mention the lemon

See PRESIDENT'S CORNER, Page 7

## FESTA FUN AT THE DANTE



The Dante Club presented its Sausage Festa on June 14, with a menu of salad, green beans in garlic tomato sauce, rigatoni, lemon pie and lots of sausages. Providing music for the event, right, is the Cheryl Tiburzi Band. Some guests, above, enjoy a game of bocce by twilight. The festa drew 139 club and auxiliary members and their guests to the club's outdoor tent.



## ENHANCING OUR ITALIAN CULTURE

### Breaking bread: a time-honored tradition that means a lot more than just eating

By Susan Pricco

Why do we come to dinner or luncheon meetings or events with organizations like the Dante Club?

It's the time-honored tradition of breaking bread, a practice honed to perfection by Italians. On any given day, we can eat in a number of Italian-themed places such as restaurants, cafes or delicatessens—some better than others.

My mother always wanted to go to Italian restaurants but often spent time analyzing the menu and criticizing the meal for not being authentic. As much as I hate to admit it, she was usually right, but she never stopped searching for the perfect Italian place.

When we get together with other *Italiani*, we find kinship in shared cuisine. Often, the gathering gets lively over a colorful display of antipasti with its pickled vegetables, cheese bites and *salume* (aka charcuterie or cold

See TRADITION, Page 7



## NEWS, NOTES AND OTHERWISE

### Advisory and finance

In June, the advisory and finance committee continued to establish an investment account to hold all Dante Club scholarship funds. The committee will then schedule the transition of existing funds into that account. The scholarship committee will continue to determine the awards to worthy applicants through its annual process, using all unused amounts remaining in the account.

A line of credit has been created to handle seasonal cash-flow issues. Summer months are historically slower for the event center. That, coupled with a few cancellations and increased expenses, has required the need for the line of credit.

The committee is looking at different types of reports to help speed up report processing as well as provide a better understanding of the finances. The changes will evolve over the next few months, but committee members are pushing to make them happen as soon as they make improvements. Reports are being generated directly from bookkeeping data sooner than the data received from the club's accountant.

Six initiatives are in development with the intention of generating funds for cash-flow issues. More information should be available within the month.

### General manager's report

After a slow-down in May, the Dante Event Center rallied in June, hosting several return events, including the Sacramento County Retired Employees Association event and the Dante Club's member-hosted Sausage Festa with 139 guests.

General manager Jennifer Peretti said the center is continuing to book for 2024 and has begun accepting reservations into 2026. She advises club members to make reservations early for the July barbecue for members and their families. Reservations are open now.

Starting in August, due to the increasing costs of labor and food, as well as inflation, the Sunday Family Dinner price for adults will increase to \$22 for adults and to \$12 for children. Members dinners will increase to \$25.

A reminder: Reservations for Sunday and members dinners are due by midnight Fridays rather than Saturdays. Reservations for Women's Auxiliary dinners are due by midnight Thursdays.

See NEWS, NOTES AND OTHERWISE, Page 3



### UPCOMING EVENTS

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

#### July 7

##### Sunday Family Dinner

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

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

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

*Reservations are closed.*

#### July 15

##### Members and Guests Barbecue

**Times:** 5 p.m. cocktails, 6 p.m. steaks handed out

**Menu:** House salad, roasted asparagus, penne pasta with marinara, grill-it-yourself ribeye steaks with toppings, rolls with butter, ice cream sundae bar with hot fudge, caramel and toppings

**Cost:** \$35 per person

*Reserve by midnight Friday, July 5.*

#### August 4

##### Sunday Family Dinner

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

**Menu:** Tomato basil soup, meatloaf with garlic mashed potatoes and gravy, seasonal vegetables, rolls with butter, chef's choice dessert

**Cost:** \$22 adults, \$12 ages 12 and younger

*Reserve by midnight Friday, July 26.*

#### August 19

##### Members and Guests Barbecue

**Times:** 5 p.m. cocktails, 6 p.m. steaks handed out

**Menu:** Italian chopped salad, grilled peppers and onions, rigatoni with marinara, grill-it-yourself ribeye steaks with toppings, rolls with butter, spumoni

**Cost:** \$35 per person

*Reserve by midnight Friday, Aug. 9.*

**News, Notes and Otherwise**

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

**Buildings and grounds**

During June, the buildings and grounds committee completed shelving repairs in the kitchen storage area. Thanks go to Ron Pane.

The quarterly service of the building's heating, ventilation and air conditioning system was completed. A few minor items that will need addressing were noted.

