

La Voce della Dante

Published by the Dante Alighieri Society of Washington (DAS)

<http://danteseattle.org>

October 2016

October English Meeting: “A Guided Discussion of the Ins & Outs of Traveling Alone”

Presented by Julia Normand

Wednesday, October 12th, 6:30 pm, Headquarters House

Julia Normand, sister of Dante member, Anita Bingaman, will present “A Guided Discussion of the Ins & Outs of Traveling Alone”, for the October English meeting. This will be a guided discussion of traveling alone, how to decide what is right for you, and how to make the most of it if that is your choice. Among the topics are safety, staying in touch, choosing where to go, eating, and connecting with the culture.

Julia has traveled on her own not only in Italy, but in Mexico, India, Portugal, and many other countries. She also lived in Rome for nine months in the 1980’s to enhance her knowledge of the Italian language. She has continued that quest through travel to Italy, continuously reading Italian literature, and helping her sister learn the language.

October Italian Meeting

“Civita Institute in Rome”

Presented by Iole Alessandrini

Wednesday, October 26th, 6:30 pm, Headquarters House



Iole Alessandrini is a local artist who works with light and digital media in public spaces. She will be talking about the Civita Institute in Rome, for which she is president.

Born and raised in Italy, Iole Alessandrini is an artist who has been living in Seattle since 1994. She received her diploma in Fine Arts from the First State School of Fine Arts in Rome and earned two master degrees in Architecture; one from the University of La Sapienza in Rome and the other from the University of Washington in Seattle. It is the intersection between these two creative expressions—art and architecture—through which her work moves. She is a 1996 NIAUSI Fellowship recipient, Civita Institute director since 2000 and President (2016-18). <http://iole.org/>

Upcoming Events

Wed, Oct 12th:

“A Guided Discussion of the Ins & Outs of Traveling Alone”, presented by Julia Normand. Pre-Dante Pasta at

6:30 pm, presentation at 7:30 pm, Headquarters House.

Wed, Oct 26th:

“Civita Institute in Rome”, presented by Iole Alessandrini, 6:30 pm, Headquarters House.

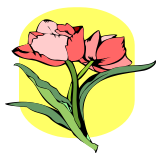
Sat, Dec 3rd:

“Festa di Natale per i Bambini”

Christ the King Church, Seattle
1-4 pm, Info will be in November newsletter.



Sicilian Sight Hounds at Festa Italiana



Our New Members

Benvenuti Nuovi Membri

Donald & Camille De Santis
Thomas Liberator
Cheryl Lundgren

**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
- * De Santis, Donald & Camille
- * Gillett, Debra Rovetto
- * Hoffman, Pat
- * Whaley, Terrance & Sandra

Argento \$26 to \$50

- * Morton, Lorraine
- * Reinert, Harry

Oro \$51 to \$100

- * Borriello, Rosa
- * Bosi, Lawrence
- * Cottrell, David & Jane
- * DeMatteis, Dan & Carol
- * Fonzo, Emilio
- * Greenfield, Peter
- * Larsen, David
- * Minotti, Dominick

From the President's Desk

Salve a tutti –

We are off to a great start for another year with the Dante Alighieri Society. First, there were two well attended and enthusiastically appreciated program meetings in September. At the first meeting Consigliere, Nick Minotti, previewed this year's Italian Cultural Quiz, which he has put together for the last two years for use at our booth at Festa. Joyce Ramee cooked up a delicious pasta dinner with sage from her own garden. For the September Italian meeting, Marcella Nardi spoke about daily life in medieval Italy.

Secondly, Festa was a great success. Lots of people came by the booth and learned about our program meeting and the Language School. Many took the quiz and a couple of visitors signed up for classes and/or expressed an interest in this year's speaker program. Our showing of the film, *Maratona Infernale*, was well attended. Giuseppe Tassone did a great job arranging the publicity throughout Festa for the film and the Society in general. Thanks especially to Toni Napoli, Nick Minotti, Stephen Stimac, and Harry Reinert as well as to everyone who volunteered at the booth.

