

# La Voce della Dante

Published by the Dante Alighieri Society of Washington (DAS)

<http://das.danteseattle.org>

March 2016

## March English Meeting:

### “Wine Tasting Dinner”

#### Presented by Chris Zimmerman

Wednesday, March 9th, 6:30 pm, Headquarters House

The annual Wine Tasting dinner with Chris Zimmerman will occur on March 9th. This will be a four-course dinner paired with wines from NE Italy and new this year will be a vegetarian option. Notices were sent to members and capacity has been filled. However, if you want to be on a waiting list, please email [dante.reserve@gmail.com](mailto:dante.reserve@gmail.com) and put “Attention: Wine Dinner” in the subject line. You will be notified if there is a spot.

## March Italian Meeting:

### “Jungle Fever: *La Pantera Biondo* and Censorship in Postwar Italy”, Presented by David Chapman

Wednesday, March 23rd, 6:30 pm,  
Headquarters House



The period after World War II in Italy was a terribly unsettling time when the country went from the chaos of war and defeat to an economic miracle of reconstruction. People—especially young people—desperately needed heroes to admire, so perhaps not surprisingly, they sometimes turned to *fumetti*, or comic books to find them. One the most famous and popular of these fictional champions first appeared in 1948, and she was named *La Pantera Bionda*, the Blond Panther.

The protagonist of this work was a beautiful blond jungle queen who was a sort of combination of Tarzan and Wonder Woman. She swung through the tropical forests of Borneo from one liana to another, fighting such foes as Japanese soldiers (unaware that the war is over), foreign slavers, savage native cults and other evil-doers. In addition to being a fearless fighter for justice, she was also spectacularly beautiful as she

(Continued on page 12)

## Upcoming Events

Wed, March 9th:

“Wine Tasting Dinner” presented by Chris Zimmerman, Headquarters House

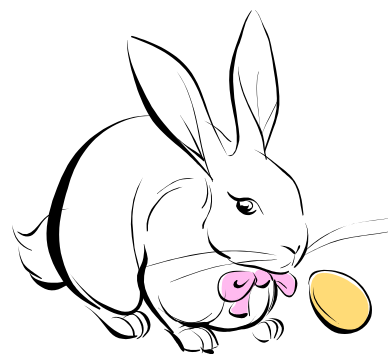


Wed, March 23rd:

“*La Pantera Biondo*, Italian Comic Book”

Presented by David Chapman  
6:30 pm at Headquarters House

Happy  
Easter





## Our New Members

### Benvenuti Nuovi Membri

Lawrence Bosi

Rebecca Novelli &  
William Broesamle

Harry Reinert &  
Cecilia Paul

Gary Smith &  
Carol Henry

**We thank you for your  
support of DAS.**

### \* DAS Star List 2016\*

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 additional services.

Grazie Mille for supporting the Dante Alighieri Society of Washington.

#### Bronzo up to \$25

- \* Crawford, Barbara
- \* Crosetto, James & Deborah
- \* Gillett, Debra Rovetto
- \* Hoffman, Pat

#### Argento \$26 to \$50

- \* Morton, Lorraine
- \* Reinert, Harry

#### Oro \$51 to \$100

- \* Bosi, Lawrence
- \* Cottrell, David & Jane
- \* DeMatteis, Dan & Carol
- \* Fonzo, Emilio
- \* Greenfield, Peter
- \* Minotti, Dominick
- \* Sportelli, Domenic & Louise

#### Platino—over \$100

- \* Rodriquez, German

## From the President's Desk

*Felix Annus Novus!* That's Latin for *Felice Anno Nuovo*, Happy New Year! And a reminder of how far back the Italian heritage goes. The earliest Roman calendars we have designate March 1 as the start of the new year and it wasn't changed to January 1 until 153 b.c. A long-standing tradition.

Even older is the Italian cultivation of wine grapes and the Italian love of wine as the perfect accompaniment to food, conversation, and good friends. So, it's fitting that one of our premier social events should be a Wine Dinner, where we can learn more about Italian wine, taste some of its many varieties, and sample how well the drink of the gods goes with food - and with good company. I hope you get a chance to attend this year's dinner on March 9th. Space is limited, so register early.

And, for the young at heart, the Italian meeting presentation this month features an Italian comic-book series from the 40s and 50s, *La Pantera Bionda*, a Tarzan-like jungle girl in the forests of Borneo. David Chapman is the presenter. You may remember his lively talks previously on the 19<sup>th</sup> c Italian novel, *Love and Gymnastics*, and on Italian jazz. So expect the unexpected.

I also wanted to remind you that the Nominating Committee is putting together the slate of candidates and volunteers for key positions on the DAS Board this month. There are still open slots and a chance for you to become more involved. Please contact either Jane Cottrell, Nancy MacDonald, Melinda Jankord-Steedman, or Sylvia Shiroyama and one of them will be happy to let you know where you can help out.

