

La Voce della Dante

Published by the Dante Alighieri Society of Washington (DAS)

<http://das.danteseattle.org>

January 2015

January English Meeting:

“Buying a House in Tuscany”

presented by **Joanmarie Curran**

Wednesday, January 14th, 6:30 pm, Headquarters House



As quoted from Joanmarie’s website:
The beginning was simple. Fifteen years ago my soul found a place in Tuscany. Then came the education through experience. First was the challenge of successfully finding, financing, negotiating, and understanding the nuances involved in the purchase of my piece of paradise.

Next came assembling the contractors for an extensive restoration, managing the remodeling project, coordinating an international move, and furnishing the home. Finally, I developed an invaluable network of trusted local professionals, community resources, service providers, and regional artisans. Earlier passions for Italian culture and lifestyle were now augmented by a thorough education in making a real estate dream become a living reality.

Joanmarie Curran first went to Italy as an apprentice printmaker 40 years ago and restored her first historic (US) home a few years later. Both events laid the course of life long work and pleasure. A Managing Broker with Realogics Sotheby’s International Realty and Certified International Property Specialist, she provides soup-to-nuts service to clientele both in the states and Italy.

Italian Meeting:

“Crescere in Sicilia: Growing up in Sicily”

presented by **Dario De Pasquale**

Wednesday, January 28, 6:30 pm, Headquarters House



Dario De Pasquale is the founder and lead teacher at Anima Italiana Seattle. He moved here from Sicily 5 years ago to work in the startup world. He started the Italian school a year ago to provide students a place to explore the culture, cuisine, literature, and cinema of Italy in Italian. His method of teaching is very conversational and aimed at developing a personal vocabulary that reflects one’s own interests and personal story.

Upcoming Events

Wed, Jan 14th:
“Buying a House in Tuscany” by Joanmarie Curran

Pre-dante pasta at 6:30 pm, Headquarters House followed by the presentation

Wed, Jan 28th: “Crescere in Sicilia: Growing Up in Sicily” by Dario De Pasquale, 6:30 pm, Headquarters House



Renew Your Membership

It’s that time of the year to renew your Dante membership for the new year. Membership runs from January 1st to December 31st of each year. However, if you joined DAS after September 1st, 2014, then your membership is good through December 31st, 2015.

Yearly membership rates are:
\$40 per individual
\$50 per family

Fill out the membership form on the back page of La Voce and send to Bruce Leone at 2522 2nd Avenue West, Seattle, WA 98119 or the DAS post office address noted on the membership form.



**Welcome to
Our New
Members**

**Benvenuti
Nuovi Membri**

Frank Emery
Lester Garnet

**We thank you for your
support of DAS.**

*** DAS Star List 2015***

While we appreciate those who support our Society through membership dues & volunteering, stars are awarded to those making extra cash contributions which allows us to provide additional services.

Grazie Mille for supporting the Dante Alighieri Society of Washington.

Bronzo up to \$25

- * Gillett, Debra Rovetto

Argento \$26 to \$50

- * DeMatteis, Dan & Carol
- * Minotti, Dominick

Oro \$51 to \$100

Platino—over \$100

Consider making a donation to DAS today. Your donation helps DAS maintain the excellent programs and activities sponsored. Everyone benefits!

The names on the donation list will remain through December 31, 2015. If you make a donation after May 2014, your name will be on the donation list through 2015 then a new DAS Star List begins January 2016.

From the President's Desk

Nuovo Anno Felice! Auguri per 2015.

The New Year starts with so much promise. It is a time to look forward with fresh energy and resolutions to address those things, projects, and issues that we kept meaning to deal with or start last year. In addition to what we didn't do, I think it's also a good time to recommit to those people and things that make our lives work and that we value. Realizing that Dante participation ranks behind family, health, and work, I do hope that you find enough value in Dante fellowship and activities to make it to your actionable list. Certainly we hope to see you at a meeting soon.

Our English presentation this month features Joanmarie Curran speaking on "Buying a House in Tuscany." Frances Mayes may have popularized the romance and fantasy in "Under the Tuscan Sun" but Ms. Currie will give us tips on how to actually do so.

In our Italian presentation Dario De Pasquale will let us know what it was like to grow up in Sicily. For those of you who have first hand experience with this, many memories will undoubtedly be revived, and for the rest of us we can look forward to entertaining stories.

Dante's program year and membership year work on different calendars, which may be confusing when it comes to renewals. We organize our programs to coincide with the school year of the language program but the membership dues are for the calendar year. So, yes it is that time again. Check out the membership form in this newsletter or pay at an upcoming meeting. We now have the option of paying by credit card in person at meetings. Help keep our organization viable and our participation fees low by renewing soon. Thanks!

If you are not already registered, it is not too late to continue or restart your Italian language studies. Other than those brand new to the language it is easy to jump in at whatever level seems most appropriate or to retake a level if it has been awhile and you need a refresher. For me those verb tenses can slip away rather easily and the repetition helps. Check out the related article or website for registration information.

