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# La Voce della Dante

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March 2007

## March Meeting: Seneca Garber,

Wednesday, March 14th, 5:30 - 9:00 PM  
Headquarters House, 2336 15th Ave. S., Seattle

**S**eneca Garber graduated from Whitman College in 2002 with a history degree, where his main focus was cultural history. He currently works in the Education Department for Seattle Opera, maintaining the daily finances and scheduling needs for the department. He will be talking about Dante and St. Augustine's 'City of God,' probably focusing on the idea of the city and the meaning of love. He will use multi-media in his presentation.

We'll have a nice pre-Dante pasta before the lecture. We begin preparation at 5:30 and eat at 6:30 and it is cooperatively prepared, set up and cleaned up. Be sure to call in your reservation for dinner on our hotline (206) 320-9159, by 5pm on Monday, March the 12th!

## March Italian Meeting: Emilio Fonzo

Wednesday, March 28, 7:00 - 9:00PM  
Headquarters House, 2336 15th Ave. S.,  
Seattle

Emilio returns tonight. We missed him in January because of the storm. He will talk about Paestum, an ancient Greek city whose ruins stand today in the vicinity of Naples. They are among the finest preserved Greek ruins in the world. He will speak in Italian. Let's hope it doesn't snow again!

## John Venables The Etruscans

**J**ohn Venables was the highlight of our February 14th meeting. Despite having a newly and severely broken ankle, he came out and spoke with contagious excitement. He attracted a large crowd, and filled them with wonder as he described this intriguing tribe of people who left very little behind that might have helped us understand them. It is mostly from the reminders through Roman mimicry that we know them at all. It seems that the Etruscans were already using arches when the Romans came, and they were also the ones who laid the original Roman sewers. Thanks again, John, for a great presentation.



**A**nd a special thanks as well to Bev Riter who made the most beautiful desserts and table settings I've ever seen. The desserts were also delicious.



# Upcoming Events

## March English Program Seneca Garber

Wednesday, March 14th  
7:30—9:00 pm  
(Pre-Dante pasta 5:30-7)  
Headquarters House

## March Italian Program Emilio Fonzo

Wednesday, March 28th  
7:30—9:00 pm  
Headquarters House

## Board Meeting

Monday, March 26  
7:00-8:30pm  
Faerland Terrace—1421 Minor Ave

## April English Program Norm Hollingshead

Wednesday, April 11th  
7:30—9:00 pm  
(Pre-Dante pasta 5:30-7)  
Headquarters House

## April Italian Program Nicoletta Macchiavelli

Wednesday, April 25th  
7:30—9:00 pm  
Headquarters House



## Market and Trattoria

Specialty Foods	Pasta
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...and more!

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## From the President's Desk

### Going Once, Going Twice!

**D**ante would love for you to become the proud owner of any or all of the approximately six dozen lovely glass dessert cups we have been storing at Headquarters House for a long time. There is consensus by the Board and confirmation by our own Hospitality Chair that we won't use them again, so we'd like to offer them to the highest bidder, silent auction style. We'll take bids (per dozen) at the next two meetings and the winning bid may have as many dozen as they wish. Second highest bidder may have the rest, if they choose. Any leftovers will be donated so we can have the storage space.



*A presto,  
Donna Lipsky*





## Dante Library

**J**ane Cottrell has kindly agreed to gather and organize our Dante library. These books are available to members who come to meetings. If you would like to borrow one, come to a meeting and check it out. Here is a list of the first group of books that she's had time to catalog:

26 Italian Songs & Arias, ed. John Glenn Paton - Based on Authentic Sources  
 Dante Club, Matthew Pearl  
 Design Directory Italy, Claudia Newmann  
 The Fall & Rise of Modern Italy, Serge Hughes  
 The Fall of the House of Borgia, E R Chamberlin  
 Farm Holidays, Confederazione Italiani Agricoltori  
 From Caesar to the Mafia - Persons, Places & Problems in Italian Life  
 Luigi Barzini  
 A Garden in Lucca – Finding Paradise in Tuscany, Paul Gervais  
 The History of Italy, Francesco Guicciardini  
 Italy in Mind, Alice Leccese Powers  
 Life & Times of Dante, Trans. by Arnaldo Mondadori, editore  
 Life & Times of Leonardo, Trans. by Arnaldo Mondadori, editore  
 A Man, Oriana Fallaci  
 The Medici, John Cleugh  
 The Memoir of Marco Parenti, Mark Phillips  
 Mr. Palomar, Italo Calvino  
 The New Science of Giambattista Vico,  
 trans. by Thomas Goddard Bergin & Max Fisch  
 North of Naples – South of Rome, Paolo Tullio  
 Selections from Greek & Roman Historians, ed. by C A Robinson, Jr  
 The Stones of Venice, Mary McCarthy  
 A Tuscan Childhood, Kinta Beevor

### L'aquilone



L'aquilone  
 è un grande uccello colorato.  
 Vola leggero nel cielo azzurro,  
 volteggia agile nell'aria tiepida,  
 scende in picchiata sul prato  
 fiorito  
 poi si alza veloce ad osservare il  
 mondo.