**Social report**

The social committee reports that the annual Sausage Festa on June 14 drew 139 people, who enjoyed excellent food, dancing and bocce. Early feedback on the event was mostly positive. The only hitch was the speed of drink service, which will be rectified for upcoming events.

Special thanks go to Joe Porata and his setup and tear-down team and to Ron Pane and his team for preparing such good food. Thanks to all who helped organize the wonderful event.

As a reminder, no members meetings will be held in July and August, but we'll have a barbecue on July 15 for members and guests. The cost is \$35 per person, and the cutoff for reservations is July 5.

As mentioned in the June members meeting, the social committee is organizing a bus trip to the Italian Festival at the Eldorado Resort Casino in Reno on Oct. 12. A limited number of

seats are available. Orders for the event will be taken in the next few weeks, so keep an eye out for information in the *Inferno* newsletter and in email blasts from the club. Cost of the bus trip is \$50 per person.

The Frank Calcagno and Vic Martinelli Golf Tournament, the Dante Club's major annual fundraiser, is scheduled for Sept. 14 at Alister Mackenzie Golf Course, Haggin Oaks. Members are encouraged to put foursomes together and look for sign-up information on the club website.

Organizers are planning for 144 golfers. The day will have a shotgun start and begin at 7:30 a.m., with lunch to follow at the Dante Club.

**Save pull tabs**

Since Ron Cristoni challenged Dante Club and Women's Auxiliary members to collect pull tabs to benefit the Ronald McDonald House, the response has been overwhelming.

Cristoni offered this update a few weeks ago: "A couple of weeks ago, I dropped off 67 pounds of pull tabs at the Ronald McDonald House. I asked the desk clerk what the going price was for parents to spend the night. The price is still \$20 a night. So if the Ronald McDonald House cashed in the pull tabs at the going rate of \$1.25, that is \$83.75 or four nights' stay for parents who can't afford the \$20 per night. Please thank the auxiliary. They turned in two giant bags of pull tabs."

The club and the auxiliary have a lot to be proud of. To date, we have collected over 1,625 pounds of pull tabs and raised nearly \$2,000 for the program.

The program helps offset the cost of overnight accommodations for parents with a child hospitalized at UC Davis Medical Center.

Club and auxiliary members are asked to continue bringing pull tabs from pet food, soda and beer cans 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."

**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

See NEWS, NOTES AND OTHERWISE, Page 10



## 2024 Committees and Assignments

### COMMITTEES

#### ADVISORY AND FINANCE

Dan Calcagno, chairman; Ron Pane, vice chairman

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

#### 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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- Tom Mezzanares, treasurer: [tjmezzan@gmail.com](mailto:tjmezzan@gmail.com), 916-467-7483

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## Auxiliary heralds summer with saltwater taffy treats

To go with the darling summer-theme decorations at the June meeting,

Women's Auxiliary mascot Laura Scarrone, wearing a 1920s-style



Laura Scarrone, right, shows her taffy tray to Debra Cattuzzo.

swimsuit, handed out saltwater taffy to all attendees. One hundred and eighty members enjoyed a chicken saltimbocca

dinner before the meeting.

We also introduced these eight new members (their Italian family names are in parentheses): Kelly McGhee-Pane (Yazzalino), Catherine Cramer (Favero), Roberta Kassis (Galli), Kara Ozeroff (Ciani), Vickie Clemens (Maita and Massi), Gina Della-Russo, Pamela Della-Russo and Joanne Massoni.

Welcome, new members!



### WOMEN'S AUXILIARY NEWS

*Debra Cattuzzo*

Bocce games will continue through the summer if enough people sign up to play. Check the Women's Auxiliary's Facebook page to see if games are canceled. Otherwise, games will be held at 11 a.m. Tuesdays and 6 p.m. Wednesdays.

Anna Tenderella's guest, Gail Robards, asked our bocce crew to come teach the game to the staff of a Lyons Realty Employee Day at East Portal Park. So Anna, Susan Kasimatis, Carole Pesetti and Donna O'Neil went over to teach the group, who had a great time.

Pétanque is the French version of bocce. On Saturday, June 1, the local French cultural club, Alliance Française de Sacramento, hosted its annual pétanque event at the Pétanque de Sacramento courts in Rancho Cordova. A group of

Dante Auxiliary members attended and had a fabulous time. The event featured French food. Watch for it next year. I am sure it will be posted on our Facebook page.

We had lovely prizes in June, and the winners were: Anna Turner, free auxiliary dinner; Tracy Cottini, pizza party platter and bottle of wine; Karen Lenoir, \$25 Boudin gift card; Cathy Maffei, s'mores maker with fixings; Terri Ross, Pavilion Car Wash; Pam Della-Russo, strawberry bowl with fresh strawberries; Gloria Galvez, \$25 cash; and Carletta Puppo, summer lemonade picnic basket.