Finally, be sure to pencil April 13th in your calendar. That's the annual General Meeting, with a pasta dinner prepared by the Board, followed by the report from the Nominating Committee, and elections for the upcoming DAS year – May 2016 to April 2017.

*Ci vediamo presto!*

*Dan DeMatteis*

### Star List

Consider making a donation to DAS today. Your donation helps DAS maintain the excellent programs and activities sponsored. Everyone benefits!

Please designate where your donation should go: Social Programs & Activities or Language School

The names on the donation list will remain through December 31, 2016. If you make a donation after May 2015, your name will be on the donation list through 2016 then a new DAS Star List begins January 2017.



## Language Program News by Giuseppe Tassone Italian Language Program Director

Winter quarter started on January 5th with 54 students enrolled and four levels of Italian (A1, A2, B1, B2) taught by Dida Berretta, Marina Gagliardi, Michela Tartaglia and Nicla Rivero. Winter quarter is the second quarter for all levels. Most of the students attended fall quarter while others, who studied Italian previously, joined the program in the winter and were placed in their appropriate level.

Once again Seattle University is hosting our program and as a result our students have multimedia classrooms with Internet, in addition to the printed text, and are exposed to videos, news, commercials, and music in order to enhance their learning experience. We are very fortunate to be able to use their facilities and classrooms and are very grateful to the administration for allowing us this use.

The use of multimedia has many benefits such as improvement of students' listening comprehension skills. When taking the PLIDA exam students find the oral part pretty challenging, especially at level B1 and above as we experienced last November. Their exposure to spoken Italian through both listening to the instructor and follow up exercises is fundamental for a successful completion of the exam. Other skills tested in the PLIDA are reading, writing, and speaking.

Last May we offered the PLIDA A2 exam and in November we offered the PLIDA B2 exam. The students who took the exam received the official certificate issued by the *Società Dante Alighieri* with the seal of the *University of Rome – La Sapienza* and the *Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs*. I encourage our students to consider taking the exam in May or November not only for practical reasons, such as to satisfy the language requirement for the permit of long stay in Italy or to enroll to Italian universities, but also for personal gratification and to formally assess proficiency in Italian. Although the Rome Headquarter administers the exam, students can take the exams in Seattle since the Dante Alighieri Society of Washington is one of the few institutions in North America to offer it under my coordination. The exam is open to everyone not only to students, and the fee is very reasonable. If a student fails any of the four skills he/she can re-take only that portion of the exam instead of taking the entire exam again.

To conclude, I want to thank Seattle University for hosting the courses, our students for their dedication to the program, and our instructors for their excellent work. Students in their evaluations praised their skills and their ability to create a friendly atmosphere in the classroom that enable them to make progress and attend class regularly even after a day at work. Class meets from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m.!

Here are some excerpts of their comments at the end of fall quarter 2015: *I enjoyed the exercises in this class, and the reading was easily understandable. The handouts were helpful, and I LOVED the cultural notes and presentations that Dida gave to us (A1). Marina is VERY encouraging and supportive and kind. She makes the classroom a safe place to practice*

## Club Alpino Italiano (CAI) PNW

Club Alpino  
monthly  
hike for March:



Mar 12th: Snowshoe to Skyline Lake (Highway 2 at Stevens Pass Ski area)

*Classification:* Moderate/strenuous (steep hill but slow and easy)

*Distance/Time:* 2.5 miles RT, 1 1/2 hrs to the Lake and lunch spot.

*Elevation Gain:* 1050'

*Highest Point:* 5100'

*Contact:* Clarence Elstad  
(celestad@gmail.com)

A slow paced snowshoe walk suitable for beginners and families. Bring your own/rented snowshoes and poles, wear waterproof boots, warm clothes in layers, bring rain gear, a hearty lunch, and 2 liters of water. The trip subject to change based on weather.

## DAS Board Meeting

Board meetings are held on a Wednesday every other month from September through May.

The next board meeting is scheduled for March 16th, 2016.

Meetings are held from 7:00-8:30 pm in the Community Room at Merrill Gardens at First Hill (formerly Faerland Terrace), 1421 Minor Avenue on Capitol Hill. Meetings are open to all members.



(Continued on page 4 )

*speaking Italian and she makes the concepts much more clear and easier to understand (A2). I found Michela to be a fantastic instructor. She sets a good pace and does a great job of accommodating to all skill levels within the class. I am looking forward to continuing on with her (B1). Nicla did an exceptional job with handouts, activities, videos, sharing of cultural exchanges, grammar explanation, and the small group activities were great. We learned so much under her expert tutelage (B2). Laura inspired lively and engaged conversation, and carefully included every student in it. Laura's ability to make this work is exceptional. Although the fluency of the individual students varied significantly, all were challenged and all made progress (C2). This is a great program and I would definitely recommend it. Excellent, I would recommend it!*

### **The Program:**

Since 1984, the local chapter of Dante Alighieri Society has offered a comprehensive Italian Language Program for all those interested in learning or perfecting their Italian language skills. Our instructors are qualified and native speakers, classes are small and our per hour instruction cost provides you good value.