One last note – we are still looking for a cook for the February pre-Dante pasta dinner. Expenses are reimbursed and you will have assistance in the kitchen. If interested, please contact Joyce Ramee at: mavijramee@aol.com for details.

Ci vediamo a presto!

Sylvia Shiroyama



Language Program News by Giuseppe Tassone Italian Language Program Director

The Italian Language Program offers classes in fall, winter, and spring. Classes are held at Seattle University in the Administration Building. Classes below held Tuesday and Thursday from 7:00-8:30 pm.

Classes Offered:

Beginning Italian (Level A1) - For people with little or no Italian language. Students will be introduced to the basic phonetic, grammatical, and lexical structures through conversation and simple dialogues. During the three-quarter course, students will be engaged in a variety of fun activities and begin their journey of learning Italian. (\$180 per quarter)

Elementary Italian (Level A2) - This is the continuation of the beginning class or for those who have already studied some Italian. Students will finish exploring essential grammar structures while learning appropriate and relevant words and expressions. At the end of the three-quarter course, students should be able to use basic structures of the language with confidence and be able to communicate well in daily situations. (\$180 per quarter)

Intermediate Level (B1) - B1 reviews and reinforces the basic knowledge of Italian. Students will review, expand, and reinforce their knowledge of the language in addition expanding vocabulary and the ability to understand written and spoken Italian. Students will be exposed to cultural and literary readings and will develop a greater understanding of Italian culture, lifestyle, and way of thinking. (\$275 per quarter)

Upper-Intermediate Level (B2) - B2 is a continuation of B1. It completes the review and reinforcement of grammar covered in previous levels in addition covering any missing structures. This course covers understanding articles from newspapers and the web, song lyrics, literary excerpts, videos, and excerpts from films and commercials. At the end of the three-quarter course, students will be able to engage effectively in a conversation, express opinions, and give simple explanations. (\$275 per quarter)

Advanced-Intermediate Level (C1) - This course is designed for students who have completed the grammar topics reviewed and expanded in level B1 and B2 or have a good grasp of them. Students will perfect their grammar and greatly improve their comprehension, conversation, and writing skills. Students will read and discuss literature, watch films and videos in Italian and converse about the cinema, art, Italian news, and current events. At the end of the three-quarter course, one will be able to interact with Italian speakers fluently and spontaneously. (\$300 per quarter)

Course Schedule:

<i>Fall Quarter 2014:</i>	October 2—December 11
Pre-registration Deadline:	September 26
<i>Winter Quarter 2015:</i>	January 6—March 10
Pre-registration Deadline:	December 21
<i>Spring Quarter 2015:</i>	April 2-June 9
Pre-registration Deadline:	March 20

For more information, check the language program website at: <http://www.danteseattle.org>. Registration can be done by mail or by Pay Pal on the school website.

Club Alpino Italiano (CAI) PNW



Club Alpino
S e c o n d
Saturday event
for January is as
follows:

January 10th: Snoqualmie Pass Area
dmhoff@summitpyramid.com

An easy 3-4 mile snowshoe in the Snoqualmie Pass area. The group will snowshoe along Little Kachess Lake from Kachess Campground and return. Contact Dianne and Jim by January 8th.

Classification: Easy

Distance: 3-4 miles R/T

Elevation Gain: Flat to approximately 300 feet

Highest Point: 2600 feet

DAS Board Meeting

Board meetings are held on a Wednesday every other month from September through May.

The next board meeting will be January 21st, 2015.

Meetings are held from 7:00-8:30 pm in the Community Room at Merrill Gardens at First Hill (formerly Faerland Terrace), 1421 Minor Avenue on Capitol Hill. Meetings are open to all members.



La Voce

We've gone past the longest day and can look forward to daylight longer but it still feels like winter around here!

If you travel and discover something or a place of interest that's related to Italian culture, send photos or an article about your experience. Or maybe you've tried a great new Italian restaurant or read a great book. We would love to hear about it. These are all things that make a great La Voce, so submissions are welcome. Submit, submit ...

Here's to another great year of Dante programs....

Linda

La Voce Editor

LTHDesign@comcast.net

Delivering La Voce to Members



La Voce will be sent as a pdf file attachment to your email address. Or you may log onto the Dante website to see the latest issue as well as back issues of La Voce. The website is:

www.das.danteseattle.org

Adobe Reader is necessary to be able to view La Voce. You can download this program from the DAS website.

Be sure your mailbox isn't full otherwise you will have to check the Dante website.



PLIDA

PLIDA (Progetto Lingua Italiana Dante Alighieri)

The Dante Alighieri Society of Washington in Seattle is an official examination center of the Società Dante Alighieri and provides its students and others the opportunity of taking PLIDA exams in order to obtain a PLIDA certificate.