We continue to support the Ronald McDonald House by bringing in aluminum can pull tabs for donation. Thanks go to Linda Banks, Laura Leonelli, Alyse De Fazio, Francesca Carleson, Liane Leavitt, Ann Zacharias and Suzie Rozewski. Pull-tab donors should put their names on or inside their

See WOMEN'S AUXILIARY, Page 11

## 2024 WOMEN'S AUXILIARY BOARD

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## BACK TO THE HOMELAND

# Family trip reveals locals' pride in their Italian way of life

By Eric Luchini

I recently returned from my fourth trip to my parents' homeland. Each time I visit, I reflect and learn not just something new about the sites and the history but something more refined regarding the people.

Italians continue to hold one foot in their original culture. In the words of one of my cousins: "I guess we really don't want to change (give up our 'regional' heritage)."

Italians take pride in who they are and what they represent. Hospitality and food are as important as how they dress and greet others. No sweatpants or ball caps while running off to the store.

The streets are tidy with minimal litter in touristy areas. Italians recycle everything. Cars are efficient and lower-emission. Italians yell passionately even when they argue, but then they move on (no fights or violence).



Eric Luchini and his fellow travelers—from left, daughter's boyfriend Adam Bess, daughter Jazzy Luchini, wife Suzan Sabado-Luchini and Eric—join Italian family members for a home-cooked meal during a visit at their home in Lucca.

It's very evident that Italians appreciate history and culture but stay relevant to modern times. The architectural integrity of historical buildings is still very much intact—but no removing walls or cutting up the buildings—but the modern boutiques in the ancient cities of Rome, Florence and Venice rival those of Rodeo Drive: plush and exquisitely merchandised and displayed.

Restaurants still uphold the high culinary standards visitors expect. It's the original farm-to-fork mindset: "If it isn't local and fresh, we don't serve it."

Nearly all servers take orders on smartphones, and the entrees often arrive within minutes of ordering. Complimentary aperitifs and antipasti greet most customers, even those just there for drinks.

See ITALIAN, Page 7



The Cathedral of St. Andrew in Amalfi, above, is renowned for its grand staircase of 62 steps. At St. Peter's Church in Vatican City, right, the Pope was saying Mass.



Medieval-era Palazzo Luchini, above, is among the sites the American travelers visited in the Tuscan city of Radicofani.





Adam Bess, above, checks out the dash of the Alfa Romeo Stelvio hybrid SUV that the Luchini travelers rented for their Italian adventure. Eric Luchini's cousin, Egidio Luchini, right, dishes up some ravioli for a family meal. He lives in Massrosa, Eric's father's hometown near Lucca.



## Italian

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

Finally, money in Italy goes far: lunch for four—entrees, wine, antipasti—costs 110 to 120 euros, with tax and tip included. That's about \$130.

This 14-day trip was jam-packed: Rome to Sorrento and Amalfi, then to Lucca and Viareggio, on to Florence and Montalcino wine country, then farther north to Cinque Terre and across the divide to Venice, Murano and Burano. We spent 11 days in an Alfa Romeo hybrid SUV and got good at tackling the roads and competing with the speeding Italian drivers.

Although we explored some standard tourist sites in ancient Rome, Pisa and Venice, we also enjoyed the real home cooking of my dad's family in Lucca. A big treat was an exploratory afternoon in the south-central Tuscan city of Radicofani in the province of Siena, home of Palazzo Luchini. Distant relatives probably assumed occupancy of the palace in early medieval times, but a more recent family member, Sen. Edoardo Luchini, put the family name to it in the mid-1800s, after he helped with the unification of Italy.



Emanuele, Eleonora and Egidio Luchini show off the Orange County soccer team jerseys that Adam Bess, who works for the team, brought as gifts for his Italian hosts.

## Tradition

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

cuts)—or to get a little fancier, some savory crostini.

"The Music Man" includes a song called "Pick-a-Little, Talk-a-Little." That title perfectly illustrates how we bond over antipasti spread out before us.

Many of us are guilty of obsessing over the best pesto, demanding the proper al dente of our pasta and analyzing who has the best spaghetti gravy/sauce/sugo/ragu. Invariably, conversations among the *amici* will include the question, "Do you use sugar in your sauce?" (a sacrilege in some families, including mine).

Every time we place a whisper-thin slice of prosciutto on our tongue, bite into a crunchy biscotti or savor a comforting minestrone, we remember and honor our families, our ancestors and our customs.