### **Classes Available:**

Six class levels from A1 to C2, each level consisting of three quarters—Fall, Winter, and Spring, are offered during the year as enrollment permits.

### **Schedule:**

The school year extends from late September or early October to June with a class break every 10 weeks. **Each class level begins in the fall and lasts for three quarters or 30 weeks.** Classes meet twice a week on Tuesday and Thursday evenings.

### **Location:**

Seattle University campus, Administration Building

### **Class Descriptions:**

*Beginning Italian (Level A1)* - This course is for people with little or no Italian language. Students will be introduced to the basic phonetic, grammatical, and lexical structures through conversation and simple dialogues. During the three-quarter course, students will be engaged in a variety of fun activities and begin their journey of learning Italian.

*Elementary Italian (Level A2)* - The elementary level is the continuation of the beginning class or for those who have already studied some Italian. Students will finish exploring essential grammar structures while learning appropriate and relevant words and expressions. At the end of the three-quarter course, students should be able to use basic structures of the language with confidence and be able to communicate well in daily situations.

*Intermediate (Level B1)* - This course will review and reinforce the student's basic knowledge of Italian. Students will review and reinforce their knowledge of the language in addition to expanding their vocabulary and ability to understand written and spoken Italian. Students will be exposed to cultural and literary readings and will develop a greater understanding of Italian culture, lifestyle, and way of thinking.

*Upper-Intermediate (Level B2)* - This course is the continuation of B1. It completes the review and reinforcement of grammar covered in the previous beginning and elementary levels in addition covering any missing structures. This course will help students understand articles from newspapers and the web, song lyrics, literary excerpts, videos, and excerpts from films and commercials. At the end of the three-quarter course, students will be able to engage effectively in a conversation, express opinions, and give simple explanations.

*Intermediate—Advanced (Level C1)* - This course is designed for students who have completed the grammar topics reviewed and expanded in level B1 and B2 or have a good grasp of them. Students will perfect their grammar and greatly improve their comprehension, conversation, and writing skills. Students will read and discuss literature, watch films and videos in Italian and converse about the cinema, art, Italian news, and current events. At the end of the three-quarters course, one will be able to interact with Italian speakers fluently and spontaneously.

*Advanced Italian (Level C2)* -

Level C2 is the capstone of our program. It is designed for students who have completed level C1 and wish to continue for an additional year. The goal of the three quarter course is to deepen and perfect the student's existing knowledge of the Italian language.

(Continued on page 5)



## Course Schedule:

<i>Fall Quarter 2015:</i>	October 1 - December 10
Thanksgiving—No classes 11/26	
Pre-registration Deadline:	September 27
<i>Winter Quarter 2016:</i>	January 5 - March 10
Pre-registration Deadline:	December 21
<i>Spring Quarter 2016:</i>	March 31 - June 7
Pre-registration Deadline:	March 21

## Class Fee:

Level A1 & A2 - \$180 per quarter  
Level B1 & B2 - \$275 per quarter  
Level C1 & C2 - \$300 per quarter

For further information email: [info@danteseattle.org](mailto:info@danteseattle.org)  
To register: [www.danteseattle.org/register.html](http://www.danteseattle.org/register.html)



[www.facebook.com/danteseattle](http://www.facebook.com/danteseattle)

## La Voce

Here's hoping spring is around the corner. Things are starting to bloom and trees are beginning to bud out in Georgia. We are all looking forward to sunshine and being outdoors!

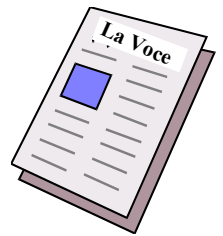
If you find an interesting article, event, book, anything related to the Italian life, please consider sharing this through La Voce. Submissions are always welcome and by all means send the articles to me any time. The sooner the better!

*Linda*

La Voce Editor  
[LTHDesign@comcast.net](mailto:LTHDesign@comcast.net)

*Have a Happy  
Easter*

## Delivering La Voce to Members



La Voce will be sent as a pdf file attachment to your email address. Or you may log onto the Dante website to see the latest issue as well as back issues of La Voce. The website is:

[www.das.danteseattle.org](http://www.das.danteseattle.org)

Adobe Reader is necessary to be able to view La Voce. You can download this program from the DAS website.

Be sure your mailbox isn't full otherwise you will have to check the Dante website.

## Inclement Weather Procedure

It's not winter yet but weather can still be prickly. Hopefully, there will be no repeat of winter pasts but in case there is, keep in mind when schools, community centers, and businesses are closing early or remain closed, we will postpone any scheduled meeting for Headquarters House. We will do our best to have a message on the DAS reservation line, 425-243-7663, to let you know if our meeting needs to be canceled. If the weather is treacherous in your area, PLEASE DO NOT attempt to travel to Headquarters House, we want everyone to be safe.



