
La Voce della Dante

Published by the Dante Alighieri Society of Washington (DAS) <http://das.danteseattle.org>

December 2008



Christmas Party!

Wednesday, December 10, 6:30 - 8:30 PM
Headquarters House, 2336 15th Ave. S., Seattle

You are cordially welcomed to attend the annual Dante Alighieri Society Christmas party. Bring your most festive antipasto or dolce to share for a festive evening of visiting, games, songs and general merrymaking. And bring a friend. Or two.

Festa di Natale per i Bambini

Celebrate Natale with your family at Dante's 2008 Festa di Natale per i Bambini on Saturday December 6th. We meet that afternoon from 2:00 PM to 5:30 PM in the comfort of our own Headquarters House at 2336 15th Ave S in Seattle.

The children, grandchildren and neighbors of you and your friends are all invited to experience a traditional Italian celebration of Christmas. This joyous occasion includes delicious fresh-baked pizzelle, projects with stars, letter-writing, clay and word games, creating a presepio (Nativity scene), reading the La Befana story (and greeting her!) pizza, and tombola with prizes!

Befana also brings each child a Natale gift so be sure to let us know how many children you would like to attend by calling Caterina at 360-638-2500 and filling out the registration form below:

Registration form for Festa di Natale per i Bambini

Please Help us ensure that we have adequate refreshments by returning this form with your payment by December 1st.

Tickets: \$5.00 per child, up to a maximum of \$10 per household.

The price includes a slice of pizza and juice per child.

Parents and other adults are also welcome.

Family Name _____

of children _____

of adults _____

Please make checks payable to the Dante Alighieri Society (DAS)

Mail to :

Dante Alighieri Society c/o Caterina Murone Wartes

P.O. Box 434 Hansville, WA 98340



Upcoming Events

From the President's Desk

Festa di Natale per i Bambini

Saturday, December 6th
Set-up 12 - 2 PM
Festa 2- 5:30 PM
Headquarters House

December Christmas Party

Wed. December 10th
6:30– 8:30;
Headquarters House

January English Meeting

Louise Sportelli

Wed. January 14th
5:30-6:30; Dinner preparation,
6:30; Dinner, 7:30; Meeting
Headquarters House

Board Meeting

January 26th
7:00-8:30pm
Faerland Terrace—1421 Minor Ave

January Italian Program

Albert Sbragia

Wednesday, January 28th
Antipasti and Social; 7- 7:30pm
Meeting; 7:30;
Headquarters House



When my husband and I first started attending the Dante Alighieri Society meetings about 8 or so years ago, it was led by an elegant woman who had mastered the art of leading a diverse group of Italians and Italian wannabees. I was appreciative and in awe of her capabilities. She passed on the mantle of the presidency to others over the years, but she kept her passion, which was to teach the children, our collective children and grandchildren about the Italian customs of Natale.

Every year in December, she assembles her small group of volunteers, and they lead the children in song, arts and crafts in a procession of the Natale figurines to and around the Presepio. La Befana makes an appearance and tells the story about her meeting with the Magi. Each child leaves with happy memories, having learned either about their own heritage or about the culture and customs of Italy with a little gift bag.

We are so indebted to Caterina Murone Wartes who joyfully carries on this tradition for the Dante Society. The Festa di Natale per I Bambini takes place this year on Saturday, December 6 and you still have time to make a reservation. Check the form in this issue of LaVoce. Come and bring all of your children, grandchildren, neighbors, friends. And think about all the people who work behind the scenes to make your involvement in the Dante Alighieri Society a pleasurable, rewarding experience. One way to express your thanks is to sign up to help on various committees. Volunteers are what make us successful and will enrich your life.

My wish for you this Christmas is pace, e buon capo d'anno.

Jane Cottrell

DAS Board meeting Schedule

We are very fortunate to be able to use the Community Room at no charge at the Faerland Terrace retirement facility at 1421 Minor Ave on Capital Hill. The current schedule is Monday at 7 PM on the following dates:

J a n u a r y 2 6 , M a r c h 2 3 , M a y 1 1 (o p t i o n a l)
If you are not familiar with the location, please google Faerland Terrace, Seattle to get directions.

Language Program News
by Giuseppe Tassone
Italian Language Program - Director

Winter Quarter 2009 Classes start January the 8th. The preregistration deadline is December the 6th.

To register, we accept payment either by online payment using PayPal or by check or money order.

