

"To preserve and disseminate Italian language and culture"

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dicembre 2011

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News from the Office



To all Members

Please note

The Dante Alighieri Society of Canberra Inc. office hours are:

From 10:30am to 2:00pm Tuesday to Friday

On Monday the Office will remain closed. We apologise for any inconvenience.

For enquiries please call the office on 6247 1884 or visit our website: www.dantealighiericanberra.org.au

LIBRARY

Members please note that our library is open during office hours. It includes the following sections: Reading—Education—Literature— Literature/Youth—Geography—History— Art— Music—Cinema

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

President: Prof. Franco Papandrea Secretary: Andrew Antenucci (on leave) A/g Secretary: Paul Merner V. Presidents: Yvette Devlin, Sue Hancock Treasurer: Mario Rosi Committee members: Francesca Foppoli,

Franco Foppoli, Cellina Benassi, Orlando Di Iulio

Journal Editors: Cellina Benassi, Yvette Devlin *Note*: The journal editors wish to acknowledge the assistance of the office staff, Francesco Pozzi and Gabriel Willis in compiling this issue.

2011-2012 Holiday calendar

PLEASE NOTE

The office will be closed from Monday 5 December 2011 to Monday 30 January 2012 inclusive

and

conversation classes have ceased for the year and will resume on 16 February 2012

(please see new fee schedule on page 11 for more information)

ITALIAN LANGUAGE COURSES IN ITALY

The Dante Alighieri Society of Canberra offers its <u>financial members</u> access to Italian language courses in Italy at discount prices.

The Dante Alighieri Society of Camerino (Marche region), for instance, offers Australian students discounts of up to 46% on their 2012 course prices. For only 922 Euros, you could have a four-week language and culture course, accommodation, cultural visits etc. Excellent value!

If you intend to travel to Italy for an intensive course, contact the office for further details.



Non fidarsi delle apparenze!

Un giorno una donna responsabile delle risorse umane in una grande azienda, viene tragicamente investita da un camion e muore. La sua anima va in Paradiso, dove incontra San Pietro:

- Benvenuta in Paradiso! - dice San Pietro - Prima che entri, però, dobbiamo risolvere un problema: sei la prima responsabile delle risorse umane ad arrivare qui e non sappiamo ancora quale sia la migliore sistemazione per una manager del tuo tipo.

- Nessun problema, fammi entrare! - dice la donna.

- Mi piacerebbe, ma dall'Alto ho l'ordine preciso di farti passare un giorno all'Inferno ed uno in Paradiso, così potrai scegliere dove stare per l'eternità. Ti viene concesso un gran privilegio.

E così San Pietro accompagna la manager all'ascensore e va giù, giù, sino all'Inferno.

Le porte si aprono e si trova nel bel mezzo di una località di villeggiatura attorniata dagli amici-colleghi, tutti vestiti in abito da sera e molto contenti. La salutano, la baciano e ricordano i bei tempi. Giocano a golf, cenano al country club con aragosta e caviale. Incontra anche il Diavolo, che è un tipo molto simpatico cui piace raccontar barzellette e ballare. Ma arriva l'ora di dover lasciare questo magnifico posto. L'ascensore va su, su, e si riapre al cancello del Paradiso dove San Pietro la sta aspettando.

- Adesso è ora di passare un giorno in Paradiso.

La donna passa le successive 24 ore passeggiando tra le nuvole, suonando l'arpa e cantando dolci melodie. Le piace molto ed alla fine delle 24 ore San Pietro viene a prenderla.

- Allora, dove preferisci trascorrere l'eternità?

La donna riflette un attimo e poi risponde:

- Beh, non l'avrei mai detto: sì, il Paradiso è bellissimo, ma, alla fin fine, mi sono trovata meglio all'Inferno!

Così San Pietro la scorta fino all'ascensore e lei scende all'Inferno. Quando le porte dell'ascensore si aprono si trova in un'immensa terra desolata, ricoperta di sterco e rifiuti di ogni genere. Vede i suoi amici lerci, vestiti di stracci, curvi a raccogliere lo sterco ed i rifiuti e a metterli in sacchi neri. Il Diavolo la raggiunge e le mette un braccio sulla spalla.

