



**Don't forget to pay
your 2025 member
dues by Dec. 31!**

DANTE'S INFERNO



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Pat Orelli

Holiday season promises much merry-making

'T is the season to be jolly! The Dante Club may or may not be jolly, but we certainly have some wonderful holiday events in which members can participate and enjoy themselves this month.

Our Sunday Night Dinner on Dec. 1 will feature spaghetti and meatballs—sure to be delicious.

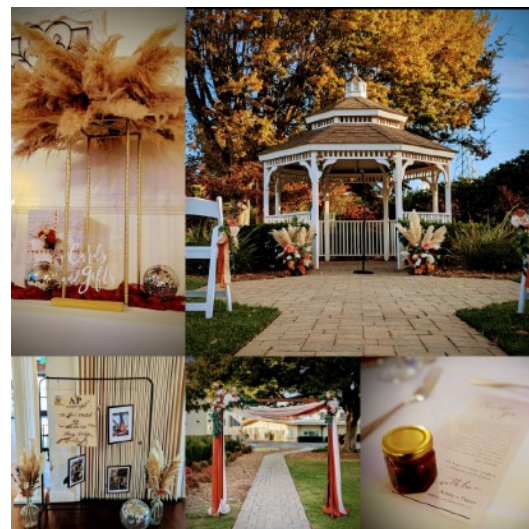
Regretfully, the Orelli family will not be able to attend as we'll be taking our annual trip to Louisiana to enjoy Christmas New Orleans-style.

Holiday celebrations in the Big Easy start the first day of December and continue throughout the month.

Activities include Christmas caroling in Jackson Square and nightly prix fixe Réveillon dinners at many restaurants. Christmas decorations abound, and even

See PRESIDENT'S CORNER, Page 6

FALL FUN AT THE DANTE



The Dante Event Center welcomed many organizations and individuals for events and celebrations of all kinds during the recent fall months. In October, members of Chi Eta Phi Sorority, above left, held its new-member mixer in an event center banquet room adorned with green and yellow decorations. Also in October, the Optimist Club held its Texas Hold 'Em Poker Tournament, left, at the center. And in November, fall colors dressed up an outdoor wedding ceremony and indoor reception, above.

ENHANCING OUR CULTURE

Classic Italian music brings comfort and joy to family holiday gatherings

By Susan Pricco

With the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays upon us, many of us will be spending time with family and friends. What better time to share our Italian heritage?

Here's a consideration: music. Do you have a favorite classic Italian song or perhaps remember something that your parents or grandparents used to

See MUSIC, Page 8



NEWS, NOTES AND OTHERWISE

General manager's report

November was a good month at the Dante Event Center, general manager Jennifer Peretti reports.

The center hosted over 20 events, including weddings, conferences, classes and meetings.

"We take this time to be thankful for all that this club does for its members and private guests as we turn into the holiday season," Peretti said. "We do still have a few openings for holiday parties, so please contact us as soon as possible to book a banquet room."

The center is booking into 2026, she said. See Page 9 for information on the member discount for bookings.

Ongoing reminders: The Sunday Family Dinner price is now \$22 for adults and \$12 for children. Members dinners are \$25. In addition, 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.

Advisory and finance

We are asking members for help in filling some roles associated with our replacing the treasurer position. We're dividing tasks among several people. It's the perfect opportunity for anyone who has dealt with financial duties to step up and help the Dante Club. All roles will be under the approval and oversight of the club president and the appropriate subcommittees.

Club treasurer and assistant treasurer—oversight advisory and finance committee

- Approve and endorse checks for club-related expenses
- Track annual dues payments
- Alert members of delinquencies

Financial oversight and review committee (two to three members)—oversight advisory and finance committee

- Review and approve expenditures from the club
- Review and approve expenditures from the event center
- Review and approve monthly financial reports from the bookkeeper
- Work with companies to ensure proper insurance coverage
- Work with an accounting firm to ensure proper

See NEWS, NOTES AND OTHERWISE, Page 3



UPCOMING EVENTS

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

December 1

Sunday Family Dinner

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

Menu: Classic wedge salad, spaghetti with meatballs and marinara, housemade garlic bread, chef's choice dessert

Cost: \$22 adults, \$12 children age 12 and younger

Reservations are closed.

