



**Pledge to keep
active in the Dante
Club in 2026**

DANTE'S INFERNO

LOOKING BACK

Histories of Dante Club and St. Mary's unfold side by side

By Marie Waldron Booth



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Pat Orelli

Attendance lower than typical for October events

October was an active month for the Dante Club, although attendance at events was generally disappointing.

The Sunday night family dinner was about 40 people short of recent sell-outs. Only 59 people turned out for the Italian Heritage Night dinner, when we had over 160 the prior year. And only about 30 people came for the bocce sausage get-together.

On the bright side, the Dante Women's Auxiliary had over 210 members and guests for its dinner and annual mercato in October.

November brings the start of the holiday season, with our regular meetings and the Sunday family dinners all featuring traditional menus with turkey and trimmings.

There will be one very

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The history of the Dante Club in Sacramento is long and its locations align closely with the locations of St. Mary's Church.

In the early 1900s, the church was located first at 818 N St. and then at Seventh and T streets. At the same time, the Dante Club was in a building at 1511 P St., where it remained for 34 years.

The church and the club were easily accessible to the many Italians who had settled in Sacramento. The newcomers wanted to be close to their church and to other Italians who already lived here. They also wanted access to the many services

that both the church and the club offered to the community.

As its congregation grew after World War II, St. Mary's Church relocated to east Sacramento at 1333 58th St. Groundbreaking for the new church building occurred on Sept. 29, 1946, and Bishop Armstrong blessed the cornerstone on Sept. 21, 1947.

The first Mass was offered on Aug. 1, 1948. The first wedding was a double wedding celebrated by sisters Alma and Gilda Lagomarsino with Sebastiano Stassi and Nick

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The Dante Event Center of today is the result of Dante Club members' 1958 decision to purchase land on Fair Oaks Boulevard, closer to St. Mary's Church, which had relocated from downtown to east Sacramento 10 years before. Members celebrated the opening of their modern new club building in 1960 and were able to pay off the mortgage by 1970.



NEWS, NOTES AND OTHERWISE

General manager's report

October was a beautiful start to the fall season. We hosted several weddings and saw the return of the banquet for the Sacramento chapter of the Case Management Society of America, with over 180 guests and vendors attending.

We also hosted Sisters of Nia's annual Woman on Fire Gala on Oct. 19 and the Dante Club's annual Italian Heritage Night on Oct. 11. Although the guest count for the Italian night was less than normal, the event featured excellent food, entertainment and raffle prizes.

This month we look forward to the Dante Women's Auxiliary's Celebration of Biba fundraiser on Nov. 8 and our Ultimate Football Watch Party on Nov. 16. We are working on creating a great list of holiday options to include the Dante Christmas Party, a wine dinner and a New Year's Eve Casino Night.

The Dante Event Center still has some rooms and dates available for holiday events. See Page 8 for information on member discounts for bookings. The center is booking into 2027.

Membership

October was a little less busy for the membership committee than anticipated, which may only mean that the rest of the year will be hectic.

At the October meeting, we interviewed Sean O'Donoghue, sponsored by Andy Pennisi, and recommended him to those present for acceptance. He was voted in and will be added to the list for induction in the next few months.

William Sevdý, sponsored by Joe Pasquinelli, attended the meal and was inducted.

On the list of upcoming inductees, besides Sean, are Pete Reali, Anthony Giannotti and Jay Boundy. It isn't unusual for some new applicants to be inducted in November or December and others to wait until January to start the new year as a Dante member. We will see what these men decide.

We have also received a note of interest from Johnny Magagnini, a first-generation Italian American who lives in the Bay Area. He is a member of the San Francisco Italian Athletic Club and the Ligure Club of Oakland. Johnny is moving to Roseville and looking for a club in

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UPCOMING EVENTS

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

November 2

Sunday Family Dinner

Times: 4 p.m. cocktails, 5 p.m. seating, 5:15 p.m. first course

Menu: Roasted pumpkin salad with pine nuts, spinach, feta and honey balsamic dressing; slow-roasted turkey; garlic mashed potatoes with gravy; traditional stuffing; rolls and butter; pumpkin pie with whipped cream

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

Reservations are closed.

