

The Girls of Summer



Image courtesy of Midway Village Museum

*Ange Armato,
Calacurcio sisters
were pioneers in
women's sports*

By Mike Doyle

They weren't exactly the Joe DiMaggios, Phil Rizzutos or Anthony Rizzos of their day. They were young women, eager for an opportunity to play in the sport they loved, decades before Title IX. Three Italian-American women from Rock-

ford – Ange Armato and sisters Doris Calacurcio Johnson and Aldine Calacurcio Thomas – had connections with the Rockford Peaches of the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League, which ran from 1943 to 1953.

It's 12 years of existence, 15 teams, mostly from the Midwest, played in the league. Not only were the Peaches and South Bend Blue Sox two of the four charter teams, they were the only ones to field teams in every season. The idea for women's professional baseball came from Chicago Cubs owner Philip K. Wrigley, who feared the major leagues would be shut down during World War II. Most minor league teams had folded, and he didn't want his stadium sitting empty. In 1942, he proposed the idea of a women's league, and, the next year, there were four teams in the league, which eventually was the AAGPBL. Besides the Peaches and Blue Sox, there were the Racine Belles and Kenosha Comets.

Aldine Calacurcio played for the Rockford Peaches in 1947 as a shortstop and utility infielder. Her tryout for the team was in Cuba where the entire league had spring training.

The Calacurcios lived across the street from Beyer Stadium, and Aldine's younger sister, Doris, and she and other girls on her park district team would watch the Peaches practice. Peaches' manager Bill Allington often practiced with the girls but told her, "If you're serious about ball, you have to play – not only practice," wrote Peggy Dalhberg in the July 1989 issue of Rockford Magazine.

Wrigley's idea was to find players in women's softball



Ange Armato

leagues that were popular at the time. That's how Ange Armato came to the league. Growing up as the seventh girl in a family of eight children, she excelled at sports and at the age of 15 was invited to play softball in a traveling league out of DeKalb. The next year, she was playing shortstop and pitching in a co-ed hardball team.

Her hometown team played home games at Beyer Stadium, which is where she saw her first Peaches game in 1945.

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*Notable Italian women
are celebrated
in March
during Women's
History Month,
Pages 1, 8, 9*

Elisabetta Sirani (above) painted her self-portrait at a time when Italian women artists had to struggle for recognition for themselves. Her story is on Page 8, while the story of Artemisia Gentileschi, another woman born before her time, is on Page 9. Joe and Jan Licari (right) are pictured in Sambuca during GRIAA's 10-day tour of Sicily in September, 2016. A story about the trip is on Page 2.





GRIAA's Sicily trip enjoyed by all

By Frank Perrecone

On September 4, 2016, a group of 14 left Rockford for a ten-day tour of Sicily. The trip was hosted by the Greater Rockford Italian American Association (GRIAA), with travel arrangements made by Tony Caruana at Lindstrom Travel. The travelers were Dominic and Mark Gugliuzza, Joe and Jan Licari, Rich and Anna Marie Arbisi, Annette Giansin, Ninette Basile Cooney, Nancy Parrinello, Chris Parrinello-Peterson, Mary Weber, Diane Scoma and Frank and Jody Perrecone.

We flew from Chicago to Rome to Palermo. Upon our arrival in Palermo, we were greeted by our embedded tour manager, Michelangelo Montagnese, who, along with our bus driver, made travel through Sicily stress free.

We spent two nights in Palermo, one night in Marsala, two near Agrigento, and three in Taormina and one in Catania. The cities and villages we visited were Palermo, Monreale, Segesta, Erice, Marsala, Roccamena, Sambuca, Agrigento, Aragona, Catania, Taormina, Messina and Siracusa.

Sicily is home to many ancient Greek temples and theaters that have survived time, weather, earthquakes and invasions. We saw many of them, with guides explaining the significance and detail of each. In Agrigento, we saw ruins which included the best preserved temple in Sicily. At Piazza Armerina, we toured an excavated Roman villa with the finest floor mosaics in existence.

With guides, we toured many of Sicily's beautiful cathedrals: Palermo, Monreale, Messina, Catania and Messina. These structures all have common elements: breathtaking mosaics, beautiful statues of religious figures, large paintings of religious events, magnificent side altars and bodies of religious people entombed in crypts.

The food and wine of Sicily is outstanding. I was somewhat leery of having lunches provided at pre-selected restaurants with set meals, but my concerns were unfounded. The group thoroughly enjoyed the four-course meals, both in taste and variety. I was surprised that during this trip to Sicily, the wait staff actually knew what type of food I wanted when I said *"lo sono vegano."* I am vegan. During previous trips to Italy and Sicily, I had to explain to them in Italian, no meat, fish and cheese when ordering meals.

The weather in Sicily was great. Temperatures during the day were primarily in the low 80s. Evening temperatures were mild, with only an occasional need for long sleeves or a sweater. However, at the higher elevation of Mount Etna, the temperature was cold, requiring a jacket.



Richard and Anna Marie Arbisi sitting in a hotel lobby near Agrigento



Dominic and Mark Gugliuzza in Cefalù with Gugliuzza and Marchesano cousins.

The best part of the trip for most was connecting or re-connecting with relatives or visiting the villages of family origin. In Sambuca, Jody and I found the street of her grandmother's birth in 1882. Joe and Jan Licari's families have Sambuca connections. They brought with them a family genealogy chart, which he gave to a Sambuca official, who agreed to look for information about the Alba, Lucido, Montalbano and Bonavia sides of their families.

In Roccamena, a village about 10 miles north of Sambuca, Annette Giansin and her niece, Ninette Basile Cooney, wanted to see the village of Annette's mother's birth (Ninette's grandmother). Michelangelo took us to the municipal building, where we met village officials. Once the mayor found out the reason for our visit to Roccamena, he started going through old records and found Annette's mother's birth certificate, Guiseppe Provenzano, born in 1898. He made a copy for Annette and Ninette.

During our time in Roccamena several residents of the village started to gather around us in front of the building. Soon, I heard someone saying in a thick Sicilian accent, "Rockford, Morgan Street." With Michelangelo translating, Pietro Cascio told me that in 1971, he was in Rockford and stayed at a house on Morgan Street with the Terrazino family. I asked him if the house was located close to a church and if the family had a daughter named Nancy. He said yes. I told him I went to St. Anthony Grade School with her and walked by that house on my way to school. He asked me to contact the family and gave me his name and telephone number on a piece of paper. I told him I would attempt to find the family and give them the message. Another Roccamena resident asked if I knew Joe Bruscia. I told him that my father and mother bought a pizzeria from Joe.

