



La Voce della Dante

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Settembre/September 2026



President's Message

Greetings everyone!

Welcome back from summertime, which I hope has been relaxing and rejuvenating for everyone. As always it seems to have slipped by me very quickly, with teaching and a short trip with Rodger. My Italian-themed activities have been minimal since we finished our Dante season last May, but some fun behind-the-scenes communications and meetings have kept the ideas flowing. I was happy to meet two of this season's new presenters after they reached out to us. Also, visiting a few local Gelato shops helped, as did a quick romp through the fabulous Italian classic cars at Casa Italiana last month with fellow boardie Debra Gillett. (If anyone has a spare, bright yellow Maserati they don't want, let me know. I think I'd look very nice driving one.)

MEANWHILE – we have a terrific season lining up thanks to our Program Chairs, Carol DeMatteis and Cecilia Paul. Everything starts on September 9, so get that on your calendar and join us for the first English Meeting and Pre-Dante Pasta dinner at Greenwood Senior Center that night (*see info in this issue*).

Italian and English meetings will follow in the usual outline, right through from September to May – we are staying with LIVE meetings in the winter again, and collaborating for a festive Christmas Party Potluck with Il Punto on December 12. Programs this year run the gamut in topics: Italian linens, the opera Turandot, Civita Institute, travelogues by our own members and learning about a little-known female artist, just to name a few! The full season list will be available in September.

Opportunities to volunteer for Dante abound. We'll be setting up our rotating crew for

meeting set-up and tear-down soon. Our tradition of Pre-Dante Pasta for English meetings continues – volunteers are needed to cook. Our Festa Italiana booth needs sitters (see article in this issue) and there are many ways to help out our Board with ongoing activities. Volunteering deepens our experiences with this wonderful organization; please step up if you can!

Lastly, before you dive into Dan's beautiful new issue of La Voce, a shout out for articles and stories of interest for future issues! Travelogues and other stories from our members help make the newsletter more enjoyable. Pictures do too. Send your materials to our editor, Dan DeMatteis, (javoce@danteseattle.org) by the 20th of each month for the next issue.

Hope to see you September 9!

A presto –
Joyce

September Meetings

We are pleased to have as our guest speaker at the September English Meeting on Wednesday, September 9 is Don De Santis, a Dante Society member and a regular speaker at our meetings. He has a passion for history. Don received his B.A. from History from Loyola Marymount University and has travelled to 5 continents and roughly 30 countries. From 2014 to 2020 he was a regular speaker on Rome for the Rick Steves Travel Center in Edmonds. Since 2018 he has been a regular speaker on several cruise ship lines for cruises to Europe and North America. His lectures cover the history, art and culture of the places visited.



Don's topic at the September 9th meeting will be **"Ravenna - Architectural Jewel of The Adriatic"**. For most of the 5th century Ravenna was the capital of the Western Roman Empire. From the mid-500s to 751 it was the capital of Byzantine Italy. There are several stunning churches that contain the best Byzantine mosaics in all of Western Europe. For a city of 150,000 it has eight UNESCO world heritage sites. The Basilica of San Vitale has some of the most famous mosaics in Europe. The Italian poet Dante is buried in Ravenna.

The presentation will be in English. Please join us at for a delicious Italian Pasta dinner or come after dinner for the movie and presentation. The dinner and meeting will be at the usual venue:

Greenwood Senior Center
525 N. 85th St

Seattle WA 98103

Pre-Dante Pasta Dinner

Please reserve your place for dinner by 5:00 Monday Sept. 7

Please bring wine, antipasti or desserts to share

Doors open 6:00; dinner 6:30, presentation, 7:30

Reserve your place
at dinner by
clicking [here](#)



The September Italian meeting on Wednesday, September 23 will feature a showing of the documentary film *"Turandot. L'ultima nota"*—an original production by the Società Dante Alighieri headquarters in Rome, dedicated to Giacomo Puccini's unfinished operatic masterpiece.

Marking the centenary of the opera's premiere at La Scala, the film takes the viewer on a journey between memory and dreams, narrated by the young priest Don Pietro Panichelli, a close friend and biographer of Puccini. It is directed by Lamberto Lambertini, based on a concept by Adriano Bassi, and produced by our Culture Unit in Rome. The costumes recreate those worn at the 1926 La Scala premiere.

As a special treat, Jonathan Dean, from the Seattle Opera's Community Engagement department will introduce the film and answer questions after the film is shown.

Greenwood Senior Center

525 N. 85 St

Seattle WA 98103

No reservations for Italian meetings, but please bring

beverages, antipasti or desserts to share

Doors open 6:00; Presentation 7:30

Thanks to all who have renewed their Dante Membership. If you haven't done so yet, please renew soon. Dues fund all our activities.

\$40/individual, \$60/family.

To renew, click [here](#)

Italian Language Program News

By Giuseppe Tassone - Language School Director

Greetings from Italy! Join us for a new school year

Cari amici,

I am writing to you today directly from Italy, sending you my warmest greetings! As I find myself surrounded by the language and culture we all love, I am absolutely thrilled to announce the beginning of our 42nd consecutive school year here at the Dante Alighieri Society of Washington!

We are gearing up for an incredible year ahead. While registrations are already strong, select spots are still available for you to join our community.

I am incredibly proud to welcome back our many returning students this term. Your continued presence is a true testament to the high quality and vibrant community spirit of our program. I also want to extend a special, warm welcome to all our new students. Thank you for choosing to begin your Italian language journey with us!

Ahead of this kickoff, I want to extend my deepest, heartfelt thanks to our incredible teaching staff. Throughout my 28 years as director, I have been privileged to work with exceptionally talented instructors. Their absolute dedication, passion, and tireless hard work are what make this program shine and ensure our students succeed year after year.

