



Newsletter ~ October 2020

Dante Alighieri Society of Pueblo

P.O. Box 1561, Pueblo, Colorado 81002

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Mission Statement

The mission of the Dante Alighieri Society of Pueblo, Colorado is to promote and preserve the Italian language, culture and customs in Pueblo and Southern Colorado regions.

To achieve this mission, the following goals are set forth:

To award scholarships to Pueblo area senior high school students to continue the study of the Italian language at the university level and to sponsor cultural and social activities to enhance the Italian American community.

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Ciao, fratelli,

To say things have changed since our last correspondence would be an understatement of monumental proportions! For example, if you had walked into a bank in February wearing a mask, 911 would have been called. Now you must wear a mask to enter a bank!

There is no way to put a smiley face on this pandemic. It has dramatically changed the way we live and function. It has devastated our economy and forced government spending giving us a deficit from which we may never recover. It hit our sister city in Italy, Bergamo, particularly hard (see story elsewhere in this newsletter) and forced us to live in a way that is an introvert's dream and an extrovert's nightmare!

It forced cancellation of our Dante scholarship lunch, summer festa, regional dinner and the very popular DeNiro Christmas party. We can be proud to know our Dante Society was the largest donor to the fund to assist Bergamo.

On a sad note we lament the passing of charter member Frank Ricotta. He was a very loyal Dante member and longtime educator in Pueblo. He will be missed!

On a happy note, Dante member, CSU Pueblo language professor Alegria Ribadeneira has won an international educator award for her teaching and use of Open Education Practices. Alegria has played a very key role in the success of our student exchange program with the University of Bergamo.

So we wear our masks, avoid each other, and pray for an end to this pandemic. We remain optimistic we will be hosting the scholarship luncheon on the first Sunday of May!

Ti auguro il meglio! (All the best)

Michael G. Salardino, President

Dante Alighieri Society of Pueblo

COVID IN BERGAMO



If all of you remember earlier this year, Italy was the hardest hit country in Europe by the pandemic and Bergamo, Pueblo's Sister City, was, apparently the hardest hit city in Italy. The Pueblo Sister City Commission and Pueblo Rotary 43 launched a campaign to raise funds to assist Bergamo and our Dante Alighieri Society was the largest donor. Our friends in Bergamo were most grateful.

Recently I contacted a number of our friends in Bergamo to see how the situation is now. It is better but, like us, they are not "out of the woods". That said, Italian specialist travel agent Guido Adelfio recently visited Italy (he has dual citizenship) and told me, "There is less Covid in Italy than in the White House!"

It's not quite that good! Our economic development and Rotary contact Giuseppe Venuti (we have a Sister Rotary connection with Bergamo as well) says "The situation in Italy is not dramatic but not good as well. Now we know more about the virus and the death rate is very, very low." He does lament the damage done to the economy. "The real problem is for tourism which is completely destroyed after one year of being stopped. The situation is dangerous for our economy even here in Lombardy where we generally don't have economic problems."

Elvira Messina, former assistant to the president and the person with whom we coordinated the Sister City agreement feels there is over reaction. She recently toured many parts of Europe and reports "In Italy there is mass hysteria I didn't see anywhere else in Europe." She also reports that "they know this virus better and can treat it before the patients get to the last stage."



Former exchange student Stefano Longaretti reports, "We're doing quite well. The number of infected people is increasing but we are managing them quite well so far. On the other hand, I am quite sure the situation will get worse in the next few weeks so we'll probably be forced to heavier restrictions." CSU Pueblo and the University of Bergamo are Sister Universities.

So while it appears the worst is over for Bergamo, they now appear to be in about the same situation as we in Pueblo!

So as Giuseppe says "we too are forced to always wear masks and it is not comfortable at all to go around with glasses always beared , but's that's it!"

Yes, Giuseppe, sadly, that's it!

Acceptance to Ca'Foscari University

For years now, I have wanted to go back to Europe for school and I have worked hard to save up to return. Now that I am a master's student at Ca' Foscari University of Venice, my dreams are finally coming true. I was accepted into a Language Sciences program, in order to further my studies in Linguistics. It has always fascinated me to know the reasons why something works the way it does and language is no exception. I was homeschooled my entire life and one of the classes that I took in high school was called Etymology, the study of the origin of words. I believe that God has a purpose for all of us and this is my purpose.