The PLIDA Certificate

The PLIDA certificate is an official Diploma issued by the Società Dante Alighieri under an agreement with the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the University of Rome *La Sapienza*. It is recognized by the Italian Ministry of Labour and Social Policies and by the Italian Ministry of University and Research as a qualification for the proficiency in the Italian language for foreigners.

The PLIDA certificates attest proficiency in Italian as a foreign language on a 6-level scale according to the parameters established by the Common European Framework for Languages (A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, C2).

Why Take the PLIDA Exam

Students who may wish to be certified include those who plan to study at Italian universities (which accepts PLIDA Certification as proof of proficiency), American high school and college students who may seek college credit, or persons wishing to be certified for obtaining an application for the Italian Permit of Stay in Italy. Certification may also interest students who see the examination as a capstone experience after taking their language courses.

For more information on the PLIDA certificates, visit the official PLIDA website: www.plida.it/plida/

Dates, Registration, Location, and Exam Fees

PLIDA certificate sessions will be held every year in May and November. Candidates may choose to take an exam at the level they feel is closest to their proficiency. Registration does not require having taken lower-level tests.

Candidates need to register approximately 30 days prior to the exam date. Dates of each exam, registration deadlines, location, exam fees, and registration instructions check the Language School's Plida website at:

www.danteseattle.org/plida.html

For any questions, email: plida@danteseattle.org





La Voce Needs You!

Tell a story, write an article, share your Italian heritage; send via email (as a Word document) to LTHdesign@comcast.net. You can also mail it via regular mail to Linda Heimbigner, 4355 Little Falls Drive, Cumming, GA 30041. Keep things coming!

Thanks to everyone who has contributed articles.

Article submission deadline:

ISSUE DATE	SUBMISSION DEADLINE
February 2015	January 20th
March 2015	February 20th

NOTE: Please keep in mind the above submission deadlines and it's great if articles were submitted as early as possible.

Dante on the Internet!

Check our website. It has links to our recent newsletters (including this one) as well as information on speakers and other matters of interest. Our web address is:

<http://das.danteseattle.org/>

Pre-Dante Pasta

Join us for the pre-Dante Pasta dinner preceding the English language programs. **To attend the dinner, reservations are required. The only way to make these reservations is by calling the activity line at (425) 243-7663 by 5 pm on the Monday before the meeting or send your request via email to: dante.reserve@gmail.com.**



Please remember to bring your homemade Italian desserts to finish off this great meal.

This is a communally prepared meal – the preparations start at 5:30 and the meal is served at 6:30. People who come early help with set up and cooking, those who come late help with the clean up.

Pasta dinner cost is \$8 per person, \$15 per couple, if reservations are received on the Activity Line by 5 pm on Monday before the meeting. Late reservations and walk-ins are charged \$10 per person and subject to availability. We meet at Headquarters House, 2336 15th Avenue, Seattle, WA. DAS will not be providing wine for the pre-Dante pasta dinners so bring your own wine to enjoy and share with others.

Dante Alighieri Society of Washington

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

Mailing address:
PO Box 9494
Seattle, WA 98109
(425) 243-7663

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.

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Grab Your Apron and Favorite Italian Cookbook—Duties

by Joyce Ramee

Thank you to all who have signed up to cook a pre-Dante pasta meal for an English meeting this season. Cooking is fun and a great way to make a significant gift of your talents to Dante!

Here's what's involved:

Sign up for the date you can do, by yourself or with a friend to help you. Those who sign up will be emailed about spending guidelines, etc.

You select the menu (pasta with sauce of your choice, salad, bread, anything else you want within the \$\$ guidelines).

You shop for all ingredients and prepare the sauce at home. Keep your receipts so you can be reimbursed.

On your cooking day, plan to arrive around 5:00 pm to get started.

As others arrive, they will pitch in; cooks don't have to do the table set-up alone. Bring your receipts for reimbursement.

The cook eats free and immediately makes about 35 new friends for being so generous as to volunteer!



Dante Cookbook Update

by Nancy McDonald

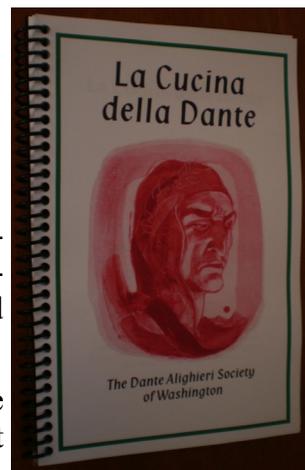
Thanks to all Dante members who have supported our La Cucina delle Dante cookbooks with their precious family recipes and sales.

We have had many compliments about the wonderful and delicious recipes and about what a great gift the cookbook makes, including repeat customers at Seattle's Festa Italiana in September.

Several of our pre-Dante pasta dinners have featured Dante cookbook recipes; a particular favorite is "Fried Capers and Anchovy Pasta", submitted and cooked by Dave Cottrell, and found on page 74.

