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Artichokes in America Young Artist Awards

The Newsletter of the Lancaster Italian Cultural Society

Volume 24 ~ Issue 1 March 2022



LANCASTER
ITALIAN
CULTURAL
SOCIETY


L'Osservatore Lancastriano



President's Message

Saluti cari amici,

I have enjoyed being of service to our membership for many years and positions, consecutively about 13 years, but most notably the last two years as your President. Although we worked through Covid isolation, I would like to mention what we have accomplished:

- 2020 March Election/Installation Meeting
- Italian Movie Night at the Clipper Stadium
- 2 Part Zoom Presentation on Italian Language
- Telephone calls to Membership
- Society Approach (hand-out) Cards
- We are on Facebook
- Newsletter Committee
- New Bollettino online newsletter, monthly, when printed version not sent
- More interest and recognition from Website
- We have maintained our membership total considering the pandemic

Soon more opportunities will avail us to get together. Please join us and take advantage of our luncheon meeting on March 20th for Elections/Installations of 2022-2023, new and returning Officers and Board Members. We'll be at a new venue. It will be fun to see everyone there.

Until we meet again,

Rosemary LaFata



LICS Member News

Our deepest sympathies to David Ferruzza and family, on the passing of his wife, Betty.

And to Michael and Mark Santivenere and families, on the passing of their sister, Linda Hilton.

Winter Picnic and Election Meeting

Free and open only to LICS Members

Program: Election of Officers and Board Members for 2022-2023, and Presentation of Italian American Service Award Winner for 2021

Lunch will be provided: Pasta, meatballs, salad, bread, dessert and drinks. Cash bar open for alcoholic drinks. **50/50 Raffle!**

When: Sunday, March 20, 2022
from Noon to 3:00 PM

Where: American Legion Post 34, 1388 Arcadia Road, Lancaster, PA 17601

Directions: Route 72 (Manheim Pike) turn onto service road; turn right onto Arcadia road; on the right, use drive on right side of building to parking lot in rear; must enter from the rear into hall.

**Reservations are required and are due by March 12, 2022. To sign up, please call:
Dee Viscardi 717-951-7112**

Mask to be worn unless seated at your table.

Officers & Board of Directors Positions for Election Meeting, March 2022

Nominations Accepted:

| Office | Term | Nominee |
|----------------------|---------|---------------|
| President | 2 Years | Nella Seward |
| Vice President | 2 Years | Jeannie Hubbs |
| Secretary | 2 Years | Deb Saporetti |
| Treasurer | 2 Years | J. D. Roda |
| Board Members | | |
| Dolores Biedenkapp | 1 Year | |
| John Day | 2 Years | |
| Tony Fisichella | 2 Years | |
| Peter Mastropietro | 2 Years | |
| Patti Meyer | 2 Years | |
| Livia Riley | 1 Year | |
| Dee Viscardi | 1 Year | |

LICS 2022 Officer/Board Nominations' Bios:

Nella Seward, a native of Rome Italy, came to the U.S. on December 1961, with her entire family. She has lived in NJ and moved to PA over 30 years ago. She has been a member of LICS since day one. She has held positions on the board, including twice president and vice president. She introduced and managed cultural and social events such as Carnevale, Adult Italian Language conversation, 11 group trips to Italy, the Spaghetti Dinner fund raiser and other events. She is looking forward to serve again on the Board and to work with all the LICS members.

Deb Saporetti was born and raised in western PA in the town of Butler. Deb moved to Lancaster in 1983. Shortly after her move, she began working at Armstrong World Industries, where she worked for 10 years and met her husband Bill. They have been married for 28 years and have two children, Emily and Gary. In 2014, Deb's son Gary was honored to receive a scholarship from the LICS. Both of her children are adults and now live and work in the Philadelphia area. Since 2008, Deb has worked at Franklin & Marshall College and is currently the Academic Department Coordinator in the English department, a job she absolutely loves! In her spare time she enjoys gardening, traveling and being the co-captain of the Bocce Babes in the Lancaster Bocce League. She is excited to support the leadership and engage with members of LICS.