Send your payment to:
D.A.S. ITALIAN LANGUAGE PROGRAM
P.O. Box 16257
SEATTLE, WA 98116-0257

Tuition is \$110 per quarter.

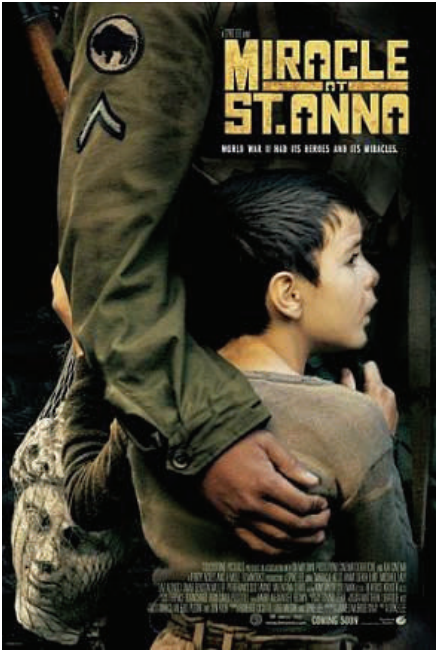
For information contact:
info@danteseattle or the director Giuseppe Tassone at
tassone@danteseattle.org

Please don't forget; your
membership renewal is due *1 January 2008*.

If you joined **before** September of 2008, it is time for you to renew. Please use the handy form on the last page of this newsletter and mail it with your check right away.

Our dues are still \$30.00 for individuals and \$40.00 for families. Thank you for supporting your Dante Alighieri Society.





Dante's Own Buffalo Soldier by Gini Harmon

On my way to Italy his fall, I purchased what looked like an interesting novel to read on my way to Rome: The title of the book is “The Miracle at Sant’Anna” by James McBride. It takes place in the Serchio Valley and the Apuane Mountains of Italy during World War II, and covers the period when the Germans were fighting the Italians. Also in the same place was the American 92nd Division, a segregated division of black soldiers. What happens when the Italian partisans, Buffalo soldiers of the 92nd Division, and the German Panzer Division cross paths is the subject of this well written novel based on an actual event.

When I read through the acknowledgements, I found our own David Perkins named as one who had given information from memories of his experiences. David died a couple of years ago, but those of us who knew him were aware that his interest in the Italian language began while he was serving in Italy. Like most WWII vets, he did not talk much about the war. The only reference I remember he made to me was that he could always tell they were coming upon an Italian camp, because there was always singing and guitar playing.

We all remember David as an active member who held several board positions, and could always be counted on to do an outstanding job. Oh yes, he was a great bridge player.

The book was also made into a movie which I saw in Italy. When I returned it was already out of the Seattle theaters. It should be available on DVD soon.

Rita Rossi Colwell by Carmen Flak

Rita Rossi Colwell is one of the most influential and visionary scientists of her generation. She holds a BS, an MS, and a PhD, is a microbiologist, marine expert and internationally recognized authority on cholera and infectious diseases. In addition she has received 40 honorary degrees. In 2007, she was one of seven who received the National Medal of Honor. She served as Director of the National Science Foundation (NSF) from 1998 to 2004, and was the first woman and first biologist to be named Director. At the NSF, she spearheaded the agency’s emphasis on K-12 science and mathematics education, increased the participation of women and minorities in science and engineering, and led the NSF through the greatest period of growth in its fifty-year history. Dr. Colwell has pioneered the expanding role of women and minorities in science from Bangladesh to America, and a dynamic understanding of complex systems, integrated data, and the multi-level interplay among the earth’s systems.

Dr. Colwell is the author or coauthor of 16 books and more than 700 scientific publications, and produced the award-winning film *Invisible Seas*. In recognition of her work in the world’s polar regions, the geological site in Antarctica, Colwell Massif, has been named in her honor. In developing nations, Dr. Colwell and her colleagues developed locally based, inexpensive filtration methods to remove the plankton associated with cholera bacteria that are responsible for high death rates in poverty-stricken countries. They taught women a simple, folded-sari-cloth filtration technique of water purification to reduce the incidence of cholera by 50%.



La Voce needs you!

Tell a story, write an article, share your Italian heritage; send it to danteeditor@gmail.com. You can also mail it via regular US mail to Mimi Torchia Boothby, 8018 36th Avenue South, Seattle, WA 98118, USA. Keep it coming! Thanks to everyone who is helping! Next issue's deadline is the 26th of October.