DO NOT attempt to travel to Headquarters House, we want everyone to be safe.



## Francesco Greco

Many of you know Francesco and know he spends much of his time in Italy. I received the following email from Cam and know we all wish a speedy recovery for Francesco:

*Dante member Francesco Greco has had a stroke while staying in Lisbon, Portugal. He is recovering little by little with the help of his wife, Cam, who is with him in Lisbon, his two children, some wonderful friends in Lisbon, and the staff at the hospital. Soon he will be transferred to a rehab center in Viareggio, Italy. There, we all hope to see more recovery progress as his rehabilitation will be in his "mother tongue," Italian.*

*Francesco brought the subsection of Club Alpino Italiano to the Pacific Northwest. He has been a presenter at Dante meetings several times and is author of a hiking guide book, "The Alps of Tuscany". In Italy he has guided groups of hikers from Seattle, Australia, New Zealand, and Israel.*

## Catherine Orsi

Many may remember Catherine and her then husband bartending for DAS when DAS held Carnevale celebrations. She also was in charge of the chefs for Festa Italiana for a while. What some of you may not know is Catherine became a Naturopathic doctor in Seattle. Unfortunately, she is now battling a brain tumor that has left her unable to speak but she can communicate with hand signals. She is currently at Swedish Hospital on Broadway and can have visitors but no flowers as she may be moving rooms.

Let's keep Catherine in our prayers and if you plan to visit her, call the hospital first to be sure visitors are still allowed. Or, you may wish to contact her friend Shelly Staloch at: [shellystaloch@comcast.net](mailto:shellystaloch@comcast.net) for further information.



## PLIDA

*The Dante Alighieri Society of Washington is one of the few institutes in North America authorized to offer PLIDA (Progetto Lingua Italiana Dante Alighieri-Dante Alighieri Italian Language Project) certification.*

The Dante Alighieri Society of Washington in Seattle is an official examination center of the Società Dante Alighieri and provides its students and others the opportunity of taking PLIDA exams in order to obtain a PLIDA certificate.

### *The PLIDA Certificate*

The PLIDA certificate is an official Diploma issued by the Società Dante Alighieri under an agreement with the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the University of Rome *La Sapienza*. It is recognized by the Italian Ministry of Labour and Social Policies and by the Italian Ministry of University and Research as a qualification for the proficiency in the Italian language for foreigners.

The PLIDA certificates attest proficiency in Italian as a foreign language on a 6-level scale according to the parameters established by the Common European Framework for Languages (A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, C2).

### *Why Take the PLIDA Exam*

Students who may wish to be certified include those who plan to study at Italian universities (which accepts PLIDA Certification - level B2 minimum - as proof of proficiency), American high school and college students who may seek college credit, or persons wishing to be certified for obtaining an application for the Italian Permit of Stay in Italy (level A2 minimum). Certification may also interest students who see the examination as a capstone experience after taking their language courses.

For more information on the PLIDA certificates, visit the official PLIDA website: [www.plida.it/plida/bar](http://www.plida.it/plida/bar)

### *Dates, Registration, Location, and Exam Fees*

PLIDA certificate sessions will be held every year in May and November. Candidates may choose to take an exam at the level they feel is closest to their proficiency. Registration does not require having taken lower-level tests.

Candidates need to register approximately 30 days prior to the exam date. Dates of each exam, registration deadlines, location, exam fees, and registration instructions check the Language School's Plida website at:

[www.danteseattle.org/plida.html](http://www.danteseattle.org/plida.html)

For any questions, email: [plida@danteseattle.org](mailto:plida@danteseattle.org)





## La Voce Needs You!

**T**ell a story, write an article, share your Italian heritage; send via email (as a Word document) to LTHdesign@comcast.net. You can also mail it via regular mail to Linda Heimbigner, 4355 Little Falls Drive, Cumming, GA 30041. Keep things coming!

Thanks to everyone who has contributed articles.

Article submission deadline:

<u>ISSUE DATE</u>	<u>SUBMISSION DEADLINE</u>
April 2016	March 20th
May 2016	April 20th

(La Voce is not published June, July, or August)

**NOTE:** Please keep in mind the above submission deadlines and it's great if articles were submitted as early as possible.

## Dante on the Internet!

Check our website. It has links to our recent newsletters (including this one) as well as information on speakers and other matters of interest. Our web address is:

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

## Pre-Dante Pasta

**J**oin 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 (425) 243-7663 by 5 pm on the Monday before the meeting or send your request via email to: dante.reserve@gmail.com.**

*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, if reservations are received on the Activity Line by 5 pm 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 Avenue, Seattle, WA. DAS will not be providing wine for the pre-Dante pasta dinners so bring your own wine to enjoy and share with others.