Jeannie Hubbs:

"I am a native New Yorker, wife of 53 years, mother of 3 great kids, grandmother of 7, great grandmother of 2 and 1/2. Previously, I actively served on the LICS' Board as well as President. I am retired after a career of 40 years as Educational Sign Language Interpreter, Freelance Interpreter, Sign Language Teacher. Coming from an Italian family, I have become aware of the importance of my Catholic Faith, Family, Friends, Cooking, and of course Music.

I truly care about the future of LICS and excited to begin the Best Years Ever."

John Day: "My love of Italy started when I was about 10, and saw a picture of Gina Lollobrigida on page 60 of a Times book on Italy. My mother's father came from Affi, a small town on the other side of a hill from Lago di Garda. Grandpa Sega taught me about music theory and how to play the guitar. He was an accomplished violinist, as well as being able to play the guitar, Hawaiian guitar, and the piano. His oldest brother remained in Italy to take care of their widowed mother, and so I have 6 second cousins living near Lago d'Iseo. I first visited them in 1990, and have made numerous trips back there since then. I took Italian in college, but am not proficient in the language as I have not been able to live in Italy for an extended period of time.

Europe by Day is a business that my wife and I started just before she died in 2015. I organize custom trips to Italy and Europe for small groups of people who are intimidated by the language barrier and the thought of planning a trip. I have been a member of LICS for a number of years, and have served as a director for 2 years."

Officers

President - Rosemary LaFata

Phone: 717-569-5200

Vice President - Peter Costanzo

Phone: 717-250-0080

Treasurer - JD Roda

Phone: 717-898-7969

Secretary - Mary Cae Williams

Phone: 717-392-1630

Committees and Directors

Cultural - Nella Seward (717-725-6500)

Trips - Dee Viscardi (717- 951-7112)

Website/Historian - Rudy DeLaurentis

Hospitality - Pat Valenzo (717-569-9798)

Education Initiative- Steve Iovino

Membership - Marianne Rossini

Advertising & Public Relations -

Pete Costanzo and J.D. Roda

Eblast - John Villella

LICS Board of Directors

Peter Byrne, John Day,

Anthony Lombardo, Marianne Rossini,

Livia Neri Riley, Dolores Biedenkapp

Bollettino/Newsletter Committee:

Mary Cae Williams, Marian Caroselli

John Day, Nella Seward

Rudy DeLaurentis, editor

LICSNEWSLETTER@GMAIL.COM

Members, if you have family news, births, deaths, marriage announcements and honors or awards that you would like to share with the membership, please email them to licsnewsletter@gmail.com. Or call Pat Valenzo at 717-569-9798.

In memory of Linda Hilton - Linda's family has contributed \$300, U.S. Boiler Co., her employer, \$100, and Gary Forbes \$50 to LICS to benefit local students. We thank the family, US Boiler and Mr. Forbes for their kind generosity. Linda and Paul Hilton rarely missed a LICS meeting or event, and it was our pleasure to see and talk with them at those events.

Anthony (Tony) Fisichella:

"My father's parents were from Sicily. My Mother's parents were from Italy. My grandparents immigrated to the United States in the early 1900s through Ellis Island and eventually became American Citizens. All of my cousin's are Italian or Sicilian.

I grew up in Manhattan and Brooklyn, New York, where there was much Italian culture and cuisine. I worked as a New York State Peace Officer for 22 years. I retired as a Lieutenant. I was the President of the Board of Managers of a 49-unit Condominium for 8 years.

I was a member of the Italian Columbia Society in New York. I am a current member of the Knights of Columbus.

My wife and I have two daughters and three grandchildren. My wife and I are Catholic.

My values: Religion, family, work ethic, fellowship, honesty, treating all people with respect, and helping those in need.