At the beginning of the trip, Dominic and Mark Gugliuzza were met at the Palermo airport by relatives from Cefalù. They spent two nights with them. In Aragona, a town about 10 miles northeast of Agrigento, we stopped at the old church and piazza and met a 92-year-old man named Giuseppe Graciffa.

Continued on page 7



Graham-Ginestra House to open in April

Ethnic Heritage Museum acquires culturally historic home

By Mike Doyle

Location has long been a significant factor for the Graham-Ginestra House. When it was built in 1857, it was located between the two businesses owned by Freeman Graham. When it was purchased by Leo Ginestra in the 1920s, it was located in the middle of a dynamic commercial district on South Main Street that featured many businesses owned by other Italian immigrants. After its purchase by the Ethnic Heritage Museum last November, it has the potential to become an integral part of a cultural and economic renaissance of southwest Rockford.

The Graham-Ginestra House, a Greek revival, Italianate structure located at 1115 South Main Street, is next door to the museum. Between the two is a former rose garden with a gazebo and adjacent to the home is a new city parking lot, part of the renovation of South Main Street. "We are so happy to have it and that we can preserve the history of it," said Sue Lewandowski, president of the Ethnic Heritage Museum Board. "We realize how important it is to tie it in with what we have going on here." Lewandowski said that there are plans to construct a brick walkway between the house and the museum. She added that the board hopes to have the home open for tours by April.



Sue Lewandowski adjusts candles on the parlor fireplace mantle.

The home was built by Freeman Graham, an early local industrialist, using limestone quarried in the area. It stayed in the family until 1927 when his daughter Julia sold it to Leo Ginestra, a Sicilian immigrant and successful businessman who moved in with his wife and family. In 1978, the home was left to Therese Ginestra-Schmeltzer, who opened the home for tours and tea parties. In 1979, the home was recognized by the National Park Service and listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The two-story home was sold to a private investor in 2004 and had not been open for tours since 2008.

The grounds, which are just under an acre, include the original carriage house and a limestone privy or outhouse. While

remodeled and modernized over its 160 years, its interior retains meticulous detail, original artwork, and period furniture. In several places, you can see patches of the original wall detail. One of its recurring themes is pink roses. "There are roses throughout the house," Lewandowski said. "There are pink roses on the ceiling of the parlor. There is a connection with a rose garden being on the property."

Among the visual highlights on the first floor is original wood flooring, much done in dynamic parquet patterns. The two first-floor fireplaces feature stunning marble facades. The parlor fireplace is gray cut marble. "It has a terra cotta hearth," Lewandowski said. "It's a beautiful design, in excellent condition when you consider it is original to 1857." The first floor also features a library, dining room, a kitchen, and one of the home's two Art Deco-style bathrooms, which were installed by the Ginestras.



The Graham-Ginestra House



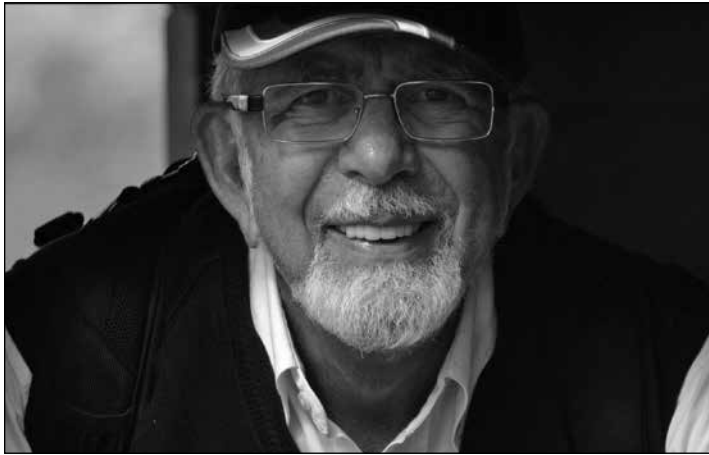
This example of the original wall detail with the pink rose in the circle.

A winding staircase that was constructed without a single nail leads to the second floor's three bedrooms. The child's bedroom features antique dolls, while the master bedroom has the Graham's original bedroom suite. The third bedroom is known as the Abruzzo Bedroom, after Rockford native Ben Abruzzo who often stayed there while in town. Abruzzo, a famed hot air balloonist who was the first to cross the Atlantic and Pacific oceans in a balloon, was related to the Ginestras. Now that the Ethnic Heritage Museum campus has expanded, the board appreciates donations for ongoing Graham-Ginestra House repairs and upkeep. There are many additional ways to help as a volunteer, so please call the museum at 815.962.7402.



East Side 'Swede' learns he's really Italian

Ancestry.com DNA test proves educational for this educator



Richard Nelson wears an Italiano cap at a warming shack at the base of Mt. Etna

By Richard Nelson

Could 15 months be considered history? Regardless, it is my Italian-American history. I turned 78 in August but have only known for 15 months that my birth father was 100 percent Sicilian. So, how is that possible? For the first 77 years of my life, I had been told that I was Swedish. After all, my last name is Nelson, and my middle name is Albert, which was my Swedish father's first name.

I grew up in Rockford at 513 Sixth Street, considered at the time to be near the epicenter of Swede-town. Our apartment building was one block from Seventh Street and just around the corner from the original Mrs. Fisher's Potato Chip Factory. I went to church at Zion Lutheran Church, which actually had a Swedish service every Sunday.

How did this Swedish lad, who grew up on the east side and graduated from East High School, become Italian? For starters, I certainly did not look Swedish. I had dark, curly hair with an olive complexion and brown eyes. My three sisters were light-skinned and blondish.

When I would ask Mom about my dissimilar appearance, she would say that there was a trace of Native-American in her background. I accepted that explanation until 2015 when I decided to take the ancestry.com DNA test in an attempt to determine how much Native American I was. Well...

It was a typical July morning ... as I entered the kitchen, the sun was streaming in the front windows. I pushed the "on" buttons on the coffee maker, TV and computer.

Part of my morning ritual includes checking my emails to sort out meaningful messages from spam. As I scrolled down the list, I saw that my DNA results were available.