At a party to celebrate our gorgeous Seattle summer, I prepared Adele Lord's recipe for "Bruschetta all Leccese", on page 7. I used my homegrown heirloom tomatoes and basil and the dish was fresh and sensational. Adele was from Lecce, in Puglia, where this is a local favorite.

Our little cookbook has traveled across the United States, and even to Italy. Caterina Wartes' friends in Trento contributed recipes and Caterina sent them the cookbook. I gave one to my sister, Betsy, in Elizabeth, CO; her friends saw it, liked it, and now several families are enjoying your family specialties. \$12 for members, \$15 for non members, and they will be available for purchase at Dante meetings.



Cookbook Comments

Jane Cottrell:

I think that I have purchased the most Dante cookbooks. I have sent them all over the country, brought them as hostess gifts and packaged them up with the ingredients in Dave's Fried Caper and Anchovy Pasta recipe. One recipient told me she didn't like anchovies! I have gifted my brother, nieces, and nephews with the cookbook. The recipes are terrific. They are easy to master and always taste very delicious.

Linda Bavisotto:

I ordered multiple copies of the cookbook and have mailed it out as gifts to both of my sisters and to other family members in Wisconsin, to friends in Seattle and Minneapolis, and to a cousin in New York. It made a very nice Christmas gift, with lots of good comments in return. My sisters both loved it. Haven't sent any abroad.



Italian Film Series at Seattle Art Museum

January 8th through March 19th

A Passion for Beauty Cinema Italian Style

Seattle Art Museum
1300 1st Ave

Jan 8—Mar 19

Select Thursdays
7:30 pm

Tickets on sale now



Jan 8: *Ossessione/Obsession*

(Luchino Visconti, 1942) With Clara Calamai, Massimo Girotti, Juan de Landa. Adapted from James M. Cain's *The Postman Always Rings Twice*. Martin Scorsese's 35mm print, 135 min.

Jan 15: *Il Sorpasso/The Easy Life*

(Dino Risi, 1962) Vittorio Gassman, Jean-Louis Trintignant, Catherine Spaak. In 35mm, 105 min.

Jan 22: *The Leopard*

(Luchino Visconti, 1963) Burt Lancaster, Claudia Cardinale, Alain Delon. Music by Nino Rota, in 35mm, 165 min.

Feb 5: *Fellini Satyricon*

(Federico Fellini, 1970) Martin Potter, Hiram Keller, Max Born. Music by Nino Rota, in 35mm, 138 min.

Feb 19: *Investigation of a Citizen Above Suspicion*

(Elio Petri, 1970) Gian Maria Volonté, Florinda Bolkan, Salvo Randone. Music by Ennio Morricone, in 35mm, 115 min, Oscar for Best Foreign Film.

Feb 26: *The Decameron*

(Pier Paolo Pasolini, 1971) Silvana Magnano, Franco Citti, Ninetto Davoli. Music by Ennio Morricone, in 35mm, 111 min.

Mar 5: *Death in Venice*

(Luchino Visconti, 1971) Dirk Bogard, Bjorn Andersen, Silvano Magnano. Music by Mahler, in 35mm, 128 min.

Mar 12: *Ginger and Fred*

(Federico Fellini, 1986) Marcello Mastroianni, Giuletta Masina, Franco Fabrizi. In 35mm, 127 min.

Mar 19: *La Grande Bellezza/The Great Beauty*

(Paolo Sorrentino, 2013) Toni Servillo, Carlo Verdone, Sabrina Ferilli. In 35mm, 142 min.

Enjoy a winter vacation with some of Italy's greatest directors, writers and actors. We'll begin with Martin Scorsese's personal print of *Ossessione/Obsession*, a stunning film noir tale of illicit love, then speed off on a road trip in *Il Sorpasso/The Easy Life*. Literature comes alive in *Fellini Satyricon* (from Petronius), *The Decameron* (Boccaccio), *The Leopard* (Giuseppe De Lampedusa) and *Death in Venice* (Thomas Mann). *Ginger and Fred* satirizes media culture and showcases the charming talents of Marcello Mastroianni and Giuletta Masina, and *La Grande Bellezza/The Great Beauty* immerses us in the fleshy and spiritual enchantments of Rome.

Films in Italian with English subtitles. Series tickets; nine films for \$68; SAM, SIFF, NWFF, SFI and TheFilmSchool members \$63. To order go to visitsam.org/tickets, call 206-654-3210 or visit any of the museum's three sites. Tickets also at Scarecrow Video. This series is sponsored by Festa Italiana.

San Gennaro Foods

taken from the Puget Sound Business Journal by Steve Wilhelm, Staff Writer

Jerry Mascio's vision, when he launched San Gennaro Foods Inc. was very elemental and very Italian: "Producing a simple product I liked very much."

That deceptively simple product is polenta, an Italian version of what Americans might more prosaically call "cornmeal mush."

But in Italian hands, stirred for 40 minutes while cooking, polenta becomes a creamy and gracious accompaniment to many Italian meals. And it was this heritage, and many family memories, that Mascio had in mind when he started his company in 1993.