- Non capisco ... - balbetta la donna - Ieri qui c'era una località di villeggiatura, abbiamo mangiato molto bene, danzato; ci siamo divertiti molto. Ora c'è una terra desolata, piena di sterco e i miei amici sembrano dei poveri miserabili! Il Diavolo la guarda e, sorridendo, le dice:

- Ieri ti stavamo assumendo. Oggi fai parte del personale ...

L'ANGOLO DELLA LINGUA/

LANGUAGE CORNER

by Yvette Devlin

I'll finish the year by drawing your attention to a couple of frequently-used expressions that you might like to pick up:

farcela (dal verbo *fare* + *ci* + *la* meaning a thing) (= *to manage, to succeed, to be able to do something*) and

non poterne (dal verbo *potere* + *ne* meaning of that thing) *più* (= *not prepared to put up with something any more/longer*). Here are some sentences to illustrate how these expressions can be used:

Non ce la faccio proprio ad arrivare per mezzogiorno perchè sono impegnata fino a mezzogiorno e mezzo = I really cannot get there by noon because I'm committed till 12.30 pm.

"Vieni in Italia quest'anno?" "No, purtroppo non ce la faccio. Sono occupatissima al lavoro" = "Are you coming to Italy this year?" "No, unfortunately I can't make it. I'm very busy at work"

Ce l'ha fatta! E' stata promossa bene ed andrà all'università = She succeeded/ She's done it! She got good marks and will go to university.

Non ne posso più! Questo rumore mi fa me impazzire! = I can't stand it any longer! This me noise is driving me crazy!

"Gli italiani non ne possono più" afferma un politico di sinistra = "Italians have had enough/ They can't stand it any more" states a left-wing politician.

ABG

CENNO STORICO -*A BIT OF HISTORY*

di Yvette Devlin

Conosciamo tutti il grande compositore Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901) che viene spesso collegato con le aspirazioni italiane per l'unificazione del paese durante le guerre d'indipendenza il cui scopo era di espellere l'impero austro-ungarico. La sua famosa aria Va pensiero (dal Nabucco, 1842) viene cantata dagli ebrei in esilio che piangono per la loro terra perduta. Il tema della schiavitù e dell'occupazione si trova anche nell'opera Aida che Verdi compose per il vicerè d'Egitto per le celebrazioni dell'apertura del canale di Suez. Fu rappresentata per la prima volta a Cairo il 24 dicembre 1871 ma per Verdi la vera première ebbe luogo al teatro La Scala di Milano l'8 febbraio 1872. Gli italiani rimasero inmediatamente entusiasti di questa opera che ha continuato ad esser presentata in tutto il mondo. Ad esempio, l'Arena di Verona (un grande anfiteatro romano perfettamente idoneo a questa opera) la include nel suo programa estivo tutti gli anni. I costumi, la magnifica scenografia e la potenza della sua musica (per es. La Marcia Trionfale) rendono l'Aida uno spettacolo indimenticabile.

Everyone is familiar with our great composer Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901) who is often associated with Italian aspirations for a united country during the wars of independence when Italy was fighting to expel the occupying Austro-Hungarian Empire. His famous aria Va pensiero from Nabucco (1842) is sung by the exiled Jews who weep the loss of their land. The theme of slavery and occupation recurs in the opera Aida which was commissioned by the viceroy of Egypt to celebrate the opening of the Suez Canal. It was first performed in Cairo on 24 December 1871 but Verdi considered its performance at Milan's La Scala on 8 February 1872 as its real première. Aida was received enthusiastically in Italy and since its première has been performed regularly all over the world. For instance, the Arena di Verona (a grand Roman amphitheatre eminently suitable for this opera) includes it in its summer program every year. Aida's lavish costumes, its grandiose settings and the power of its music (for instance the Triumphal March) make it an unforgettable experience.



L'Aida all'Arena di Verona/Aida at the Arena di Verona

L'ANGOLO DELLA POESIA/ POETRY CORNER

di Yvette Devlin

Giovanni Pascoli is a much-loved poet of the second half of the 20th century. He was born at S. Mauro di Romagna on 31 December 1855 and died at Bologna on 6 April 1912. His life was marked by a great tragedy: when Giovanni was only 12, his father was assassinated on his way home, leaving his mother and ten children to fend for themselves. Giovanni won a scholarship to the University of Bologna where he studied literature under the poet Giosuè Carducci. After teaching at high schools and at university in Messina and Pisa, he was offered Carducci's chair at the University of Bologna when Carducci died. He published many poetry collections over a twenty-year period and some studies on Dante, and also translated Greek and Latin literature.