It isn't just food. It's the way we maintain connection to our culture and preserve our history. We want to repeat and share these gustatory memories, fodder of our existence. We crave and insist on properly selected and prepared delights to immortalize our Italian ways, strengthen our kinship and perpetuate what we hold dear. The importance of these things should not be underestimated.

## President's Corner

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

pie with a graham cracker crust for dessert? Yummm!

I want to give a big thank-you to the kitchen crew led by Ron Pane and assisted by John Waldron, Paul Pane, John Waldron Jr. and John Velo. The latter two men are not even Dante Club members, so their contributions are doubly appreciated.

The setup and service crew, under the direction of Joe Porata, consisted of Don Agostinelli, Frank Bartucco, Jim Brennan, Steve DeCristofaro, Ron Grove, Al LaRocca, Jim Luttig, Pete Pesetti and Ernie Tomassilli. Big thanks also go out to these members who gave so generously of their time.

My only regret is that only 139 people attended. Although the event was open to the public, 34 club

members and their guests, together with members of the Women's Auxiliary, made up the majority of attendees.

This was a wonderful event that took only 15 men to make it happen, with the support of the Dante Event Center management. But is an event really successful when the club has over 250 members? Where are these members?



## Sicilian pesto makes a perfect pairing with pasta

**T**his pesto originated in the town of Trapani, to the west of Palermo on Sicily's northern coast. It is a delicious way to dress pasta using summer's luscious tomatoes and fragrant basil.

The pesto is traditionally made by hand with a mortar and pestle, but a food processor or blender produces excellent results as long as the ingredients aren't over-blended.

Because every Sicilian cook has his or her own way of making this pesto, the proportions of almonds, basil, tomatoes, cheese and olive oil will vary from recipe to recipe. The pesto also can be used for pasta salads and bruschetta and as a condiment for

### JUST LIKE MOM USED TO MAKE

Adrienne DeFazio

grilled vegetables and fish.

#### PESTO ALLA TRAPANESE

##### Ingredients:

- ½ pound to ¾ pound fresh tomatoes, peeled and seeded
- 2 cloves garlic, skin removed
- 3 ounces (about ¾ cup) whole blanched almonds, lightly toasted or raw as preferred
- 3 cups lightly packed basil leaves
- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 to 3 tablespoons grated pecorino cheese
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Optional: pinch of paprika, hot pepper flakes or pepe rosso

- For serving: 1 pound pasta and additional pecorino

##### Directions:

*If using whole almonds, chop them coarsely and cut tomatoes into large chunks. In food processor, grind almonds and garlic. Pulse in short bursts. The almonds don't have to be finely ground as the sauce should have some "crunch." Add basil and pulse for a few seconds. Add tomatoes and pulse until mixture is well blended. Add oil and cheese and pulse a few times. Add more olive oil if needed. Don't over-mix or sauce will have a brownish color. Add salt and pepper to taste.*

See JUST LIKE MOM, Page 9

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**Just Like Mom**

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

To serve, cook pasta in salted water to al dente stage. Reserve  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of pasta water. Drain pasta and mix it with pesto in serving bowl or pot used to cook pasta. Add a little pasta water if dish seems too dry. Serve immediately with grated pecorino cheese.

**PREP NOTES**

**To skin tomatoes:** Bring pot of water to boil. Cut X in each tomato on end opposite core end. Submerge tomatoes into boiling water for 10 to 15 seconds. With slotted spoon, transfer tomatoes from pot to large bowl of cold water. Remove skins by hand. Core tomatoes and gently squeeze or scrape to remove seeds.

**To blanch almonds:** Blanched or skinless almonds are used in this

recipe. Some recipes call for toasted almonds and others raw almonds, but the almonds should be blanched to remove their skins. To do this, bring water to boil in a medium saucepan. Remove pot from heat and add almonds carefully or put almonds in a heat-safe bowl and pour boiling water over them. Let almonds stand in the water for no longer than one minute. Drain almonds in a colander or strainer and run cold water over them. Blot with a paper towel. The skin on the almonds will now be loose enough to pull or pop off easily.

**To toast almonds:** Whole almonds can be toasted in a dry pan, stirring frequently, for three to five minutes or in a pan in an oven heated to 350 degrees for three to

five minutes, shaking pan every so often to redistribute the nuts. With either method, watch almonds carefully so they don't burn. Slivered or sliced almonds will take less time to toast.