Il vento furioso lo percuote  
 e lui, fragile e indifeso,  
 si aggrappa al filo  
 che lo tiene legato alla vita.

Le sue piume colorate  
 sono un sogno  
 di libertà e spensieratezza.

Children of the Class IV - A  
 Elementary Gandhi School  
 Rovereto

# An Etruscan Tuscan Hiking Trip

News from Italian Hiking Club-Pacific Northwest Subsection



There are still openings for participants in this Italian hiking trip of no more than 14 people which is sponsored by the Alpine Club of Italy - Pacific Northwest Section (CAI-PNW). It is scheduled for this spring from April 30 - May 12 and costs \$1500 for everything except flights to and from Italy.

On this trip we will take roads less traveled in Tuscany. We will hike along ancient roads made in the Etruscan times (vie Cave) and explore archeological sites in the area around Pitigliano, Sorano, and Sovana, in the south part of Tuscany at the border with the Lazio region of which Rome is the main city. We will hike in the marble mountains of the Apuane Alps, the hilly Tuscan countryside from one medieval town to another, and on the largest island of the Tuscany Archipelago, Elba, where Napoleone was exiled from 1814-15 and we can find his house!

Although this excursion is designed for those who like some exercise along with their helpings of culture, there will be alternatives each day for less strenuous hikes and many of the days' activities will be walking leisurely through ruins and old towns. The overall trip organizer is author of *The Alps of Tuscany* and founder of Italian hiking club in Seattle, Francesco Greco. In addition, on the Island of Elba Gaudenzio Mariotti of CAI Pisa will be our guide. In the Etruscan area Roberto Matteuzzi of CAI Grosseto will enlighten us, and in Medieval Tuscany Roberto Monguzzi of CAI Milano will be our leader. (Roberto Monguzzi walked a group of Pacific north westerners through Tuscany in 2005 and also participated in the first Italian exchange in the Pacific northwest in 1996.)

*A group of Australian Bushwalkers is joining those of us from the Seattle area on this trip. For More Information or to sign-up for this adventure, please contact Cam Bradley, Trip Coordinator, CAI PNW: [cambradley@aol.com](mailto:cambradley@aol.com) 425-803-0457(home) or, 206 715-8364 (cell).*

*After March 13, contact Cam in Italy: [grecofra2@tin.it](mailto:grecofra2@tin.it) or [francescoandcam@hotmail.com](mailto:francescoandcam@hotmail.com) To view a slide show of the '05 Umbria Exchange by participant Steve Johnson, go to:*

*<http://bighugelabs.com/flickr/slideshow.php?id=23126>*

**F**ilastrocca corta e matta,  
il porto vuole sposare la porta,  
la viola studia il violino,  
il mulo dice: mio figlio è il mulino;  
la mela dice: Mio nonno è il melone;  
il matto vuole essere un mattone,  
e il più matto della terra  
sapete che vuole? Fare la guerra.  
-anonymous

Please don't forget; your  
membership renewal was due  
*1 January 2007.*

If you joined **before** September of 2006, 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 the Dante Alighieri Society.

## 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!

## Italian Language Classes

Spring Quarter will start March 27th at 7:00 p.m. at Seattle University - Administration Building. Spring quarter is the third quarter for all levels. The only class that starts from the beginning is the Introduction to Italian. Class fee for all levels is \$ 110 per quarter. Pre-registration deadline is March 6.

## HELP WANTED—DISHWASHER

**W**e need a dishwasher for the English language meeting each month on the second Wednesday. Payment includes a free meal and \$50.00 cash. Please contact Dave Cottrell (djcotrel@comcast.net or 425-827-7782) if you are interested or know someone who can do this.

## 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.*

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.



Dante Alighieri Society  
of Washington  
*"Società per la diffusione  
della lingua e della cultura  
italiana nel mondo"*

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

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## Alfonsina Morini Strada

**A**lfonsina Strada, born a peasant in 1891, second of eight children, is the only woman to ever compete in the Giro d'Italia.