Casa Italiana Scholarship

Casa Italiana will once again be sponsoring scholarships for active members (and their children) of the Italian organizations currently part of the Casa Italiana organization. This year seven \$2,000 scholarships will be given. Contact Mimi at danteeditor@gmail.com or 723-1587 for a copy of the application.

Dante on the Internet!

We have a website. We have all the more recent newsletters there (including this one!), as well as the latest information on speakers. Our web address is:

<http://das.danteseattle.org/>

From Andrea (asehmel@comcast.net or 360.357.0270)

- * An Italian immersion and biking weekend on Lopez Island is tentatively being planned for the last weekend in May to celebrate the end of the Dante season. Please contact me if interested / to help; limited occupancy.
- * Anyone having suggestions regarding potential brochure distribution sites please drop me a note with details. We have begun distribution to several sites and would appreciate learning about further potential brochure hosts.
- * Dante totes, note cards, and t-shirts available on CafePress.com <http://www.cafepress.com/dantewashington>

Dante Alighieri Society
of Washington

*"Società per la diffusione della
lingua e della cultura italiana
nel mondo"*

Mailing address:

PMB #1244
1122 East Pike Street
Seattle, WA 98122
(206) 320-9159

The Dante Alighieri Society of Washington is a nonprofit corporation organized to promote Italian language and culture within the state of Washington. Membership is open to anyone interested in the goals and ideals of our society regardless of ethnic origin. *La Voce della Dante* is published eight times a year by the Dante Alighieri Society of Washington. All rights reserved.

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Santa Lucia

In some regions of Italy, particularly in Trentino and in the provinces of Udine, Bergamo, Brescia, Cremona, Lodi, Mantova, Piacenza, Parma, Reggio Emilia and Verona, exists a tradition tied to the “gifts of Santa Lucia”, being yet another figure like Babbo Natale, baby Jesus, La Befana and others that throughout the centuries substituted for the infantile images used by ancient pre-Christian Italians.

In a tradition apparently consolidated in the 1930's and continuing in successive decades, children would write a letter to Sant'Anna, listing the gifts that they would like to receive and declaring their personal merits— i.e. how good and obedient they were throughout the year. To heighten the anticipation of the children, in the nights leading up to the Saint's day, the older children run through the streets ringing a church bell to remind the little ones that they need to go right to bed to avoid allowing the saint to see them, because she would blind them by throwing ashes in their eyes. To attract the saint, they used to leave food, typically oranges, biscotti, a half glass of wine and some hay for the donkey who carries the gifts. The morning of the 13th of December, when they awaken, the children find the plate with the oranges and biscotti uneaten, with candies and chocolate coins added to the dish. Sometimes the gifts that they had requested can be found hidden in the house. They might be all there or only some of them, depending on the comportment of the children or of course, the financial situation of the parents. ^{1,2}

Over a thousand years ago, King Canute of the Norsemen declared that Christmas would begin with the feast of Santa Lucia, and then last for a month. How did a girl who died for her faith in the 4th century AD in Sicily become a symbol of the Christmas season with candles in her hair and a tray of sweet breads in Scandinavia?

Santa Lucia's Day is the first day of the Christmas Celebration in Sweden, Denmark and Norway. On the morning of the 13th of December, a young girl is dressed up as Lucia in a white gown with a red sash, and with a crown of lingonberry and lit candles (nowadays they are battery powered) on her head. Followed by all her handmaids and some boys called star lads, all carrying lit candles in their hands, she goes from house to house (or just into her parents' bedroom), singing songs dedicated to Santa Lucia, and offering coffee or wine (glögg) mulled with almonds and raisins, saffron buns (Lussekatter), and ginger bread cookies.

St. Lucia's feast day commemorates the day of her martyrdom, December 13th, which was also the shortest day of the year or Winter Solstice under the old Gregorian calendar. Because her name means "light," many of the ancient light and fire customs of the Yuletide became associated with her day. Thus we find that "Lucy candles" were lighted in homes and "Lucy fires" burned in the outdoors. Of course, she is also the patron saint for “the lights of the body”, the eyes, which of course according to legend, she lost.

