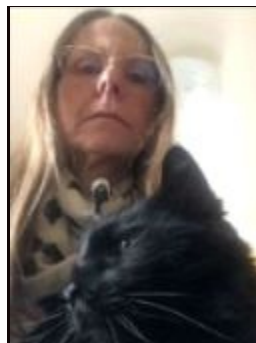

La Voce della Dante

Published by the Dante Alighieri Society of Washington

November, 2020



Joyce & Mr. Mann

From the President's Desk

November 2020

Ciao a tutti,

I hope this finds you and your loved ones well! Many good things have been happening with Dante this fall and you can read about the November 11 English Meeting, as well as other interesting articles, further on in this issue. Thanks as always to Andrea Aldrich for putting our La Voce together!

I want to share with you a couple of requests pertaining to our December 9 event. As you know, this would ordinarily be our Festa di Natale Potluck. Even though we can't gather together in person, it is my hope we can celebrate our Dante community and generate some Holiday Cheer in fun and meaningful ways with a Zoom Natale gathering instead. We'll have some social time and will even be able to play

Tombola at the zoom - Giuseppe will be with us to call the numbers!

Now for the advance requests:

1) "You devil you," – Deviled Egg recipe exchange in memory of **Terry Hanlon**, our departed Befana and constant purveyor of deviled eggs. If you'd like to participate in this, please find and submit your favorite recipe for deviled eggs to me at

joyce@danteseattle.org **by December 5.**

I'll compile them into a shareable format.

2) "Our Dante Natale 2020 Story" – What conversations can we share this year, while we're apart? To participate, please contribute something – your own idea, or your answer to **one** of the questions below. I'll compile all submissions into a document that can be shared by link when the December 9 invitation goes out. Please limit your submission to 1 page or less - and get it to me **by December 5** for inclusion.

joyce@danteseattle.org.

-What dish would you ordinarily bring to the potluck to share? Tell us about it or share the recipe.

-Tell us about a family Natale tradition. What decoration or activity makes Christmas fun for you? Do you have a craft other than cooking that you can tell us about?

-Share a Holiday dinner "fail" story. If I were to do this, it would be the time the beaters flew out of the mixer on Christmas Eve, or the Baked Alaska melted out the oven door... That sort of thing.

-Your own idea. What story or creative idea would you like to share?

Let's keep our spirits up and keep the online gatherings going. Your friendship and this community of Dante are precious to me. Happy November!

Joyce

November & December Programs



November 11, 2020 English Meeting

“Seated at Lorenzo’s Table – From Farm to Table”

Presented by Pat Hoffman

Farmer Chef Lorenzo Polegri owned Ristorante Zeppelin in the enchanting Umbrian town of Orvieto, Italy. Invited several times to cook at the James Beard house in NYC, he also cooked for President Obama at the White House in 2010.

Ristorante Zeppelin and the new site at Casa Segreta are home to Chef Lorenzo’s internship program for culinary students and his cooking school, featuring afternoon cooking classes and one-week and two-week “culinary adventures” that include cooking classes and visits to the sources that produce the ingredients used in Chef Lorenzo’s recipes. Join six friends on their excellent adventure who spent two weeks with Chef Lorenzo immersed in the history and culinary experiences of the FarmerChef.

There is no Italian meeting in November

December 9 Festa di Natale

Be sure to read all the details in Joyce's
"From the Presidents Desk" above.



Trentino: Where the Cows Do Come Home

by Mary Beth Moser

When I was a teenager, my mother sometimes said, in response to a request of mine that was – in her opinion – unreasonable, that it would happen “when the cows come home.” In other words – never. Little did I know that the cows really DO come home!

Fulfilling a long-held desire, in September of 2018 I witnessed it with my own eyes in the village of Bedollo, Trentino. The event is known as *la desmalgada*, a dialect word relating to the *malga*, the mountain dwelling where cheese is made from fresh milk during the summer.