"I told myself whatever I was going to get into was going to be something simple, something I could manage with few employees," he said. "I wanted to do something so simple—only a handful of ingredients—that it could be done by myself."

Since then San Gennaro Foods has grown steadily through the recession and was at \$4.5 million in revenues (in 2012). "Maybe people eat fewer lobsters during a recession, but a food like polenta, a staple, that's more recession-proof," Mascio said.

At its 31,000 square foot Kent plant, the company employs 20 people producing 18,000 pounds of polenta a day, cooking the cornmeal, water, and salt for 40 minutes in three large pots that are continually and mechanically stirred.

The aroma in the cooking room is warm and rich—it's the same aroma that this writer's Italian

mother, Maria de Blasio, released from the polenta she used to stir on the family stove.

Cornmeal, salt, and water are pretty much the recipe, but Mascio's twist was finding a way to preserve polenta in one-pound plastic tubes that look something like fat sausages. The tubes preserve polenta for up to nine months at room temperature. This product isn't the same as warm polenta you can scoop from a bowl after stirring it for 40 minutes. Instead it's a quick version ready to be sliced and fried, or covered with marinara sauce.

But as is the case with much Italian cooking, there are hidden subtleties, and Mascio certainly has the pedigree. Born in Sulmona, Italy, he followed his father Antonio Mascio's pasta making career, first to Tripoli, Libya, where his father ran a pasta factory feeding expatriate Italians, and then to Seattle, where the elder Mascio worked for what was then Majorette Macaroni.

Even though he's very American, wearing a baseball cap to an interview, Jerry Mascio has never turned his back on his homeland. He and his wife still own a condominium on the Piazza Garibaldi central square of Sulmona, the ancient city of his family high in the Abruzzo mountains, about 95 miles east of Rome. Mascio said he goes there at least twice a year, and in fact he left soon after this interview for another visit.

As many sons do, the younger Mascio set out on his own life direction, earning a degree in accounting that took him to work for a fish processor in Dutch Harbor, Alaska. But by 1979 the lure of pasta overcame the call of cold fish, and he returned to join his father in making pasta. The elder Mascio had invested in equipment to make fresh pasta, conveniently coinciding with growing consumer demand. Fueled by fresh pasta, Mascio Italian Specialty Foods "grew like crazy," reaching \$12 million in sales and 130 employees by the time they sold the company in 1990, Mascio said.

As he developed his polenta business, Mascio's business model has focused on keeping relatively low visibility and supplying the private-label needs of clients that make up 80 percent of his sales volume. A person can buy San Gennaro polenta, but the product is also sold under about a dozen other Italian specialty labels. Just 10 percent is sold in Washington. "All these years, I've purposely tried to stay low key, and not give away too much of what we're doing," he said. "It surprises me others haven't entered the market, it really does."

Mascio said his focus has been on doing polenta better than anybody, including one Canadian company that tried, but made a product that "had a funny taste." ... Mascio is relaxed, and he's gradually handing over the company to his children. "It has met all my expectations. I never thought it would get to this level," he said. "I wasn't looking for a \$12 million company, I just wanted to make a living."

Adele I. Lord "Nonni"

1924-2014

It is with sad hearts we announce the passing of our friend and long time Dante member, Adele Lord. Our heartfelt sympathy go to her family. Below is her obituary as published in the Seattle Times.



Adele was born to Dr. Pietro Fabrizio and Maria de Capoa on February 14, 1924 in Campobasso, Molise, Italy. In her late teens, the war interrupted studies she'd begun at the University of Rome, forcing her to resume her life with her family which had by then moved to Lecce, Puglia. As the war came to an end, she met and fell in love with Wilfrid H. Lord, a Seattle native volunteering with the American Field Services attached to the British Eighth Army campaigning across North Africa and into Italy where Lord was setting up Red Cross facilities. They married on July 28, 1945 and moved to Seattle in 1947 where Adele worked as a fashion model in Seattle's Bon Marche. She retired temporarily to become a mother and a homemaker with the birth of her daughter, Adrienne (Paetzke) who survives her. As her daughter became established Adele returned to the Bon Marche as a retail sales specialist. Grandchildren came too. Adele nurtured and cared for her grandsons Ryan and Peter, and then opened her arms and heart to embrace her great-granddaughter Giordana Coccia and great grandson Matthew. Each of them miss their "Nonni" endlessly. Passing away on December 28th at age 90, she was predeceased by her husband and by a sister Wanda Fabrizio. Adele was known to all as a woman of intelligence, dignity, and substance. Whether cooking tantalizing Italian dishes for family or guests, or teaching informal Italian classes at her home to friends, or perfecting her garden, or participating in the Dante Alighieri Society, she illuminated the lives of others with style and grace. Funeral services were held Saturday, January 3 at St. Bridget Catholic Church.