Perhaps a clue lays in the tray of sweet breads she carries. A part of the Scandinavian legends about Lucia was how during a severe winter's famine, she was seen with her white robes and halo bringing in a ship full of food over Vänern lake, which seems to mirror the same miracle deliverance described in Sicilian legends:

There was a great famine in Siracusa, and the town's people had gathered in the cathedral on Santa Lucia's feast day, December 13th, to pray. Two ships loaded with wheat arrived, with her at the helm of one, dressed in white, with a halo of candles on her head. This is the explanation given for the cuccio, or cooked wheat which is an ingredient in all her festival's foods. Cuccio, a kind of sweet porridge, is made with wheat berries, chocolate, sugar and milk. Each family has their own versions of this dish. It is probable that Viking traders, who traveled the Mediterranean seas long ago, took her legends home with them, and that is how Lucia came to the far North.³



1 Translated from the Italian Wikipedia article on Santa Lucia

2. Thanks to Mauro Baglieri for directing me to the story of Santa Lucia

3. Thanks to Julie Fredericksen for information about Scandinavia



Sharon and Bruce Leone



L to R, Gini Harmon, Terry Hanlon, Adele Lorde, Caterina Wartes

Italian Story Time

Everyone is welcome, kids of all ages!

Date: 12/14/2008

Time: 1:00 PM-1:30 PM

Description: Join us for stories, songs and activities in Italian. Speakers of all languages welcome.

Ci uniamo per le storie, le canzoni e le attività in italiano ed inglese! Sono benvenuti tutti coloro che parlano altre lingue.

Ideale per le età 2-5. Sala riunioni della Newport Way Library.

Library: Newport Way Library

Location: Meeting Room

Contact: Micheline Lopez

Contact Number: 425.747.239

David Walddon—Italian Renaissance Cuisine

David Walddon knows a lot about food and cooking. He shared a wonderful meal with us this evening and then entertained us with all sorts of tasty details about how cookbooks began and what was in them. The following is a partial bibliography of the wonderful books he shared with us. Thanks David!

BIBLIOGRAPHY

from Exploring Italian Renaissance Cuisine - Two Papers from the Oxford Symposium on Food and Cookery

By David S. Walddon

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INCLEMENT WEATHER PROCEDURE

* DAS Star List *

As the seasons change, we are approaching a time when the weather can turn on us quickly. If schools, community centers, businesses are closing early or remain closed, we will postpone any scheduled meeting for Headquarters House on Beacon Hill. We will do our very best to have a message on the Dante Alighieri Reservation line, 206-320-9159 letting you know if our meeting needs to be canceled. If the weather is treacherous in your area of town, PLEASE DO NOT attempt to travel to Headquarters House. You are too important to us to do that. We also hope that you would call the Reservation line, 206-320-9159 to report any bad weather, or you may call me at 425-827-7782 to let me know so that I can get a message to that effect on the Reservation Line as quickly as possible.

Jane Cottrell, President



While we appreciate those who support our Society through membership dues & volunteering, stars are awarded to those making extra cash contributions which allows us to provide services without having to raise membership dues.

Grazie Mille for supporting the Dante Alighieri Society of Washington.

Bronzo up to \$25

- * Crawford, Dick & Barbara
- * Cottrell, Jane & David
- * Van Tilborgh, Peter
- * Mazzola, Arthur
- * Munizza, Joseph
- * Shiroyama, Sylvia
- * Tobe, Robert & Maddalena
- * Rosa Borriello
- * Veronica Huggins

Argento \$26 to \$50

- * Gallucci, Ron & Delia
- * Canorro, Anthony & Cathy
- * Eileen Cooney

Oro—\$51-100

- * Lipsky, Donna

Platino—over \$100

- * Harmon, Gini

Directions to Headquarters House

Headquarters House is located at **2336 15th Avenue South** in the Beacon Hill neighborhood of Seattle. From I-5, take the Columbian Way/Spokane Street exit, eastbound. Turn left at the first light, Spokane Street and left again at the next light, 15th Avenue S. After crossing Beacon Avenue, Headquarters House will be on the right side between Bayview and College Streets.

Membership Application

I (We) want to promote Italian language and culture and request membership in the Dante Alighieri Society of Washington. Enclosed is my (our) check in full payment of annual membership dues (\$30.00 for individual, \$40.00 for a family).

Mark one : () **New Membership** () **Membership Renewal**

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____

Telephone: _____ E-mail: _____

Amount Enclosed:
Membership Amount: _____
Contribution: _____
Total Enclosed: _____

Contribution Categories (For recognition stars):
Bronzo (bronze) - Up to \$25
Argento (silver) - \$26 - \$50
Oro (gold) - \$51 to \$100
Platino (platinum) - Over \$100

Please return completed membership application with check to:

Dante Alighieri Society of Washington
PMB #1244
1122 East Pike Street
Seattle, WA 98122

If you have any questions, please call (206) 320-9159 and leave a message.

Dante Alighieri Society of
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