
La Voce della Dante

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President's Message

Ciao a Tutti, e Buona Pasqua!

Greetings for April,

First, a “farewell” announcement! **Rosa Borriello**, a beloved member of Dante Seattle for many years, is moving to Boston to live nearer her son. She will be missed! Linda Bavisotto and Anita Bingaman are coordinating some appropriate “goodbyes” for Rosa. Links and information about these

will be shared at our Annual Meeting (see below). Our best wishes go out to Rosa as she begins this new chapter of her life!

The Dante season continues to go well, with our Language Program classes, our online presentations, our membership renewals, and our hopes for at least some return to live activities next season. As we wait for more information as to what will be possible next year, we have three more sessions coming up:

April 14, 7:00 – 8:30 Annual Meeting and election of Board

Please plan to attend this important zoom meeting, so you can be involved in the TRIVIA GAME, the DRAWING FOR PRIZES, and so we can get your FEEDBACK on EVENTS THIS YEAR. We'll also share info on keeping in touch with Rosa. Reports and election of next year's Board of Directors will be shared; the Slate of Nominees will be sent to all current members by the (required) ten-days-before-the-meeting deadline, and the zoom link will go out one day before.

April 28, Italian Meeting

Maurizio Igor Meta: Ellis Island Project

May 12, English Meeting

Jonathan Brandt: I Rioni di Roma (Neighborhoods of Rome)

Both presentations begin at 7:30; zoom room opens at 7:00 for conversation.

Also in this issue, Dan has supplied us with a nice list of April online activities from other organizations. Looking toward fall, it's official: **Festa Italiana 2021** will be a **LIVE**, all-outdoor gathering of food and other booths at Seattle Center in September. Watch for updates during the summer months!

Enjoy the promise of spring this month

A presto,

Joyce



April Programs

April 14, 2021 English Meeting

Annual General Meeting

(Online)

Our English meeting this April is our annual AGM. Besides the usual annual reports from the President, Treasurer and Language School Director as well as the election of officers for the coming year, the Board has planned a quiz on "all things Italian". There will be prizes drawn for attendees. You have to be there to win!

A link will be emailed to members of record on April 13 to enable them to participate in the meeting.

April 28, 2021 Italian Meeting



Ellis Island

(Online)

Presented by Maurizio Igor Meta

Author and actor, Maurizio Igor Meta works mainly in theatre and in the last few years in art installations. Drama, poetry, sound, video, light and scenography, are some of the means he uses in a dramaturgical composition to create a symbolical imagery. In November 2015 he sailed by a cargo ship from Naples to New York to retrace the steps of his great grandfather Domenico, who left Italy in the late 1800s to the United States, where he worked, pick and shovel, for the Pennsylvania Railroad. So he started his multidisciplinary project *“Ellis Island”*, which includes the Journey, the theater Solo with the same title – opened in the Napoli Teatro Festival Italia in July 2017 – the exhibition *“On my great grandfather steps. Toward Ellis Island”* – which includes several installation, as *“The first ship”*, opened in 2018 at the Madre Museum – a documentary and a book.

Maurizio Igor Meta on the Presentation:

“Ellis Island” is the Journey of Life. It is not only a project related to my memory, my identity, and to the deep connection with my land and roots, but it is something that affects every human being: it is a Tribute to the Origin, a tribute to that inborn ability of the human being to challenge the unknown. At the Origin of our lives, when we are born, we face that challenge for the first time. Immigrants face it again, taking a “leap in the dark to leap in Life”.

In the Presentation we will open a time-gate on the late 1800s Italian immigration, we will talk about the origin of the project and how the experience of retracing the steps of my great grandfather turned in artworks, and we will listen to the sound composition of the installation “The first ship” to experience the ocean crossing of our fathers and the many immigrants of that age.

A Story by a Dante Member





Isnello, Piccolo e Bello by Jane Cottrell

On the great wall of the Vatican Library is a mural of Sicily that was painted in 1580-1583 based on the drawings of friar and geographer, Ignazio Danti. All the wall maps are considered to be about 80% accurate. There are not many villages or towns portrayed on the Sicilian map, but Isnello is clearly one small site located just south of Cefalù. Isnello is nestled among high limestone walls. At the top of one of the foothills is the ruin of a castle that dates from the 13th century. Records show that the community had been a Greek and Arab settlement and remains from an Arab excavation have been found.

