



ORDER  
Sons and  
Daughters  
of Italy  
IN AMERICA



**MEETING**  
August 3, 2025

**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE-** Fall is right around the corner and I think we will all enjoy the cooler weather. It's now time for fundraisers to begin. After conducting a survey from members regarding fundraisers, it was a GO to do the Va Diner Peanuts & Brunswick Stew. We will need the support of ALL GVL members. Please do not let a handful of members carry this responsibility.

At the August meeting we will hand out the Peanut Flyers.

Thanks to David and all who have been willing to help him keep the grounds maintained. If any BoD who has not been able to help but may have a few hours to give for the next few months, please contact David Whiteside and coordinate with him.

Stay Cool, God Bless you and the USA!!

Mary Louise

*Happy Birthday*

Betty McGowan – 1 <sup>st</sup>	Andrew Biondi-19 <sup>th</sup>
Jean Marie Donati-4 <sup>th</sup>	Lin Sykes-21 <sup>st</sup>
Paul Etgen-12 <sup>th</sup>	Angela Poli-22 <sup>nd</sup>
Carolyn Funai-11 <sup>th</sup>	Lenora Orlandi-25 <sup>th</sup>
Anne Marie Massie-16 <sup>th</sup>	Tony Peay-28 <sup>th</sup>
	Sue Gigante-29 <sup>th</sup>

*Happy Anniversary*

John & Sherri Puccinelli-1<sup>st</sup>  
Dexter & Charlotte Oliver-2<sup>nd</sup>  
Steve & Judy Angely-5<sup>th</sup>  
Andrew & Jennifer Biondi-9<sup>th</sup>  
Bernie & Norma Marrin-21<sup>st</sup>  
Lisa & Chad Hall- 22<sup>nd</sup>

**LODGE INFORMATION:**

August 16- Evening in Sorrento, Italy Dinner- Last chance to purchase tickets at August meeting.

October 18- Murder Myster Luncheon

## HERITAGE:by Cindy Sininian

Sicily - April, 2025

“Write about your trip to Sicily”... .hmmm, now that’s a bit of a conundrum. Should I describe sightseeing? The museums, culinary delights, and breathtaking scenery? Or, the richly layered journey, steeped in ancestral memories and mystical experiences? Do I fly my flag unfettered with its true colors, or tone it down until you get to know me?. Well, I’m half Sicilian, and that involves a hefty dose of drama, magic, mythology, and intrigue, so here it goes...

All of my great-grandparents on my dad’s side immigrated to Western New York from Sicily back in the early 1900’s. I recall my Great-Grandmother Nonni from Rodi, who spoke only Italian, bustling about her apartment tending to us when we visited. From my dad’s mom, Gramma A, I learned a lot of Sicilian traditions, including cooking, food preservation, healing, mother-wit, but mostly the sacred, centrality of the family. I believe I also inherited from my dad a rich dreamlife that serves to guide me in most of my big decisions—including my trip to Sicily.

So, my son had been in Italy for a number of disappointing months attempting and failing to gather the documents in Agrigento that we needed to get dual citizenship via *jus sanguinis*. His luck changed when he took the train up to Northern Sicily to the tiny village of our ancestors on the other side of the family line. There, like a fairy tale, he chance-met beloved new friends and living relatives who rolled out the red carpet with their hospitality, generous helpings of pasta - and escorted him to gather all the Italian documents he needed within 2 days. Before we could get too excited however, literally, while I was on the plane flying to meet him a week later, Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni and the Italian Council of Ministers changed the criteria for *jus sanguinis* and sent us back to the drawing board...but, that’s another story.

Anyway, months earlier, my son and I had set up a rendezvous to meet in Siracusa in March/April. I wondered if I should alter my itinerary and go to the village he’d found or continue on as planned. We decided to stick to our original plan and visit Siracusa. I landed in Catania and hit the deck running. We toured the historic center or Centro Storico, taking in notable landmarks like Piazza del Duomo, the Catania Cathedral, and the Elephant Fountain made of volcanic stone. We strolled around a gorgeous, fountain-filled park, the Villa Bellini, also known as Giardino Bellini, with Mt. Etna smoldering in the background. All the food we ate was incredibly delicious: arancini (fried rice balls filled with delectable tidbits), caponata (eggplant and other veggies in a unique sauce—just like Gramma’s), and margarita pizza.