As in other valleys in Trentino and beyond, the dairy cows are brought up to the high mountain meadows after the snows melt to graze on the fresh herbs and grasses. This is where they spend their summer. Inside the *malga* is the cheesemaking operation, where wheels of cheese line the shelves for local sale. In fall, the cows, like Queens, are adorned with magnificent flowers and greenery on their heads and brought back home in procession. In Bedollo there was a grand festa lasting the entire day, including a prize for the best-adorned cow. The cows from three *malghe* were represented: Stramaiolo, Cambroncoi,

and Sass. Thankfully, I was not a judge because it would have been hard to choose. When prizes were announced, the name of the cow, the *pastori*, and the *malga* were announced. The owner proudly came to claim their prize, an ornate leather strap with a bell. The winner that day was named ‘Edelweiss,’ the famous wildflower of the Alps better known as *Stella Alpina* in Italian.

The *desmalgada* is a beloved occasion among the locals that is also attended by tourists who do not want to lose this ancient and joyful event. In other parts of Trentino, the transhumance – the return of animals from the summer pasture – is known as the *desmontegada* which means “descending from the mountain” in Trentino dialect.



On that mid-September day, there was a market with booths of hand-crafted items and typical food. Wood carvers and basket weavers demonstrated their traditional skills, to the sound of live music and the continual chorus of cow bells ringing. Inside the new communal theater, a feast of polenta and traditional food was being served, along with beer and wine. Outside, when the time arrived for awards, the crowd gathered around a raised platform near the field where the cows were resting. Mayor Francesco Fantini spoke heartfelt words of how meaningful it was to celebrate this tradition as a community. I was deeply moved by the beauty in which the animals were honored, the authenticity of the gathering, the skill of the artisans, and the joy of the community celebrating together.

Bedollo is a village of 1500 people in the province of Trentino and rises at nearly 4700 ft elevation. It is named for the Italian word for birch, “*betula*,” and indeed birch trees grow there along with wooded hillsides of conifers. It is a

place of particular interest to me because my paternal grandmother, Anna Casagrande, was born there. Anna emigrated to Central City, Colorado when she was sixteen, where she met and married my grandfather, Giovanni Moser, also with origins from the high plateau of pines, the Altopiano di Pinè. The house where my grandmother was born is still there, high on the steep terraced hillside. Down below and further south are Lake Piazza and Lake Serrai where one can picnic, stroll, and enjoy the weather.

This is the land of folk stories and magical characters. Carved elves and other creatures line the path that the cows took to get to the central field.

Nearby is the hamlet of Martinei, where the folk story *“El Carador e le Vivane”* about a cart driver and the magical women known as Vivane takes place. When I went in search of the location of the folk story, I met a local woman who lives there during the summer. “I’m 98 ½ years old!” she responded, when I asked her about the site of the story. It took her a moment to remember and then she pointed to the place across the road from her home. “Right there,” she said, although the crevices of the rock where the Vivane had supposedly been were now grown over with vegetation. The magical realms are real places in mountainous lands.

Fall is a beautiful time in the Dolomites. To witness this passage from above to below of the grazing animals signals a change in the seasons, in an age-old practice that links humans to their animals. In an agrarian community, the cycle of the year is marked by natural events that include the soil and the stars, plants and animals, moon and sun, with humans as part of that cycle and in harmonious relationship with all the participants.



Photos for "...The Cows Do Come Home," left to right, top to bottom
Beautiful cow – Centrale di Bedollo
Beautiful cow – Centrale di Bedollo
Cows get to rest after their journey until prizes are awarded at the end of the afternoon.
Local Trentino apples for sale
Scene of La Desmalgada 2018. The village of Bedollo is upper right on the hill with its prominent church and steeple on the horizon.
Hand woven harvest basket, una gerla in dialect, worn like a backpack

Trentino: Where the Cows Do Come Home is one of a series of stories by members telling about a town or place that has special meaning to that member. It may be a place often visited or where family is from or still lives. The idea is not to write a travel log but to share with us some history, the town's location, interesting sites, characteristics of the town, what makes it unique or beautiful, etc. Do you have a special place to share with us? Please send your story (or questions) with 4-6 photos to Andrea Aldrich, aaldrichj@gmail.com. Grazie!

Report of the Effect of the Pandemic on Dante Alighieri Society Clubs Around the World

As most of you know, there are many organizations called Dante Alighieri Society around the world, more than 300 in 73 countries. Only 7 of them, including ourselves - the Dante Alighieri Society of Washington - are in the US by the way. And all of them worldwide are associated in some way or another with the *La Sede Centrale della Società Dante Alighieri* in Rome, our "headquarters" so to speak. In normal times 249 of these *comitati Dante all'estero* (overseas "committees") offer Italian language courses and all offer Italian-themed events and cultural programs to members and the general public.