In this poem Pascoli describes an idyllic rural scene. It occurred to me that the peasants ploughing the field might not have experienced the same scene quite so romantically. *Arano* was included in his first collection *Myricae* (1892) and I found it in *Letture italiane per stranieri* (1964).

Arano

Al campo, dove roggio nel filare qualche pampano brilla, e dalle fratte sembra la nebbia mattinal fumare, arano: a lente grida, uno le lente vacche spinge; altri semina; un ribatte le porche con sua marra paziente; ché il passero saputo in cor già gode, e il tutto spia dai rami irti del moro; e il pettirosso: nelle siepi s'ode il suo sottil tintinno come d'oro.



Here is my literal translation.

They plough. In the field where some vine leaves shine red along the row and from the bushes the morning fog rises like smoke, they plough; shouting slowly, one pushes along the slow cows; another sows; yet another with a hoe patiently flattens the folds of the raised earth; the smart sparrow already rejoices in its heart and watches attentively from the bare branches of the mulberry tree; and the redbreast: in the hedges you can hear its light song like a little gold bell.

Italian classes for children

The Italian Language School (I.L.S.) runs Italian classes for children aged 5 to 15

Classes are held every Saturday from 1.30pm to 4pm during school terms at Yarralumla Primary School, Loftus Street, Yarralumla

Cost: \$120 per term

For further information please ring the Coordinator Giuliana Komnacki on 0414 269 335 or email giuliana1@iprimus.com.au

ITALIAN NOBEL LAUREATES IN SCIENCE

A presentation by Prof Oscar Moze

At our October cultural event the focus was on the best scientists that Italy produced, scientists whose achievements were recognised with the highest accolade – the Nobel Prize.

The scientific attaché at the Italian Embassy, Prof. Oscar Moze (who has a doctorate in Physics and who subsequently specialised in neutron spectrometry), gave us an excellent power-point presentation on each one of them and brought them to life in an effective way. We almost basked in reflected glory when he mentioned the fact that he personally met two of them, including Carlo Rubbia whom he found to be "quite a character".

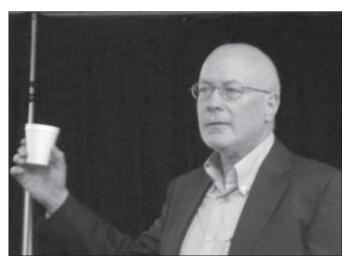
After reminding us that the prize was instituted by the Swedish chemist Alfred Nobel who made his money from inventing dynamite and from arms manufacturing, he mentioned the five categories in which it is awarded and reminded us that Mathematics isn't one of them. To date, the Physics and Chemistry prizes have been awarded 103 times and the Medicine one 102 times. Ten Italians have received one of these prizes.

The first one was **Camillo Golgi** (born in 1843 in Lombardy and educated at Uni of Pavia) who received the **Medicine** prize in **1906** together with Santiago Ramón y Cajal "in recognition of their work on the structure of the nervous system". Colgi had experimented with the impregnation of nervous tissue (silver staining) and had also established that there were at least two forms of malaria.

The second was the famous **Guglielmo Marconi** (born in Bologna in 1874 and privately educated) who from a young age showed a passion for electricity. At the age of 25 he sent wireless signals across the English Channel, and two years later he transmitted across the Atlantic between Cornwall and Newfoundland, a distance of 3300 km. In **1909** he shared the Nobel Prize in **Physics** with Karl Braun "in recognition of their contributions to the development of wireless telegraphy".

The third was **Enrico Fermi** (born in Rome in 1901 and educated at the Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa). Demonstrating an early aptitude for mathematics and physics, at age 25 he had discovered important statistical laws – now known as the Fermi statistics – and at age 26 he was appointed Professor of Theoretical

Physics at the University of Rome. He migrated to the USA in 1938 because of the risky political situation in Italy for Jewish people. His research work took him to the discovery of nuclear fission; he directed the first controlled nuclear chain reaction in 1942 and was a team leader on the Manhattan Project (for the atom bomb). In **1938** he was awarded the Nobel Prize for **Physics** "for his demonstrations of the existence of new radioactive elements produced by neutron irradiation, and for his related discovery of nuclear reactions brought about by slow neutrons".



