



Newsletter ~ Summer 2021

Dante Alighieri Society of Pueblo

P.O. Box 1561, Pueblo, Colorado 81002

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• **Events:** Warren Diodosio • **Reservations:** Carol Arias, Betty Giltner, and Janet Sciortino
• **Scholarship:** Donna Stutzman
• **Past Presidents:** Donna Stutzman, Barbara Ferrero, Rocco DeNiro
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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.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

DANTE ALIGHIERI SUMMER FESTA

LaTronica's Restaurant

August 12th @ 6:00pm

RSVP to Warren Diodosio:

(719) 671-1916

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Ciao amici,

It has been a long time since we have been able to gather. All our popular events for a year and a half have been cancelled due to the evil Covid. But that ends Thursday Aug. 12 when we host the popular Dante Alighieri Festa! It will be held, once again, at Latronica's where we will enjoy food, music, and camaraderie. It will be a great way to end our isolation. The vaunted Latronica's buffet will be served including their famous Italian dish, fried chicken🍗. See the advertisement elsewhere in this newsletter.

Although we haven't been able to gather for many months, we haven't been idle. We have donated Italian books to local schools and donated more money than any organization or individual to the Bergamo, Italy relief effort. Mayor Nick Gradisar contacted me when it was learned that Pueblo's Sister City, Bergamo, was the hardest hit city in Italy and, perhaps, all of Europe, by the pandemic. The Pueblo Sister City Commission joined forces with Rotary 43 to raise funds, but Pueblo Dante made the largest contribution. Our friends in Bergamo were pleased and very grateful. It made me proud to be your president!

On Nov. 9 at River's Edge, we will host our annual regional dinner (region yet to be selected). It will be catered by our friends at East Coast Pizza. They have catered for us before and, since owner Dominic Mannino is from Italy you can count on genuine Italian cuisine!

Until Aug. 12, we wish you all the best. Ti auguro il meglio! (All the best)

Michael G. Salardino, President

Dante Alighieri Society of Pueblo

How the pandemic affected Gagliano's Italian Market



What does a family grocery store and deli do when it needs to survive a global pandemic, it has to persevere and change? In March 2020, we had to adapt our business to limited in person shopping, we choose to close the store to in-person shopping. That was hard given that for 99 years we survived the Great Depression, World War II rationing, and the economic downturn that Pueblo experienced in the 1980s. We went to curbside and call-in orders. We created a paper-guide of products at first that helped people see some but not all the products we carry. We thought that this would work for the initial two-week lockdown, but unfortunately it persisted, and we had to make a choice that would benefit us! How do we keep going and protect our parents who we wanted to keep safe? For us it was about them, over profits and we also did not want to have to fight with people to wear a mask. We would continue with our curbside shopping and adapt. We created a website using godaddy.com that would allow on-line shopping and allow people to view products and put in orders, we continued to take orders over the phone and installed a doorbell for people to inform us they were here for their orders. We were incredibly surprised regarding how well the online ordering took off. We started getting 15 to 20 online orders a day, that helped free up the phone, and outside ordering. We created posters and banners on the outside of the store that directed people to the website, that had pictures of the shelves, and the ability to order.

A few things also helped us as well, given that our customer base goes back four generations most of our customers new exactly what they wanted and where it's located. Our wholesale business had just expended into in getting our sausage in the local Safeway and Albertson's Stores, Springside Cheese Shop, Disanti Farms, DiTomaso Farms, Legree's and in over 30 restaurants In Pueblo area. As the pandemic continued, it was difficult for our staff running outside in the heat, cold, rain, snow but we were committed limiting our exposure by keeping our work family small and not getting exposed and having to close for 14 days as per health department orders. Can you imagine closing your business for 14 days and having to throw out all the perishable products every-time a person was exposed to someone with Covid-19? Not many people can, but we understood that it was better to have a limited business, that take a hit like that.

A big part missing was the cultural and family- home like setting that Gagliano's had fostered for over 99 years, so we had to increase our online presence. We increased our presence using Facebook and with over 7000 people following us we could engage with our customer. Our aim was to show more than the products we sold but show people that inside Tony and Josephine where doing what they had always do. We posted pictures of Josephine making cookies, making lasagnas, and Tony sitting in his chair upfront. We invited people into the store with the posts and hopefully engaged with them as well.

