
La Voce della Dante

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

December 2007

December Bi-Lingual Natale Party

by Sam Ciapanna

Wednesday, December 12th, 7:00 - 9:00 PM
Headquarters House, 2336 15th Ave. S., Seattle
No Pre-Dante pasta.

In the Dante tradition, our December meeting is a celebration of Christmas Italian style. There will not be a formal speaker or a pre-Dante pasta, but there will be plenty to eat and drink and lots of time to socialize with long time friends and become acquainted with some new faces as we celebrate *Natale* together.

We ask each person attending to bring something for our holiday buffet table. It can be an antipasto, entrée, or dolce - whatever you would like to share with the rest of the group as long as it is Italian. Whether you have a special Italian holiday recipe that you have been wanting to try or a long time family favorite that you want to introduce the rest of the group to - this is your golden opportunity. For those who do not have the time or inclination to cook or bake, Italian cheeses, salumi, or prepared baked goods are always a good idea.

We will have festive Italian music, which may include a live *Zampagnaro* (I am working on it!), and an opportunity to sing a few of the traditional Italian carols. The *presepio* will be on display and there will be several games of *tombola* - one in Italian - with special prizes for the lucky winners.

This is a great opportunity to invite friends and older children to experience the warmth and hospitality of our group. There is no cost for this meeting, although we would appreciate some help with clean up afterwards. Don't miss it!

In an Italian Kitchen

by Gini Harmon

On November 10th, three Dante members gathered in Gini Harmon's kitchen to prove that making simple Italian desserts is, well, simple. Noting that there seemed to be some members bringing brownies to the Dante table, rather than something Italian, it was decided to offer a hands on opportunity to make some progress in dispelling the idea that Italian baking was difficult. Dana Cottrell, Kris Kantor, and Linda Bavisotto joined Gini in making pizzelle, biscotti, and a Torta di Pignoli. Lots of fun went along with the learning, and all took home some of the products of the day.

By the way, there's nothing wrong with brownies, except that they are harder to make than anything tackled by this group.



Upcoming Events

December Bi-lingual Program

Natale Program
Wednesday, December 12th
Antipasti and Social; 7– 9:00pm
Headquarters House
(see page 1)

No Board Meeting

In December
7:00-8:30pm
Faerland Terrace—1421 Minor Ave

January English Program tbd

Wednesday, January 9
5:30-6:30; Dinner preparation,
6:30; Dinner, 7:30; Meeting
Headquarters House

January Italian Program tbd

Wednesday, January 23
Antipasti and Social; 7- 7:30pm
Meeting; 7:30;
Headquarters House

Board Meeting

January 28
7:00-8:30pm
Faerland Terrace—1421 Minor Ave

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://www.danteseattle.org/DAS>

Remember that DAS must be capitalized!

From the President's Desk

Cari Amici:

I don't know about you, but it seems impossible that it is already December and the holiday season is fully upon us. I hope you had a meaningful Thanksgiving enjoying time with family and friends. I certainly did. December 1 is our traditional Festa di Natale per i Bambini at Headquarters House. We've had some wonderful programs already this year, including our most recent English program about our fascinating club namesake, Dante Alighieri. If you were unlucky enough to miss the presentation, you can read about some highlights in this newsletter. Our December 12 program is intended to be relaxed, social and fun. There is no presentation, but we will have music and ample opportunity to visit, make some new friends and catch up with old friends. I am looking forward to seeing all of you there, with your best dessert or antipasti to share.

We've got some great momentum and we've seen steadily increasing attendance at all of our meetings, which makes them more enjoyable and interesting for everyone. I can't tell you how exciting that is to me, and the best part is that we have more to come! Your Board continues to look ahead to the future, so we are going to ask our nominating committee to swing into high gear after the holidays. As I've mentioned before, all your current Board Members, with the exception of one new counselor, graciously agreed to serve you again, but are wishing to return to "regular" membership status at the end of the year. They have done a tremendous job for you, but now it is time for others to take the helm. So, for the next few weeks, I encourage you to please be thinking about what role you might be willing to fill next year. Some jobs are bigger than others, but none are that onerous when you have a great team, as I have been fortunate to have. If you have questions about what is involved, please seek out any one of us. We'll be happy to share our story, and believe me, no matter how busy you are, there is something you can do to keep Dante moving in the right direction.

Thank you for being members, for participating in meetings and for sharing your time with the rest of us. Please accept my very best wishes to you and your families for a safe and happy holiday and a peace-filled new year.