I also wanted to tell you about the grant that DAS has received from the Italian Consulate in San Francisco and the Italian Cultural Society to support its Italian Language Program. This grant will enable us to put on some of the advanced level language classes this year that, in the past, we have had to cancel due to funding considerations. I am sure that the students who have worked their way up through our language programs to the higher levels will appreciate the chance to continue their study of Italian within our Language Program. Thanks to Giuseppe Tassone who shepherded the grant application through the review process.

And, speaking of the Language Program, my wife and I have just come back from a two week vacation in Italy. While there, we went back to Lucca and discovered the Museo dell'Emigrazione Italiana in the Palazzo Ducale. This is a fascinating museum, narrating the story of the Italians who came to North America – and in fact, went throughout the world – especially during the last decades of the 1800's and the first decades of the 1900's. One of the displays spoke of the many ways that these emigrants tried to maintain their culture and their language. The Dante Alighieri Society was singled out as one of the most widespread international organization by which the new immigrants kept their Italian culture alive and taught their sons and daughters the Italian language they so loved. I was proud to be even a small part of this history.

Finally, I hope you will be there for our October Program meetings: Julia Normand on "Traveling Alone in Italy" on October 12th and Iole Alesandrini on the "Civita Institute in Rome" on October 26th. Sharon and Bruce Leone are our cooks for the English meeting.

Looking forward to seeing you at our October meetings.

A presto,

Dan DeMatteis



Language Program News

*Giuseppe Tassone, Italian
Language School Director*

* DAS Star List 2016*

Oro \$51 to \$100

- * Shiroyama, Sylvia
- * Sportelli, Domenic & Louise

Platino—over \$100

- * Harmon, Gini
- * Rodriquez, German

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

The names on the donation list will remain through December 31, 2016. If you make a donation after May 2016, your name will be on the donation list through 2017.

Fall quarter began October 4th and runs through December 8th.

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.

PLIDA exams are offered in May and November. 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*. Why take the PLIDA exam? 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 the coordination of Giuseppe Tassone, the Dante's language school director. 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.

We 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 from last year:

The teacher is excellent. She uses our time really well and knows how to teach us little tricks to unlock the code for us. She gets an A+ in my book.

The teacher uses a multitude of instructional materials from handouts, visuals, power points, blackboard, etc. The list goes on. It is obvious that he goes out of her way to make sure we have materials which will help us understand whatever concept we will be learning.

Everything was great - about the right level and complexity.

DAS Board Meeting

Board meetings are held on the first Wednesday every other month from August through May with August being planning meeting.

The next board meeting will be held November 5th.

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)

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 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 except the new class “Intermediate-Advanced Conversational Italian” that meets Monday & Wednesdays.

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 quarter 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.

Intermediate-Advanced Conversational Italian—NEW - This is a multi-level conversational course open to students who have completed at least levels A1 and A2 and recommended for students with a level of proficiency above B1. This course will advance your fluency, listening comprehension and conversation skills, expand your vocabulary, and improve your grammar. Monday & Wednesdays

Course Schedule:

<i>Fall Quarter 2016:</i>	October 4 - December 8
Thanksgiving—No classes 11/24	
Pre-registration Deadline:	September 27
<i>Winter Quarter 2017:</i>	January 5 - March 14
Pre-registration Deadline:	December 19
<i>Spring Quarter 2017:</i>	March 30 - June 6
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

Intermediate-Advanced Conversational Italian—\$300 per quarter

For further information email: info@danteseattle.org

To register: www.danteseattle.org/register.html



www.facebook.com/danteseattle

“Icons of Italian Culture” Quiz

by Dominick Minotti

Below is a sampling of the quiz Dominick developed for this year's Festa Italiana. Participants getting 15 or more out of the 20 questions were eligible to win a free pre-Dante pasta dinner.