November 8

Celebrate Biba (dinner tribute to Biba Caggiano)

Times: 5 p.m. aperitivo and antipasti, 6 p.m. seating

Menu: Antipasti grazing table, Mionetto Prosecco, Romaine salad with creamy Gorgonzola, penne pasta with Bolognese, chicken mushroom marsala with creamy polenta, tiramisu

Cost: \$100 per person

Reserve by midnight Friday, Oct. 31.

November 10

Dante Women's Auxiliary Dinner

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

Menu: Butternut squash salad, slow-roasted turkey, mashed potatoes with gravy, traditional stuffing, side of rigatoni with marinara, roasted Brussels sprouts, rolls and butter, pumpkin pie

Cost: \$25 members, \$30 guests

Reserve by midnight Thursday, Oct. 30.

November 17

Dante Members Dinner and Meeting

Times: 6 p.m. cocktails, 7 p.m. dinner, 8 p.m. meeting

Menu: Butternut squash salad, slow-roasted turkey, mashed potatoes with gravy, traditional stuffing, side of rigatoni with marinara, roasted Brussels sprouts, rolls and butter, pumpkin pie

Cost: \$25

Reserve by midnight Friday, Nov. 7.

December 7

Sunday Family Dinner

Times: 4 p.m. cocktails, 5 p.m. seating, 5:15 p.m. first course

Menu: Fennel and orange salad, baked ziti, seasonal vegetables, garlic bread, tiramisu cupcakes

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

Reserve by midnight Friday, Nov. 28.

MARK CALENDAR: Wine tasting and dinner, Dec. 18; Dante Club Christmas dinner, Dec. 21; Dante Monte Carlo New Year's Eve Casino Night, Dec. 31

**News, Notes and Otherwise**

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

the Sacramento area. We hope to chat with him this month and add him to the inductee list.

Nominations for the Dante Club's 2026-2027 board of directors will be open during this month's members meeting. We ask members to consider who they would like to represent them and to either nominate them or encourage them to nominate themselves.

We have 15 board positions, as well as the treasurer and corresponding secretary positions. Associate members are not eligible for election.

The December meeting is another opportunity to nominate candidates, but it's the last chance as elections will be held at that time. Members nominated from the floor must be present to accept the nomination. Please contact any board member for all questions.

Buildings and grounds

October was a quiet month, so the buildings and grounds committee has nothing significant to report. We did get the roof damage repaired that was caused by our trash-removal company, at no cost to the club.

The outdoor event tent was scheduled to come down at the end of October or the beginning of November. An email will be sent to those on the volunteer list once a date is selected.

Newsletter advertising

Dante's Inferno coordinator Tom Mezzanares and the Dante

Club board thank our advertisers, whose support helps defray the costs of publishing the newsletter. Anyone interested in advertising can email Tom at tmezzan@gmail.com.

Legacy fund donations

The Dante Club Legacy Fund was created during the pandemic as a way for members to help the club through a difficult period.

The Dante board of directors has decided to reinvigorate the fund as one of five strategies to pay off the club's remodeling mortgage. Donations to the fund will help retire the mortgage early.

The Legacy Fund has three donation levels: platinum, \$1000 or more; gold, \$500; and silver, \$250. Donors will be recognized annually in the newsletter and at a members dinner. They'll also be honored on a plaque in the Dante Event Center.

Donations will be applied to the mortgage principal each month.

Donors should mail or deliver a check to the Dante Club (attn: treasurer) and give instructions on how the donor or a person honored by the donor should be recognized—what name should be included on the plaque and in the newsletter. Donors may remain anonymous if they prefer.

Club apparel

The Dante Club works with Premier Graph-x to brand clothing with the club logo, including hats, T-shirts, jackets and aprons.

Members can order clothing at danteclub.shopgraphx.com or they can contact Mark Pedroncelli at peddc@surewest.net or 916-812-6729. For special orders, contact Julie

Brown at 916-787-0603 or julie@premieregraphx.net.