A Presto,

Donna



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

If you joined **before** September of 2007, 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.



Casa antica

Suonano lenti i passi nel cortile;
la voce delle rondini è la stessa,
lo stesso il nido tra le vecchie travi
del portico, e il frinire
dei grilli tra le siepi del giardino.

Io chiudo gli occhi, Leila: una finestra
S'apre stridendo nella casa antica,
e la luce abbagliante dell'estate
entra tra i muri candidi, imbiancati.

Quanti ricordi ancora! La penombra
dei pomeriggi estivi, ed il riflesso
dei carri, sferraglianti sul selciato.

C'era la guerra, allora: si aspettava
che la sirena gridasse il suo richiamo
per fuggire sotterra, nei rifugi.

C'era la guerra allora, e noi bambini
non capivamo l'angoscia delle madri
strette in preghiera davanti al Crocefisso....

C'era la guerra, ma pareva un gioco
fuggire all'improvviso giù in cantina
lasciando il piatto a mezzo.....

C'era la guerra, ma eravam felici
delle povere cose che avevamo:
le ciliegie sull'albero in giardino,
il pane fatto in casa, i grandi armadi
e le casse ammucciate nelle stanze,
piene di cose inutili, lasciate
nell'attesa di un tempo già passato,
che non ritorna più.

Poesia di **Giacomo di Chiosca**
e-mail gmmmanzoni@libero.it



Joseph W. Meeker – “DANTE & the MODERN MIND”

November English Presentation

Joseph W. Meeker shared with us his insights on “Dante and the Modern Mind” in a stimulating presentation laced with humor and candor at the well-attended November 14 English meeting. He began by offering us the distinction between tragedy and comedy, before elaborating on the encompassing comedic vision that Dante’s transcendent *Commedia* can provide today’s reader. Tragedies, on the one hand, loom as epic struggles cast in polar opposites (black vs white, good vs evil, hero vs villain) compelling the protagonist to make a choice, as a consequence of which he/she is made to suffer—often the very opposite of what he/she was striving for, resolved only in final victory or defeat (very often, death). Comedies, on the other hand, capture life at the present moment, not in opposing polarities but as the big picture with its shades of gray and interdependencies, in which the protagonist seeks to do whatever is necessary for survival, resolving conflicts along the way by reconciling opposites, and finding moments of wholeness and happiness wherever possible, a point of view which offers more choices and adaptability.

Dante’s *Commedia* is best known to most via familiarity with its first book, *Inferno* (Hell), but fewer individuals know the entire work, including the second and third books of *Purgatorio* (Purgatory) and *Paradiso* (Heaven), respectively—which according to Joseph should properly be viewed as one complete work in order to appreciate the nature of Dante’s comedic vision of an all-encompassing framework for the cosmos. Joseph sketched a diagram of the Ptolemaic (earth-centric) universe imagined during Dante’s time, with *Inferno* envisioned symbolically buried in the center of the earth, as far as possible from the light of the sun; with *Purgatorio* depicted on a mountain offering some but limited view of the light, and *Paradiso* in concentric shells surrounding the earth, bathed in light. While much has been learned about the cosmos since that time, Joseph offered us a modern secular interpretation of the *Commedia* as a model for personal growth, looking at the comedy as a study of the many states of the human soul and psyche. In this view, Hell has to do with the ways in which people cause pain and limitations for themselves but have no insight; Purgatory is about the therapeutic process of recovery from suffering and the acquisition of broader understanding; Paradise is Dante’s account of the nature of joy as it grows from a clear vision of the whole and of one’s role within it. The overall pattern of traversing the spheres is the growth of the soul “from misery to felicity”.

Following questions and answers, Joseph generously provided us with a number of free signed copies of the second edition of his book “The Comedy of Survival—In Search of an Environmental Ethic”. Thank you, Joseph, for a very enlightening presentation.

Joseph is a human ecologist with a Ph.D. in comparative literature, and master and postdoctoral studies in wildlife ecology and comparative animal and human behavior.

Spheres of Life, *The Comedy of Survival*, and *Minding the Earth*. He has taught at several universities, and is currently an emeritus professor at the Union Institute and University, and on the faculty at Vashon College.

La Voce Submission Deadlines

Let’s work as a team. If your story, article, photos or poem is submitted to me via email by the following date, it can be published in the next newsletter.

Deadline - publication date
December 26 - January 2008
January 26 - February 2008
February 25 - March 2008
March 26 - April 2008
April 25 - May 2008

Le Notizie



La Voce needs you!