Prof. Oscar Moze giving his presentation.

The fourth was **Emilio Segrè** (born at Tivoli, Rome, in 1905 and educated at the Uni of Rome). He gained his doctorate in Physics under Enrico Fermi. A Jew, he too left Italy for the USA in 1938 and subsequently worked on the Manhattan Project. He contributed to the discovery of Plutonium. Together with Owen Chamberlain in **1959** he was awarded the Nobel Prize in **Physics** "for their discovery of the antiproton".

The fifth was **Giulio Natta** (born in Imperia in 1903 and educated at the Milan Polytechnic). An industrial chemist, he started working on synthetic rubber. In **1963** together with Carl Ziegler he received the Nobel Prize for **Chemistry** "for their discoveries in the field of the chemistry and technology of high polymers".

The sixth scientist is **Salvatore Luria** (born in Torino in 1912 and educated at the Uni of Torino). After studying radiology at the Uni of Rome and meeting German-American biophysicist Max Delbrück, he began to focus

on testing genetic theory with viruses that infect bacteria. Being a Jew, he too moved to the USA in 1940 where he worked with Dulbrück and with him demonstrated that natural selection affects bacteria, which explains how bacteria develop antibiotic resistance. In **1969** they were both awarded the Nobel Prize in **Medicine** "for their discoveries concerning the replication mechanism and the genetic structure of viruses".

The seventh was **Renato Dulbecco** (born in Catanzaro in 1914 and educated at the Uni of Torino). During the war he joined the resistance as physician to the partisans. In 1947 he left Italy for the USA with Rita Levi-Montalcini and joined the Luria group. He studied the biological properties of the poliovirus, isolating its first mutant, and his studies focussed on the genetic nature of cancer. In **1975** with Howard Temin and David Baltimore, Dulbecco was award the Nobel Prize in **Medicine** "for their discoveries concerning the interaction between tumour viruses and the genetic material of the cell".

The eighth is **Carlo Rubbia** (born in Gorizia in 1934 and educated at the Uni of Milan then the Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa). In 1958 he moved to the USA where he was involved in experiments on Weak Interactions. He continued his research as a senior physicist at CERN (the European Organisation for Nuclear Research) and in **1984** together with Simon Van Der Meer he was awarded the Nobel Prize in **Physics** "for the discovery of the subatomic particles W and Z" – particles which convey the weak force, one of the four fundamental forces of nature.

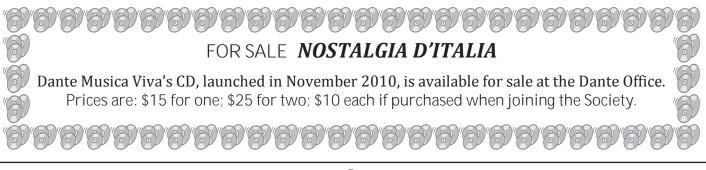
The ninth is the only Italian female scientist to receive the prize – **Rita Levi-Montalcini** (born in Torino in 1909 and educated at the Uni of Torino). During the war she installed a small laboratory in her own home to investigate chick embryos. In 1947 Levi-Montalcini moved temporarily to the USA to pursue her research observing mouse tumours implanted in chick embryos. Together with American biochemist Stanley Cohen, she was awarded the Nobel Prize in **Medicine** in **1986** "for their discoveries of growth factors". Rita Levi-Montalcini is now 102 years old, still active and a life senator in the Italian Parliament. The tenth is **Riccardo Giacconi** (born in Genova in 1931and educated at the Uni of Milan). In 1958 he moved permanently to the USA to undertake his research focussing on X-Ray astronomy. In 1978 he led the development of the first fully-imaging telescope to be put into space. In **2002** with Raymond Davis Jr and Masatoshi Koshiba he received the Nobel Prize in **Physics** "for pioneering contributions to astrophysics, which have led to the discovery of cosmic X-ray sources".