Questions on the quiz included the following:

- * Restructured in 2015, incorporated in the Netherlands, it sold the most expensive car ever, \$38,115,000, to magnate Craig McGaw. *Ferrari*
- * It's origin may be Passover cookies eaten by Roman Jews or matzah to which Roman soldiers added oil and cheese. *pizza*
- * Taking the maiden name of a baker's apprentice in Treviso, it suggests the eater “pick me up” because it is so good. *Tiramisu*
- * It started as a many-sided boxing match, jousting, even bullfights, until later years when racing became it's fame. *Palio di Siena*

Here is a link to Dominick's presentation about the quiz:

<https://onedrive.live.com/?authkey=%21AGpi59DIHoF5x3w&id=2CE1EA1C6E8F65CA%2140519&cid=2CE1EA1C6E8F65CA>

(Click on the tab that says “Presentations”).

La Voce

Summer flew by, it's now fall, and leaves are turning color. Now, you may have that chance to relax and enjoy a book, movie, restaurant, museum, or something else you have wanted to do and see but didn't have the time. Feel inspired and try something new!

If you find in your explorations something related to the Italian life that may be of interest to our members, 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

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:

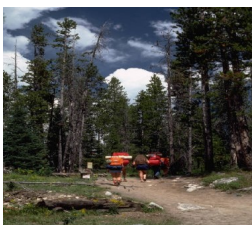
<http://danteseattle.org>

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.

Club Alpino Italiano (CAI) PNW

Club Alpino monthly hikes for fall:



Oct 8th: Iron Goat Trail, North Cascades

Classification: Moderate
Distance/Time: 6 miles RT
Elevation Gain: 700 feet
Highest Point: 2800 feet
Contact: Barbara Thake
(bthake@yahoo.com)

The trail is historical as well as pretty, with markers explaining events that happened on the railroad.

Nov 12th: Urban walk in a Seattle area park

Classification: Easy
Distance: Approximately 4 miles
Elevation Gain: Minimal
Contact: Diane Clifford
(dianelclifford@gmail.com)

Since the exact location is still a mystery to the walk facilitator, let's just say that there will probably be trees, views, and most likely some precipitation. And it'll be just a short drive for most folks to get there.

Check the CAI PNW website for further information:

www.cai-pnw.com



One of the dogs at the Italian puppy parade at Festa.



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

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

For any questions, email: plida@danteseattle.org





La Voce Needs You!

Tell 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>
November 2016	By October 20th
December 2016	By November 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 are 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://danteseattle.org>

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 (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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By Chef Enza Sorrentino

Cook fusilli in lightly salted water until “al dente” and drain. Mix with the sausage and the clams in their broth. Add plenty of parsley and freshly ground black pepper.



Inside booths at Festa



As prepared by David Madrid

While pasta is boiling, heat olive oil with red pepper. Add pancetta until crisp, remove pancetta and add chopped onion to oil for a few minutes then add garlic only for a minute. Add hand squeezed tomatoes for about 1 1/2 minutes, let simmer and add basil and parsley. With tongs add al dente pasta and a cup or so of pasta water. Mix in all pancetta, cover with cheese and let sit for 5-10 minutes.

Mangia baby!!

David Madrid is the host & founder of the **West Coast Italian Radio show**. The show is broadcast every Monday 3-5pm on KKNW 1150AM & KLAY 1180AM. More info can be found at: <http://www.weir.biz/>



Gini Harmon and Caterina Wartes at the DAS booth at Festa

Baked Stuffed Clams

As prepared by Chef Walter Pisano of Tulio Ristorante

36 large clams, washed
1/4 cup dry white wine
6 fresh garlic cloves (not peeled)
1/2 cup virgin olive oil
1/8 teaspoon crushed red chili flake
1/2 cup flat leaf parsley, washed and sliced
1/2 pound unsalted butter
1/2 grana Parmesan grated
1 each fresh lemon juice
3 cups fresh bread crumbs
1 tablespoon fresh marjoram, washed and minced
1/4 cup chives washed and minced

Prep the bread crumbs:

In a heavy bottom sauté pan slowly heat 1/4 pound of butter with 1/4 cup olive oil. Add the 4 sliced garlic cloves and lightly toast. When garlic is lightly browned, add the fresh bread crumbs and mix well. Toast the bread crumbs slowly for 3-4 minutes. Make sure to stir constantly to avoid burning. Turn the heat off and add chives, parsley and parmesan. Mix together well and set aside.