Pull-tab program

The Ronald McDonald House near UC Davis Medical Center charges \$20 per night for parents to stay there while their children receive treatment at the hospital.

The pull-tab program helps those who can't afford the cost of accommodations by accepting donations of aluminum-can pull tabs, which it then sells for cash.

The Dante Club has donated to the program since March 2018. The Women's Auxiliary also participates.

On Sept. 17, Ron Cristoni dropped off 31.7 pounds of Dante Club pull tabs at the Ronald McDonald House.

Our club and auxiliary have donated a total of 1,757.7 pounds of pull tabs.

Scholarships

Graduating high school seniors seeking a Dante Club scholarship next year must submit applications by March 31. Applications are available online and at the Dante Event Center office.

Students must provide their grade-point average, two letters of recommendation, a personal essay and activities they've participated in during their high school years.

Applicants may apply online at <https://danteclub.com/scholarship/info/>. For questions or more information, they may email Richard Battistessa at drbattistessa@comcast.net.

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2025 Committees and Assignments

COMMITTEES

ADVISORY AND FINANCE

Dan Calcagno, chairman

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

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

Tom Mezzanares, chairman

SCHOLARSHIP

Rich Battistessa, chairman; Jim Dimino, vice chairman

Member: Mark Pedroncelli

SOCIAL

Joe Porata, chairman; Rich Battistessa, vice chairman

Members: Matt Longo, 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: Matt Longo, chairman;
Bill Maffei, member

• 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: dmcalcagno@aol.com, 916-481-8368
- Ron Pane, second vice president: repane@icloud.com, 916-798-0111
- Steve DeCristofaro, secretary: stefanodad@gmail.com, 916-752-3247
- Joseph Pasquinelli, treasurer: jmpasquinelli@gmail.com, (708) 805-5242

DIRECTORS

- Richard Battistessa: drbattistessa@comcast.net, 916-995-0291
- 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
- Tom Mezzanares: tjmezzan@gmail.com, 916-752-7443
- 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
- Joe Porata: jporata@sbcglobal.net, 530-368-7479
- George Procida: gprocida@gplandscape.com, 916-455-4738



Annual mercato in October attracts full house

We had a fabulous mercato in October, with 15 vendors selling their wares to members and guests. Every seat in the room was taken.

Chef Lai Saepharn received many compliments on his lasagna, and I even brought him out into the banquet room so members could congratulate him.

We introduced 14 new members to the Women's Auxiliary in October. Here are their names, with their Italian names in parentheses: Claire Quillici, Janie Schwartz (Focacci), Laraine Beliveau (Anancia), Rebecca Porter (Foresti/Orsencio), Darlene Porter (Forsti/Orsencio), Gloria Jane Reali, Mary Jane Sutliff (Craviotto), Kimberly Bucchioni, Linda Bucchioni, Pam DiTomasso (Lovotti), Maria Lovotti, Barbara Kearton (Monteleone), Amy Behr (Pane) and Angela Klier (Pane).



WOMEN'S AUXILIARY NEWS

Debra Cattuzzo



Auxiliary attendees are all smiles after downing a tasty lasagna meal courtesy of chef Lai Saepharn in October.

Each vendor donated a prize for the October raffle. Prize winners were Peggy Alexander, The Chef's Olive Mix; Franzi Lopez, The Spiced Avocado; MaryAnne Kifer, Touchstone Crystal; Kathryn Traversi, MaryAnne's Homegoods; Diane Blackwell, Villa Biscotti; Patty Peter, Cannoli by Vita; Bonnie

Cook, pottery/sculpture and lotions; Jane Reali, Discovery Toys and Franny's Baggage; Karen Lenior, Scones by Gina; Gail Maita, tumblers; Carol Perri, Isabelle Cammarota Mary Kay; Kristy Calcagno, soaps; Carol Ann Young, \$50 cash door prize; and Linda Van Rees, free dinner. Congrats to all!

Thanks to Cathy Bertolani, Francesca Carleson and others who brought in pull tabs to donate to the Ronald McDonald House.