December 9

Women's Auxiliary Members Dinner and Meeting

Times: 4:30 p.m. cocktails, 6 p.m. dinner

Menu: Italian Christmas salad with sun-dried tomato vinaigrette; roasted potatoes with rosemary, garlic and olive oil; prime rib carving station with au jus; rolls with butter; tiramisu

Cost: \$28 for members, \$33 for guests

Reservations are closed.

December 16

Dante Club Members Dinner and Meeting

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

Menu: Caesar salad, beef ravioli with Bolognese sauce, green beans with garlic butter, rolls with butter, chef's choice dessert

Cost: \$25 per member

Reserve by midnight Friday, Dec. 6.

December 22

Dante Members and Guests Christmas Dinner

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

Menu: Panzanella salad with blue cheese crumble, croutons, maple grapefruit vinaigrette; roasted garlic baby carrots; focaccia breadsticks; choice of New York strip with garlic mashed potatoes, Cornish game hen with saffron risotto, salmon piccata with linguine or portobello mushroom ravioli (vegetarian); Italian chocolate mousse

Cost: \$40 adults, \$20 children age 12 and younger

Reserve by midnight Thursday, Dec. 12. Choose entree at time of reservation.

MARK CALENDAR: Sunday Family Dinner, Jan. 5;
Dante Crab Feed, Jan. 18

**News, Notes and Otherwise**

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

fiscal coverage

Contracts oversight (chairman and assistant)

- Review ongoing commitments and recommend renewal or replacement

Members who are interested or have questions should speak with club president Pat Orelli, advisory and finance chairman Dan Calcagno or any board member.

Newsletter advertising

Newsletter coordinator John Caselli and the board thank our *Dante's Inferno* advertisers.

Anyone interested in advertising in the newsletter in 2025 can email Caselli at jac6652@aol.com.

Bocce update

Congratulations to the Italian Stallions who came out on top in the fall bocce session, with 12 wins and six losses. Maestri de Bocce took second, and four teams tied for third place.

All players have had a lot of fun this session and have greatly improved their skills.

We are ready to compete with other teams in the area and should consider setting up some tournaments with other teams.

The bocce committee will meet soon to set next year's sessions. Stay tuned.

Big thanks go to Frank Perri, who has provided eight bocce ball racks for our courts. He noticed

that some older players were having trouble bending over to pick up balls, so he designed and installed the racks to ease their efforts. It was a great gesture and very much appreciated.

Our spring season will begin in March. We invite anyone who's interested to come out and give the game a try. It's a great way to meet and make new friends.

In the spring, our existing Dante league will play Saturdays, and a new league, Columbus, will play on Tuesday nights.

Plenty of spots are available for creating new teams or for individuals to join existing teams.

Legacy fund donations

Men's club and Women's Auxiliary members have donated regularly to the Dante Club Legacy Building Fund to keep the club in good shape now and in the future.

We continue to encourage members to remember the club when they update their wills or trusts, providing future financial support to the club. Such gifts help us maintain the Dante Event Center as a premier venue in the area.

Those who would like to make such a gift should email Tom Mezzanares at tjmezzan@gmail.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 substitution 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 at danteclub.shopgraphx.com or they can contact Mark Pedroncelli at peddc@surewest.net or 916-812-6729. They can contact Julie Brown at 916-787-0603 or julie@premieregraphx.net for special orders.

Order clothing items now for the holidays.

Pull-tab program

Ron Cristoni, president of the Dante Club's pull-tab committee, reports that collection efforts from the Women's Auxiliary and Dante members increased in October and November.

The collections benefit the Ronald McDonald House, a global program that has provided over 2.7 million low-cost stays for families who must travel to a hospital for their children's care.