Prep the clams:

In a heavy bottom sauce pan, begin to heat 1/4 cup of olive oil slowly then add 2 sliced garlic cloves, chili flakes, and washed clams. Sauté the clams for 30 seconds then add the wine, lemon juice, and cover. Jiggle the pan slightly during this process. The clams should take approximately 2-3 minutes to open. When the clams are open remove and place in a strainer and reserve the juice.

When the clams are cool take a paring knife and slice around the shell of the clam. During this process try and keep the clam intact. Place the clams in the strained broth to prevent them from drying out. Reserve the clam shell for stuffing.

To assemble:

Place the clam shells on a sheet pan. Start the process by placing a shucked clam into the shell, then place a little dollop of butter on the clam. Mound the bread crumbs in the clam shell until completely covered. Continue this process until all the clams are stuffed. Drizzle a few drops of the clam juice on the bread crumbs just before baking.

To bake:

Turn your oven on broil and preheat. Place the sheet pan of clam on the lowest rack in your oven. Warm so the bread crumbs are toasted and the clams are slightly warm inside.

To serve:

Carefully remove the clams and place on a platter and serve immediately.

Serves 6

For more recipes, please check the Festa site at:
www.festaseattle.com

Click on the “Activities” tab, then “Food and Wine” and “Chef Schedule”. There are recipes from Brian Gojdic of Tutta Bella; Joe Zavaglia of From the Heart of Italy, Cooking School; Steven Thompson, Private Chef, formerly of Restaurant Rescue and Hilton Hotels; Brad Inserra, Columbia Hospitality; Franz Junga & Marco Nocco of Il Fornaio; Frank Isernio of Isernio Sausage; and Perry Mascitti and Jeremy Taisey of Tulalip Resort & Casino. Enjoy...

Interview: David Laskin

by Rebecca Novelli



Recently, *La Voce* sat down for an interview with writer David Laskin, author of some dozen books and numerous articles.

Laskin writes frequently about travel in Italy. His recent book, *The Family*, provides a template for researching one's family history.

Please tell us about yourself.

I grew up on Long Island and attended Harvard University from 1971-75. I studied history and literature and learned French. After graduation I went to Oxford University in England to study English. When I finished, I came back to NY and got a job in publishing and shortly afterwards became freelance writer, which I've been doing now since 1981.

Initially, I wrote articles on travel, parenting, and working in advertising. A book on islands off the east coast of America was the beginning of my writing books that I wanted to write, including books on the weather. More recently, I've focused on narrative non-fiction, i.e. novelistic recreations of the past, which has become my approach to most subjects I undertake.

What led to your writing travel articles about Italy?

I first went to Italy when I was attending graduate school at Oxford University between 1975 and 1977. I went to Florence on a lark before my second year at Oxford. Because I had studied Latin in high school, I had a little under-

standing of Italian. Like so many before me, I loved the Italian people, their history, culture, food and their attitudes and, of course, the country. This initial interest remained dormant until my wife and I went to Italy—Rome and Sicily—on our honeymoon in 1982. That was the real beginning of my love affair with Italy. We stayed in a hotel not far from Spanish Steps, and our window overlooking the city presented a very romantic view of obelisks and statues, some on top of buildings, and fountains. On the way into the city from the airport, we circled the coliseum marveling that passing by it was part of the normal course of driving in Rome. This layering of times and historic periods there and the fact that the ancient city was still visible amid the city of later ages made an especially strong impression on both of us.

When did you decide to learn Italian?