**Mortar and pestle method:** To make pesto in the traditional way, use a mortar and a pestle to crush the almonds, then add garlic and crush some more. Add basil and crush until basil has broken down into small bits. Add tomatoes and cheese and crush some more, leaving tomatoes slightly chunky. Stir in olive oil and season with salt and pepper.

**Suggested pasta shapes:** Use busiate (find it at World Market), casarecce, fusilli or long pasta, such as spaghetti or linguine.

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## News, Notes and Otherwise

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

give the substitute's name. Any substitution not confirmed by noon can't be honored.

### Bocce

The summer session of our bocce league has started, and we are looking for warm weather to speed up the courts.

Ten teams of four to five rollers are ready to take on the spring champs. The Doo Wops prevailed.

Team competition can be great fun and an opportunity to meet other club members. We always have room for more rollers, and our substitute list is growing.

Novices and experts alike are encouraged to come out and join this great Italian sport.

The courts will be occupied Saturday morning from 8:30 to 11 a.m. Congratulations to Tom Mezzanares, Jim Brennan, Pat Orelli and Colin Orelli for their winning season.

### 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).

### Membership committee

Our membership ranks now stand at 251. We have 230 regular and associate members and 21 Lifetime members. Dave Rizzardo, son of John Rizzardo, was inducted at the June meeting.

Also, a correction: Last month we misspelled the last name of our May inductee. He's Tony Giusti, not Guisti. Mea culpa.

It was a hectic interview process, but thanks to Don Agostinelli and Brian Noble, we were able to empty the waiting list. Four of our six membership committee members were busy elsewhere.

In June, Corey Carskaddon, sponsored by Ron Cristoni, and Rafael Ruano, sponsored by Al Manfredi, were both presented to the general membership and accepted into the club.

Because of the club's summer break, both newcomers will be asked to return in September for their inductions.

Although our waiting list now stands at zero, we will still receive applications but will not schedule interviews until the fall.

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



New member David Rizzardo, right, takes the mic with his dad, John Rizzardo, during his induction in June.





## WHY I'M PROUD TO BE AN ITALIAN

# Frank Capra saw wartime films as important legacy

By Tom Novi

**M**any Italian artists have been justly recognized for their important accomplishments, but having just celebrated the 80th anniversary of D-Day, the 1944 Allied invasion of Europe, we need to remember one of the all-time Hollywood greats: film director Frank Capra.

Born Francesco Rosario Capra in Sicily, Italy, in 1897, Capra became one of the United States' outstanding film directors and producers, especially in the 1930s and 1940s.

Raised in Los Angeles from the age of 5, Capra had a rags-to-riches story that personified the American dream. His father worked picking fruit, and Capra, from his early childhood, worked selling newspapers to help the family. After he graduated from high school, Capra managed to then graduate from the California Institute of Technology with a



Columbia Pictures, public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

degree in engineering, an accomplishment that opened his eyes to the enormous opportunities in the United States for those who worked hard and smart.

During his long career in film, Capra won three Academy Awards for directing and three in other categories. His film credits include "It Happened One Night," "Mr. Deeds Goes to Town" and "You

Can't Take It With You." His most remembered film, "It's a Wonderful Life," was not a commercial success when first released but later was named one of the best films of all time.

For all his commercial and artistic success, Capra often referred to the seven World War II films he produced as his most important legacy.

Known as the "Why We Fight" series, the films traced the war, beginning with "Prelude to War" in 1942. The films explained to soldiers "why the hell they're in uniform," Capra wrote. So when D-Day arrived in June 1944, Capra's films had served to instill in Allied troops a clear understanding of why they were risking their lives for their country and democracy.

Clearly, Capra was not just a truly great artist and filmmaker but also a great Italian American.

## Women's Auxiliary

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

baggies of pull tabs so I can acknowledge their contribution.

A spirited group of members stayed for bingo at the June meeting. Winners, who won \$10 in cash for each of the four games, were Marilyn Cottini, Tracy Cottini, Janet Sellars and Wendy O'Neal.

Remember, we have a Facebook page—the Dante Club Women's Auxiliary—that members can join. Our secretary, Susan Kasimatis, established it last year so members can have access to photographs of our

meetings and other activities. Adrienne De Fazio also always lists cooking classes and recipes. The page is wonderful and open to the public. Check it out!

Please remember that we do not have another meeting until Sept. 9. We hope the Balamo dancers will entertain us that evening.

Members who know of other Italian entertainment we might have at our meetings should contact me at 916-442-2266 or [cattuzzod@gmail.com](mailto:cattuzzod@gmail.com). Members also can contact me with their suggestions or complaints.

Have a wonderful summer, and see everyone in September!



## *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.

## 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).