Tell a story, write an article, 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. I expect an outpouring of talent. You know who you are— this is an opportunity!

Pre-Dante Antipasti

We need help! Can you volunteer to bring refreshments to the next Italian meeting? Terry Hanlon would love to hear from you. It's easy; if you don't have time to cook, you can just go to QFC and buy delicious cold cuts, olives and peppers. If you do cook, there are all sorts of wonderful recipes you could make. If you need help planning, contact Gini at giniharmon@aol.com or call 206-364-6834. If you just want to volunteer, call Terry Hanlon at 206-431-5475 or send her an email at terryhanlon@comcast.net. Remember, you'll get lots of help!

Pre-Dante Pasta

Join us for the pre-Dante Pasta dinner preceding the English language programs. **To attend the dinner, reservations are required. The only way to make these reservations is by calling the activity line at (206) 320-9159 by the Monday before the meeting.**

Please remember to bring your homemade Italian desserts to finish off this great meal.

This is a communally prepared meal – the preparations start at 5:30 and the meal is served at 6:30. People who come early help with set up and cooking, those who come late help with the clean up.

Pasta dinner cost is \$8 per person, \$15 per couple, plus BYOB, if reservations are received on the activity line by 5pm on Monday before the meeting. Late reservations and walk-ins are charged \$10 per person and subject to availability. We meet at Headquarters house, 2336 15th Ave. S., Seattle. (map and directions on page 9)



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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Feast of the Seven Fishes

Some of the most delicious traditions come from Italian homes during the holidays. Although Italians always seem to take an interest in food, particularly during the numerous holidays throughout the year, at Christmas, food becomes a priority. This is the time each year, when traditional family celebration foods are prepared and families gather together. One of the most famous traditions followed each Christmas, is the one for La Vigilia, or the Feast Of Seven Fishes which is celebrated on Christmas Eve.

While researching the background of this tradition I was surprised to find out that it is not always simply seven seafood dishes prepared. Some feel there must be seven different types of seafood served, while others traditionally serve ten or thirteen fish dishes each Christmas Eve. It is thought that the seven fishes represent the seven sacraments of the Catholic Church, while the number ten is used for the ten Stations of the Cross. Thirteen dishes are said to represent the twelve apostles plus Jesus. Whatever your beliefs are, plan a wonderful seafood feast this year, gather round your friends and family and enjoy the season. Here is my suggestions for seven seafood dishes for your Christmas Eve menu. Add a few vegetable side dishes, and a tasty dessert, and enjoy!

Deborah Mele's paean to the feast evokes many happy memories of our family's Christmas Eves. I don't recall the number of courses, but it all was delicious and smelled wonderful! My favorite fish were "small fries." They were the size of my pinky, fried and crunchy, which we ate bones and all. The best part – we were allowed to stay up until midnight – at which time the plump fragrant sausage was served.

Menu

Antipasto

Fried Pastry Stuffed With Salted Cod
Frittelle con Baccala

Seafood Salad
Insalata di Mare

Stuffed Clams
Vongole Ripiene

Primi
Seafood Crepes
Crespelle con Frutta di Mare

Spaghetti With Crab
Spaghetti al Granchio

Secondi
Swordfish With Orange Sauce
Pesce Spada all Arancina

Salmon With Green Sauce
Salmone con Salsa Verde

Buon Appetito!
- Deborah Mele 2002



BOOK REVIEW: END GAMES -

An Aurelio Zen Mystery by Michael Dibdin- by Linda Bavisotto

I'm not a regular reader of detective mystery novels or police procedural thrillers, but found I couldn't resist picking up *End Games*, the eleventh and latest book in the Aurelio Zen mystery series, just released and still in hardcover. I was only recently introduced to Dibdin's inimitable protagonist and arch style of storytelling, after tearing through his earlier *Vendetta* (recommended and reviewed by Carmen Flak in last month's issue of *La Voce*), whetting my appetite for further adventures of Zen, and now I am hooked. *End Games*, aptly titled, is one of his best ever, a bittersweet fact for his legions of fans, since Dibdin died in Seattle at age 60 in March 2007 following a short illness, and this book, published posthumously, has now become the entirely satisfying finale to the series, and a fine testimony to the writing career—17 novels, with 11 of these in the Aurelio Zen series—of Michael Dibdin. Dibdin strikes the right balance between poignant humor, darkness, and cultural insight in this final book.