In early April *La Sede Centrale* surveyed the *comitati* to assess the effect of COVID-19 on the programs they offer. 309 *comitati* responded to the survey. A report of the results was recently published by *la sede*. I thought that our members might be interested in how other groups were faring in these strange and unsettling times. Below are some of the key findings from the report.

Overall Effect

At the time of the report 51% of the *comitati* had completely suspended activities because of the pandemic; 48% had reduced their programs and

offerings; 1% reported that the pandemic had no effect on their activities.

Italian Courses

73% of the *comitati* that have Language Schools were offering online courses - usually through Zoom or Skype - in place of classroom learning while 27% were no longer offering courses. The main reasons for abandoning the Italian language courses were:

- not having access to technology suitable for teaching online
- not finding teachers capable of online instruction
- students were not willing to take online classes.

On the other hand, 51% were planning to continue with online courses after the restrictions were loosened. The rationales given were:

- the technology allowed us to expand our offerings and reach new students (35%)
- online classes respond to the needs of our students (5%)
- a desire to modernize the classes in order to appeal more to young learners (11%).

Cultural Events and Programs

In this area the effect of the pandemic was very pronounced. In fact, 70% of the *comitati* report that they had postponed all cultural programs and were not offering any events or programs for their members or the public. Only 14% were planning to organize new programs online, 11% already had, at the time of the survey, online plans and, surprisingly, 5% said they could continue with their current offerings.

Assistance from the *Sede Centrale*

The final section of the report documented ways in which the *comitati* would appreciate support from *la sede centrale* to alleviate the effects of the pandemic. 96 *comitati* made requests and their major needs were:

- economic support, including subscriptions to online teaching software
- online teaching material
- training for Italian teachers on online instruction

At the time of the report Rome has responded to many of these requests, including having allocated 100,000€ to support the *comitati esteri*, including

Zoom licenses.

Summary

All in all, it seems that Dante Seattle has adapted pretty well to the restrictions put in place due to the COVID-19 pandemic, moving its language classes to online courses quickly and using Zoom to hold a regular series of meetings and program events. There is of course always more we can do - and challenges ahead, like how to play tombola online at our *Festa di Natale*! Thanks to our President, Joyce Ramee, the Board, our Language School Director, Giuseppe Tassone, all our flexible and fast-moving teachers and all the dedicated members who have worked to continue to keep "your door to all things Italian" open!

If you're interested in the full report, available only in Italian, you can access it by clicking on the link below:

[Scarica allegato 1 - Analisi Questionario Comitati Esteri](#)

What's happening in Other Local Italian Organizations

The Seattle Trentino Club

The Seattle Trentino Club marked its 10th anniversary in March. Like other Italian clubs, we were not able to celebrate together this year. Our annual events include a Polenta Picnic in August and a La Befana party in January. Every two years there is an international convention at which Trentini from across the US and Canada gather, which has been re-scheduled for 2021 in Albany, NY. Meanwhile, our local club has initiated a Monday night "Family History Hour" online during which a member shares their immigrant family's story. Our web site features written stories of our northwest families, whose locations include Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, and Alaska. The Seattle Trentino Club marked its 10th anniversary in March. Like other Italian clubs, we were not able to celebrate together this year. Our annual events include a Polenta Picnic in August and a La Befana party in January. Every two years there is an international convention at which Trentini from across the US and Canada gather, which has been re-scheduled for 2021 in Albany, NY. Meanwhile, our local club has initiated a Monday night "Family History Hour" online during which a member shares their immigrant family's story. Our web site features written stories of our northwest families, whose locations include Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, and Alaska. <https://seattletrentinoclub.org/>
(from Mary Beth Moser, STC President)

Il Punto

Sam Ciapanna resigned the presidency of Il Punto in July. Franco Tesorieri is now President.

The biggest news of Il Punto for the year is its massive donation of \$80,000 to Casa Italiana Italian Cultural Center to offset the down payment for the purchase of a 7,000 square foot building and 5 parcels in Burien for the complex.



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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