At a stretch we could claim an eleventh winner, **Mario Capecchi**, who was born in Verona in 1937 but left Italy for the USA at age 11. He therefore received his education and research opportunities in the USA but was influenced by Salvatore Luria. In **2007** he shared the Nobel Prize in **Medicine** "for discoveries of principles for introducing specific gene modifications in mice by the use of embryonic stem cells".

Oscar's enthusiasm and understanding of the work of these outstanding scientists was effectively communicated to the audience, despite the fact that many of us non-scientists struggled with technical terms and concepts.

What came through very clearly in Oscar's presentation is the importance of great scientists working with other great scientists: as was the case of Dulbecco and Levi-Montalcini working with Luria and all studying at the University of Torino; and Segrè studying with Fermi in Rome and then working together in the USA. Clearly, intellectual stimulation from peers and availability of research resources are two vital ingredients in achieving outstanding scientific success. The other 'pattern' that emerged from the presentation was that four of the Nobel Prize winners were Jewish and had to leave Italy during the fascist period because of the repressive laws introduced by Mussolini. Hopefully this will never be the case again.

Yvette Devlin Vice-President



Christmas in Italy... ...Natale in Italia

Around Italy, Christmas decorations are put up on the 8th of December, the day of the feast of the Immaculate Conception (Festa dell'Immacolata Concezione), which as the name suggests, celebrates the immaculate conception of Jesus. At this time,

Christmas trees, street decorations, and most importantly, nativity scenes (presepi) are put up. Presepi can be seen all around towns, in shop windows, at Christmas markets and in people's homes.

The festivities continue past Christmas and the New Year until the 6th of January, the day of the Epiphany (Epifania or commonly called Befana). Traditionally, on the eve of this day, the Befana gives gifts to children who have been

good. If children have been bad, they receive a lump of coal instead of candy and presents, although these days it is replaced with dark candy, of which most children will receive a piece in addition to presents, because they have probably been bad at some point in the past year. Of course not even Italy is immune to globalisation and Santa Claus (Babbo Natale) is an increasingly popular character and plays a similar role as he does in Australia, delivering gifts at night on Christmas Eve.



There are also many regional differences between celebrations around the country. On Christmas Eve, abstinence from meat is generally observed and some southern regions celebrate the Feast of the Seven Fishes (festa dei sette pesci). Typical foods at

> this meal include calamari, prawns, anchovies, sardines and other types of seafood. This is just one example of the many regional variants of Christmas celebrations.

> If you are ever lucky enough to go to Italy for Christmas, you will find that each town has its own attraction: Naples has the best nativities, the Vatican has the Pope's midnight mass, Torino has the best Christmas lights and Monte Ingino* has the world's tallest Christmas

tree, topped with a star that can be seen up to 50 kilometres away. For those of you who won't be in Italy for Christmas, you can still celebrate like the Milanesi by eating panettone, which is traditionally enjoyed for Christmas and New Year's Eve.

Merry Christmas, or as they say in Italian, Buon Natale!

Gabriel Willis

* Mount Ingino is situated just outside Gubbio, Umbria

THE DANTE MUSICA VIVA CHOIR SAVES THE BEST TILL LAST

Our Society's choir has had a very busy and rewarding year, performing at several locations and to different groups of people, ranging from nursing homes to Italian community groups and large multicultural events.

Over the week-end of 26-27 November it ventured out of Canberra for the first time. At its own expense, the choir went to Wollongong where it had teed up three performances: at the Marco Polo Care Services at Unanderra (mostly Italian residents), at the Multicultural Aged Care Illawarra at Warrawong (24 nationalities with half a dozen Italians), and at the Fraternity Club of Wollongong (mostly Italians).

Wherever we performed, we were embraced enthusiastically. From the spontaneous positive feedback received, we know we brought immense joy and triggered emotional responses among our audience. It was indeed an ideal way to conclude our year of disseminating Italian culture through song and opera arias. We were all on a high as we drove back to Canberra.

Thanks to Livio Chicco who had organised the visit; to the choir leaders, the soloists, the musicians and every single choir member who played an essential part in this success story; and to all the helpers who assisted with transport and setting up of sound system etc.

Yvette Devlin, Vice-President

I L RINASCIMENTO IN VISITA ESCLUSIVA A CANBERRA

La National Gallery of Australia (NGA) è riuscita ad ottenere in prestito per un periodo di quattro mesi 76 dipinti dell'epoca rinascimentale, dipinti che sono in mostra permanente all'Accademia Carrara di Bergamo che però deve chiudere temporaneamente per restauri.