And, to my surprise, I found out that not only was I not Native American, but I am not Swedish, either. For the first time in my life, I realized that the drunken Swede who stumbled in and

out of my life was not my father.

Instead, my DNA results showed that I am 50 percent Italian! After several intense days of research, I discovered that my birth father was Jim Cassioppi, who was actually an "uncle" of mine while I was growing up.

Since I have discovered my true heritage, I have immersed myself in the Sicilian culture. I took an eight-day tour of Sicily in early September and spent an additional four days in and around Sambuca, my ancestral hometown. I hired an English language interpreter, and we spent time visiting the church and the town hall, where we identified several of my Cacioppo (Italian version of my name) relatives. Our expedition took us to two homes and a bakery, where I met several Cacioppo cousins.

My research identified three area surviving first cousins: Joe Marino and Jennie (Cassioppi) Jensen of Rockford and Dottie (Cassioppi) Ashley of Wheaton.

Editor's note: This is the family history Dick Nelson submitted to the GRIAA Immigration Project. He is a 1956 graduate of East High School and has degrees from Northern Illinois University and the University of Wisconsin-Madison. In addition to teaching English and journalism at Belvidere High School, he also taught in Arlington Heights, the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, and NIU. He lives in Chicago where he worked as a communication director in graduate medical education.



In Sambuca, Sicily, Richard met two cousins, Giuseppe Cacioppo (left) and his mother Anna.

GRIAA Immigration History Book to be available at Festa

About five years ago, GRIAA started to collect immigration histories of Rockford's Italian families. GRIAA Hall of Famer Gene Fedeli thought it was important to preserve in writing the immigration stories of as many Rockford Italian families as possible. So did GRIAA's board of directors.

Since that time, more than 80 families have submitted histories. The ultimate goal was to transform this collection of histories into a book, "Immigration Histories of Rockford Italian Families".

With the collection of histories complete, we are now one step closer to reaching that goal. By the time you are reading this article, Mike Doyle and Frank Perrecone will be editing and formatting the collection for publication.

GRIAA has decided to self-publish the book, and it is expected to be available for purchase in August at the organization's largest fund-raiser, *Festa Italiana*. The price will be about \$20, not including mailing.



GRIAA Italian Hall of Fame Special Recognition Nomination Form



Please return to: GRIAA, P.O. Box 1915, Rockford, IL 61110-0415

Additional comments and supporting documentation may be included on supplemental pages.

I would like to nominate _____
(Last name) (First) (Middle)

Address: _____
(Number & Street) (City) (State) (Zip)

Business Address: _____
(Number & Street) (City) (State) (Zip)

Phone Numbers: _____
(Home) (Business)

Occupation, Profession or Title _____

Overall Impact on Italian American Community: _____

Major constructive achievements:

Date Achievements

Major constructive achievements:

Date Achievements

Major constructive achievements:

Date Achievements

Nominator name: _____
(Last name) (First) (Middle)

Address: _____
(Number & Street) (City) (State) (Zip)

Phone: _____ (Home) _____ (Business)



Scholarship opportunities for Italian-American students

Several scholarships are available for students of Italian-American descent ranging from elementary and high school to college and post-graduate schools for 2017 and beyond.

Greater Rockford Italian American Association

Through this committee, scholarships are presented annually to area Italian-American families to defray the cost of a private (parochial) education. Through the 2016 *Festa Italiana*, more than \$690,000 in scholarships has been presented. Visit www.griaa.org, then onto the Scholarship Committee, chaired by Ben Todaro and Frank Valentine. Scholarships information can be viewed and printed by clicking on Application Form.

Columbian Club Charitable Foundation

Several scholarships of various amounts awarded to graduating high school seniors and undergraduate/graduate students of Italian descent who are permanent residents of the state of Illinois. Scholarships are also available for undergraduates in music education and graduate students in law, medicine and dentistry. Contact foundation for deadline information. Visit www.columbianclub.org

Joint Civic Committee of Italian Americans

The Joseph Cardinal Bernardin Scholarship of \$2,000 will be presented to a male high school senior of Italian ancestry who is enrolled in an accredited college or who is currently enrolled in an accredited college or university. Deadline is May 15. Visit www.jccia.com or call 708.450.9050.

Joint Civic Committee of Italian Americans Women's Division

Several \$2,000 scholarships awarded to female students of Italian ancestry. Deadline is April 3. Presentation is May 1. Visit www.jccia.com, call 708.450.9050 or email jcc@jccia.com.

Sons of Italy Foundation, Illinois

Several \$1,000 scholarships will be awarded to students of full or partial Italian ancestry graduating from public or private high school. Financial need, scholastic record, activities showing character and leadership are the criteria. Personal statements and faculty recommendations are required. The deadline for application is July 1. Recipients will be notified by August 31. For information, contact the Illinois Sons of Italy Foundation, 9447 W. 144th Place, Orland Park, IL 60462 or by email at osiaill@aol.com.

National Italian American Foundation.

Sixty to 70 scholarships from \$2,500 to \$12,000 are awarded annually for undergraduate, graduate, post-graduate, medical and law students. Applicants must be of Italian descent and members of NIAF. Application deadline for 2017 has passed but information about future scholarship opportunities is available at www.niaf.org/scholarships.

Viva San Giuseppe!

Two St. Joseph Altars in Rockford March 18-19



Graphic by Jill Paul

4:30 p.m. Mass. Pasta, bread and the other traditional offerings will be served from 11:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Sunday, March 19.

Colleen Gullo is the chairperson of the St. Joseph Altar committee. St. Joseph is the Guardian of the Holy Family and patron saint of the Catholic Church.

Rosie Scalise Sheridan is opening her home on Saturday, March 18, from 5 to 8 p.m. to view her altar. Her family will begin serving pasta at noon on Sunday, March 19, and will continue through the dinner hour. The Sheridan home is at 7020 Cliekman Road in Rockford.

The Rockford area is fortunate to have two St. Joseph Altars that will be open to the public on Saturday and Sunday, March 18-19.

The altar at St. Anthony of Padua Church is in the Parish Hall, located in the lower level of the church, 1010 Ferguson St. The altar can be viewed on Saturday, March 18, after the



*St.
Joseph
Altar*

Sunday, March 19, 2017

Celebrate St. Joseph's Day

My family starts serving pasta at noon on Sunday and continues all day through the dinner hour.

OPEN HOUSE

Saturday Night, March 18th

5:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Rosie Scalise Sheridan
7020 Cliekman Road
Rockford, IL 61101

Viva San Giuseppe!