My mother and father were both born and raised in Isnello although they really didn't know each other growing up. My siblings and I grew up hearing "Isnello, Piccolo e Bello" from my mother whose heart remained in this medieval village of Isnello in the province of Palermo. It is roughly 39 miles to Palermo from Isnello. Access to the village that is south of Cefalu, is up a winding, switchback mountain road into the interior of the Madonie Mountains.



The town remains pretty much like it was when my parents lived there in the early 20th century. Most of the residents were farmers, whose farms were a good walk or horseback or donkey ride out of town. There might be a small cabin built on the farm. I visited our family's little farm and stayed overnight at the little 2 story house when I visited back in 1952. My distinct recollection of eating a raw egg there has never left me.

I started returning to Sicily in 1996 and have been back almost a half dozen times since. I can say that Isnello has not changed much in the almost 65+ years since I first went there as a child. I'm not sure what the present day livelihood of the villagers is. The houses are centuries old and the streets are narrow and laid out in an enigmatic pattern. There are about 2,800 people who currently reside there.

I have first cousins who live in Sicily and I visit them whenever I get the chance. I have maintained a closer relationship with those on my mother's side. Somehow or other, maybe because my father never went back to Italy after 1925, I don't have contact with his nieces and nephews.

One of my cousins lives in Isnello on an estate that overlooks the village. His joy is the garden and the animals that he raises there. He and his wife have a

restaurant in Piano Battaglia, Il Ristoro dello Scoiattolo. It gets rave reviews on Trip Advisor. The restaurant also provides a webcam look of the hills around it. Check it out, especially if you are traveling there. We never had the time to dine at their restaurant but we have been guests in their home. Mama Mia! Meals to dream about.

Some members of our CAI group have stayed at the Refugio that the brothers used to run in the Parco delle Madonie.

The people of Isnello are very proud of the fact that the mayor of New York City, Vincent Impellitteri (1950-1953) was born in Isnello, even though he and his family left when he was a year old. In fact, after World War II, while he was mayor of NYC in 1950, he visited and his parting gift to the village was to have a bath house or a place for people to shower built for them. As a youngster, I was there two years later and I was never sure if the villagers were grateful or amused. Even today though, they will proudly point out the strada that is named for him. Carlo Levi, the great Italian author, wrote an essay in *Words Are Stones: Impressions of Sicily*, about that visit.

A small square with a fountain unofficially called Il Ponto that overlooks a small rivulet caused the villagers to fear that they would be bombed during WWII. My mother often read that in their letters to her. Truly, il Ponto is not a strategic site.



But like many hill towns, Isnello is losing its young people to a more modern lifestyle or better opportunities outside. The rest of my cousins have moved to Cefalu or Palermo. Some of their children reside in Milan and Syracuse. A big boost to the economy is the GAL Hassin, International Center for the Astronomical Sciences, that I was lucky enough to visit in 2019. It is unlike any planetarium that

I have been to. The telescopes which are probably human sized are housed in a garage like building. When researchers study the stars, the building moves forward on tracks to view the open sky. The stationary telescopes track asteroids, monitor space debris, gamma ray bursts and gravitational wave sources. They also study variable stars and active galactic nuclei. Excerpted from their brochure, "No telescopes of comparable capabilities exist in the whole European continent as of now and none are foreseen to be built in the near future." There is an auditorium and study areas for visitors. Wikipedia claims that NASA built this astronomical center, but I did not see reference to that in their pamphlet.

In gratitude to the village, GAL Hassin has named Asteroid 6168 "Isnello," a minor planet in the Asteroid Main Belt.

If you should be in the vicinity of Isnello, the Madonie Mountains, or Cefalù, the nearest big city, I would like to recommend Il Ristoro dello Scoiattolo, and Agrodolce B&B in Cefalù, run by my young cousin. She gets rave reviews, as well, on Trip Advisor. If you go, be sure to tell them I sent you.

Linda Bavisotto and Bill Lemcke have passed through Isnello and I would like to thank Linda for directing me to this half hour video about a festival of food, what else, in Isnello.

"Live from Isnello, Part 2" – things to do around Isnello:

https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=1755999194531843&ref=watch_permalink

Photos for Isnello, Piccolo e Bello, left to right, top to bottom:

Stock photo of Vatican map

Isnello at Vatican - Afinello

Isnello and surrounding hills

The church steeple that my mother's family attended. Almost around the corner from her house

Il Ristoro dello Scoiattolo

GAL Hassin

Italian Language Program News

By Giuseppe Tassone

I cannot believe that we began already our third quarter of our Italian language program during which our students will work to reach their proficiency level in order to advance in the fall to their next level.