Guiseppe Tassone:

I have known Adele Lord for many years, she was a great person and supporter of the Dante Alighieri Society of Washington and its activities since its inception. I have many memories of Adele at the Festa di Natale per i Bambini when my daughters were very small and the years after and other Dante Alighieri Society's event such as Carnevale and Festa di Primavera. We will miss Adele.



Polenta with Creamy Tomato Sauce

Recipe from San Gennaro Foods website

1/2 cup minced onion
3 tablespoons tomato paste
4 tablespoons butter
1 clove minced garlic
1/4 cup dry wine
Salt and pepper to taste
1/2 cup chicken broth
3 tablespoons cream
1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese

Sauté onions in butter over medium heat. Add garlic. Stir in wine, tomato paste, and chicken broth.

Simmer 5 minutes.

Remove from heat and stir in cream, salt and pepper to taste. Arrange 1/2" thick slices of San Gennaro Polenta (2-3 slices per serving) in lightly oiled baking dish. Spoon over polenta and sprinkle with Parmesan.

Bake at 350 degrees for 15 minutes, or microwave 60-90 seconds on high.

Serves 4



And look what else San Gennaro sells for those with southern roots:



December Christmas Party

taken by Houghton Lee



December Christmas Party—taken by Stephen Stimac





New Year's Eve in Italy

New Year's Eve celebration in Italy is known as "*La Festa di Silvestro*" and as with other festivals in Italy, food plays a major role. Friends and families gather together for a huge feast with lentils being the star of dinner which symbolizes money and good fortune for the coming year. *Cotechino*, a large spiced sausage or *zampone*, stuffed pigs trotter can be served at dinner as pork symbolizes the richness of life in the coming year.

(The following is from the *Life in Italy* website.)

Lentils at Midnight (from *Life in Italy* website)

Eating lentils at midnight on New Year's Eve brings good luck. Or so we believe, even if, ... we don't remember why.

In truth, the origin of this particular tradition is pretty sketchy, as we've many a version of it. Some say that lentils, as all legumes, are naturally resistant as a plant and long lasting as an ingredient, which makes them a perfect symbol of longevity and health. Because they are very nutritious and relatively cheap, lentils were often chosen, in the past, by the poorest of people to guarantee a healthy, solid meal to their families, with a little amount of money spent. It's also for this reason that lentils are so strongly and ideally associated with the idea of health and well-being: because they are a quintessential symbol of a full stomach, for centuries the foremost gradient of health and happiness.

This is not the only version of the story, though: round, flat and golden-brown in color, to some lentils resemble gold coins, and the Romans used to gift little satchels full of them as a way to wish the

receiver wealth and well being. Eat them, we say today, and plenty of money will get in your pocket in the new year. If interpreted this way, then eating lentils becomes a good economical omen, or at least stands as a generalized hope financial difficulties will not hit any of those gathered around the table to eat.

Fireworks

So, it seems the habit of using cracknels and fireworks on New Year's Eve, which is pretty common everywhere in the world really has its roots in Italy and, more precisely, in our habit to talk with ghosts, spirits, and demons, calling them by their first name: apparently, so we Italians traditionally say, demons and evil spirits don't like loud noises, and stay away from them. Hence, it's not really in the beauty, the color, and the grandeur of fireworks one must look to find their tie with *Capodanno* (great New Year's celebration), but rather in the fact that...well, they're noisy. Even the loud pop of champagne bottles is said to be one of the reasons this particular type of wine, as well as any other very sparkling white, such as Italian *spumante* or Spanish *cava*, is always available on each Italian table on New Year's Eve.

The Lancio dei Cocci

Even though it used to be way more popular in the past, the *lancio dei cocci*-which literally means to throw old crockery out of your sitting room's window-is probably one of the most Italian of all Italian New Year's Eve traditions. Known in the whole of the country, but considered Neapolitan in its essence, the *lancio dei cocci* must take place at the ringing of the New Year, because it's then that, with old mugs and plates, you smash past negativity and evil against the ground: a cathartic act of liberation, let's call it. And you don't necessarily have to throw stuff out of the window, risking to hit your neighbor on the head; the *lancio dei cocci* can be done inside the house, against a wall or on the floor.

Le Strenne

Just like the *lancio dei cocci*, the *strenne* are a typical Italian thing. *Strenne* are simple gifts, but their story goes back once again, surprise-surprise, to the ancient Romans. Apparently, our glorious ancestors were pretty keen on a proprietary rite called the *streniarum commercium*, where people would give each other little gifts to increase well being and luck in the new year; the more presents one would receive, the more happiness the following 12 months were to bring. Although the *strenne* are not common everywhere in the country, in some regions it is usual enough to see young people walking around the streets on New Year's Eve, singing songs and reciting limericks asking for gifts, with the aim of increasing their luck and happiness for the new year.

Kissing Under the Mistletoe

In most of the world, kissing under the mistletoe is a Christmas tradition. In Italy, for some reason, we like to do it on New Year's Eve.