Dibdin made his home in Seattle in later years with his wife Kathrine Beck who is also a mystery writer. Dante members may recall that he gave a highly entertaining presentation to our group at our June 9, 2002 meeting, sharing stories of personal adventures while in Italy researching for his books. We learned from him how he ended up at the University of Perugia teaching English, learning Italian, and having to maneuver through the bureaucratic maze of that University, setting the stage for the political labyrinth in what was to become the first Aurelio Zen novel, *Ratking*, set in Perugia (1989), which won the prestigious Gold Dagger Award of the Crime Writers Association. Showing an intense awareness of geography and history, and developing an ear for its language and varied dialects and manners, Dibdin set each of the subsequent Aurelio Zen mystery novels in a different city or region of Italy. The Zen novels cover Venetian-born detective Aurelio Zen's police assignments across the farthest reaches of Italy's regions, which are accurately portrayed and add much to the color of the novels.

End Games is a page-turner whose lively original plot interweaves multiple story lines. Zen has just received an assignment to Calabria, where he feels even more an outsider than usual. Calabria is known for its poverty, its history of exploitation by feudal landowners and the toughness of its peasants. Calabrians keep their own counsel, speak their own language, and old vendettas still burn after decades have passed in this proud and ancient culture. Zen approaches this latest posting with a wary amusement since he is tasked with standing in during the absence of the provincial Chief of Police, who has accidentally shot himself in the foot while cleaning his never-used pistol. Advised by the Calabrian authorities to keep a low profile, Zen would be only too happy to oblige, but he is forced into action when an American lawyer, acting as an advance scout seeking a site for a movie shoot sponsored by a West Coast video-gaming mogul, is kidnapped and ritually murdered. It will not be a spoiler to tell you that, in parallel, the subplots of both local banditry and American business thuggery are colorfully developed.

While *End Games* shares some of the classic story elements of early Zen books—his quasi-exile to a provincial city of Italy for some offense to the powers that be, his cynicism about Italian politics and the Italian character, and his middle-aged angst, this book also shows a softer side of Zen. Zen defies the police bureaucracy—a recurring note in the series—and is able to expose the truth, but ironically yet characteristically fails to receive any of the credit.

Working feverishly and unceasingly to find a way to penetrate the close-mouthed community's code of silence, Zen follows his instincts and slowly gains the confidence of an elderly *nonna* who is in a position to provide a missing piece of history, a brutal event that occurred 50 years earlier when she served the Calopezzati family in one of the last of the feudal estates dominating that part of Calabria, which is critical to pull all the pieces of the story together. Then, not only does the returning provincial police chief receive all the credit and glory, but Zen hears "suggestions had even been made that it might be in everyone's best interest, including his own, if he were to be offered early retirement."

(continued on page 8)

(continued from page 7)

There are many reasons to like this book. First, Aurelio Zen is a fascinating and complex character who evolves during the series—urbane, skeptical, middle-aged, world-weary, tough, and slightly dyspeptic who bemoans the prevalence of tomatoes in the Calabrian diet. While always partial to the finer comforts of life he can be crotchety, depressed, even petty and neurotic. Passed over several times for promotion, experience has made him cynical about defending the law in a system where it is often bent, circumvented, and even duped, and he is resigned about inefficiencies he can do nothing about. Although based in Rome, Zen's penchant for rocking the status quo and pursuing leads into inconvenient places finds him frequently quasi-exiled, often to places even less to his liking.

Through Zen's keen observations, we get a bracingly witty exposition of a northern Italian native's prejudices and experiences of life in the south. Yet, as he interacts with townspeople, we see him also registering a sincere respect for the survival skills it has been necessary for them to hone for protection, with moments of unexpected poignance drawn out of the dark comedy. Dibdin's eye catches not only the native community, but also observes those who are immigrants on the fringes, holding to their own cultures--some of the extracommunitari immigrants are shown to be richly humane, though forced to remain distant outsiders. When one of the visiting Americans turns out to have unexpected Calabrian roots, we also get a telling glimpse of the reaction of local natives to American tourists.

Dibdin has superbly crafted this story with a subtle but deeply humorous delivery. Dottor Zen gathers clues using all of his senses, including smell and touch, observance of gesture as well as language inflection, what is unsaid as well as said, and improvises, along with the best detectives in the *romanzo giallo* tradition. Sometimes, a good mystery novel can substitute for a trip abroad. Dibdin and Aurelio Zen will both be missed, leaving readers with a sly smile.