Like to dance?

Check out the Amici Italiani Dance troupes

The Amici Italiani Adult Troupe has started rehearsals with eight new dancers. The troupe meets Tuesdays from 7 to 9 p.m. at the Alumni center, 4000 St. Francis Drive, Rockford, IL, 61103. Anyone who is 14 years or older is welcome to join. For information, contact Rosie Scalise Sheridan at 815.977.4779 or Bea Ricotta at 815.520.1010.

In addition, Amici Italiani Youth Dance Troupe is dedicated in helping to preserve the rich Italian heritage and culture of the greater Rockford area. Interested dancers must be of Italian heritage and be between the ages of 6- and 13-years-old. For information, please call Pauline Urso at 815.218.0063.



Local museum highlights

The Italian Gallery of the Ethnic Heritage Museum is highlighting St. Valentine's Day, Lent, and St. Joseph's Day with historical information on each event. St. Valentine's Day in Rome, Carnevale in Venice and St. Joseph Altars in Rockford are the focus of the displays. In addition in April, a palm-weaving workshop will be held as well as a display commemorating the 10th anniversary of Rockford's Sister City agreement with Ferentino, Italy. The museum, 1129 S. Main St., is open Sundays from 2 to 4 p.m.

The second Rockford Cultural Heritage Celebration will be held Saturday, March 18, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Midway Village Museum. Also, scheduled at the museum is the Rockford Plate: A Culinary Journey of Early Rockford Immigrants from 5:30 to 9 p.m. on July 13. Last year, six ethnic groups were represented – Italian, Swedish, Polish, African-American, Latino, and Irish. For information, call 815.397.9112. The museum is located at 6799 Guilford Road.

Continued from page 1

"I was brought up in South Rockford," she said. "I used to walk to games from my home on South Church Street. From 1945 to 1948, I walked to every game. And I enjoyed every minute of it. Even before I played, I felt like I was a part of something."

Still a teenager, she practiced with the Peaches for three years then twice went to their spring training in Florida. In 1949, she signed a contract with the Peaches and went to spring training. She made the team as a second baseman as a backup to star Snookie Doyle. Then she missed the rest of the year with an injury but never got on the field in a game.

Following her mother's death, Ange left baseball to pursue a career as a technical artist, but in 1953, had a chance meeting with the new manager of the Kalamazoo Lassies. That led to a spot on the Lassies in 1953 season as a utility second baseman. Then severe allergies caused her to quit the game for good.

She returned to Rockford and worked for the Barber-Colman Co., where she was one of the first women draftsmen and later a technical illustrator. She followed that by working as a commercial artist.

Ange grew up in a time when young Italian women weren't allowed to do things like play sports. "My mom and dad were not in favor of it," she said. "They would tell me I couldn't play, but I would leave the house and go play on my own."

Although she never played a game with the Peaches, she played against them in Beyer Stadium as a Lassie. But she couldn't stay at home. "I had to stay in a hotel," she said. "One thing I always wanted to – have my mom and dad see me play."

After Ange left the game, she didn't talk about her experiences. "No one would ever believe me," she said. "I would tell them I played hardball, and people would say, 'Oh I played softball.' Until the movie came out I avoided talking about it."



Ange Armato's baseball card as a Kalamazoo Lassie.

Photo courtesy aagpbl.org

Keye and me to Cooperstown. We were the only two players from Rockford. When I saw the movie, I kinda cried. It was fantastic. It brought back so many memories that I just love it."

Rockford's deep roots in women's baseball were recognized last September when it was announced that the International Women's Baseball Center will be moving here from California. It will be located in a building across Seminary Street from Beyer Stadium, and eventually will include education, training and a museum for girls and women's baseball.

Dr. Kat Williams, president of the board of directors, said in a statement that "Rockford is a perfect location. The fact that the buildings are across Beyer Stadium where the Peaches played is a definite plus."

Greg Schwanke not only restored the diamond at Beyer Stadium, he maintains it for events like a national 8-18 girls tournament that is scheduled for July. He is a coach for the 16-and-older girls baseball team, the Rockford Star Fires. "They play hardball, just like the major leagues," he said. "And the star fire is a variety of peach."

Continued from page 2

Dominic wanted to know from him if he knew of the Caruana family. Dominic's mother's side of the family is from Aragona, but Mr. Graciffa was not aware of any Caruanas there. I spoke with Mr. Graciffa, with Michelangelo translating. He knew many families left Aragona years ago to live in America, but he had not heard of Rockford or last names of several Rockford families from Aragona.

While we were in Marsala, Nancy Parrinello and her sister, Chris Parrinello-Peterson, broke from the group and visited with relatives. Nancy and her parents had been in Marsala 46 years ago. To Nancy and Chris' surprise, 21 of their relatives joined them at a family dinner in their honor. Because of the success of the Sicily trip, GRIAA's directors have approved a trip to Italy in 2018 which will include Rome, Florence, Venice and Ferentino.



Teenage artist supported family

Elisabetta Sirani was successful in art world dominated by men

By Mike Doyle

It's the kind of heart-breaking story we are familiar with. That of a teenager with little formal training forced to work to support parents and siblings; then to pass from this world at the age of 27, partially from overwork and exhaustion.

It carries more impact when you find out the person was Elisabetta Sirani, a female Italian artist who lived in a world dominated by men, but in whose short life produced 200 paintings, drawings and etchings, including one of the Holy Mother and Child that was used on a U.S. stamp 356 years after her death. Sirani was one of the first successful female artists in a time when women were not allowed formal training.

Born in January 3, 1638, Elisabetta was one of three artistically talented daughters of Giovanni Andrea Sirani of Bologna. It was her good fortune to be born in that progressive northern Italian city located in Emilia-Romagna province.

Bologna was known for its worldly view of women's rights and the location of the most prolific "workshop" of Italian women artists, thanks to their protective fathers, according to bolognawelcome.com.

She became one of Europe's leading artists in the seventeenth century, even though she had no formal study of male nudes, which was open only to men. Instead, she gleaned knowledge from her father's circle of artists, including Guido Reni and Count Carlo Cesare Malvasia, an art historian. Malvasia broadened Elisabetta's education beyond that of a typical Renaissance daughter which helped to her develop a distinctive style. Reni, schooled in the works of Raphael, taught her narrative organization and lyricism. And from her father, Elisabetta developed a taste for "dark, rich jewel tones, the dominant palette in Italian fashions," according to biography.yourdictionary.com.