Dal 9 dicembre 2011 al 9 aprile 2012 queste opere artistiche saranno esposte a Canberra in una magnifica mostra intitolata Renaissance – 15^{th} and 16^{th} century Italian Paintings from the Accademia Carrara, Bergamo.



Giovanni Bellini: Madonna e Bambino (c. 1488)

Potremo ammirare i dipinti di alcuni dei più rinomati pittori nella storia dell'arte italiana. La NGA ha sottolineato che "finora nessun dipinto di Raffaello, Botticelli, Bellini o Perugino è mai stato visto in Australia". Pure il grande Tiziano figura tra gli artisti rappresentati.

Alcune delle opere in mostra erano state dipinte per altari di chiesa e sono quindi ampie mentre altre sono più piccole perchè destinate ad uso privato.

Per meglio gestire le visite ed evitare le lunghe code tipiche delle grandi mostre d'arte della NGA, i biglietti d'ingresso <u>devono</u> essere prenotati in anticipo e potranno essere utilizzati solo per un'ora e una data specifiche. Ma una volta dentro ci si può fermare quanto si vuole.



Raffaello Sanzio: San Sebastiano (1501-2)

Vi esortiamo a visitare questa mostra, specialmente se non avete l'occasione di visitare l'Italia e i suoi musei, accademie e chiese. I biglietti sono prenotabili on line tramite Ticketek oppure telefonando al 132 849. Per saperne di più, visitate il sito della NGA nga.gov.au.

A quick summary in English: Between 9 December 2011 and 9 April 2012 the NGA will host a major Renaissance exhibition featuring 76 paintings belonging to an art gallery in Bergamo that is temporarily closed for renovations. The artists included in this unique exhibition are among the most respected of this golden age of Italian art: Tiziano, Raffaello, Botticelli, Bellini and Perugino. Apart from Tiziano, original paintings of the other four artists have never been seen in Australia. You are all encouraged to visit this exhibition especially if you don't have the opportunity to visit Italy and its art galleries and churches where you can admire works of these painters. Tickets must be booked in advance through Ticketek or by ringing 132 849. For more information visit the NGA website nga.gov.au.

Yvette Devlin Vice-President



DANTE ALIGHIERI SOCIETY'S FEE STRUCTURES FOR 2012

The Dante would like to inform you of our new fee structures for the year.

Our grant income from the Italian Government has fallen dramatically over the years. Five years ago we were receiving around \$15,000 a year; last year we received just under \$4000. As a result of the very recent financial happenings in Italy, we can be assured of receiving little or nothing in 2012. In addition, whilst we do make every attempt to minimise our expenditure where at all possible, our costs have been increasing over the past years.

The committee has, after careful consideration, decided on the following changes and fee structure for 2012:

Dante Annual Membership Fees

Remain unchanged at \$30 per annum (\$15 conc).

Conversation Groups:

Will be held during the same period as the three terms for the Grammar classes, with the dates being advertised in the newsletter.

Conversation group sessions will be held on the following dates:

Term 1 - 16th Feb to 19th Apr Term 2 - 31st May to 2nd Aug Term 3 - 13th Sep to 15th Nov There will thus be a total of 30 conversation group sessions.

There will be now be a modest charge to attend the Conversation Group sessions, as follows: \$100 for the full year (three terms) Or \$40 per term Or \$5 per ad-hoc session attended

Dante Review

The newsletter will now be produced bi-monthly

We encourage all members to receive their newsletter electronically where possible to reduce both the impact on the environment and our costs. Where specifically requested, we will continue to send it through the mail.

Grammar Classes

New students will be charged \$260 for their first term. Ongoing students will continue to receive a 10% discount on the subsequent term's fees.

Our new fee structure still leaves us in a very competitive position vis-à-vis other language providers in Canberra.

The Committee thanks you for your understanding on these issues.

	ATTENTIO	N ALL MEMBERS	S!!!
IT IS TIM	E TO RENEW	YOUR MEMBER	SHIP FOR 2012
Dante Alighier	i Society of Can	berra Inc. One-Year I	Membership
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