I began studying Italian in 2003. I had studied French in college, so I thought I could learn Italian fairly easily. The decision to study seriously was a bit of a whim and had partly to do with my fiftieth birthday: I wanted to really master another language. I started with CDs, but when I tried to speak with Italians, I could see this sense of patience and amusement on their parts. I began taking classes at Seattle Language Academy and have taken classes ever since. As most people will tell you, progress is slower than when you're young and somewhat halting. My reading skills are pretty good now, but speaking is still a problem for me.

Do you use your Italian professionally?

The first time I used my Italian professionally was just a few years ago when I wrote an article for the *New York Times* about Urbino. I did the interviews in Italian. There were some things I didn't quite get, and occasionally I noticed pained looks from professors and curators. I persevered. It's been hugely rewarding to indulge my passion for country and language and to use Italian professionally. Since then, I've done a number of articles and research in Italian, including the research for two of my recent articles on the Jewish ghettos in Rome and Venice. Sometimes, my Italian contacts prefer to speak English, but they're always willing to do the interview in Italian if they don't speak English. Sometimes we go back and forth between English and Italian.

Another challenge for me is taking notes. I don't record interviews—a personal preference. My notes end up in a mish mash of Italian and English so they can be difficult to decipher if I don't sit down right after the interview and put them in order while I still remember the sense of what was said.

What places in Italy have you written about?

I've done several travel articles on Rome. One on the Renaissance gardens of Rome was included in *The Best Travel Writing from the New York Times on Italy*. I've been fortunate that the *Times* has been very open to my writing about my interests. For example, I wrote about

Rome of Pope Alexander VII, who commissioned Bernini to design the portico for St. Peter's basilica as well as do other urban planning projects. More recently, as I said, I've explored the Jewish ghettos in Rome and Venice, both fascinating areas that many tourists don't have an opportunity to see.

I've also done a lot of travel writing about other areas over the years. One of my first books was about all the islands you can get to by ferry on the east coast of the US. In fact, my first article for the *New York Times* was one on Montauk Island, so initially my destinations were closer to home.

How does your travel writing relate to your other non-fiction writing?

My last three books all required a great deal of travel to do research. *The Children's Blizzard* took me to the Midwest. *The Family*, which was a "roots" project, took me to Israel and Belarus, Lithuania. At the same time, I had travel writing assignments for those places, too. For *The Long Way Home* I wrote a travel piece on the Argonne, the site of the final battle of WWI and of the largest American cemetery in Europe. I'm often able to do research for a book and also write a travel article on the same geographical area that may have little to do with the book. For example, doing research for *The Family* involved my first trip to Israel, and so I proposed a travel piece on the subject of tracing the roots of my family in Israel, which became trial run for a book describing travel with my cousins in Israel as we searched for our roots. The *New York Times* has published several of these what you might call cultural and roots articles. I find family history and genealogy are subjects of widespread public interest.

As someone who spends time in Italy, do you have any observations about Italy and Italians?

I think there's a disconnection between the Italy we love and seek and the real Italy of today. As a tourist, you tend to go to the *centro storico*, see museums and stay in beautiful places. In this way, you feel very much in touch with way people lived hundreds, sometimes thousands, of years ago. When you really chat with people who actually live there, however, the attitude of most of those I have contact with has been extremely pessimistic. There is a sense of hopelessness, of a culture in decline. The vibrancy, beauty and the great illumination of the past that we value so much doesn't seem to be very present in the contemporary lives of Italians. So I notice a great difference between my passion for historic Italy and the contemporary political and economic realities of that country.

That said, however, I find that average Italians are very aware of and proud of their history in a way that I think is fairly uncommon in America. Typically, an Italian will also show you an historic site when you're with them in a way that reflects pride and tempers that national pessimism. So in Italy there is this strange combination of pessimism and pride.

What do you think might explain that contradiction in Italian attitudes?

When you look at the Renaissance in Italy there was a sense of exuberance, of an opening up in art and science. That was combined with political violence, wars, incredible religious and secular conflicts, killings, and assassinations. The excitement associated with the Renaissance is still evident in small ways today, for example, in early Fellini movies, the Italian film industry, perhaps; in view of all of Italian history maybe these waves of exuberance and violence have always coincided.