See NEWS, NOTES AND OTHERWISE, Page 9



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: Frank Bartucco, Nick Canepa, 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

OFFICERS

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

DIRECTORS

- Richard Battistessa: drbattistessa@comcast.net, 916-961-4854
- John Caselli: jac6652@aol.com, 916-217-6482
- Steve DeCristofaro: stefanodad@gmail.com, 916-752-3247
- Jim Dimino: jkdimino@sbcglobal.net, 916-956-6691
- Ron Fiorica: rbfiorica@frontiernet.net, 916-687-6406
- Matt Longo: longomb@sbcglobal.net, 916-397-5869
- Bill Maffei: mrmaffei@sbcglobal.net, 916-207-6837
- Brian Noble: ibnoble@gmail.com, 916-217-8836
- Dennis Noble: d.noble35@comcast.net, 916-889-6677
- Tom Novi: tomnovi@aol.com, 916-961-6197
- Mark Pedroncelli: peddc@surewest.net, 916-812-6729
- George Procida: gprocida@gplandscape.com, 916-455-4738



Auxiliary re-elects current officers to serve in 2025

The Women's Auxiliary held its general membership meeting and elections in November, with these officers re-elected: Debra Cattuzzo, president; Alyse De Fazio, vice president; Susan Kasimatis, secretary; and Tina Bowers, treasurer.

We've added an additional past president to the board. Karol Buccola has been our past president



WOMEN'S AUXILIARY NEWS

Debra Cattuzzo

for six years, but we realized we'd overlooked another one, Carole Stefani-Meyers.

Carole was installed as a co-president of mine in 2019 and served for three years before she left. So we now have two co-presidents, Karol and Carole.

Also at the November meeting, the position of auxiliary historian was reinstated, and Marie Waldron-Booth was assigned to the role. She had been acting in that capacity for the past year.

Anna Tenderella was re-elected as hospitality director. These trustees/callers also were re-elected: Roseann Jamison, Adrienne DeFazio, Nancy Doyle, Donna O'Neil and Kathy Holberton. Unfortunately, Kathy was overlooked and not presented to the membership. Our apologies

to Kathy!

The auxiliary has required \$25 annual membership dues over the past eight years. Last month members voted to increase dues to \$40 a year. Anyone who joined the auxiliary in October, November or December won't have to pay dues for 2025.

Three new members were introduced in November and received their membership flag pins. The new members—their names are followed by their Italian family names in parentheses—are: Jane Zerbi, Vicki Sapunor (Rosaia) and Barbara Thalken (Mazzarolla). Welcome, ladies!

Thank you to the women who brought in pull-tab donations for the Ronald McDonald House. They were Florinda Fantasia, Suzie Rowzeski, Kathryn Beltrami and Francesca Carlson.

There was an additional bag with no name. Remember, we can't thank donors without knowing

See WOMEN'S AUXILIARY, Page 6



Auxiliary vice president Alyse Defazio, right, checks in a pilgrim, member Laura Scarrone, at the November meeting.

2024 WOMEN'S AUXILIARY BOARD

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| • Debra Cattuzzo, president:
cattuzzod@gmail.com | • Anna Tenderella, hospitality:
annatenderella46@gmail.com | • Kathy Holberton, trustee/caller:
crystalgal@yahoo.com |
| • Alyse DeFazio, vice president:
alysedefaz@aol.com | • Karol Buccola, past president:
karolrb55@gmail.com | • Roseann Jamison, trustee/
caller: rosieado@yahoo.com |
| • Tina Luchini Bowers, treasurer:
tebowers55@gmail.com | • Adrienne DeFazio, trustee/
caller: adefazio73@gmail.com | • Donna O'Neil, trustee/caller:
rtg4005@gmail.com |
| • Susan Kasimatis, secretary:
sjk955@gmail.com | • Nancy Doyle, trustee/caller:
ncdoyle59@gmail.com | |

**Women's Auxiliary**

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

their names.

These women won prizes in the November raffle: Summer DeFazio, free dinner; Julie Calcagno, wine gift basket; guest, Italian cookbook; Virginia Griffin, BJ's gift basket; Mindy Jung, See's Candy gift card; Marilyn Cottini, \$25 cash; Nina Ciani, car wash gift card; Carmina Cioli, relaxation basket.

We look forward to our December meeting, when the St. Francis High School Italian Club will entertain us once again with Christmas carols sung in Italian.

A reminder this month to bring in donations for the Bishop Gallegos Maternity Home. Our members



Auxiliary members Carole Orelli, second from left, and Debra Duccini, third from left, and Debra's guest, Julie Reardon, fourth from left, enjoy appetizers before the November meeting. During the meeting, the auxiliary chose to reinstate its current slate of officers to serve again in 2025. Also, three new members were introduced, and eight women won prizes in the monthly raffle.

domestic abuse, homeless women and any woman needing a safe place to live while having a baby.