Elisabetta made such progress that she soon surpassed her father's skill and reputation and was earning her own commissions. But any individual accomplishment vanished when her father lost the use of his hands because of gout in 1655. Unable to work, Giovanni turned to his talented daughter to support the family. She was 17.

CHRISTMAS



Elisabetta Sirani, 1663
National Museum of Women in the Arts

Sirani's "Virgin and Child" depicted on a 1994 stamp sold 1.1 billion



"Portia Wounding Her Thigh," one of Elisabetta Sirani's most famous works, was completed in 1664, a year before she died.

Not only did Giovanni protect his artistic daughter as other Bolognese fathers did, he had her work quickly and discouraged suitors from forming relationships with his attractive daughter in order to keep her working. And work she did. She was so efficient that others assumed she had help producing such magnificent oils. She proved them wrong in an exhibition she arranged. On another occasion in 1664, the Grand Duke Cosimo de Medici visited her studio to watch her paint his uncle. While there, he commissioned a Madonna for himself. Elisabetta quickly went to work so that the piece could be dry before he went home.

Elisabetta was known for *chiaroscuro*, the play of light figures against dark backdrops, as her figures tended not to have sharp outlines. Her self-portrait shows the 22-year-old artist as an attractive, dark-eyed woman well dressed and adorned with pearls. She is holding her palate, ready to apply a brush stroke to the canvas after a glance at her subject.

Her use of black backgrounds can also be seen in "Virgin and Child" from 1663, which shows the baby Jesus about to place a rose garland on his mother's head. In 1994, this sweet depiction was selected by the U.S. Postal Service to be printed on a stamp. It was the first historical work by a female artist used by the postal service for its holiday stamps.

In 1664, she painted "Portia, Wounding Her Thigh," which depicts an anecdote from Ancient Rome. Small knife in one hand, scabbard in another, Portia, daughter of Cato and wife of Marcus Brutus, has just cut herself to prove that she can keep quiet during the conspirators' plot to assassinate Julius Caesar. Her act occurs while men plot in the much smaller background, diminishing the importance of the men who murdered an emperor. It can be seen as a metaphor for the quiet desperation of women, who toil in lives that are matter much less than actions of men.

She died on August 28, 1665, of an undisclosed stomach disease. Her other mentor, Malvasia, wrote that she was "the glory of the female sex, the gem of Italy, the sun of Europe."



Artemisia Gentileschi depicted strong heroines

Woman artist overcame adversity, struggled for recognition



"Susanna and the Elders" was completed when Gentileschi was 17.

By Mike Doyle

To say Artemisia Gentileschi was a woman born before her time is an understatement. The Italian Baroque painter fought for recognition at a time when women were denied access to formal art education or recognition. In time, she overcame personal and professional adversities as she became one of the most accomplished painters

of the post-Renaissance, early Baroque period in Italy, as well as a friend and contemporary of Galileo. Born in Rome on July 8, 1593, she was the daughter of well known Roman artist Orazio Gentileschi, who provided her early training.

Denied the opportunity to study at art academies, her father commissioned a friend, Agnosto Tassi, to tutor her. However, Tassi took advantage of the situation and was accused of raping Artemisia. Her father had his friend charged and the ensuing rape trial lasted seven months and was the major news story of its day. Transcripts of it still exist and the details are torturous to report. Artemisia, then 19, was examined by midwives to determine whether she had been "deflowered" recently or in the past. While under testimony, sibille or metal rings, were placed on her fingers and slowly tightened in a method used at the time to make sure the witness was telling the truth. Tassi was convicted and there are conflicting reports of whether he served time in prison.

However, Artemisia was never slowed by adversity. Unable to use nude male models, she used females instead. And because men were unable to use female nudes, it gave her an advantage that can be seen in her masterpiece, "Susanna and the Elders."



Brush in hand, Artemisia Gentileschi's self portrait

She was 17 when she completed this work, which depicts Susanna from the Book of Daniel.

She got a measure of revenge from Tassi with another famous painting, "Judith Slaying Holofernes," Painted after the trial between 1614 and 1620, it depicts the Old Testament story of the Israeli heroine Judith assassinating the Assyrian General Holofernes. It clearly shows a common theme of powerful women winning out over powerful men. A student of Caravaggio's dramatic realism, she specialized in depicting strong heroines, many of whom came from the Bible.



"Judith Slaying Holofernes" is an example of the artist's theme of empowering women.

After the trial, Artemisia married another painter Pietro Stiattesi, and they moved to Florence, where she eventually became the first woman to become a member of the Accademia di Arte del Disegno in Florence. Another famous member of the academy was Galileo. She eventually ended up in Naples.

Artemisia has been the subject of plays, TV documentaries, a film, and a book "Artemisia Gentileschi – the Image of the Female Hero in Italian Baroque Art," by Mary D. Gerrard. Even today, a major exhibit of her work can be viewed in Rome's Palazzo Braschi, an exhibit that runs through May 7, 2017.

Following her death in 1656, she became more obscure. In fact, many of her works were attributed to her father or other artist. However, there has been a renewed awareness of this fascinating woman. Gerrard, her biographer, said Artemisia "has suffered a scholarly neglect that is unthinkable for an artist of her caliber."



Spring, summer Italian Festivals in Italy and America

Did you know there are 361 Italian festivals in 46 of our states? The most are in New York (61) and New Jersey (50). Illinois ranks fifth with 26. Instead of listing festivals and events in Italy, this list highlights those in Italy and in our own country. Source: Sons of Italy osia.org.

March (Marzo)

25-26 – 4th annual Italian Festa in Scottsdale, Arizona, featuring entertainment, food, Italian arts and crafts and dancing

April (Aprile)

25 – Liberation Day, end of Nazi occupation of Italy in 1945

29 – 6th annual Feast of St. Mark in Birmingham, Alabama

May (Maggio)

1 – International Workers Day, May Day

22-29 – Week-long celebration of the 17th annual Herrin Festa, selected as the best festival in Illinois for 2017.



Logo of the Stockton Festa Italiana, which was held May 22, 2016, in Lodi, California

June (Giugno)

2 – Republic Day, the day

Italians abolished the monarchy for a republic in 1948

11-18 – St. Anthony's Italian Festival in Wilmington, Delaware. This year's focus is on Sicily

July (Luglio)

21-23 – Festa Italiana in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Begun in 1978, it is the largest event of its kind in the U.S.