The next day we took the train to Siracusa. Trains in Sicily are smooth, economical, easy to use, and offer huge windows to view the countryside. When we reached Siracusa and stepped out of the train my knees buckled. Here’s the mystical part...I had visited this city many, many times in my dreams. I called it “the city by the sea.” And so it was. In all honesty I felt a powerful *deja vu*, which stayed with me for the duration of my visit. We walked down to the

Isola di Ortigia, where we found our Airbnb, which overlooked the Temple of Apollo. The island was stunning. For 5 days we went full steam ahead taking in the countless museums, fountains, gardens, cathedrals, and temples on this tiny island. We walked along the Ionian Sea, crystal clear and filled with shells and smoothly-worn pieces of pottery. We ventured off Ortigia and walked to the enormous central Archaeological Park Neapolis, which features a Roman Amphitheater, the Teatro Greco and the Orecchio di Dionisio, a limestone cave shaped like a human ear. It rained only one day and that day we visited the Museo Archeologico Regionale Paolo Orsi with its terracotta artifacts, Roman portraits, and anthropological, flora and faunal account of the area. We also toured the Catacomb of San Giovanni.

Another noteworthy trip was our visit to the mouth of the Ciane River, a natural reserve where papyrus grows up to 4 meters high. Fonte Ciane, a large pool of clear water surrounded by groves of papyrus, was a sacred place in ancient times. Here, according to legend, Persephone (the Goddess of Spring) was carried down into the underworld by Hades on a horse-driven cart (Pluto to the Romans). The nymph Ciane, Persephone's childhood friend, was so overcome that she died of grief and her tears were turned into the spring on the spot where Persephone disappeared. Our adventure here also included a mystical encounter with a wild horse which had both of us running, but that's another story for another day. Our last adventure was Castello Maniace with its moats, lofty architecture, and breathtaking views of the Ionian Sea. Yet another mystical place that had connections to my dreams...

Thank heavens we walked and walked every day because our other primary activity was to eat, and eat, and eat. I'm pretty sure we ate pizza at least once a day, often twice! We also feasted on the seafood, which was local and abundant: calamari, mussels, clams, and more, often tossed in steaming bowls of homemade pasta. Afternoons usually included gelato and/or cannoli. Orange and lemon trees were everywhere, and we were lucky because we could pluck a delicious orange when we were hungry or thirsty. Pasticcerie (bakeries), cafes (bars), pizzerias, gelaterias, markets, co-ops and open air markets were abundant, convenient, and surprisingly affordable.

Honestly, it was the most incredible trip of my life. I am already planning my next trip to the town of my ancestors, to meet my newfound relatives and explore our familial connections to that region. My son and I were disappointed but undaunted by the changes to jus sanguinis, even though our quest for dual-citizenship has now become more challenging. We are also studying Italian so that we can communicate better with our newfound friends and family. Sicily and Sicilians are magical, but have a pragmatic, strong link to family, food, and fun. I am beyond grateful to have had this opportunity to materialize my relationship with the motherland. The door feels like it has been thrown wide-open for a fresh, exciting, and new chapter in my own family's story as, Italian Duo-lingo lesson by Duo-lingo lesson, we plot our return!



## Italian Language

- |                   |                   |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| • Hello           | - ciao (ciao)     |
| • Goodbye         | - Arrivederci     |
| • How are you?    | - Come stai?      |
| • Fine, thank you | - Bene, grazie    |
| • Good Morning    | - Buon giorno     |
| • Good Afternoon  | - Buon pomeriggio |
| • Good Evening    | - Buona sera      |
| • My name is...   | - Mi chiamo...    |