## Dante Alighieri Society of Washington

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

Mailing address:

PO Box 9494

Seattle, WA 98109

(425) 243-7663

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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# A Month in Sicily: Marvels and Mysteries

by Philip Dickey

Roberto Alajmo, in his book *Palermo è una Cipolla*, writes to an imaginary traveler who has come to visit Palermo because he has heard many things about it, some of which scare him. Describing the difficulties of landing an airliner at Punta Raisi, situated between a mountain and the sea, Alajmo informs the traveler that airliners have crashed there both in the sea and on the mountain and even supplies the dates, which reassuringly were in the 1970s. Upon arriving at his hotel, the traveler gazes out of the window into the street below, afraid to leave the room. The book presents the case for leaving the hotel and visiting the city, which Alajmo peels open like the layers of an onion.

Inspired by this delightful book, we decided that our trip to Sicily in 2013 had to include Palermo and that we would definitely leave our hotel room to see the sights and the culture described by Alajmo and so many others. We scheduled Palermo at the end of our month-long tour of Sicily in order to work up gradually to a city that we knew would be unforgettable and, perhaps, rather intimidating.

Sicily is a land blessed with a beautiful and bountiful natural environment that has invited friends and foes over the centuries. Nature has also been cruel at times, assailing the island with devastating earthquakes, fierce summer heat, relentless winds, torrential rains, and lava flows. The result is a place with a rich history that can be seen in its art and architecture, heard in its mu-

sic and the voices of its people, and read in its literature. It is a land of contrasts, of beauty and ugliness, of rich and poor, of old and new. These are the marvels that visitors come to see: the teeming life in Sicily's cities, the enchanting landscapes, and the precious treasures and evocative relics of past cultures. Sicily's marvels also include a cuisine that blends nature's gifts and wide cultural influences in unique and flavorful combinations.

As our Alitalia flight approached Palermo's airport at Punta Raisi, a strong crosswind was raising whitecaps on the sea and the plane was aimed about 30 degrees off the center line of the runway. When we touched down safely the traditional applause was a bit louder than usual. We claimed our rental car and headed to Scopello, a tiny coastal village between Palermo and Trapani.

Scopello still has its *tonnara*, once a tuna-processing plant, now becoming a resort. Boasting a handful of accommodations and restaurants, Scopello these days is mainly a gateway to the Zingaro nature reserve on the peninsula San Vito Lo Capo. At Scopello I was introduced to a pasta dish that would remain my favorite of the entire trip: *Casarecce alla melanzana e pesce spada*, hand-made tubular noodles with swordfish and eggplant in a light tomato-based sauce flavored with mint. The wine: Cerasuolo di Vittoria: a DOCG blend of Nero D'Avola and Frappato. Both were marvels.

From Scopello we continued on to Trapani and the first of our mysteries, specifically the *La Processione dei Misteri*, a long-standing Good Friday tradition in Trapani. The sights and sounds of this 24-hour event surpassed our every expectation. Teams of men dressed in dark wool suits shoulder enormous platforms on which are depicted scenes from the Crucifixion of Christ by means of gigantic figures of paper maché and wood. The platforms are so heavy that every minute or two wooden rattles signal a rest period in which the load is set down onto wooden feet while the bearers rest. Spare teams of substitute bearers stand ready to take a turn if needed. Interspersed between the Mysteries are marching bands that play dirge-like music to which the statues and their bearers sway from side to side. The effect is somewhat like a New Orleans funeral



*The procession of the mysteries, Trapani*



procession, though rather more subdued. The procession winds its way through city streets and remote neighborhoods. During the nighttime hours, the musicians and other marchers get to go home and sleep, but the bearers of the Mysteries continue walking to the cadence of drums. We were awakened at 5 am the next morning, when the marchers passed under the balcony of our apartment 17 hours into the procession.

For the next two weeks we circled the island in a counter-clockwise direction, visiting in turn Erice, Segesta, Selinunte, and Agrigento. During the day we walked among the ancient temples and ruins that popu-

Remains of Temple E, Selinunte



late the superb archeological sites. In the evening we dined on local seafood and sampled the indigenous varietal wines: Nero D'Avola, Nerello Mascalese, Frappato, Grecanico, Catteratto, Grillo,

Inzolia, and Moscato. A side trip took us inland to visit the somewhat famous Easter Arches of San Biagio Platani. Constructed on frames of wood and scrap metal, the elaborate arches, which simulate building facades, are rebuilt every year and decorated mainly with bread, but also corn, rosemary, berries, and other edible materials. Sadly, in the year we visited only a few arches were erected. A local youth I spoke to said that the reason was declining interest and funds.

A second side trip led us to the town of Santa Margherita di Belice, where the writer Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa spent time as a child. The old town was destroyed in the earthquake of 1968, but a new one was built next to it. Among the ruins visible are the former Palazzo Gattopardo, now partially rebuilt, and the Mother Church, now a museum. Lovers of the book *Il Gattopardo* (*The Leopard*) are well rewarded by visiting this village.