To be able to study in Italy is a dream come true and to make it even better, I get to live in one of the most famous cities in the world, Venice! I'm full to the brim with excitement as I embark on this next step in the journey of my life and I have the Dante Alighieri Society of Pueblo to thank. The Society enabled me to be able to study abroad in Bergamo, Italy in my last year at Colorado State University - Pueblo by giving me a scholarship for \$1500. I will be forever grateful to the Society and to Dr. Picicci and Donna Stutzman for enabling this little Pueblo girl to see the world.

Cassandra R. Castillo



2021 Dante Celebration

Dear Dante Alighieri of Pueblo Member,

I hope that you and your families are staying safe and sound during these most unprecedented times. As a member of our organization, I write to you with the hope that 2021 will bring us better days and the opportunity to reunite once again in community and celebration. As you may know, 2021 marks the 700th anniversary of Dante Alighieri's passing. The year is especially important to Italophiles, Dante members, and admirers of the "supreme poet." Furthermore, the year will mark a celebration of Italy and the figure of Dante throughout the world.

In person and virtual events, performances, exhibitions and conferences are being planned for the entire 2021 year. The General Secretary of the Dante Alighieri Society of Rome, Aleesandro Masi, recently said, "*Commemorare Dante significa rendere omaggio al padre della nostra lingua e ad un caposaldo della letteratura europea e mondiale. Significa anche celebrare il simbolo che racconta al mondo l'Italia, il suo umanesimo e la sua identità fatta di bellezza e accoglienza*" (To commemorate Dante means to pay tribute to the father of our language and to a cornerstone of European and world literature. It also means to celebrate the symbol that tells the world what Italy is, its humanism, and its identity made of beauty, acceptance and hospitality.) The Dante Alighieri Society of Pueblo hopes to come together in the near future to remember and celebrate the genius and legacy of Dante.

The Executive Committee plans to resume our scheduled events in the coming year. CSU-Pueblo's Italian program will also honor the year with an online course on Dante's *Divine Comedy*. Students will read the 14,000+ line poem with its astounding hendecasyllabic rhyme scheme, known as the terza rima and invented by Dante. Stay tuned for announcements on virtual and in-person events that coincide with the homage of seven centuries of Dante, including highlights of his contribution to the world's cultural patrimony.

On a side note, all membership dues for 2021 will be waived for those Dante members who paid in 2020. Thank you for your continued support and loyalty to our association. Wishing you all continued health and safety for the upcoming holiday season and in the new year.

Best wishes,

Chris Picicci
Vice President of the Dante Alighieri of Pueblo

Scholarship Winners

Due to COVID-19 the 40th Annual Scholarship Awards Presentation at the Pueblo Country Club on May 3, 2020, was cancelled. However, in spite of the disruption of classes last spring, four remarkable students completed the application process and were awarded scholarships. Three high school seniors received \$1000 scholarships and one student completing a minor in Italian from CSU-Pueblo received funding towards a study abroad program in Italy.

Lexus Dauenhauer, scholarship winner from South High School, wrote “The Dante Alighieri Scholarship would be incredibly meaningful to me because I take pride in being an Italian American. Learning the Italian language and obtaining a broad overview of the Italian culture has given me a stronger sense of my Italian heritage.”

Katie Madic, scholarship winner from South High School, wrote “This scholarship would mean I could focus more on my education and be one step closer to receiving my degree in speech pathology as well as furthering my education in Italian.”

Mollie Schoss, scholarship winner from Central High School, wrote “As a student who is interested in pursuing Italian during college, this scholarship would allow me to pursue a passion of mine further.

Brianna Reyes, scholarship winner from Colorado State University Pueblo, wrote “Studying abroad in Italy is something I’ve always dreamed of doing, it is almost surreal that I have the opportunity to pursue it. There are no words to describe how blessed I feel, and I know taking on this journey will enable me to enhance my future career goals and skills. I believe this trip will cultivate my learning, as well as introduce me to international business opportunities. I am thrilled to expand not only my educational outlook on things, but also to discover new cultures. To embark on this journey is like nothing I’ve ever known before, I am very thankful to be a recipient of the Dante Alighieri Scholarship.”

We look forward to awarding scholarships to deserving students in 2021. If you are interested in donating a scholarship or would like information regarding scholarship requirements, please contact Donna

Stutzman at donna.stutzman@csupueblo.edu or 719-545-2870 or Chris Picicci at

chris.picicci@csupueblo.edu .

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511 W. 29th Street, Suite A
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