

# La Voce della Dante

## February, 2026

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

*by Judy Klayman*

The Winter Olympics are coming to Milan and Cortina D'Ampezzo in the Dolomites this month. But they are also coming to Bormio, in the Stelvio National Park, where more than 2,000 dinosaur footprints were discovered last September. Stelvio National Park is a large national park in the Alps near Switzerland, about half way between Milan and Cortina D'Ampezzo. It's known for a paved highway that goes up to 9,045 feet at the Passo dello Stelvio, where there is an annual bicycle race that draws arduous bicyclists from around the world. The Stelvio ski area, near Bormio, will be the site of the mens' alpine ski events this month. It has a vertical drop of 3,356 feet in 2.14 miles, so it will be a very fast course!



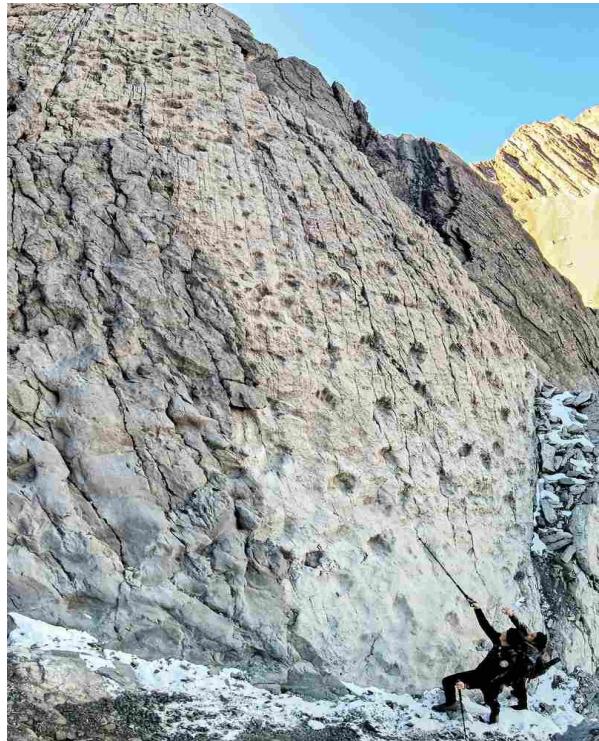
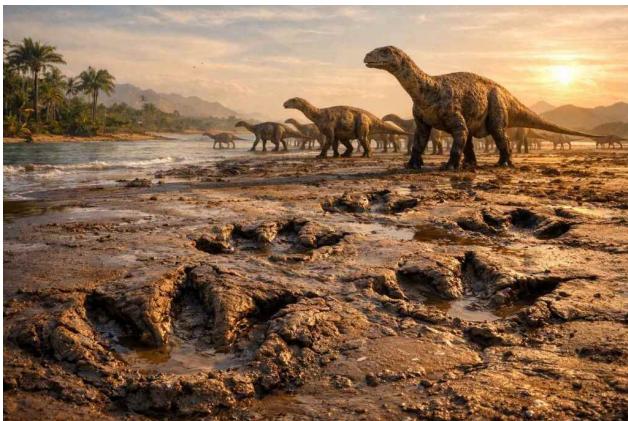
But the skiers will be zooming down slopes that did not exist around 200 million years ago, when prosauropod dinosaurs roamed in this area. They were the largest animals on Earth at that time, moving in herds across land that was then a tropical shoreline in northern Italy. The folding and uplift of the earth's crust that resulted in the Alps mountains occurred much later, about 100 million years ago.

Nowadays Stelvio National Park contains very high rocky mountains, many of which are remote, soaring far from any trails. A nature photographer seeking shots of bearded vultures and alpine ibex spotted thousands of footprints on sheer rock faces through his telephoto lens last fall.

He managed to hike to the cliffs and found about 2,400 fossilized footprints on a single rock face! Italian paleontologists consider this a very important and remarkable find, and have just started to study the area, releasing the first photographs of the area in mid-December. Access is difficult, because the fossils are on steep ground that is only snow free between July and October.