Born in a hut with 28 other occupants, Alfonsina and her siblings were among the poorest classes of people in northern Italy. Her family moved around a bit to feed the family, her mother was often a wet nurse and her father was a day laborer. When Alfonsina was 10, her father came home with an old bicycle that he had received in trade for a few chickens. She was entranced. In no time at all, she was riding that bike up and down the fields, between the beets and the cabbages. She discovered that she had a real talent for it, and began racing boys and winning. Soon, she was entering in actual contests and did quite well. Her parents were horrified. They tried to prevent her from riding, so she got sneaky. She'd assure her mother she was going to church, and instead would take some back road and practice. In those days, exercise for women was considered unhealthy, and Alfonsina's behavior was scandalous. The whole family cringed while Alfonsina became the laughing stock of the town. People teased her, men made suggestive remarks and they called her crazy. Meanwhile, at the age of 13, she decided that she would become famous some day for riding her bike. Her mother just wanted her to learn a respectable trade; sewing. And she did. When she couldn't get by on her bicycle winnings, she sewed. This skill served her well for most of her life. In 1911 she broke the women's speed record, previously set in 1905. Her record stood for 26 years at 37 kilometers per hour (23 mph) and she did it on a 44 pound single geared bike.

In 1915, she became engaged, and her parents were ecstatic. Now she would quit this bicycle business and become a respectable young woman. To their dismay, the new husband, Luigi Strada gave her a shiny new bicycle as a wedding present. He became her trainer, and they began to travel the local circuit so she could compete. The first major race that Alfonsina competed in was the 1917 Giro di Lombardia. The first world war was still raging, and many of the major players were in the service. Fewer people signed up for the races, and they looked the other way when the diminutive Alfonsina signed up. She finished 32nd, last of 32 finishers, out of 74 entrants, a respectable placing for an amateur's first big time race.

In 1924 she signed up for the Giro d'Italia. She started off virtually unknown, but she generated a large following with her bobbed hair and black shorts that showed off her muscular legs. Alfonsina managed to finish every stage within the allotted time until the 8th stage. She had fallen a few times and had a very sore knee. This time, she also broke her handlebars, and wasted a lot of time wandering around looking for a replacement. Finally a housewife gave her a broomstick, which she broke in half and used in place of the handlebars. This particular stage was really tough, with driving rain and muddy, broken roads, many contestants ended up being towed, and did not finish in time, including Alfonsina. But she had become so popular that the roads were filled with fans, waiting for Alfonsina, long after the winners had gone to bed. They let her and some of the men that did not finish that stage to complete the race unofficially because of the terrible conditions. When she finished the Giro, the fans tore her from her bike and cheered her, as if she was the champion. Throughout her life, she promoted bicycling and even had her own shop. She died in 1959 at the age of 68.