August (Agosto)

15 – Feast of the Assumption

24-26 – 26th annual Festa Italiana in Portland, Oregon, featuring a Mass in Italiana at the Grotto.

More Italian t-shirts (as seen online)

1. Half-Italian is better than none
2. 50% American + 50% Italian = 100% awesome
3. Made in the USA with Italian parts
4. Half Gaelic-Half Garlic
5. I'm an Italian Nana. Just like a regular grandmother but way cooler

Best Things to Eat When in Italy

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Pizza Napolitano in Naples | 7. Spaghetti alla Carbonara in Rome |
| 2. Lasagna in Bologna | 8. Cannoli in Palermo |
| 3. Ossobuco alla Milanese in Milan | 9. Cicchetti in Venice |
| 4. Gelato all over Italy | 10. Caponata in Sicily |
| 5. Panzanella in Tuscany | 11. Burrata in Puglia |
| 6. Focaccia in Liguria | |

Sources: travelaway.me and editor's personal experiences

Test for all Italians

Answer this multiple-choice question: What is the world's greatest cuisine?

- Italian
- Italian
- Italian
- All of the above

Source: Sons of Italy posting on Facebook

Top 20 Italian Baby Names

Girls

1. Sophia
2. Giulia
3. Aurora
4. Emma
5. Giorgia
6. Martina
7. Chiara
8. Sara
9. Alice
10. Gaia
11. Greta
12. Francesca
13. Anna
14. Ginevra
15. Alessia
16. Viola
17. Noemi
18. Matilde
19. Vittoria
20. Beatrice

Boys

- Francesco
- Allesandro
- Andrea
- Lorenzo
- Mattia
- Matteo
- Gabriele
- Leonardo
- Riccardo
- Tommaso
- Davide
- Giuseppe
- Antonio
- Fredrico
- Marco
- Samuele
- Luca
- Giovanni
- Pietro
- Diego

Source: Nameberry.com

Quotable


"Secret to life, marry an Italian."

- The writer Nora Ephron when asked to write her autobiography in six words.

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More Italian idioms

Using non in Italian unlike 'non' in English

By Rosaria Mercuri-Ford

Benvenuti alla nuova edizione di Pappagallo! Hopefully, everyone has had a pleasant winter season thus far. I am sure, though, we are all beginning to think spring and, as for myself, “*non vedo l’ora,*” or I can hardly wait.

In this issue, I am going to present several Italian phrases and idioms starting with the negation non. It is relatively easy to think of expressions starting with non in Italian since, unlike the English negation not, non is freestanding and does not get tangled up in contracted forms like: don’t, isn’t, wouldn’t, didn’t, and so on. I hope the choice does not reflect a bunch of “cannot-do” winter blues.

Actually, not all these phrases indicate negativity. Think of the expressions:

Non c’è male = not bad at all, when responding to someone inquiring about our health.

Non Importa /non fa niente really means that something is not a big deal.

Now: *Non è detto che* translates almost literally into: This does not mean that ...

When someone does not have a clue about something, you might hear:

Non si sa che pesci pigliare = literally means we do not know what kind of fish we ought to catch

But be careful: *Non si sa mai* = you never know, is not to be confused with *Non sia mai* = Heaven forbid

To cheer someone up, one might say:

Non è mica la fine del mondo. = Come on, it’s not the end of the world) or even, one might want to remind us that something is a blessing in disguise.

Non tutti i mali vengono per nuocere. = Not all evils come to harm you.

Or, showing empathy, one might say:

Non ci voleva proprio. = We sure did not need this

The expressions:

Non per niente, *Non a caso*, really translates into: that is why ... as you see...

Non val la pena reminds us that something is not worth our time and effort.

Non c’entra niente, or the more colorful *Non ci azzecca niente* mean out of the question.

Non se ne parla affatto or *Non ci siamo* both mean not worth taking into consideration.

On the other hand, to praise something or someone’s achievements one might say:

Non è mica da tutti = Not anyone could do this, or

Non capita certo tutti i giorni. = Such things do not happen any day.

There are some expressions that do carry a somewhat negative connotation:

Non ha neanche una lira = He or she is totally penniless

Non riesce a trovare un cane = He or she cannot even find a dog for company

Non se ne può più = We cannot take this any longer

Non svegliare il cane che dorme = Do not kick a sleeping dog
Some idioms describe someone we do not find very sympathetic:

Non è santo che fa grazia = He is not the kind of saint to grant a miracle

Non è uno stinco di santo = He is definitely no saint.

Finally, here are some cute expressions:

Non tutte le ciambelle escono col buco = Not all doughnuts come out with the hole, meaning that not everything turns out as expected.

Non è bello quel che è bello, è bello quel che piace = Beauty lies in the eyes of the beholder

Non è tutt’oro quello che luce, almost literally means it is not all gold what shines.

Non facciamo di tutt’erba un fascio = Let’s not mix apples with pears

Hopefully, you found these idioms and phrases interesting, and ... *a presto!*

Sicilian a language, not a dialect

By Angelo Coniglio

I was the “baby” of nine children, the eldest of whom, like my parents, was born in Serradifalco, Sicily. My father died when I was a child. Two of my brothers had already married, but my mother Rosa Alessi Coniglio did her best to raise her remaining seven kids. If you had asked me as a child what language my mother spoke, I would have said “Italian.” Eventually I realized that the tongue she spoke, and that I learned (somewhat imperfectly), was the Sicilian language.

My mother had been gone for 40 years when my elder sister Mary (*buon arma*) was preparing to visit Sicily for the first time in 2004. I was concerned that due to lack of use, she had forgotten our parents’ tongue and would not be able to converse with our cousins. Mary, ever the bold one, assured me she’d get by, and when she returned after a successful trip, she boasted, “Everyone loved my Sicilian, and they said I spoke it very well.” It wasn’t until two years later, when I visited our ancestral village, that I fully understood the implications of that praise.

Contrary to some claims, Sicilian is a language, not a “dialect of the Italian language.” It has its own syntax, spelling, and pronunciation. It does have many dialects, depending on the region of Sicily where it is spoken, but they are dialects of Sicilian, not Italian. And, unfortunately, Sicilian is not often written.