I have some sad news. Our treasurer, Tina Bowers, recently lost her husband, Bob Bowers. I knew Bob because he was the Sacramento County coroner for a time. He also was a member of the men's Dante Club until he became ill. He had Alzheimer's disease for years; finally, he is at peace.

Our sympathies go out to Tina and her family.

See AUXILIARY, Page 6

2025 WOMEN'S AUXILIARY BOARD

- Debra Cattuzzo, president: cattuzzod@gmail.com
- Alyse DeFazio, vice president: alysedefaz@aol.com
- Tina Luchini Bowers, treasurer: tebowers55@gmail.com
- Susan Kasimatis, secretary: sjk955@gmail.com
- Anna Tenderella, hospitality: annatenderella03@gmail.com
- Carole Stefani-Meyers, past president: cchivaro2@aol.com
- Karol Buccola, past president: karolrb55@gmail.com
- Adrienne DeFazio, trustee/caller: adefazio73@gmail.com
- Nancy Doyle, trustee/caller: ncdoyle59@gmail.com
- Kathy Holberton, trustee/caller: crystalgal@yahoo.com
- Roseann Jamison, trustee/caller: rosieado@yahoo.com
- Donna O'Neil, trustee/caller: rtg4005@gmail.com
- Marie Waldron-Booth, historian: bmbooth@aol.com

**Auxiliary**

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If anyone knows of a member who has lost someone or is ill, please tell me. I'd also like to know when members have something wonderful to celebrate.

This month's Nov. 10 meeting will be our annual general membership meeting with elections.

We are looking for suggestions to improve meetings, welcome new members and get members to mingle more.

I continue to hear that members sometimes feel like they don't get to meet others because everyone sticks with their friends at their own tables.

I understand that people like to sit with their friends, but how can we get people to mingle more?

Some of our board members leave a few empty spaces at their tables so people they don't know can join them and new members can feel like they are truly a part of the auxiliary.

I heard complaints last month that some people couldn't sit

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President's Corner

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important exception: On Nov. 8, the Dante Women's Auxiliary will hold a fundraising dinner celebrating the late Sacramento restaurateur Biba Caggiano.

Not only will the food be prepared using Biba's recipes, but the meal will include wine pairings for the various courses conducted by Darrell Corti, Sacramento's internationally known wine and food expert and president of landmark grocery store Corti Brothers. Proceeds from this event will benefit the Dante Club.

We need to support the women in this endeavor. I hope members will read this before reservations close.

Before the pandemic, what is now our Sunday dinner was a Tuesday dinner, usually held in the Sicilian Room because it was rare for more than 60 to attend. After the pandemic, when we began meeting again, the club decided to switch the dinner to

5 p.m. Sunday, with the hope that more families with children would attend.

We always had a drawing on Tuesday nights with my son, Colin, as master of ceremonies. He took on that role shortly after he became a member at the end of 2013.

We didn't carry over the drawing to Sunday night until a few attendees requested that it be reinstated. Colin volunteered to take it on once again. I want to publicly thank him for his continuing commitment to the Dante Club.

We will nominate members for the club's 2026-2027 board of directors at this month's members meeting.

I know that at least five of our current directors do not intend to run for re-election, so I encourage members to consider supporting the club by either accepting a nomination themselves or nominating a fellow member. We need new blood with new ideas.

Request for information

As we mark this year's 100th anniversary of the Dante Club, we are seeking information about our history. Through December, we're featuring articles in the newsletter focusing each month on a decade of our club history, starting with the 1920s, the decade of our founding.

Women's Auxiliary historian Marie Booth assembles the articles for us, but we need help gathering information. We ask members who, over the years, may have saved newspaper clippings, newsletters, photos or other club-related memorabilia to share them with us. They can also tell us stories and memories that aren't written down. Members willing to share can contact Marie at bmbooth@aol.com or 916-715-5756. They also can email Tom Mezzanares at tjmezzan@gmail.com.

Thanks for helping us recall and celebrate our club's many great stories and memories over a century of Italian American camaraderie and friendship.



News, Notes and Otherwise

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Bocce

Oct. 18 was a great day for the bocce finals, which also featured scrumptious sandwiches from Corti Brothers and great shots on the court.