From the book by Paolo Facchinetti; *Gli Anni Ruggenti di Alfonsina Strada*





**SAM CIAPANNA**  
Attorney at Law

425/454-2347

11418 NE 19th Street  
Bellevue, WA 98004-3030

## Dante on the Internet!

**W**e 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!

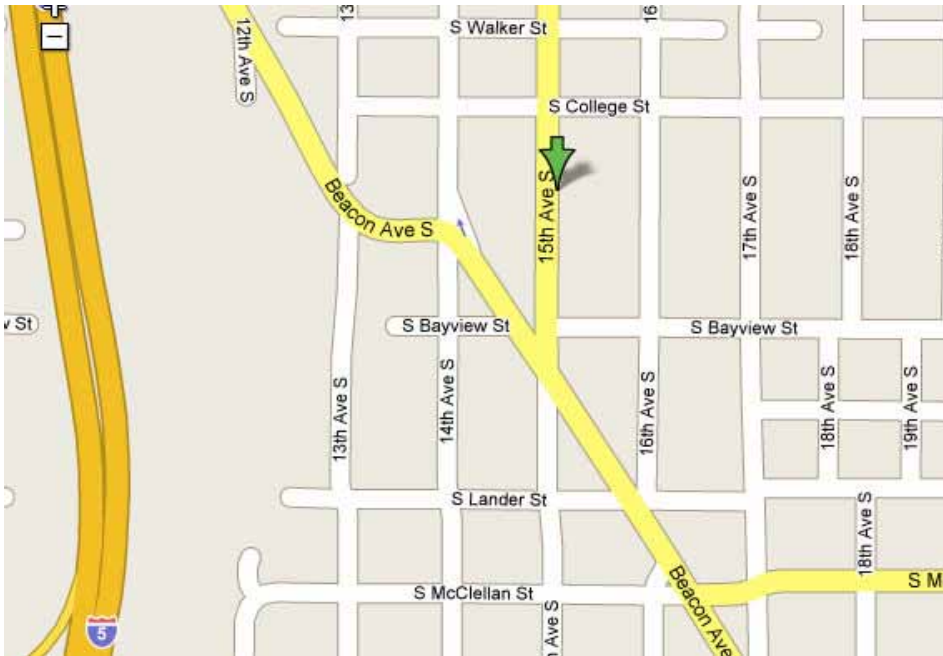
## March Board Meeting

**R**emember, as a member you are welcome! Our next meeting is March 26th, 7-8:30pm. Mark it on your calendar. The meeting is located at **Faerland Terrace—1421 Minor Ave**, right off Pike Street in Seattle. There is free parking.



## 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.



# DANTE = THE THINKER

By Carmen Flak



In the 19th century Dante's poetry was rediscovered. *The Divine Comedy*, considered to be the greatest marriage of European poetry and philosophy, rivaled only by the pagan epics of Homer and Virgil, became a bestseller. At the same time, Auguste Rodin developed a passion for *L'Inferno*. Dante's journey through hell became his inspiration, visualizing the characters became his career.

When Rodin was commissioned by the French government to create a portal intended as the entrance to a museum, he created "*The Gates of Hell*" on which he worked for many years. The museum never materialized but the portal still stands. *The Thinker* was originally meant to be Dante in front of the portal pondering his great poem. Even though Dante was thin and ascetic looking, Rodin, strongly influenced by the sculptures of Michelangelo, depicted him as a heroic figure. Dante's head bears some resemblance to the profile of *The Thinker* and Dante's headdress is distinctive and as indicated by the markings Rodin made on the working copy.

*The Thinker* (later produced on a much grander scale) is in the top center of *The Gates of Hell*, a large piece of bronze covered with human figures in various miserable poses.

Rodin's contemporaries interpreted these figures in terms of Dante's warning inscribed over the entrance to the Inferno: "*Lasciate ogne speranza, voi ch'intrate*," (Abandon all hope, you who enter here.)

*A copy of the Thinker exists at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City  
– an exhibit I sought each time I went to the Museum.*

## DANTE ALIGHIERI SOCIETY - JERSEY CITY, NJ

Guy Catrillo, president of the Jersey City DAS invites us to symbolically join hands via a link to our web sites and perhaps swap ideas for nurturing our respective societies. (Their web site is still in its infancy but you'll see photos now and more stuff later). Their 98 year old group is working on a centennial cookbook. Jersey City DAS owns their own building with a fine kitchen. Here is their URL : <http://dantealighierisociety.org/> or just go to the DAS News page and click on their link.



# The liberation of Ruggiero from the island of Alcina

**E**ach year, Northwest Puppet Center presents an elaborate baroque marionette opera. Hand-carved figures take the stage with chamber orchestra and singers on either side of the proscenium. It will be performed by these handcrafted puppets; Pupi Siciliani, three of which were made in Palermo, with live music and opera singers. This year they are staging Francesca Caccini's sole surviving opera. The Medici Court celebrated the visit of Prince Wladislaw of Poland's visit with the premier of this piece on Feb. 3, 1625 at Villa Poggio Imperiale in Florence. "The Liberation of Ruggiero" is noted in music history as the first opera composed by a woman. The libretto by Ferdinando Saracinelli draws from Canto VI of Ludovico Ariosto's "Orlando Furioso." First published in 1516, Ariosto's epic masterpiece is also one of the main sources of inspiration for Italian marionette repertoire. This performance incorporates some of the most magical and fantastic elements with a prologue by Neptune, the magical spells of Alcina the sorceress, a chorus of enchanted plants, an army of monsters and the romance between the valiant North African knight Ruggiero and the French warrior maiden Bradamante. You can find more information on the NWPC website: <http://www.nwpuppet.org/opera.html> or <http://www.nwpuppet.org/background.html> where you can see Stephen himself.



**When: April 20th through 22nd and the 27th through the 29th**  
**Where: NW Puppet Center 9123 15th Ave NE, Seattle**

Phone: 206-523-2579



## ART AND REGION: Calabria By Nina LaSalle

Umberto Boccioni, the Futurist painter and sculptor, was born on October 19, 1882 in the ancient city of Reggio, in the Region of Calabria in the new country of Italy. In 1882, twenty years after unification, Italy was a weak, politically fractured country, a nation straddling modernity in the north and antiquity in the south. After unification, Calabria's decline into abject poverty was as swift and complete as the rise of modernization was for a few cities in the north. Desperate Calabrian peasants were emigrating to the United States.