These women live together in the home, where they learn how to cook healthy food and do their laundry.

They also receive free health care from nursing-student volunteers.

The women receive education on the physical care of their babies, as well as the psychological impact of their actions and words on how they raise their babies.

Here are some items on the Bishop Gallegos Maternity Home's wish list this year:

See WOMEN'S AUXILIARY, Page 11

were so generous last year, and the home was so appreciative. Bishop

Gallegos Maternity Home provides housing for pregnant victims of

President's Corner

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

the street cars are adorned with wreaths.

Speaking of Sunday night dinners, the Dante Club's November dinner sold out a few days before the reservations deadline. It was great to see so many people attend this event.

Our annual Christmas dinner for Dante Club and Women's Auxiliary members and their guests is scheduled for Sunday, Dec. 22.

This is after the members meeting instead of the Sunday immediately before it, as has been in the past. Perhaps this will result in greater attendance at both events.

The Dec. 12 reservations deadline will be strictly enforced, although there isn't a limit on the number of attendees. Members should reserve early.

The Christmas dinner menu will feature a choice of four entrees: New York strip steak, Cornish game hen, salmon picada and portobello mushroom ravioli. That sounds like something to please everyone.

The auxiliary meeting on the second Monday and the members meeting on the third Monday both will feature a prime rib dinner.

A reminder that dues are due by Dec. 31. No penalty will be imposed if they're paid by Jan. 31.

Members can go online to pay their \$100 dues and \$50 mortgage-reduction assessment—or they can drop off a check or mail it to the Dante Club.

I hope everyone has a merry Christmas and a happy and successful new year.



Traditional sesame brittle hails from Calabria

I learned about a traditional holiday sweet from one of my husband's Calabrian cousins who lives in Castagna, the DeFazio family's ancestral village in southern Italy.

Known as giurgiulena in Calabria, this nut and sesame brittle is known by other names depending on the region. For example, it's called cubaita in Sicily and cupetta in Campania and Puglia.

Giurgiulena is a popular treat during il periodo natalizio, or Christmastime. It keeps well for several months at room temperature in an airtight container.

Useful tip: Sesame seeds are quite expensive when purchased in small containers at the grocery store. Visit a local Middle Eastern market for sesame seeds at a more economical price.

Measuring honey tip: With a small pastry brush or fingers, brush a little vegetable or olive oil on the inside of a measuring cup to coat the interior of the cup. The honey will pour out easily without sticking to the cup.

JUST LIKE MOM USED TO MAKE

Adrienne DeFazio

GIURGIULENA (SESAME NUT BRITTLE)

Ingredients:

- Salted or unsalted butter for greasing pan
- 5 tablespoons sugar
- 1½ cups honey
- 1 pound sesame seeds
- 4½ ounces almonds, raw (whole or halved)
- Zest of 1 orange
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 2 tablespoons or more of colored sprinkles (optional)

Directions:

In large deep pan with heavy bottom, combine sugar and honey. Heat mixture over medium heat until sugar is dissolved. Add sesame seeds and cook mixture until seeds turn a shade darker, about 15 minutes. Be sure to stir the mixture frequently. Add almonds and cook for about five minutes more, stirring frequently.

Remove pan from heat and stir in orange zest and cinnamon. Let mixture rest until it's cool enough to manipulate.

In the meantime, prepare a low-rimmed, 15-by-10-inch or larger baking sheet.

Tear or cut a piece of parchment paper to line the bottom of the baking sheet, and grease the paper generously with butter. In lieu of parchment paper, place one large rectangular, nonstick silicone mat on the bottom of the pan.

Carefully pour or scrape the cooled candy mixture out of the pan onto the metal baking sheet. Place another sheet of buttered parchment paper, buttered side down, or a second silicone mat on top of the mixture.

With hands, press down on the mixture to flatten it into a rectangular shape about a half-inch thick, but don't worry if it's a bit thinner or thicker.

If needed, flatten the mixture with a rolling pin on top of the paper or silicone mat.