The NY Times covered this story right after the photos were available to the public in December, and many other videos and articles about this recent discovery can readily be found with a quick google search.

As can be seen from the photos, the prosauropods' footprints are large, because they were huge animals, about 23-26 feet long, and weighed about 2-2.5 tons. I find it simply amazing that these fossils were not discovered until 2025. But even more remarkable is the fact that modern ski racing is now taking place very near a swampy landscape where dinosaurs roamed in large groups 200 million years ago!



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# February Meetings - Fountains and Music!

## DON'T MISS THESE IN-PERSON WINTER GATHERINGS

### February 11, 2026 English Meeting

with Pre-Dante Pasta dinner ~ [by reservation](#)

## The Fountains of Rome

### Rob Prufer



At this presentation, we'll explore the history, engineering and especially the art of Rome's most interesting public fountains, from those that are spectacular such as Bernini's Fountain of the Four Rivers to those that are humble like the ubiquitous "nasoni."

**Rob Prufer** teaches art history at Newport High School and has been a frequent speaker at Dante meetings. Our Pre-Dante Pasta chefs are Bruce and Sharon Leone, so you don't want to miss dinner!

Greenwood Senior Center  
525 N. 85th St  
Seattle WA 98103

[Pre-Dante Pasta Dinner by reservation](#)  
please reserve by 5:00 Monday February 9  
and bring antipasti and desserts to share  
Dinner is \$10/person payable onsite

Doors open 6:00; Presentation 7:30

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**February 25, 2026 Italian Meeting** presenting the  
amazing Italian performing artist

## **Gianmario Strappati, tuba**

If you were part of Dante during our all-online- season during pandemic, you will remember the fabulous lecture-performance given us by Gianmario Strappati, classical tubist. We enjoyed his presentation from his studio in Italy in real time — that is, VERY early in the morning where he was! This gifted musical scholar will be with us again on February 25. We will gather in person at Greenwood Center to hear him in live broadcast while sharing our antipasti and vino.

Gianmario will guide us on a musical journey through great Italian music: from Vincenzo Bellini to Giacomo Puccini. The first author Vincenzo Bellini represents a famous exponent of the Italian 19th century, capable of uniting neoclassicism and romanticism with his style. In 2025 the anniversary of the 190th anniversary of the musician's death was held. The second author Giacomo Puccini represents the absolute genius par excellence as far as Italian opera is concerned, author of famous works such as Turandot, Gianni Schicchi etc... with immortal arias for every lover of great music. In this journey the socio-political context of Italian history will be analyzed, with references also to authors of great importance such as Giuseppe Verdi, Gaetano Donizetti, Pietro Mascagni and Gioacchino Rossini, fundamental to understanding the musical and cultural transition over the centuries. The history of great Italian music from the pre-Risorgimento period until the death of Giacomo Puccini, which occurred in 1924.

Gianmario Strappati ci guiderà in un viaggio musicale attraverso la grande musica italiana: da Vincenzo Bellini a Giacomo Puccini. Il primo autore Vincenzo Bellini rappresenta un famoso esponente del 19esimo secolo, capace di unire neoclassicismo e romanticismo con il suo stile. Nel 2025 è stato commemorato il 190 esimo anniversario della morte del compositore. Il secondo autore Giacomo Puccini rappresenta il genio assoluto per eccellenza concernente l'opera italiana, autore di opere famose quali Turandot, Gianni Schicchi ecc... con arie immortali per ogni amante della grande musica. In questo viaggio il contesto socio-politico della storia italiana sarà analizzato con riferimento ad autori di grande importanza quali Giuseppe Verdi, Gaetano Donizetti, Pietro Mascagni e Gioacchino Rossini, fondamentali per capire la transizione musicale e culturale nel corso dei secoli. La storia della grande musica italiana da prima del Risorgimento fino alla morte di Giacomo Puccini, avvenuta nel 1924.