Mistletoe has been known for centuries, millennia, even, as a magical plant, associated, especially in the Celtic and Viking tradition, to fertility and love: for this reason, kissing under the mistletoe on New Year's Eve is thought to enhance people chances to find love.

Keeping Doors and Windows Open on New Year's Day

Ok, it may sound crazy, as we are talking January and it's pretty much freezing everywhere in Italy, but this is actually a pretty common habit: you open the door to let the good spirits in, and the windows to create a draft capable to wipe all evil entities away from your own home.

Wearing Red Underwear

...It's once again down to the Romans and their habits. In Roman times, the color red was associated with war and bloodshed, but wearing it was a common manor to exorcise the feat of both.

In a way, we still do it for the same reason: keeping a red undergarment on you on New Year's Eve, symbolically helps to fend off evil and negativity, so that you can start the new year with the right foot. It is important, however, to remember a couple of things: first of all, your *Capodanno's* red undergarment must be brand new and has to come to you as a gift. In other words, if you buy it for yourself, you're cheating. And don't even think to keep those knickers/boxers after the first of January: they must be thrown into the bin as soon as you finish partying, if you want their beneficial power to hold up against evil!

Eating Grapes

I must admit the first time I heard about the whole eating grapes on New Year's Eve business I was living in Dublin with a Spaniard from Malaga and one from Las Palmas, and it was through them I came to know about it. We never really had this tradition, in Italy, but it's become popular in the past five to ten years, as an imported mannerism from the Iberic peninsula. At midnight, people offer each other 12 grapes, each symbolizing a golden coin for each of the months of the new year. Just as it happens with lentils in the Italian tradition, in Spain grapes represent abundance and fertility, plentifulness, and good luck, and for this reason eating them at midnight has become popular in Italy, too.

Last but Not Least...Tombola

To many of us in Italy, it's not New Year's Eve unless we play at least one game of *tombola*. Just like bingo, *tombola* is one of those cross-generational games you very likely have played once in your lifetime, possibly with your grandparents and, if you're Italian, on New Year's Eve. Many of us, however, don't know anything about the curious history behind its origin and why it's so tied in our minds and habits to the Christmas and New Year's festivities.

...the game of *tombola* was born in Naples in the 18th century (precisely in 1734) as a way to decrease the popularity of gambling. Gambling was legal in the *Regno di Napoli* at the time (in the mid 18th century, Italy was still more than one hundred years away from unification), but was very little tolerated by the Church for moral reasons. In spite of it, declaring it illegal was out of the question, as it was source of a large amount of revenue for the kingdom. The Bourbon king of Naples, Charles, had a little conversation with father Gregorio Maria Rocco, a Dominican friar, and the two came to the agreement of forbidding gambling (which, by the way, had almost exclusively the shape and form of the *lotto*) during the Christmas period, but to keep it running for the rest of the year.

Neapolitans—just as all of us Italians—really, didn't like to be told they couldn't do what they loved and they remedied it by creating a game similar to *lotto*, to be played privately at home during the Christmas holidays. And voila, *tombola* was born.

Well, it's known all around the world that Italians are pretty ingenious people, right? ...

Il Fornaio *Passaporto*

I For-
In a i o
continues
their tradi-
tion of Ital-
ian Festa
Regionale



twice a year. Each person receives a "*Passaporto*" good for that time period when you sign up.

Every month Il Fornaio features a new dinner menu celebrating the wonderful diversity of food and wine from one of Italy's 20 unique regions.

You will receive a complimentary gift with each month you dine. When all six regions are stamped, you will be given a *Piatti della Festa Regionale*, a special plate commemorating your travels through the regions of Italy. Plus you will be eligible for a trip for two to Italy.

Dates:

- Jan 5-25 (Friuli, Farmer's Market Bag)
- Feb 2-22 (Umbria, Peperoncino Olive Oil)
- Mar 2-22 (Liguria, Herb Mix)
- Apr 6-26 (Marche, Truffle Salt)
- May 4-24 (Emilia-Romagna, Glassa Balsamico)
- Jun 1-21 (Campania, Finito!)

To sign up and for more information, visit their website at: www.ilfornaio.com

When we lived in Seattle we did this for many years and have several plates that I still use. They've kept us on their mailing list and we do occasionally make it to one of their Festa Regionale dinners.