Recently, I've been studying the literature of WWII and the *do-poguerra*, I was unfamiliar with most of the works of this period that dealt with the War and its aftermath, the overwhelming sense of crisis in it. The social and literary response to this cataclysm has been eye opening for me. I now see that a very vibrant literature came out of chaotic, violent period. For example, *L'Agnese va a Morire* [Agnese Goes to Die] by Viganò is a novel that has stayed with me because of what it revealed about the conditions and aspirations of the *partigiani*, the resistance movement. In Italian literature, even in 20th Century and contemporary Italian literature, there is so much that's worth reading.

What advice would you give those who plan to travel in Italy?

In general, I think it's almost always better to *go with some sort of agenda*. Pretty much every major place has vast cultural riches that you can't take in in one visit. If you have some sort of focus, your visit will have some coher-

ence. On our honeymoon, for example, my wife and I focused on Hadrian's Rome because we had read *Memoirs of Hadrian* by Marguerite Yourcenar and were interested in Hadrian's legacy. It was a rich and rewarding experience.

For those who are interested in learning the Italian language, do **maximize your language exposure**. As a tourist you have limited opportunities to speak Italian and Italians expect to speak English to English speakers, so you must think about linguistic opportunities. I find renting accommodations through VRBO or Air B & B where the owner doesn't speak English is one good way to be sure I have an opportunity to speak Italian. Two years ago we rented part of a farmhouse in Puglia from a family that had olive oil concern. They spoke no English, and so we were able to get to know them by speaking Italian with them.

If you can go for an extended time, there are, of course, more opportunities. When we stayed for a month, I hired **a conversation partner and a tutor**. It took about ten minutes online to find them and they were both great. Participating in something local is another possibility. My brother joined a band.

Another way to speak Italian is to **get off the beaten track**. In the less tourist-y places, speakers of English are few to non-existent, so it's necessary to speak Italian. I often have great conversations with cab drivers, especially in Rome, and I try to chat with them.

Take classes. We've also combined language and culture by taking cooking classes. Our class went to market where we felt

wrapped up in the daily life of the locals. In the market we could see who had the best products because that's where old ladies were lined up. When they saw that we were "newbies," they helped us get through the line.

The important thing in practicing Italian in Italy is to **just do it**. Don't worry about making mistakes. People will appreciate your efforts and typically they are helpful and supportive.

What advice can you give people who want to research their Italian roots?

Although my book called *The Family* has nothing to do with Italian-ness, it does pertain to anybody who has roots in a foreign country, especially Europe. If we're seeking our family's roots, we're asking: *Who are we? Where did we come from? What happened to us?* These are universal questions that I pursued. Italy has a huge overlap with what I write about because Italy went through the same wars, civil wars, and the holocaust, too, and the history of Jews in Italy epitomizes the various currents of Italian politics. I intended that the book would serve as a template for how to do family history.

What is your next Italian travel project?

I'm leaving in a few weeks to do research in Milan, Brescia, Venice and Rome on historic libraries in Italian history. In Milan I'll be visiting the Biblioteca Ambrosiana, in Venice the Marciana. These are important and beautiful buildings with archives now mostly used by scholars, but I do hope seeing libraries will give me a different perspective on Italy's intellectual history.

La Voce: What do you plan to write in the future?

Fiction definitely appeals to me, but I think it would be a challenge because I am freest imaginatively when I'm working with detailed historical records. I enjoy thinking about how those lives were lived. I'm somewhat pessimistic about the state of publishing. As a writer, I'm doing something I think is important, but for obvious reasons the publisher is primarily concerned about sales. It's a fact of life for any writer. I have to think about writing books and then about selling them, too. While it's much more appealing to travel to Italy and write about it than to do a book tour, I'm very fortunate to have reasons to do both.