At Vittoria, we stayed several days at Azienda Agricola COS, an innovative winery where we enjoyed an impromptu tasting during which we were invited to compare identical wines aged in oak and in clay amphorae, an ancient technique that is being revived there. Our journey along the coast ended at Siracusa, where we turned inland and crossed diagonally to Cefalù, with stops at Piazza Armerina, Caltagirone, and the wine estate Antico Feudo San Giorgio, near Polizzi Generosa. San Giorgio is beautifully situated among rolling hills with long views and is run by a charming couple, Fabiola and Giancorrado Fatta. It's a lovely and relaxing place to spend a few days.

We continued north to the coastal town of Cefalù, built around an impossibly tall hill with harbors on two sides. We visited the cathedral,

with its wonderful mosaics, and walked every street in town. Mainly, though, we just hung out and watched how life is lived, from boys playing hide and seek among fishing boats pulled up on the beach, to an old fisherman mending his nets on the sidewalk,



Fisherman mending nets, Cefalù

to a grocer delivering fruits and vegetables piled on his *furgone* and then sending them up via pulley to a third floor apartment while awaiting payment lowered by the same rope.

Feeling ready to tackle Palermo, we returned our car to Punta Raisi and took a taxi to our hotel on the marina downtown. For a week we walked the streets of Palermo, visiting many of the sights recommended by Roberto Alajmo: churches, parks, the marionette museum, and what remains of the Vucciria fish and vegetable market. Now a shadow of its former self, Vucciria still retains its colorful character. As Alajmo promised, at no time during our stay in Palermo did we ever feel unsafe or threatened in any way, except by the traffic.

While preparing to leave Sicily, we thought back over our month

(Continued on page 10)



of experiences, during which we had noticed progressively more aspects of Sicilian life that presented surprises and contradictions that we began to classify as mysteries. Some were pleasant and others not so much. Why, for example, when you drive into a city on a main highway, is the first turn usually clearly marked and then key traces of further direction are missing as you are swallowed up and redirected from your desired route? Why, when a mountain road is slipping off of its roadbed, leaving crevices large enough to swallow a Fiat 500, is the affected area simply roped off to leave a gradually narrowing lane and a sign that says *lavori in corso*, and yet the only *lavori* in evidence are the placement of the signs? Why do Sicilian drivers insist on nudging their right headlight almost against your left taillight before they pass you? Why do most benches in Palermo face away from the sea view? Why do most conversations between friends or family sound like arguments? Why are all of the small churches invariably locked? How can anyone eat so much ricotta?

In the end we departed without unraveling many of these mysteries. Clearly, we will have to return. And when we do, we will follow our advice to you: if you choose to drive in Sicily, either rent the GPS or make sure you have a robust data-roaming plan on your smart phone. While the roads are usually quite good, the signage is decidedly sketchy.

*Philip Dickey has been studying Italian for 15 years. He and his wife, Bridget, have made numerous trips to Italy and to-date have visited sixteen of Italy's twenty*

*regions. Philip's hobby is photography, and the photos included here are his.*



*Street scene in Vucciria, Palermo*



*Laundry hung out to dry, Cefalù*



# Parmigiano Reggiano Cracking Event at Whole Food Market Stores

If you happened to be at a Whole Foods Market store on Saturday, February 27<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 pm EST, you may have witnessed the cracking of wheels of Parmigiano Reggiano. All Whole Food stores across the U.S., Canada, and the U.K. were participating in this event. Brian and I happened onto this event a few years back and it was fascinating watching how quickly and how with the use of very few specialized tools this feat was accomplished. Whole wheels weigh 85 lbs.

Five things to know about Parmigiano Reggiano cheese purchased at a Whole Foods Market store:

- 1) Every wheel has “Parmigiano Reggiano” imprinted on the rind in pin dots. Wheels destined for Whole Foods Market stores are also hot-branded telling you the cheese within is of the highest export-only quality.
- 2) Cathy Strange, their global cheese buyer, visits each producer and selects wheels made only with evening and morning milk. Wheels are selected based on the best flavor profile from spring milk (herbal, floral) and fall milk (nutty, caramelized).
- 3) “Two summers” is the traditional mantra of the Parmigiano Reggiano cheesemaker. The belief is that one summer’s heat energizes enzymes, kick starting their flavor-enhancing work. The next summer takes those flavors to the intensely complex, nutty, sweet, grassy, creamy heights the cheese is known for. That’s why Whole Foods Market only carries Parmigiano Reggiano that has aged 24 months.
- 4) Their cheesemongers crack each wheel of Parmigiano Reggiano in house to ensure the freshest, most flavorful cheese is sold at Whole Food Market stores.
- 5) Parmigiano Reggiano is rich in protein, calcium, vitamins, and minerals. It is easily digested, does not contain lactose, and has a low fat content.