We closed spring quarter registration with 73 students with an excellent retention from last quarter when we had a total of 78 students.

Among the numerous continuing students, we had the students who presented at the last Italian language meeting on the occasion of the *Dantedì* to whom, along with their instructors Laura Ciroi, Nicla Rivero, Francesca Giambartolomei, Damiano Pinton, Paola Alberti and Roberta Punzi, go once again our congratulations. *Bravissimi!*

For those who were not able to attend the *Dantedì* celebration, we had the following program:

The A1 (Sec. II) students provided a brief presentation of some relevant characters of the *Commedia* using the illustrations by Gustave Doré.

Students of the A2 level showed the enormous impact that Dante's *Divina Commedia* had and continue having on the Italian (and world's) culture through the many traces it left on contemporary Italian language. They presented a selection of expressions used in Dante's work, from *Inferno* to *Paradiso*, that are still used in everyday speech and provided a brief explanation of meaning, usage, and context in which they appear in the poet's original work.

The B1 level students read and explained a sonnet from Dante's *Vita Nuova* and *Rime* and part of *Canto XXVI* from the *Inferno*

The students of the B2 level read and explained the first verses of *Canto III* from the *Inferno* and focused on the relationship between *La Divina Commedia* and the arts. The students presented a selection of artworks and musical masterpieces, which have been directly inspired by *La Divina Commedia* and explored subjects that can be associated with the poet's work.

To conclude the program, we watched a video with the A1 (Sec. I) students reciting in Italian the most famous verses of the *Commedia*.

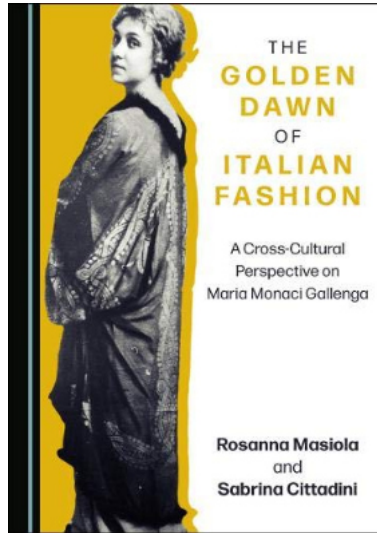
Students highly valued this experience as you can read from some of their answers from the end of winter quarter evaluation form where, among the other questions, we asked to comment about it:

- * It was fun & challenging - a great introduction to Dante*
- * It was a great way of pushing myself to perform in Italian.*
- * I really value this experience. I had the opportunity to learn more about Dante and his work, write a report in Italian, and practice my pronunciation. I also appreciated seeing the work of the other levels.*
- * It was incredibly fun to be part of this experience, and also another great opportunity for us to practice what we learn.*
- * I found great value in learning about the importance of Dante to the Italian culture and society. The 2021 presentation opened my eyes to a lot and I feel like I gained deeper insight into the culture that I didn't have before. It makes sense that this historical figure would be woven into the curriculum. I would also enjoy learning about the impact of some other key figures in the evolution of Italy and the Italian language.*
- * It was a great learning experience - writing, studying, then speaking Italian was a great experience.*
- * This was a lot of fun. I wish we can do more like this type of event or anything that will bring together students.*
- * I greatly enjoyed all the presentations*
- * It was very useful. I learned a lot in writing my piece and reviewing it. It's worth continuing this experience in the future.*
- * I attended and I learned about Dante both in class and through the presentation.*

We all put a lot of effort into it and it is a great satisfaction to see the positive results. I am thankful to Dan DeMatteis for putting the Language Program on the calendar of events and for his enthusiasm that motivated us to do our best. We will continue in the future with similar events and as we say in Italian *le idee già bollono in pentola*.

What's Happening

By Dan DeMatteis



Seattle Perugia Sister City Association Sunday, April 11, 2021 - 11 AM PST

Seattle Perugia Sister City Association series, "A Casa" interviews SPSCA friends living in Perugia/Umbria during Covid-19 to see how they're getting along safely during this global pandemic.