Linda

DANTE CALENDAR 2014–2015

Dante Alighieri Society of Washington

<p>2014:</p> <p>September 10th: English Meeting Bonnie Birch “An Evening of Italian Music”</p> <p>September 24th: Italian Meeting Albert Sbragia “Cultura Italiana contemporanea: alcune riflessioni”</p>	<p>2015:</p> <p>January 14th: English Meeting Joanmarie Curran “Buying a House in Tuscany”</p> <p>January 28th: Italian Meeting Dario De Pasquale “Crescere in Sicilia: Growing up in Sicily”</p>
<p>October 8th: English Meeting Rob Prufer “All of Western Art Changed in this Room in Padua: Giotto’s Scrovegni Chapel”</p> <p>October 22: Italian Meeting Marcella Nardi “Umbria”</p>	<p>February 11th: English Meeting Julie Emerson “SAM’S Italian Room/Italian Ceramics”</p> <p>February 25th: Italian Meeting Nicla Rivero, UW and DAS Teacher “Isabella Andreini: In Defense of Women’s Virtue”</p>
<p>November 12th: English Meeting Lesley James “Checking out the Libraries of Italy”</p> <p>No Italian Meeting in November</p>	<p>March 11th: English Meeting Wine Dinner with Chris Zimmerman</p> <p>March 25th: Italian Meeting Cecilia Strettoi “I tesori nascosti di Pisa (The Hidden Treasures of Pisa)”</p>
<p>December 10th: Annual Christmas Party</p> <p>No Italian Meeting in December</p>	<p>April 8th: English Meeting Elections</p> <p>April 22nd: Italian Meeting Dr. Giovannella Moscovici “The First Turbojet: An Italian Realization to be Remembered” (Her father was the co- pilot in 1941)</p>
	<p>May 13th: English Meeting Mary Beth Moser “Trentino”</p> <p>No Italian Meeting in May</p> <p><i>June-August 2015: Summer break, no meetings.</i></p>

At the first meeting of each month (English program), pre-Dante pasta is communally prepared at 5:30 pm and served at 6:30 pm. Call the Activity Line (425) 243-7663 by the Monday before to reserve your spot (s) or email your request to: dante.reserve@gmail.com. Cost: \$8.00 per person or \$15.00 per couple

Unless otherwise noted, all programs are held at Headquarters House, 2336 15th Avenue S, in the Beacon Hill neighborhood of Seattle. Directions are on the back page of La Voce.

Membership Application

I (We) want to promote Italian language and culture and request membership in the Dante Alighieri Society of Washington. Enclosed is my (our) check in full payment of annual membership dues (\$40.00 for individual, \$50.00 for a family).

Mark one : () **New Membership** () **Membership Renewal**

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____

Telephone: _____ E-mail: _____

Amount Enclosed:

Membership Amount: _____

Contribution: _____

Total Enclosed: _____

Contribution Categories (For recognition stars):

Bronzo (bronze) - Up to \$25

Argento (silver) - \$26 - \$50

Oro (gold) - \$51 to \$100

Platino (platinum) - Over \$100

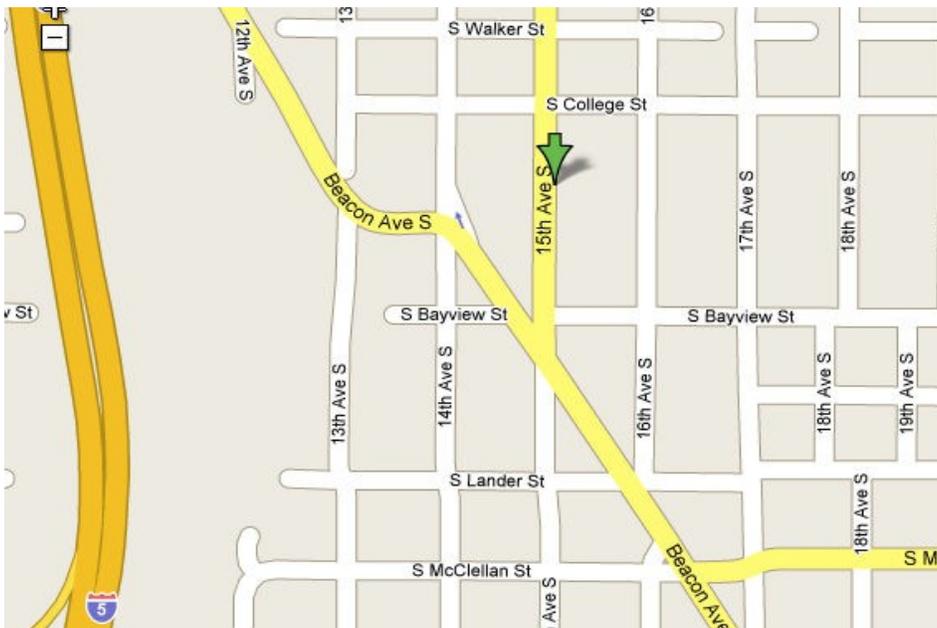
Please return completed membership application with check to:

Dante Alighieri Society of Washington

PO Box 9494

Seattle, WA 98109

If you have any questions, please call (425) 243-7663 and leave a message.



Directions to Headquarters House

Headquarters House is located at **2336 15th Avenue South** in the Beacon Hill neighborhood of Seattle. From I-5, take the Columbian Way/Spokane Street exit, eastbound. Turn left at the first light, Spokane Street and left again at the next light, 15th Avenue S. After crossing Beacon Avenue, Headquarters House will be on the right side between Bayview and College Streets.