Other facts include:

The rind of a Parmigiano Reggiano wheel, though chewy, is completely edible. So when you get down to the end, toss it into simmering soup, stew or pasta sauce. After it softens, remove, dice and return the bits to the pot.

Many who taste Parmigiano Reggiano assume its subtle crystal-like texture comes from salt, but in fact, it is due to protein crystals that form when amino acids break down during the aging process. The longer the cheese ages, the more lovely “crystal” crunch to enjoy.

Professional cheese testers (*battitores*) “listen” to each wheel of Parmigiano Reggiano by placing the 85-pound wheel on a special stand and gently tapping it with a small “*martello*” or hammer to detect flaws

in texture and structure. They are also experts at evaluating the color, aroma and maturation of the cheese—all without breaking it open.

If you’ve not seen this and missed this years, mark your calendar for next year and check with your local Whole Foods Market when they will hold this event.



## Parmigiano Reggiano Crisps

- 1 cup grated (not shredded) Parmigiano Reggiano cheese
- 2 teaspoons fresh thyme

Preheat oven to 300 degree F. Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper and set aside.

Mix cheese and thyme in a bowl. Spoon 2-3 teaspoons of cheese mixture on prepared baking sheet to make a small pile, spacing 2-3 inches part. Flatten each pile with a spoon into a 2 inch circle.

Bake 8-12 minutes until slightly browned on top. Remove baking sheets from oven and cool a few minutes to let crisps firm up. Slide parchment paper off the baking sheet and onto a wire rack. Use a spatula to gently loosen crisps. They should be slightly flexible and harden as they finish cooling.

Store cooled crisps in airtight container, layered between sheets of waxed paper.

Makes about 20



## Elections

Please become involved. Our annual elections will be held at our April 13th English meeting.



Dante needs nominees for the following positions:

*Vice President*

*Secretary*

*3 Consigliere positions*

*Festa Italiana Manager*

*Wine Tasting Dinner Manager*

*Italian Night Antipasti Manager*

Please consider volunteering for these open positions or nominate some of your friends.

Vote on Election Night, Wednesday, April 13th. If you are a current member (dues paid for the new year), enjoy a free pasta dinner prepared by the DAS Board.

## Donations

When you send a donation to DAS, please designate the donation as going to Social Programs and Activities or to the Language School or if you wish to donate to both, please designate the amount for each.

The membership form found in La Voce now reflects how donations can be designated.

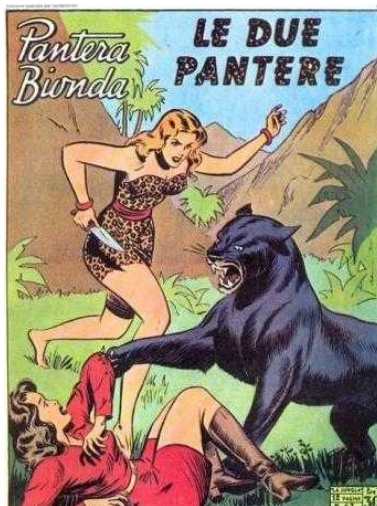
performed her good deeds clothed in a very skimpy leopard-skin bikini. She is a pinup princess in a primeval wilderness—as gorgeous as she is unrealistic.

In addition to possessing Anita Ekberg hair, flawless makeup and a figure that left little to the imagination of her young male readers, the Panther had something that the girls could admire also: self-sufficiency. She needed no man to protect her. She was a unique force of nature—no man's sidekick or fawning love interest. She could kick butt very proficiently without the help of any masculine protector. Almost from the start, readers loved the feisty female warrior, and soon the Panther began to appear internationally; her adventures were translated into French, Spanish, German and other European languages. But all was not well at home.

Many Italian parents (egged on by the Catholic Church and other moral watchdogs) were very disconcerted by the Panther's near nudity and her non-traditional gender role. Many parents demanded that the Panther cover up and start acting like an obedient and modest Italian girl. Spurred on by this criticism, the writers added a love interest, an improbable American explorer named Fred and the Panther's brief costume started to expand subtly over her formerly bare body. When the changes were not done fast enough to please the church, the comic book was banished from the news kiosks until she cleaned up her act. Thus, Italy has the dubious distinction of being the first country in the world to censor a comic book.

As might be expected, the more the Panther's busty figure was covered up, the less popular she became. Her once skimpy bikini slowly expanded into a garment that covered her from shoulders to calf.

In my illustrated address to the Società Dante Alighieri I will tell the story of this short-lived and relatively obscure comic book and the reaction it received in Italian postwar society. *La Pantera Bionda* marked the start of a new era in both Italy and the rest of the world when people of both genders began to examine their roles and to question whether they might need to make a few adjustments in their thinking.