La Befana

La Befana vien di notte,
con le scarpe tutte rotte,
neve, gelo, tramontana,
viva, viva la Befana!!

La Befana comes by night,
With worn down shoes,
through snow, ice and the
north wind,
long live la Befana!

A short Biography of a Dante Member—Pina Trentini

Giuseppina Trentini was born in 1946 in northern Italy. She grew up inside the walls of a 16th century palace in the city of Ala in the North East of Italy, and graduated from both business and language schools. She was a translator in Italian, German and English working first in Germany and then back home in Italy. Pina has travelled often to Cyprus over the past 10 years, and fell in love with the island, its natural beauty and its genuine people. Her love of travelling and writing, as well as photography, made writing the book, *The Angels of Pano Stroumbi* a given. In this exposè of the matriarchs of Agia Marina Street, her Cyprus home, everybody is invited to take a closer look at the beauty and simplicity of the village way of life.

Giuseppina has held several exhibitions of her photographs representing the natural beauty of the island and its art. Her favourite photography subjects include nature, Roman mosaics, ancient Byzantine paintings and old churches hidden in the forest.

In order to keep her knowledge of the German language she keeps translating books. At the moment she is translating one of the six books of St. Katherine Emmerich, a German mystic who lived in 1820, with the title “The Secrets of the Old and New Testament.” The book is due to be published. In her free time, she teaches prevalently German from elementary to high school level, and periodically holds conferences at a local high school about the Germans who were against Hitler’s regime; particularly about the life of Marion Graefin Doenhoff, the biography of which she translated and published in 2002.

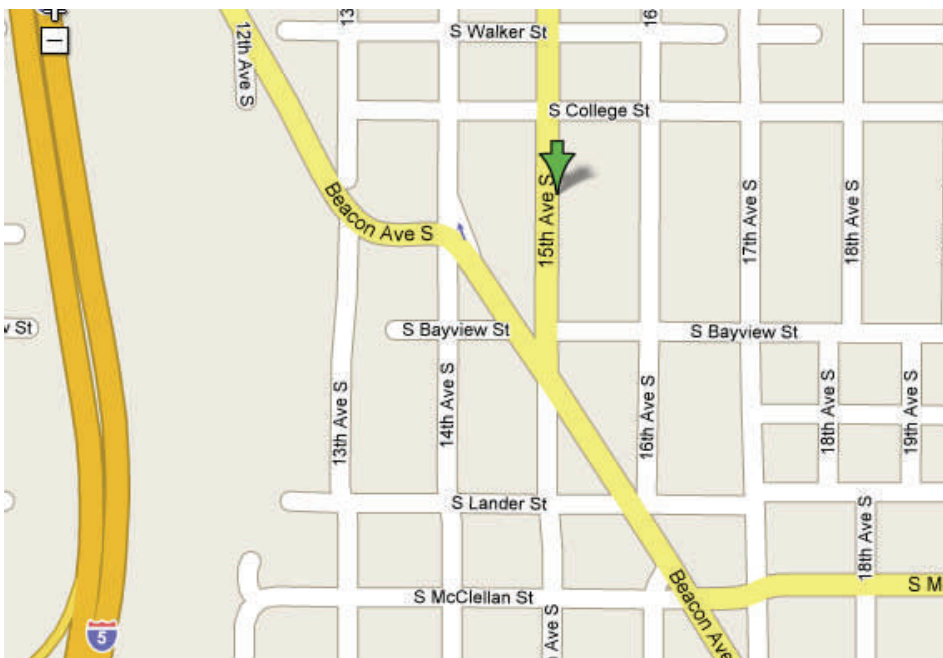
She has been a member of our Dante Alighieri Society since Caterina Wartes travelled to Italy and visited Giuseppina about ten years ago. Since then Pina has come to Seattle several times. Being aware of the importance of speaking several foreign languages Giuseppina promised her best students a trip to America if they were able to reach a certain level of proficiency. Last summer Giuseppina came to Seattle with two of them, Leonardo and Massimo. They stayed with some Dante members and got to know a little about the Seattle area. The experience was really good for them, they enjoyed it so much that they did not want to go back to Italy.

Giuseppina is now retired but her life really started on the first day of her retirement!

If you would like a copy of her book, *The Angels of Pano Stroumbi* which is written in English, Italian and Greek, please send a check for \$18.00 and mail it to: Carolyn Fudetani, 12352 35th Ave NE, Seattle - WA 98125

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.

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