See JUST LIKE MOM, Page 8

Please patronize our paesanos



EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE, STYLE & PEACE OF MIND



CARF-ACCREDITED
INDEPENDENT & ASSISTED LIVING
AND MEMORY CARE RESIDENCES

601 Feature Drive, Sacramento
916.229.9463
RiversEdgeSacramento.com



RCFE# 342700579



2400 J St.
916-441-1478
sales@rellesflorist.com
www.rellesflorist.com
Making memories for 76 years.

**Just Like Mom**

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

Remove top parchment or mat. If desired, trim flattened mixture with sharp knife to make a more perfect rectangle (save or snack on the trimmings).

If decorating with colored sprinkles, distribute them over mixture while it's still warm. With fingers, lightly press sprinkles into the surface.

With sharp knife, cut candy into pieces, preferably before mixture has completely cooled. Pieces can be squares, rectangles or diamonds. To make diamonds, cut candy lengthwise into long rectangles, then cut at an angle to make diamond shapes. The number of pieces yielded will depend on the size of pieces cut.

I have not used a candy thermometer when making this candy. Some batches have turned out softer, yielding a chewy candy, while others have turned out harder, like brittle. Both versions are tasty.



Giorgiulena

Music

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

enjoy? It's easy to get recordings from the internet, music stores, CDs and records.

Or you might ask relatives if they have any Italian recordings. It would be fun to play them or, better yet, to sing with a recording or even go a cappella.

Maybe someone in the family plays an instrument. Consider printing out lyrics for a singalong.

Throughout my life, I remember many joyful family gatherings where older family members would break out in song. It also happened a lot when there was a gathering of friends to play cards, drink wine and catch up with each other's lives.

Many songs were local village songs from Italy, such as the Alpini march "Quel Mazzolin di Fiori," but also more popular songs, including "Volare," "Santa Lucia" and "Arrivederci Roma." I learned the tunes and some of the words along the way.

It wasn't until years later that I learned that a few of the songs had some naughty lyrics ("La Spagnola" is quite suggestive). Now I understand why they were laughing so heartily after singing those charming little ditties!

Many Italian clubs, much like extended family, offer singalongs and musical entertainment to perpetuate our culture. My aunt loved "Viene su"—not sure if it was the original or the Dean Martin version that captivated her.

Often the strains of "Torna a Surriento," popularized by Enrico Caruso, and "Funiculi Funiculà," written around 1880, would be sung or hummed in the kitchen, at work parties or during after-dinner revelries. It was a given that at almost every celebration there was at least one rousing rendition of "O Sole Mio."

So consider adding Italian music to your holiday festivities or anytime you have the opportunity to share a pezzettino (little piece) of your Italian roots.

Please patronize our paesanos

SOLD

PATRICK VOGELI
...And I Sell Houses!
916.207.4515
Broker Associate | Certified Probate & Trust Specialist
CalBRE #01229115

COLDWELL BANKER
REALTY

SACRAMENTO
TREE
FOUNDATION

Trees make our communities livable & lovable. Find out how you can receive free trees, get involved, or support our work.
(916) 924-8733
www.sactree.com

**News, Notes and Otherwise**

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

Social report

The social committee is looking forward to a sold-out Sunday Family Dinner on Dec. 1.

We're also looking forward to seeing everyone at the Christmas Dinner on Dec. 22.

We're working with the event center manager to introduce new social events for the upcoming year.

We have a casino night on the calendar for Feb. 8. Stay tuned for more events to come.

Buildings and grounds

November was a fairly quiet month for the buildings and grounds committee, with no major projects or equipment issues requiring substantial funds.

Many small projects, however, needed attention, including leaking toilets, clogged sewer lines and emergency-exit signs that needed fixing.

Club members volunteering their time have completed all such repairs. The effort has helped save the club thousands of dollars as plumbers, electricians and handymen didn't have to be hired.

Several projects still need to be addressed this month and in January.

Some broken door hinges need repair, kitchen-sink drain lines need replacement and toilets need resealing.

We encourage club members with special skills in facility or home maintenance and repair to consider helping with these small projects.

The buildings and grounds committee maintains an email list of

those able to help. Prospective volunteers should consider adding their names to the list.

Membership

At the November members meeting, we interviewed Mark Caso, sponsored by Randy Canova, and Matt Campanella, sponsored by the membership committee.

Caso is retired from the construction industry, and Campanella is involved in real estate and making ice sculptures for events.

Members voted in both candidates, and we hope to induct them this month or in January.