Join our "A Casa" interview (in Italian, with English translation) on April 11, 11am Seattle time (8pm Italy time) with special guest, Sabrina Cittadini! Sabrina is an instructor at l'Universita per Stranieri in Perugia, who grew up in Perugia and has a new book out: "The Golden Dawn of Italian Fashion" in English. She's also working on her second book, this one in Italian.

The event is free. To attend, join the Zoom Meeting at 11 AM on April 11 by clicking:

<https://us02web.zoom.us>

[/j/83686984258?pwd=S2luTURBdlFkOWVoeGN4aEVKcVNRUT09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83686984258?pwd=S2luTURBdlFkOWVoeGN4aEVKcVNRUT09)

Meeting ID: 836 8698 4258 - Passcode: 965037



Momenti Musicali
Sunday, April 18, 2021 - 7 PM PST

Music and literature have always been related to each other. Many composers have been inspired by literary works for their compositions. With ***Momenti Musicali*** musicians and actors work together to accompany you on a fantastic journey through notes and words. The musicians will play the pieces linked to the literary passages that will be read in Italian and in English.

In this performance, we will explore how Liszt musically interprets three of Petrarca's sonnets. Featured will be Pianist: Luana Struppa and Actors: Viviana Dragani and Steve Dooner.

This event is sponsored by the Società Dante Alighieri - Roma in collaboration with Dante Alighieri Society - Michigan and under the Auspices of the Consulate General of Italy in Boston and the Consulate General of Italy in Detroit.

To register, go to - <https://www.events.dantemass.org/event-details/momenti-musicali-ferenc-liszt-and-francesco-petrarca>

Dante's Odyssey: An Apocalypse Now

Thursday, April 22, 2021 - 6:30 PST



Dante Society of BC presents an online event in English via Zoom - ***Dante's Odyssey:***

An Apocalypse Now - Tales from an inner journey, a talk by filmmaker Max Leonida of William Penn University.

Dante was the first writer to depict human beings as the products of a specific time, place & circumstance as opposed to mythic archetypes or a collection of vices and virtues: therefore it could be rightly said that Dante has actually started modern fiction.

From that assumption comes the everlasting charm & the evergreen appeal of the adventures of Dante's journey as a still powerful magnet that can everlastingly gain an incredible interest all over the world: from popular videogames (Dante's Inferno) to cartoons & movies... the journey of a hero in Hell is still the most wonderful, modern & relevant story to be told.

For more information and to register, go to <https://www.dantesocietybc.ca/cultural-events>

CAI-PNW April Hike

Wednesday, April 14 Urban Walk

Discover the University of Washington area with Steve Johnson on Wednesday, April 14th. Walk through Union Bay Natural Area featuring several ponds and home to turtles, beavers and a wide variety of waterfowl.

The walk then continues up to Husky Stadium and the University of Washington Campus passing by Drumheller Fountain. The Fountain dates back to 1909 as part of an elaborate water display for the Alaska Yukon Pacific Exposition. In 1961 the Fountain was named for University Regent, Joseph Drumheller who gifted a center fountain for the pond during UW's centennial celebration.

The tour will continue through the University of Washington campus then back to University Village. The actual route will depend on the weather at the time. It should be 3-4 miles with some minor elevation gain up to Drumheller Fountain. Covid rules will be followed, and a slow pace is expected.

Meet at the Starbucks in the University Village QFC. Contact Steve regarding meeting time. See you there!

To RSVP please contact by Monday, April 12: Steve Johnson

Email: stevepaine45@gmail.com

Today in Italia

By Janet Lenart

Did you know that 2021 marks 160 years of diplomatic relations between Italy and the U.S? You can learn more at <https://www.italyus160.org/>. This site, sponsored by the Embassy of Italy in Washington D.C. provides details on the Italian-U.S. collaboration in the areas of economy, innovation, science, art/archeology, cinema/music, and language/literature. The following inspirational quote from Tonino Guerra, an Italian poet, illustrates one benefit of the partnership between the U.S. and Italy.

There is a man who walks straight and precise towards the future, but often turns his head backwards. And when asked 'Why do you turn your head back?', he replies: 'If

I don't know where I'm coming from, I don't know where I am going to'

As both countries look to the future they will partner to address climate change. The 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in Glasgow in November 2021 will be preceded by the Youth4Climate: Driving Ambition summit in Milan in September 2021. The U.S. is a partner in the planning and implementation.



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.

Dante Alighieri Society of Washington

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

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