Links to David Laskin's travel articles on Italy:

500 Years of Jewish Life in Venice:

A journey into one of the world's oldest Jewish ghettos, where this year a long, rich history is commemorated.

<http://tinyurl.com/z4s9fq9>

Echoes of History at a Tuscan Estate

On a visit to La Foce, southeast of Siena, connecting with the property's past, and exploring its present.

<http://tinyurl.com/m8qbdzw>

A Vision As Eternal As His City

During his papacy, from 1655 to 1667, Pope Alexander marshaled the

great architects of the day -- Bernini, Pietro da Cortona, Carlo Rainaldi -- to cut long, straight boulevards, dramatic piazzas and festive approaches to the city of Rome.

<http://tinyurl.com/z6s7fb8>

Lessons in Renaissance Cool in Urbino, Italy

This historic and ruggedly remote town was known for refinement, elegant nonchalance and art.

<http://tinyurl.com/zlmgp4z>

Echoes From the Roman Ghetto

Beyond today's festive scene in this neighborhood by the Tiber River is a somber and not so ancient past for the city's Jews.

<http://tinyurl.com/z5x3h99>

River Gods and Grottoes: 4 Italian Renaissance Gardens

Closed Monday's. Opens 8:30 a.m. with various closing times. See website for specific times. Admission is \$7.35.

<http://tinyurl.com/z4qu942>

A Family Who Had It Flaunted It

For the Farneses, who turned Rome into a work of art, one palace was never enough.

<http://tinyurl.com/jyjebsy>



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Puget Sound Concert Opera: Intimate. Personal. Uplifting.

Taking advantage of the rich and vibrant local classical music scene, Puget Sound Concert Opera (PSCO) takes pride in casting the best local performers to create high quality, affordable productions of the world's greatest operas. With our innovative concert opera format, PSCO's productions allow audience members to see, hear and feel the music up close in intimate venues.

OUR NEXT PRODUCTION

***Cavalleria Rusticana* by Pietro Mascagni**

Saturday, October 8 at 7:00 PM

Cross of Christ Lutheran Church
411 156th Ave NE, Bellevue, WA

Sunday, October 9 at 2:00 PM

Music Center of the Northwest
901 North 96th Street, Seattle

Turiddu, a soldier returning home from war, learns that his fiancée, Lola, has married Alfio. Moving on with his life Turiddu begins a relationship with Santuzza. Lola, still in love with Turiddu, seduces him away from Santuzza. A wild story of love, lust and jealousy which culminates in a duel to the death, Mascagni's opera includes some of the most stirring and dramatic music in opera.

Sung in Italian with supertitles in English and Italian, *Cavalleria Rusticana* will be performed concert style with soloists, a chorus of 30 and an 11-piece chamber orchestra.

Admission at the door: \$20, cash or checks. We cannot accept credit cards at this time.

Featured Performers:

Turiddu: Gino Lucchetti

Santuzza: Katherine Castro

Alfio: Charles Robert Stephens

Lola: Katie Stevenson

Lucia: Victoria Chaussee

Piano: John Burkhardt

Arranger/Conductor: Bernard Kwiram

info@pugetsoundconcertopera.org

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Other Happenings

40th Anniversary Celebration— Bellevue Lodge Sons of Italy

The Bellevue Lodge Sons of Italy invites Dante members to their 40th Anniversary Celebration on Thursday, October 6th at Unity Church of Bellevue, 16330 NE 4th Street, Bellevue. This is four blocks south of Crossroads Mall on 164th Avenue NE.

It will be held on their regular meeting night with a social hour beginning at 5:30 pm, the special dinner starts at 6:30 pm and the meeting starts at 7:15 pm. Charter members and past presidents will be honored.

Please join them to thank the 1976 founders of their lodge and those who have led it over the years.

Please RSVP by October 3rd to Michele Guerrini at 206-979-9147 cell (call or text) or home 425-746-2487 or email Guerrini@aol.com. Cost is \$10.00 per person. They will need to know if you can attend to ensure there is enough food for everyone.