Members are encouraged to introduce themselves to our new recruits at a meeting or event.

See NEWS, NOTES AND OTHERWISE, Page 10

Want to book a personal event? Don't delay

The Dante Event Center is booking into the 2026 event season. 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, for family members—

limited to spouses, parents and children—or for a personally owned business.

Members with questions about the discount may contact club president Pat Orelli at 916-369-2327.

For event inquiries, send an email to info@danteclub.com or call 916-925-8230.



News, Notes and Otherwise

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

Rafael Ruano, sponsored by Al Manfredi, awaits induction at a future meeting.

Still on the waiting list is Andrew Varanelli, sponsored by Roy Jones. He will be scheduled for an interview before this month's meeting.

Members' ability to renew their membership for 2025 is now available on the Dante Club website.

As always, applications can be obtained on the club website, in the business office or from the membership committee.

Scholarship program

It's that time of the year when local high school seniors should mark March 31 on their calendars.

That date is the deadline for submitting applications to the Dante Club's annual scholarship program.

Prospective applicants can obtain information about the program on the Dante Club website or they can pick up applications at the Dante Event Center.

Students also may email scholarship committee chairman Richard Battistessa at drbattistessa@comcast.net or call him at 916-961-4854.

WHY I'M PROUD TO BE AN ITALIAN

Keep the old holiday customs alive

By Tom Novi

As we wrap our arms around the upcoming holiday season, it's important to understand the Italian traditions our parents and grandparents celebrated in Italy, then brought with them when they immigrated to the United States.

Most people are familiar with the Italian greeting "Buon Natale," or Merry Christmas. But true Italian Christmas traditions go beyond a simple holiday greeting or a gathering on Christmas Day to enjoy the company of family and friends.

For traditional Italians, the Christmas season begins Dec. 8 with Immacolata Concezione, the religious holiday that celebrates the birth of the Virgin Mary.

On this day, Italians typically gather in town squares to watch the lighting of the community Christmas tree.

The day also marks the opening of Christmas markets and the beginning of holiday festivals.

From Dec. 24 through Dec. 26, the celebration of Christmas occurs in a variety of ways, depending on location.

In Southern Italy, for example, seafood-based dinners are typical, mostly because of the region's ample supply of seafood.

Inland locales often have a different culinary focus based on their unique foods and agriculture.

Throughout Italy and regardless of region or locale, however, midnight Mass on Christmas Eve is the norm.

On Christmas Day, families gather to visit, share delicious foods and exchange gifts—truly a day of celebration.

Dec. 26, also known as St. Stephen's Day, concludes the holiday celebration with paisans enjoying the good company of others and dining on leftovers.

The Christmas holiday ends on Jan. 6—La Befana, or Epiphany Day—when children wait for Befana, a witch-like woman who arrives on a broomstick to fill their stockings with candies or a lump of coal for those who have misbehaved.

La Befana is celebrated with festivals and women dressing up as good witches who go around the town or village singing and giving children candies.

Many of these Christmas traditions are celebrated in the United States not only by Italian Americans but also, to a degree, by others.

In fact, Christmas celebrations of one variation or another are largely universal worldwide to recognize the birth of Christ and the impact of Christianity on all peoples.

So Buon Natale, my friends, and keep dreaming of candies, not coal!

**Women's Auxiliary**

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

Women's needs

- hair conditioner (the home has an overstock of shampoo)
- body wash
- lotions
- women's razors (good for newcomer welcome baskets)
- pajamas
- socks
- bras and underwear

Baby needs

- thermometers (good for congrats baskets when women come home with their babies)
- Pedialyte
- Infant Tylenol
- baby wipes
- diapers (sizes 3 to 6 months only; home has enough newborn to 2)

- baby gowns (for newborns)

Household goods needs

- queen sheets and comforter sets
- bath towels, hand towels and washcloths (mothers can take them when they leave)
- Tide pods
- Cleaning supplies, such as Pine Sol, Windex, bleach, dusting spray and Comet

House appliance needs

- Air fryers
- blenders
- larger microwaves
- electric in-counter range top with overhead vent.

We will also have a jar available if members prefer to make cash donations. I look forward to seeing everyone in December!

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 and DeCristofaro at 916-752-3247 or 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 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.