Sicilian was the first “Romance” language to develop from the Latin spoken by the clerics and administrators of the island. Based on the Latin Vulgate introduced into Sicily by Norman and Italian clergy, Sicilian was the language of the common man, but classical writers and poets “cut their teeth” on it, most famously in *la Scuola Poetica Siciliana*, the Sicilian School of Poetry.

Source: timeofsicily.com



Three seasonal recipes

By Mike Doyle

Any way you make it, spell it or pronounce, it *ta'ano* is an Easter tradition in many Sicilian families, many of whom have their roots in Aragona. It is the *Pappagallo's* tradition to include one recipe in each spring issue, and the one below comes from The St. Anthony Altar and Rosary Society's cookbook.

Because we try to have the *Pappagallo* mailed in time for St. Joseph's Day on March 19, we also have included recipes for *Pasta Con Sarde*, or St. Joseph's pasta. This year, instead of another recipe, we have a different sardine dish for you to try.

Finally, for most Italian-Americans, Fridays during Lent means that we seek out meatless meals, and many churches, restaurants and other organizations gear up for that with fish fries. However, one delicious alternative is a pepper and egg sandwich. It is a dish you can find on menus of many Chicago Italian sandwich shops, including Buona Beef. However, there are at least two eating places where you can get the sandwich in Rockford:

- Portillo's, 6090 E. State Street (815.997-1800). Sue Sundstrom, a manager at the Rockford location, said that Portillo's timeline for making the sandwiches runs from Ash Wednesday to Good Friday. "We do it every Friday on only on Fridays during Lent," she said. In 2017, Ash Wednesday was March 1 and Good Friday is April 14.

- DiTullio's, 2207 E. State Street (815.399.2080). Owner Anthony DiTullio said his version probably will be on a panini and also be available during Lent.

This classic sandwich also can be made in home kitchens. You don't have to be a trained chef to create one, but, sometimes, it helps to have a recipe to follow.

Pepper and Egg Sandwich

4 green peppers, washed, seeded and sliced

4 large eggs

¼ cup olive oil

Grated Parmesan or Romano cheese

Salt and pepper to taste

Crusty bread of your choice, sliced Italian or French

Mild or hot giardiniera (optional)

Heat olive oil in sauce pan and add green peppers, stirring often to your taste — *al dente* or softened. Red peppers can be used as well. Season eggs with salt, pepper and cheese and whisk them well. Once peppers are cooked to your liking, pour on the peppers and cook until set. Place on slices of crusty bread. Add hot giardiniera. *Sources: Epicurious.com and home recipe*

Sarde Al Forno

2 pounds fresh *sarde* (sardines)

¾ cup breadcrumbs

½ cup grated Pecorino Romano cheese

2 cloves garlic minced

1 ½ tablespoons fresh parsley chopped

Salt and pepper to taste

Olive oil

Red wine vinegar

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Remove heads and scales from sardines and dry them well. Combine breadcrumbs, cheese, garlic, parsley, salt and pepper in a bowl. On the bottom of a baking pan, place a layer of sardines then cover the sardines with a layer of the breadcrumb mixture. Continue layering in this order until all ingredients have been used. Bake for 25-30 minutes.

Source: The Regions of Italy by Roy Domenico

Taano Sicilian Aragonese Easter Casserole

1 ½ pounds ground beef

½ cup bread crumbs

3-4 cloves garlic, minced

1 teaspoon salt

1 ½ pounds Ricotta cheese

2 tablespoons salt

¼ teaspoon pepper

3 tablespoons oil

4-5 quarts boiling water

1 ½ pounds Rigatoni pasta

5-6 cups clear chicken broth

1 ½ pounds grated Romano cheese

1 teaspoon dry mint

24-30 eggs

1 ½ pounds Tuma or Brick cheese

Step 1—Make the meatballs with breadcrumbs, ½ cup Romano cheese, ground beef, 1 tablespoon salt, pepper, mint, 6 eggs and minced garlic. Place all ingredients in a large bowl and blend well with a pastry blender. Make meatballs about the size of golf balls. Brown in skillet and set aside.

Step 2—Boil pasta partially in large pan; add 1 tablespoon salt and oil. Drain and pour in large bowl in which 10 eggs have been beaten well with 2-3 cups of Romano cheese. Blend pasta and egg mixture well; set aside.

Step 3—In another bowl, place Ricotta cheese and add 6-8 eggs and beat until well blended. Set aside.

Step 4 —Separately, cut Tuma cheese and meatballs into small pieces. Casserole assembly—Heat oven to 350 degrees. In a large, well-greased deep baking dish, layer in the following order: A layer of pasta, layer of meatball pieces, layer of Ricotta-cheese mixture, layer of cut-up Tuma cheese, then sprinkle generously with grated Romano cheese. Repeat layering until all ingredients have been used (about 4-5 layers). Pour enough chicken broth to reach top of layers.

Last step—Beat about 6 eggs with cup of Romano cheese for a final layer. This will form a crust as it bakes. Pour just a little and add to it as it bakes. Bake about 3 hours until broth is absorbed and top is golden but not too dry. Serve hot or cold. Remainder will keep in refrigerator for several days.

Source: Frances Drago



Creating Calzones

An Easter tradition for the Paul Family

In the Fall 2016 issue, these pages featured recipes the Paul family's Christmas Eve tradition of the Feast of the Seven Fishes (*Festa della Setta Pesce*). The Pauls of Belvidere, whose Italian name was Americanized from Polgruto, now share their Easter Calzone tradition. Jennifer Paul said, "This is an Easter treat that we typically make the day before Easter. I transcribed this from my father-in-law's original hand-written notes."

Calzone filling

(enough for 2 big pies)

3 pounds Italian sausage
3 pounds Ricotta cheese
1 tablespoon paprika
1 tablespoon red pepper
Salt to taste
¼ pound Romano cheese
3 whole eggs whisked
6 large eggs hard-boiled, then peeled and sliced in halves



Calzones made by the Paul Family of Belvidere

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Fry sausage and reserve ¼ cup of the drippings for crust recipe. In a large bowl, add Ricotta, paprika, red pepper, salt and Romano cheese, and 3 eggs to browned sausage.



Melissa Paul and Jill Paul (holding calzone) show off the finished product.

Calzone crust

7 cups flour
4 teaspoons baking powder
2 ½ tablespoons salt
1½ cups cold water
1¼ cups meat drippings
6 eggs
½ pound butter softened

Cut butter into flour, add baking powder, salt, meat

drippings and cold water to the flour mixture. Add eggs last then knead the dough until soft and pliable. Roll out dough for top and bottom crusts.