No matter where you are located, you can study with us. Our premium Italian language program is completely accessible online.

Join Us for a Free Mini-Lesson!

Want a risk-free taste of our teaching style before the school year officially kicks off? Come meet us in person at Festa Italiana at the Seattle Center! We are hosting a free, simple introductory lesson on Saturday, September 27. It is the perfect opportunity to experience our community and ask any questions you might have.

Why Choose Our Online Classrooms?

- **Strong Grammar Foundation:** We emphasize clear grammar structures in every course, ensuring you gain the formal rules and structural framework needed to build accurate, confident sentences.
- **Native-Speaking Teachers:** You will learn authentic pronunciation, idioms, and cultural nuances directly from our qualified, native Italian instructors.
- **Convenient Evening Schedule:** Classes meet on Tuesday and Thursday evenings (with the exception of our advanced C1 Level, which meets on Monday and Wednesday evenings).
- **Seamless Digital Tools:** Log in easily using Zoom for live, interactive video sessions and Canvas Instructure to manage your course materials, assignments, and access additional resources.
- **Learn from Home:** Our fully remote evening sessions fit seamlessly into your busy schedule.
- **All Levels Welcomed:** Our tailored tracks span from absolute beginners starting from scratch to advanced speakers refining fluency.
- **Supportive Environment:** Enjoy a structured, community-focused setting designed to help you achieve your personal fluency goals.

Important Note for Absolute Beginners:

If you are starting completely from scratch, you must begin your journey this fall. Starting with us now ensures you can build your grammar foundation from the very beginning of our structured curriculum, as these foundational sequences kick off exclusively with the start of the school year.

Key Dates to Remember

- **Registration Deadline:** Wednesday, September 30, 2026
- **Festa Italiana Free Lesson:** Saturday, September 27, 2026
- **First Day of Classes:** Tuesday, October 6, 2026

Get Personalized Placement Help Directly From Me

Don't worry about picking the wrong class level for the new school year. I will personally help you find your perfect fit! Simply submit to the school email your language goals and current skill level or request a formal placement test. I will review your background and provide a custom class recommendation to ensure you are placed exactly where you belong.

Plan Ahead: Register Early to Secure Your Spot

To help us balance our classrooms and ensure you get your preferred evening schedule, we strongly encourage you to register early to secure your spot. Taking care of your enrollment ahead of time guarantees your place in class and ensures a smooth start to your semester.

Ready to join us for the new school year? Head over to our official website now to view open sections, course fees, and class schedules!

Un cordiale saluto dall'Italia.

Giuseppe

FESTA ITALIANA TIME!!

<https://festaseattle.com>

September 26-27, 2026 at Fischer Pavilion, Seattle Center

Do you enjoy the English and/or Italian meetings our Dante Society offers throughout the season? Would you like to share news about the upcoming Dante line-up with interested people? Do you enjoy meeting new friends with a common love of Italy, and hearing about their roots there?

You'd be **PERFECT** to sit at the Dante Booth at **FESTA ITALIANA 2026!**

Volunteers are needed for two-hour shifts, one or two volunteers at a time. If you've done this before, you know it's an easy job, and fun. You'll be steering people to the map where they can pin their hometown, showing them our season outline, and guiding them to info about our Language Program and PLIDA exams. The food and conviviality of Festa is all around, and our booth is usually near some of those tasty Italian treats as well...

We have a few volunteers already, but shifts are open on

Saturday 26 from 2:00-4:00 PM and 4:00-6:00 PM, and on
Sunday September 27 from 10:00-12:00, 12:00-2:00 and 2:00-4:00.

Email joyce@danteseattle.org to sign up. Grazie!!



PRE-DANTE PASTA DINNER!

Our traditional community meal before the English meetings is a great opportunity for connecting with friends and sharing stories. Each of these meals is prepared by a volunteer (or team of volunteers), who decide the menu, shop for the food, prepare the meal and get reimbursed. Guidelines are available to make this easy and fun for new people, and there are always folks on hand to help on the evening you cook!

What could be more fun than trying out your favorite pasta recipe on a deeply appreciative roomful of Italians/Italophiles? Say yes to this idea, and sign up to cook. Help make some

memories and create the fun!

October 14 and November 11 are the next available dates (September 9 is covered.)

Email joyce@danteseattle.org to sign up.



Who Wrote First in the Italian Vernacular?

By Louise Sportelli

On our trip to Italy in May, Dom and I ran across a large statue with an inscription that intrigued us. In a quiet piazza in the center of historic Grosseto we found a statue of Andrea da Grosseto. The inscription below said *Andrea da Grosseto primo scrittore in lingua italiana. Dottore a Parigi 1268* (in English: Andrea of Grosseto, first writer in the Italian language. Doctor in Paris. 1268).

Well, we all "know" that Dante Alighieri was the first writer in the Italian language. So, this claim surprised us and sent us straight to the font of all knowledge, my phone's search engine. It turns out that a scholar, Francesco Selmi, researching Dante in the late 1800s came across evidence that Andrea da Grosseto's translations of various works from Latin into the Italian vernacular predated Dante's work and might even have inspired the latter.

Interestingly, Andrea da Grosseto chose to use the Italian vernacular rather than his own dialect of Grosseto. Thus, he appears to be the first to intend to use the vernacular as an Italian national language capable of being understood throughout the Italic Peninsula.

Now you have a fun fact to toss out at dinner parties and future Dante meetings!

Note The article in Wikipedia on Andrea da Grosseto is short but informative.

Thanks for reading. Hope to see you at our meetings!

The La Voce Team

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Dante Alighieri Society of Washington

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