I was a member of LICS for many years before the Covid epidemic. I renewed my membership a couple of years ago."

"I am **Patricia Caterbone Meyer** and I am pleased that Nella asked me to be on the LICS Board of Directors. My brothers, sister and I were members when it first was organized and then I re-joined four years ago. My husband, Joe Meyer, was also a member but passed away two years ago.

For 48 years, I have worked in the Catholic Diocese of Harrisburg as a Teacher, Librarian, and Director of Religious Education for St. Anthony of Padua Church. I love to make traditional Italian recipes that were handed down to me from my mother. My parents were Tony and Jennie Caterbone; and they shared with me the many traditions and customs of their Italian heritage which I treasure. I love gardening, cooking and playing BOCCE. You may know my twin brother Pat if you are a BOCCE player, too.

I look forward to serving on the board by supporting the many opportunities LICS offers, and getting more involved with its activities."

Peter Mastropietro:

"I grew up in Westchester County, New York, just north of Yankee Stadium, one of my favorite places to visit.

I am the third son of Italian immigrants, Armida and Pensiero. I have three children, all married. One lives in the Detroit area, one in Lancaster and one in Hawaii. Spent a career in recorded music sales and promotion, magazine publishing and Home Healthcare Marketing.

Currently retired, but have an in-home business - Mastro Music. I represent various music acts to venues, special events and concerts. I am also a drummer and percussionist in two local bands. I am married to a remarkable woman, Sheila Mastropietro. I am looking forward to my term on the board of LICS!"

**Lancaster Italian Cultural Society Presents****Sorrenti Family Estate and Winery - Sunday, May 15, 2022**

Come with us to the Sorrenti Family Estate and Winery in Saylorburg, PA!

Upon arrival we will enjoy a wine tasting of some of the Sorrenti Family's award winning wines at the Poconos oldest winery, before our pizza lunch buffet.

Price per Person: \$114.00

Package Includes: Motorcoach Transportation, admission, wine tasting, and lunch inclusive of all taxes and gratuities.

Departing from Lancaster Shopping Center at 8:45 AM

Returning to Lancaster Shopping Center approximately at 4:15 PM

Deadline for Payment and Registration is April 2, 2022

Contact Dee Viscardi at 717-951-7112 for more information and any questions.

Make Checks Payable to: Lancaster Italian Culture Society (LICS),

& Mail to: Dee Viscardi - 6486 Lincoln Court, East Petersburg, PA 17520

The Scholastic and the Lancaster County Young Artists Awards
Exhibitions start Saturday, March 12, 2022 10:00 AM, and run through Sunday, April 24, 2022 4:00 PM.

This annual juried exhibition showcases Lancaster County young artists works of merit, and is well worth seeing in person.

Locations: The art work will be at both the **Demuth Museum** 120 East King Street Lancaster, and the **Lancaster Museum of Art** 135 North Lime Street, Lancaster.

Congratulations to the students whose works were selected for this year's LICS' **Italian Artist** awards, which are shown on the following page. LICS has sponsored these awards for many years and is happy to recognize these young artists!

2022 Italian Art Awards for Young Artists



Leonardo Da Vinci Award - Caroline Drumm

Painting Title: *Rittenhouse Farmers' Market Onions and Garlic*

Teacher: Candace Ryan Rakers

School: Solanco High School, Grade 12



Artemisia Gentileschi Award: Karli Rathman

Drawing Title: *Mom*

Teacher: Caleb Smith

Cocalico High School, Grade 12



Michelangelo Award: Julianne Leonard

Drawing Title: *Hawaii*

Teacher: Susan Ulrich

Lancaster Catholic High School, Grade 10



Modigliani Award: Paige Kendig

Photograph Title: *Submerged*

Teacher: Maggie Cantrell

Penn Manor High School, Grade 11

Was St. Patrick Really Italain?

by Mary Cae Williams

"Some folks may not know that St. Patrick was the son of a Roman diplomat living in England."