The grand finale championship for 2025 went to the Good Fellows team for its outstanding play. Our Saturday league merged with the Tuesday night Columbus league for some great competition.

A big grazie mille goes to Frank Bartucco for putting the tournament together and preparing the courts.

We encourage Dante Club members to watch for our spring season starting at the end of March. The emphasis is always



Good Fellows team members, from left, Gino Bartucco, Frank Bartucco, Jim Luttig and Peter Pesetti are champions of the Dante Club bocce leagues' final tournament for 2025. Frank Bartucco was responsible for organizing the tournament and preparing the courts.

on having a good time and experiencing a little of our shared Italian culture.

Through the remainder of the fall, and when weather permits, we will have Saturday events when members can come out and experience the game.

Bocce provides good exercise

and good camaraderie.

2026 golf tournament

The Dante Club's annual Vic Martinelli/Frank Calcagno Golf Tournament has been scheduled for Saturday, Sept. 12, 2026. All club members—golfers and non-golfers—are encouraged to save the date.

Histories

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Tamantini on Aug. 8, 1948.

The Italian families followed the church, and an Italian community formed on the streets of east Sacramento. The area bounded by 48th Street to 59th Street and J Street to Folsom Boulevard is now designated "Little Italy" by the city of Sacramento.

In 1958, 10 years after the church relocation, the general membership of the Dante Club decided that a new club building was needed. A committee was formed under the chairmanship of past president Nick Martinelli Sr., which led to the purchase of land on Fair Oaks Boulevard, closer to the new St. Mary's Church on 58th Street.

The completion of a new building for the Dante Club was celebrated in 1960. The building was an immediate success, and the club was able to pay off the mortgage in 1970.

As Sacramento has grown, so has the population of Italians who live here. Our Italian ancestors established



This post-World War II photo shows construction well underway on the new St. Mary's Church in east Sacramento. The groundbreaking took place on Sept. 29, 1946, and the first Mass was offered on Aug. 1, 1948.

strong, close-knit communities, such as those of east Sacramento. They developed a strong cultural fabric made up of shared faith, social clubs and businesses. They maintained their language and culture, all while adopting American language and culture. All of this has allowed Italians in Sacramento to succeed as a community and to maintain their cultural heritage.

Throughout the years, the Dante Club has been a key force in ensuring the Italian cultural presence in Sacramento. Times have changed, but the club remains an important place where Italian Americans can gather to celebrate their heritage, meet old family friends and mark important events in their lives.



Want to book a personal event? Don't delay

The Dante Event Center is booking into the 2027 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 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 must be 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.

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A big turnout made the October meeting and annual mercato especially successful for the Dante Women's Auxiliary.

Auxiliary

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together. I did warn everyone that seating would be restricted in October because we had to try to fit the mercato vendors into the same room. Normally, we have additional tables for overflow, but we couldn't get them last month.

Some members saved seats for people who didn't show up. Someone suggested that we not be able to save seats at all.

Members, please email me suggestions that I can add to the November agenda so we can discuss them.

See everyone soon!

DANTE'S REMINDERS



Member volunteers

To volunteer, contact George Procida for anything related to buildings and grounds and Joe Porata for anything related to social events. Reach Procida at 916-455-4738 or gprocida@gplandscape.com and Porata at 530-368-7479 or jporata@sbcglobal.net.

Donations

Donate to our scholarship or building funds in memory of a loved one or a friend to keep their legacy going. And buy raffle tickets! Donations can be made online at <https://danteclub.com/donations/>.

Dante Club apparel

To purchase club shirts and other clothing items, contact Mark Pedroncelli at 916-812-6729 or peddc@surewest.net or speak to him at a members meeting. Cash or checks are needed to place orders. Members also can order through the Dante Club website at danteclub.shopgraphx.com.

Newsletter photos and news

Submit photos and news items for *Dante's Inferno* to Tom Mezzanares at tmezzan@gmail.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. All submissions are subject to editing for clarity, accuracy, style and length. 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 Dan Calcagno at 916-481-8638 or dmcalcagno@aol.com.