Marcella Nardi's September Italian meeting presentation can be found at the

link below:

<https://onedrive.live.com/?authkey=%21AGpi59Dl-HoF5x3w&id=2CE1EA1C6E8F65CA%2192070&cid=2CE1EA1C6E8F65CA>

DANTE CALENDAR 2016–2017

Dante Alighieri Society of Washington

<p>2016:</p> <p>September 14th: English Meeting Dominick Minotti “Festa Quiz Preview”</p> <p>September 28th: Italian Meeting Marcella Nardi “Daily Life in Medieval Italy”</p>	<p>2017:</p> <p>January 11th: English Meeting Terry Tazioli, Journalist of TVW’s <i>Well Read</i></p> <p>January 25th: Italian Meeting TBA</p>
<p>October 12th: English Meeting Julia Normand “A Guided Discussion of the Ins & Outs of Traveling Alone”</p> <p>October 26th: Italian Meeting Iole Alesandrini “Civita Institute in Rome”</p>	<p>February 8th: English Meeting Wine Tasting Dinner w/Chris Zimmerman</p> <p>February 22nd: Italian Meeting TBA</p>
<p>November 9th: English Meeting Rebecca Novelli “The Train to Orvieto” (Writing a Novel about Italians & Italy)</p> <p>No Italian Meeting in November</p>	<p>March 8th: English Meeting TBA</p> <p>March 22nd: Italian Meeting TBA</p>
<p>December 3rd: Festa di Natale per i Bambini</p> <p>December 14th: Annual Christmas Party</p> <p>No Italian Meeting in December</p>	<p>April 12th: English Meeting Election Night</p> <p>April 26th: Italian Meeting TBA</p>
	<p>May 10th: English Meeting Rob Prufer “La Liberta’: Judith & Archetypes of Liberation in Italian Art”</p> <p>No Italian Meeting in May</p> <p><i>June-August 2016: Summer break, no meetings.</i></p>

At 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

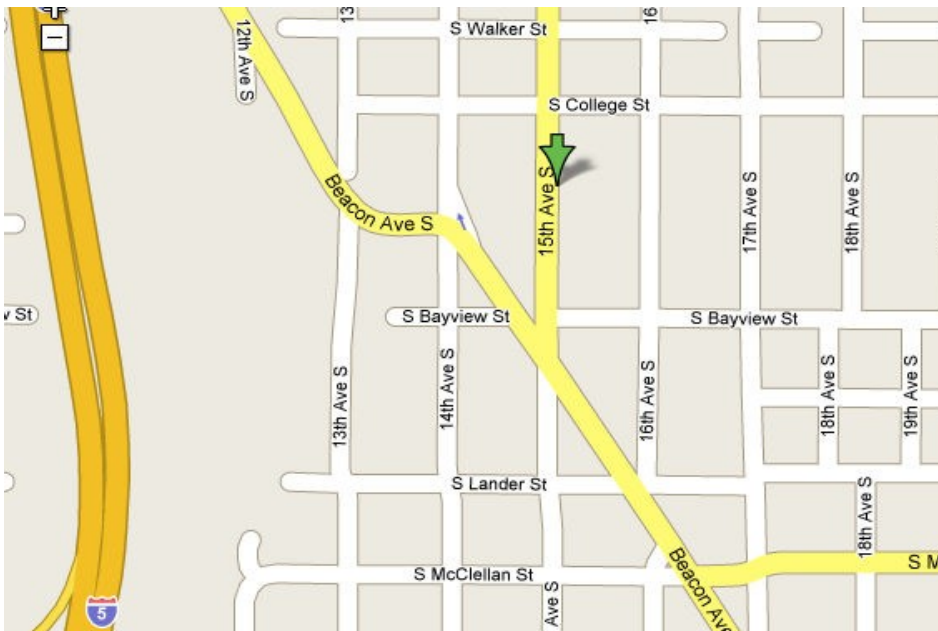
Argento (silver) - \$26 to \$50

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.