# DANTE CALENDAR 2015–2016

Dante Alighieri Society of Washington

<p><b>2015:</b></p> <p>September 9th: English Meeting Rob Prufer “Great Italian Artworks of Parties &amp; Feasts”</p> <p>September 23rd: Italian Meeting Giuseppe Tassone “Maratona infernale: in viaggio con Dante</p>	<p><b>2016:</b></p> <p>January 13th: English Meeting Terry Tazioli, Journalist of TVW’s <i>Well Read</i></p> <p>January 27th: Italian Meeting Anna Veraldi, Architect “Renaissance Gardens of Lazio”</p>
<p>October 14th: English Meeting Adrienne Bandlow “Holy Cannoli”</p> <p>October 28th: Italian Meeting Cecilia Stretto “The American Way and the Italian Way: Differences in Every Day Life”</p>	<p>February 10th: English Meeting Dan DeMatteis “Donizetti’s <i>Maria Stuarda</i>”</p> <p>February 24th: Italian Meeting Movie &amp; Antipasti “Pane e Tulipani” (Bread and Tulips)</p>
<p>November 11th: English Meeting “Festa di Natale per i Bambini: It’s Origin &amp; Preview of our Celebration December 5th”</p> <p>No Italian Meeting in November</p>	<p>March 9th: English Meeting Wine Tasting Dinner w/Chris Zimmerman</p> <p>March 23rd: Italian Meeting David Chapman “La Pantera Biondo, Italian Comic Book”</p>
<p>December 5th: Festa di Natale per i Bambini</p> <p>December 9th: Annual Christmas Party</p> <p>No Italian Meeting in December</p>	<p>April 13th: English Meeting Election Night</p> <p>April 27th: Italian Meeting TBD</p>
	<p>May 11th: English Meeting Vickie Olson (Newcastle Historical Society) “The Italian Immigrants of Newcastle”</p> <p>No Italian Meeting in May</p> <p><i>June-August 2016: Summer break, no meetings.</i></p>

**A**t the first meeting of each month (English program), pre-Dante pasta is communally prepared at 5:30 pm and served at 6:30 pm. Call the Activity Line (425) 243-7663 by the Monday before to reserve your spot (s) or email your request to: dante.reserve@gmail.com. Cost: \$8.00 per person or \$15.00 per couple

Unless otherwise noted, all programs are held at Headquarters House, 2336 15th Avenue S, in the Beacon Hill neighborhood of Seattle. Directions are on the back page of La Voce.

## 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 (\$40.00 for individual, \$50.00 for a family).

Mark one : ☐ **New Membership**    ☐ **Membership Renewal**

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount Enclosed:

Membership Amount: \_\_\_\_\_

Contribution:

Social Programs & Activities: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Total Enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_

Contribution Categories (For recognition stars):

Bronzo (bronze) - Up to \$25

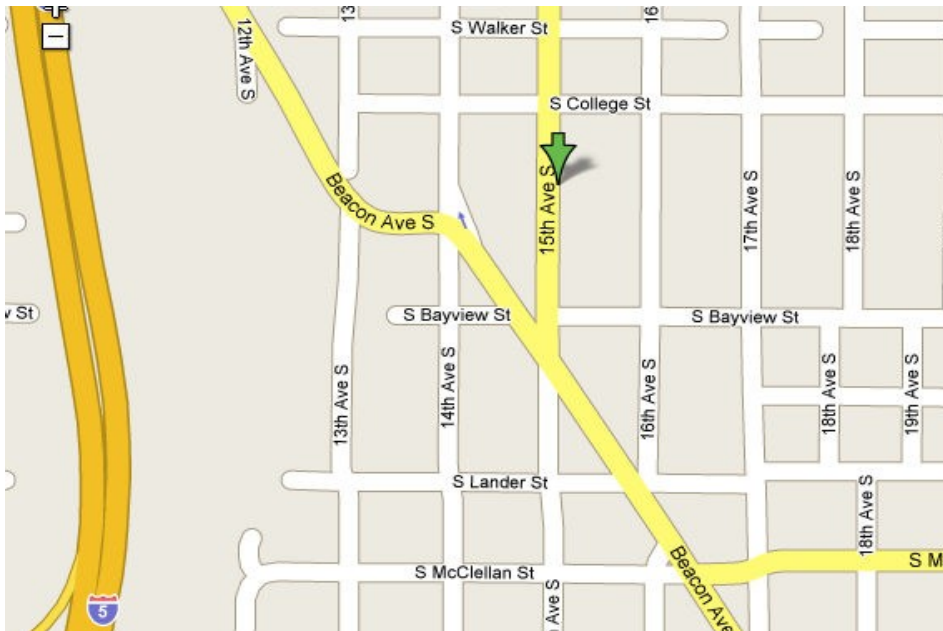
Argento (silver) - \$26 to \$50

Oro (gold) - \$51 to \$100

Platino (platinum) - Over \$10

Please return completed membership application with check to:

Dante Alighieri Society of Washington  
c/o Bruce Leone  
2522 2nd Ave W  
Seattle, WA 98119



## 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.