In a greased 9x13 pan, roll out bottom crust of the calzone and line bottom of your pan with that crust, then add a generous amount of filling across the entire pan. Place hard-boiled egg halves on top of the filling, top with the top crust and crimp the edges. Your pie should look bumpy and stuffed nicely. Bake for 60 minutes, till crust is brown, but keep baking if the crust isn't crispy yet. During the last 15 minutes, you can glaze the pie with a mixture of egg yolk, sugar and a little bit of water if you want to. It will give your pie a nice shine. Pie can be eaten cold or hot, and this recipe will make 2 pies. Keep refrigerated.

Recipe from Lidia's Italian Cookbook

Anchovy Frittata Frittata di Acciughe

12 fresh eggs
½ cup whole milk
1 teaspoon kosher salt
½ cup grated Grana Padano or Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese
2 cups crust-less day-old bread cubes, from a loaf of country bread
¼ cup extra virgin olive oil
1 pound medium zucchini, sliced thinly
1 small onion, sliced thinly
1 bunch scallions, trimmed and chopped
12 good quality anchovy filets

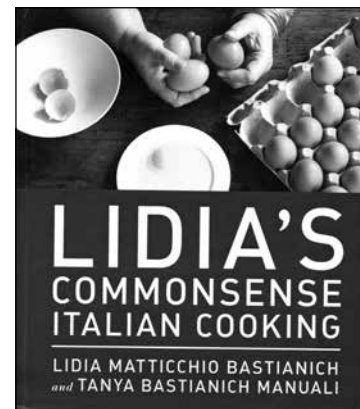
Preheat oven to 400 degrees. In a large bowl, beat the eggs with the milk, salt and cheese. Stir in the bread cubes and let the bread soak while you cook the zucchini. In a 12-inch non-stick skillet, over medium heat, heat the olive oil. When it is hot, add



the zucchini, and scallions. Cook until softened, about 5 minutes. Spread the vegetables to cover the bottom of the skillet, and pour the eggs and bread over them. Arrange the anchovies on top like spokes on a wheel. Place the skillet with the frittata in the oven and bake until

the top is golden and the eggs are set, about 20 to 25 minutes. Slide a paring knife around the edge of the skillet to help unmold if the frittata seems to be sticking. Slide on a cutting board, cut into slices and serve.

(Editor's note: I halved the recipe and it turned out great, as you can see!)



GRIAA seeks recipes for new cookbook

"La famiglia e gli amici vengono tutti a tavola e mangiano."

Family and friends, come to the table and eat.

GRIAA is planning to sponsor a new collection of recipes that will represent our Italian heritage and our love for family and friends. The *Cucina Italiana II* cookbook will be a revised edition of original 411-page *Cucina Italiana* publication that was first printed in 1995 by the Greater Rockford Columbus Day Committee, today known as GRIAA.

Recipes are currently being collected. For information, contact Karen Cantele at k.cantele@comcast.net or visit the GRIAA.org website.



A group shot of the Sister Sister City students from Ferentino, Italy, and their host families.

Photo highlights of the Sister City students visiting Rockford

On Tuesday, August 2, 13 high school students from Ferentino, Italy, landed at O'Hare Airport to start a busy 13-day visit to Rockford as part of the Rockford Sister City Alliance. Ferentino is Rockford's sister city in Italy and the students were from Martino Filetico High School. Their visit to the United States took them to Springfield, where they saw the state capitol and Abraham Lincoln sites, Chicago, Starved Rock State Park and several places in the Rockford area, including the University of Illinois College of Medicine, the opening night of the 38th annual *Festa Italiana* and St. Anthony of Padua Church. They also went to a fish fry at the Venetian Club and had a "Thanksgiving dinner," complete with turkey and the trimmings. This is the second student exchange between Rockford and Ferentino.

The Sister City Alliance is celebrating its 10th anniversary as a sister city with Ferentino. The City of Rockford signed a Sister City agreement with Ferentino in 2006 when officials from the Italian city traveled to Rockford for week-long meetings with community organizations and attended various festivities.



< Students gather at the statue in Springfield commemorating the Lincoln-Douglas Debates of 1858.

Sister City students get a hands-on lesson > in suturing during their visit to the University Of Illinois College Of Medicine at Rockford.



< Thanksgiving Dinner came early, August actually, for the high school students from Ferentino.

Congratulations to those honored at Hall of Fame Dinner

Steve Salvato (left) receives his Hall of Fame award from GRIAA co-chair Frank Perrecone. Salvato was honored for his contributions to Rockford's Italian community by helping to trace family histories. He has more than 150,000 names in his database.



Karen Barbagallo (left) receives the Special Recognition award from Frank Perrecone, which was given posthumously her late husband Jim Barbagallo. He was a successful Realtor and patron of the local arts.

(From left) Matt Spinello Sr., Matthew F. Spinello, Frank Perrecone, James R. White, and Jimi White with the Special Recognition award given to M. Spinello and Son Locksmiths/ Safe/Security. The Spinellos and Whites have been involved in the family locksmith and security business since it began in 1905 in Kansas City, Missouri. The business moved to Rockford in 1921 where four generations of Spinellos have been involved.



The GRIAA Hall of Fame members in attendance at the annual dinner at Giovanni's October 8, 2016. Steve Salvato (inducted 2016), Luciano Miceli (2015), Joe Bove (2010), Shirley Fedeli (1994), Paul Maffioli (2005), John Falzone (2006), Karen Cantele (2013), Ben Todaro (2011), Paul Mastrangeli (2011) and Gene Fedeli (1994).



Festa Italiana 2016 at night



Greater Rockford Italian American Association – GRIAA

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Graphic by Jill Paul

***Early Italian women
painters struggled for
identity, pages 8 & 9***

PAPPAGALLO



2017 Local Calendar Items

March

18 – Cultural Heritage Celebration, Midway Village Museum, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

19 – St. Joseph Altars -- St. Anthony of Padua Church, 11:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.; Rosie Scalise Sheridan home, noon through dinner hour

June

26 – Women's Italian Open at Mauh-Nah-Tee-See Country Club.

August

4-6 – Festa Italiana at Boylan High School

18 – Men's Italian Open at Mauh-Nah-Tee-See Country Club.

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John & Kathy Falzone Benny & Kerry Falzone