Greenwood Senior Center  
525 N. 85 St  
Seattle WA 98103

*no reservations for Italian meetings, but please bring antipasti and desserts to share*

Doors open 6:00; Presentation 7:30



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## JANUARY WAS MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL MONTH! PLEASE RENEW OR JOIN [HERE](#)

\$40. individual; \$60 family for 1 year  
your membership dues support all Dante activities, so please  
[renew](#) now!



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## IT'S ALMOST TIME FOR CARNEVALE 2026!

according to this link

<https://www.visit-venice-italy.com/carnival-venice-italy.htm>

events run from February 7-17, 2026. If anyone is travelling to Italy for Carnevale, please consider sharing a story or some photos with us for next month's newsletter?

Send to [joyce@danteseattle.org](mailto:joyce@danteseattle.org) by Feb 27 if so! Thanks!

Meanwhile, here's a timely recipe:

### ESPOREDIESI al CACAO

#### Chocolate Hazelnut Cookies

These are the cookies that we make for Carnevale; dark, chewy macaroons of hazelnuts and chocolate with a slightly cracked top under a light powdering of sugar. These crunchy cookies from the citizens of **Ivrea** in the **Piemonte region** aren't made anywhere beyond the city limits. They are best eaten fresh, since they dry out after a day or two.

1-3/4 C to 2 C hazelnuts, toasted and peeled

1/3 cup water

1 cup sugar

2T. light corn syrup

2 egg whites

1/2 cup plus 2 T. unsweetened cocoa powder

1 cup plus 1 T. sugar

Powdered sugar

Grind 1-3/4 cups toasted hazelnuts with 1 cup sugar in a food processor until chunky. Add egg whites and mix well into a paste. Separately cook the 1 cup plus 1 tablespoon sugar, water, and corn syrup over medium heat until the mixture is clear and reaches 240° on a candy thermometer. Do not cook it any more or it will harden. Cool the mixture completely. Add cooled mixture to hazelnuts and mix in the cocoa. As the dough cools, it will stiffen. If the dough is still soft when cool, add up to 1/4 cup chopped, toasted hazelnuts.

Drop by heaping teaspoons 3" apart on parchment-lined baking sheets. Flatten tops with the back of a moistened spoon and sift confectioners' sugar over the tops.

These cookies spread as they bake. Heat the oven to 350°. Bake 18 to 20 minutes. Cookies look slightly cracked when baked. Makes about 36 cookies.

Recipe found in [La Cucina della Dante](#), 2012, Dante Alighieri Society of WA

**And another yummy recipe, prepared by Dan and Carol DeMatteis:**

**Marinated Manchego Cheese and Olives**

This is an easy, make-ahead appetizer that keeps well in the fridge for a week or so (if you can restrain yourself that long). It's from *Whitewater Cooks Together Again*, the sixth in a series of Canadian cookbooks by Shelley Adams that we use frequently. Basically you boil lemon and garlic in olive oil, add seasonings and pour the marinade over cheese and olives. Ingredients:

1 cup olive oil	1 cup green olives, pitted
1 head garlic (separated and peeled)	1 tsp salt
1 lemon (quartered through the stem end and then thinly sliced crosswise)	1/4 tsp black pepper
2 sprigs rosemary	1/2 tsp red chili flakes
4 sprigs thyme	1/2 pound Manchego cheese, broken into pieces

Heat the olive oil, garlic and lemon in a small saucepan over medium heat for 15-20 minutes, stirring occasionally until the garlic starts to turn golden.

Remove from heat and add rosemary, thyme and olives.

Season with salt, pepper and red chili flakes. Let cool.

Pour garlic mixture into a container, add cheese and stir to coat.

Cover and chill for at least 12 hours before serving.

Stir occasionally while in the fridge.

The olive oil will congeal, so bring to room temperature before serving. Taste and enjoy!

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**Looking ahead to spring.....**

March meetings will also be in person... stay tuned for announcements next month.

The English meeting in APRIL (April 8, 2026) is our **Annual General Meeting**, where all members of Dante Seattle have the opportunity to vote on the slate for the next Board of Directors and to participate in planning for the next season. Dinner is provided at no charge (by reservation). There will be many opportunities to get involved next season and important programming discussions, so please save the date and plan to attend.