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# La Voce della Dante

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## President's Message

**Ciao e buon capodanno!**

2023... HOW did we ever get to that??? And seemingly so quickly. Well - hope everyone had a good Christmas, and that this January 1 st greeting finds you well. Our Dante Festa di Natale Potluck was a grand success, with about 52 people in attendance, tons of food, but significantly, very few leftovers.....it was a fun evening and Giuseppe guided us through our traditional TOMBOLA game with elegant humor as always. Thanks to all who came, and to all who helped with set-up and clean-up. (With everyone willing to pitch in, we don't seem to be falling apart without a hired dish-washer. This will probably be the new norm, so THANKS to all who stay to help.)

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Our winter season will take place again on ZOOM, by popular demand. See Dan's excellent line-up of programs in this issue of La Voce. This is a fun time to reconnect with our members and friends who live outside the Seattle area. In general, the Zoom Room will open at 7:00 PM and the presentation begin at 7:30, so that first half hour is informal conversation and chat. Do plan to attend!

In order to have a measure of Zoom security for these meetings, we will be asking you to make a reservation to attend the zoom, each time. Each meeting will be set up as a one-time event and we will NOT post the ZOOM link on the web or in any public space; we ask that you also follow this protocol. If you invite friends to attend the zoom, send them the RESERVATION LINK, not the meeting link. More about this will be sent each time we announce a zoom meeting, so just read each mailing carefully, follow the directions, and it should be easy.

January is the time we ask that Dante memberships be renewed. Our Treasurer Harry has made it very easy to join/renew. [You just go to this link to renew](#) and you'll have it done in no time. Our membership fees are the lifeline of all our programs, so please don't forget to renew.

Wishing all of you the best of everything in the New Year. May our world work together for peace. See you soon at the Zooms!

Joyce

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## Our Winter and Spring 2023 Programs

We have put together what we believe is a fascinating and varied lineup of speakers for our Dante meetings in 2023, January through May.

For starters, we'll be looking at olive cultivation in the New World. We'll stop in Southern Italy, then on to Ravenna, Renaissance Florence, and ending up in the Veneto. We'll give some thought to the power of the Italian media, political and otherwise and listen to some operatic favorites, scored for tuba, cimbasso and pianoforte. Finally our Italian Language students will present another one of their engaging programs on Dante, appropriately enough in March which has special significance in Italy for the celebration of all things Dante. Here's the lineup. We hope you'll find some things of interest.

### **January 11 - English Meeting (Zoom)**

Heather Stoven, OSU Extension Service, Yamhill County  
Olives in the New World: An Agricultural Perspective

### **January 25 - Italian Meeting (Zoom)**

Prof. Sergio Mauro, Former Professor at UNESP in Brazil  
"Il nuovo populismo mediatico"

### **February 8 - English Meeting (Zoom)**

Donald De Santis, Dante Member and Lecturer, Azamara Cruises  
The Many Cultures of Southern Italy

### **February 22 - Italian Meeting (Zoom)**

Gianmario Strappati, concertista, professore al Conservatorio G. Verdi di Ravenna in Italia e Ambasciatore di Missioni Don Bosco per la musica nel mondo

Delle arie più celebri della musica classica, interpretate per Tuba, cimbasso e pianoforte.

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### **March 8 - English/Italian Meeting (Zoom)**

A end of the school year presentation on Dante by the students of our Language School

### **March 22- Italian Meeting**

Mario Cazzanti, Seattle

Ravenna and the Perpetual Reading of Dante's Comedy

### **April 12 English Meeting**

Annual General Meeting along with a pasta dinner

### **April 26- Italian Meeting**

Annalisa Bellerio, Italian journalist, editor, and writer

The Conquest of Space in Renaissance Art

### **May 10 - English Meeting**

Claudio Mazzola, French & Italian Studies, UW - The Villas of Veneto

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## **Renew Your Dante Membership**

It's time to renew your Dante Alighieri Society membership. Society memberships are good for the calendar year from January 1 to December 31. Your membership supports the Society's efforts to promote Italian culture in the Puget Sound region. Besides the conviviality that comes from meeting others who share your passion for all things Italian, your membership comes with other benefits.

- As a sponsor of Cinema Italian Style at SIFF, members have a chance to receive vouchers good for movies at the festival and for other movies throughout the year.
  - Members planning to travel to Italy are eligible for discounts at a variety of museums and venues in Italy. [More information about this program is available here](#). Be sure to request a membership card if you would like to take advantage of the discounts.
  - Members receive a \$20 discount on tuition for our Italian Language Classes.
  - Membership dues and donations are tax deductible to the extent allowed under federal law.
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## Language Program

Want to learn Italian this year? Enroll the Dante Language Program today. Here are the upcoming classes.

Winter session runs from January 5 through March 14.

Spring sessions runs from March 30 through June 6.

[Register for classes here.](#)

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## The Italian Connection: Seattle through the decades



Photo credit: Greg Lundgren/HistoryLink.org

### **Vito's, the landmark 1950s Italian restaurant, closes — for now**

by Rita Cipalla

Vito's, a Seattle landmark on First Hill, has seen a lot of ups and downs during the past seven decades. Opened in 1953 by brothers Vito and Jimmy Santoro, the restaurant drew its clientele from all walks of life – politicians and writers, sports stars and business owners. It survived Jimmy's death in 1971 and Vito's

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in 2000. Even the pandemic was taken in stride. What ultimately laid Vito's low was a fire this past June that started in the apartment complex upstairs.

Although Vito's was spared from the flames, the 20,000 gallons of water used to fight the fire collapsed the restaurant's ceiling and caused terrific damage inside. Initially, the owners hoped to remodel and reopen, but their plans are now up in the air.

It was not an ending the Santoro brothers would have wanted. Born in Connecticut, Jimmy in 1919 and Vito in 1921, the brothers moved to the Northwest after World War II and got jobs as bartenders. They were quick learners and soon decided to open their own restaurant. Vito found a ground-floor vacancy in a four-story building on Ninth and Madison. After months of remodeling, doing most of the work themselves, the brothers opened Vito's in May 1953.

With a low-key vibe, the place was dark and smoky inside. Mirrored tiles adorned the walls and the seats were covered in red Naugahyde. It soon became the place for power brokers and two-martini lunches.

Jimmy Santoro died in 1971; Vito carried on for two more decades until 1994 when he sold the restaurant. His funeral at Our Lady of Mount Virgin Church in 2000 overflowed with mourners. More than 350 family members and friends filled the pews and stood several deep in the back of the church.

But Vito's was just starting its second act. [Read the full story here.](#)

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## We are looking for cooks!

I would like to find out if anyone would like to volunteer to cook for any of our meetings in which we have dinners. If there is anyone interested in volunteering, I would be happy to answer any of their questions, for example, how many to prep for, the timing involved, how the kitchen is equipped, menu options, etc. If anyone is interested, they can reach me at [joan@danteseattle.org](mailto:joan@danteseattle.org)

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