As vaccines become more available, we opened the doors after almost a year, with the confidence that everyone in our business was vaccinated and mask wearing had become a little more normalized. We also didn't have to worry about exposure and closing. Since we've opened our business has rebounded and experienced a grow that we are thankful for. We are about to celebrate 100 years of serving the Pueblo community on June 26, 2021 and plan to celebrate not only our business but our customers.

Dante Scholarship Winners 2021

The Dante Alighieri Society of Pueblo is pleased to recognize two outstanding scholarship winners for 2021. Each winner will receive a scholarship award of \$1500.

Rachel Paolucci recently graduated from Pueblo County High School and plans to pursue her studies in Italian and nursing at Colorado State University Pueblo. While enrolled in the School of Engineering and Biomedical Science, Rachel was involved in several extra-curricular activities and sports including volleyball, swimming, track, National Honor Society, and Italian Honor Society. She writes, "The Dante Alighieri Society of Pueblo Scholarship would be a meaningful award for me because of what Italian culture means to me. My great great grandfather and other ancestors came from Calabria and Napoli. I have always been fond of the Italian culture and learning more about where I come from, since I never got to meet my great grandparents. Pueblo has a rich Italian culture and I have been very fortunate to experience this. I have learned much about the Italian immigrants and how they worked and made a new life for themselves in America. As a high school student, I have had a great experience in Italian classes. Having a broad background knowledge of the Italian culture will assist me in my future studies of Italian and in my career as a nurse."



Sergio Sandoval, a graduate of Pueblo Central High School Class of 2021, has been actively involved in various academic, community and athletic endeavors throughout high school. Sergio served as Student Body President and was a member of Student Council for four years. He also participated in Key Club, Italian Club, National Honor Society, the STARS Mentor Program, tennis, swimming, and track. In addition to leading the Pueblo Central High School boys swimming team to victory in the South-Central League meet, Sergio was named the 2021 S-CL swimmer of the year. Sergio writes "The opportunity to learn the Italian language has given me a broader appreciation for the Italian presence in Pueblo. After being exposed to the beautiful architecture and traditions of the Italian people, I plan to visit Italy for my university's study abroad program. This scholarship will give me a chance to experience Italy."

Sergio plans to pursue his studies at the University of Denver.



DANTE ALIGHIERI SUMMER FESTA



**Come celebrate Thursday August 12th @ LaTronica's
Music, Food, & Camaraderie!**

6:00pm

RSVP: (719) 671-1916

Free if you bring a new member!

\$25

THE GRAND TOUR OF ITALY

May 31st – June 9th 2022

LET'S GO TO ITALY! Members of the community are cordially invited to join faculty and students from CSU-Pueblo on the Grand Tour of Italy from May 31 to June 9, 2022. On this journey from northern to southern Italy, you will experience some of the country's most iconic landmarks, savor the regional cuisine, and enjoy “la dolce vita” as you immerse yourself in Italian culture. Wander the winding cobblestone streets of Venice or take a gondola ride on its sparkling crystal blue canals. Enjoy views from the top of the Duomo of Santa Maria del Fiore in Florence and sip on a cappuccino at Caffè Rivoire in Piazza della Signoria in front of the original spot where Michelangelo placed his David in 1504. Become inspired in Assisi with visits to the Basilica of Saint Francis of Assisi and the Basilica of Saint Clare. Visit Pompeii, the most well-preserved city of antiquity and see first-hand Roman frescoes and vestiges of the 79CE eruption of Mt. Vesuvius. Finally, imagine yourself standing in the Coliseum, looking up at the Sistine Chapel or experiencing nightlife like a Roman at the Spanish Steps. Italy is truly breathtaking, and its treasures and people will never cease to amaze you. For more information on the tour, visit the following webpage, or contact:

- Chris Picicci at chris.picicci@csupueblo.edu
- Donna Stutzman at donna.stutzman@csupueblo.edu
- <https://www.efcollegestudytours.com/professors-trip/2446363RY>
- <https://www.efcollegestudytours.com/eliterature/dbd/2020/gtia.pdf>



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