Umberto Boccioni's family was one of a small minority of Italians who were part of the petty bourgeoisie. His father, Raffaele, a civil servant, moved the family from city to city finally ending up in Padova. At 17 Umberto moved to Rome and attended art school there. He spent 1906 traveling throughout the important cities of Europe, then settled in an apartment in Milan with his mother, Cecilia. She worked as a seamstress and he earned his living as a commercial artist. During his free time he painted.

During Boccioni's youth, between 1900 and 1913, Northern Italy's economy suddenly began to grow – the silk and automobile industries contributed greatly. A condensed rush of heady ideas and inventions dazzled the modern Italian city like Marconi's wireless, the quantum, particle, and relativity theories, and the new bicycles, automobiles and airplanes. Electricity, speed, dynamism was "in." What was out, passé, was the past, Italy's past – libraries should be burned, and museums inundated, according to a group of young "punks" calling themselves the "Futurists."



Materia, 1912, oil on canvas, 89"x59"



The City Rises, 1910-11, oil on canvas, 78"x118"

Boccioni joined the Futurists in 1910 when he was 28. The other Futurists were Giacomo Balla, Gino Severini, Luigi Russolo, and Carlo Carra. Besides their painting the group was known for staging *serate*; evenings of poetry and manifesto readings. Even though Filippo Marinetti was the spokesman, Boccioni became the movement's leading theorist until his untimely death in WWI. Italian "Divisionist" painting with its theory of the complementary simultaneity of color and form was an important concept in the beginning stages of the movement. "The City Rises," 1910, is an early example of Boccioni's implementation of this thought and technique. It expressed the "whirling life of steel, of pride, of fever, and of speed." (Technical Manifesto of Painting, 1910)

The overall Futurist objective in painting and sculpture was called "simultaneity," a conflux of sensations, space and time. He achieved this in the masterpiece painting of his mother, "Materia." Energy and force converge in the power of her locked hands. The concepts of "materia"(matter) and "madre" become fused

(continued from page 10)

About the time that Boccioni finished “Materia”, he became obsessed with sculpture. He visited Paris in 1912 and saw the sculptures of Picasso and Braque, and Brancusi among others and yet he returned to Milan dissatisfied. He wrote, “la scultura e’ un’arte mummificata, che deve risorgere come la pittura.”. In his manifesto of Futurist Sculpture 1912 he developed his theory of the penetration of the figure with the environment, similar to one of his painting theories of the spectator entering the center of the picture. He created 11 sculptures, examples of “plastic dynamism”, and showed them for the first time at Galerie Boetie in Paris in 1913 with much acclaim. One of these sculptures, “Unique Forms of Continuity in Space”, has been compared to the Louvre’s “Victory of Samothrace” (190BCE). It is a synthesis of striding warrior and a windblown Nike standing on the prow of a ship. Joshua C. Taylor wrote in his book, Futurism, “The rhythms of its forms triumph over the limitations of the human stride to suggest unending movement into infinite space.”

Boccioni died on August 17, 1916. He was thrown from his horse during a cavalry exercise as a newly enlisted soldier in WWI. Boccioni’s art was far more compelling than all the Futurist rhetoric that it meant to convey. It would be an oxymoron to Boccioni that his art now resides in a museum called “modern”. However, it is a gratifying irony to know that the immigrants and their descendants from the region of his birthplace, Calabria, can see it in the city that symbolized their future, New York.

Umberto Boccioni’s “City Rises” and “Unique Forms...” are at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City. “Unique Forms...” is also on the 20 centesimi euro (see page 7). “Materia” is at the Peggy Guggenheim Museum in Venice. The city of Reggio di Calabria sponsors an annual international poetry competition; the “Nosside Internazionale” -the prize is a gold plaque with an image of Boccioni’s art embossed upon it.



Unique Forms of Continuity in Space -1913, bronze  
43 7/8x 34 7/8 x15 3/4

## DISSOLVENZA

E' bello dopo il morire  
vivere ancora  
negli occhi,  
nella mente,  
nel cuore  
delle persone;  
rimembrar parole  
sguardi  
e gesti  
che si dissolvono  
in nuvole  
di domande  
senza mai risposta.

Giorgia Bracchetti

This poem won a prize in Padova  
- Italy.

Giorgia is 30 years old and lives  
in Rovereto

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**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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