I bet almost no one in our society knew the above fact. It might be fun for March to talk about it. Any of you have any Irish blood and want to tackle this piece?"

"I will be happy to investigate the story of St. Patrick..."

With this exchange of emails, our adventure in history and legend began. We will share with you what we found and let you ruminate for yourselves what you think about the Italian roots of our most famous Irish saint.



The Encyclopedia Britannica, Fifteenth Edition, Volume 9, printed in 1994 states that "he was born in Britain of a Romanized family." Uh oh...pretty much any Briton of means in those days had signed on to be a Roman citizen. We might need to delve a little further to be sure we can bring St. Patrick into La Famiglia Italiana.

From The Legal Satyricon, (<https://randazza.wordpress.com/2015/03/16/was-st-patrick-really-italian-2/>) we read that "every year, articles pop up repeating the story that St. Patrick was really Italian." Their article "Was St. Patrick Really Italian?" goes into great detail about the relationship between Roman citizenship and having "a single strand of DNA originating from the Italian peninsula" or not. It was fun to read and reminded us that the whole notion of being Italian might be more meaningful to 19th Century folks than a 5th Century saint.

One of the most entertaining articles we found was on northjersey.com: (<https://www.northjersey.com/story/life/columnists/bill-ervolino/2018/03/12/st-patricks-day-who-st-patrick-he-italian/415902002/>) because that writer went all out to cover the story in a humorous, even somewhat irreverent way. Although he did finish with the notion that we should probably let St. Patrick be the patron saint of the Irish and not stir the pasta pot too much.

Patricius (Patrick), as he signed himself, did leave some written records of his own. Confessio is the autobiographical record that includes the story of his capture by Irish pirates and enslavement for six years in Ireland. After he took orders and guided by a vision, he returned to Ireland, where in his own words he "baptized thousands of people".

Much if not most of the story of St. Patrick falls into the realm of legend, leaving it wide open to many interpretations. Even the dates of his life remain uncertain. Some historians suspect that two different people have been blended together to become the St. Patrick of our legends. Pope Celestine I sent Palladius to be "the first bishop to Irish Christians" in 431. Perhaps some of the work for the church attributed to St. Patrick was actually carried out by Palladius. One legend we know for sure is fictitious. St. Patrick did not drive all the snakes out of Ireland. From the time of the great glaciers there were no snakes in Ireland...interesting geological fact.

Well, then, if we can't truly claim St. Patrick for Italy, there is always the Feast of Saint Joseph (San Giuseppe,) on March 19th. Of course, he wasn't Italian either. If everyone is Irish on St. Patrick's Day, then maybe everyone is Italian if there's a festa to celebrate. Con affetto a tutti e buona primavera, MCW.



St. Patrick's Day, March 17, isn't widely celebrated in Italy. But that's not to say someone can't find a good St. Patty's Day party within the country best known for its romantic escapes, historic sites and museums and world-renowned cuisine. If you're traveling in Italy on March 17 and yearning for a green beer or some Irish whiskey, perhaps consider one of these fun spots!

Joy's Irish Pub in Bari is one of the most sought-after historic bars in Bari, Joy's Pub boasts a true Irish-style bar with a "public house" feel. St. Patrick's Day is a huge party here – live music, a bike parade, torchlight procession, costumes and masks, and Guinness and Peroni verde! Throughout the entire year, the pub offers music and Irish fare and beers.

Finnegan's Irish Pubs are located in Florence and Rome claim to be the only Irish-owned pub in Florence and in Rome, and it would be safe to assume that Finnegan's knows how to throw a St. Patrick's Day party. The pubs show all football and rugby games and American football and car racing stating, "If it's on and you want to see it, you can see it here." Just be sure to wear green on the holiday! Slainte!



Artichokes, the Mafia and Fiorello LaGuardia

by Marian Caroselli

What, you're Italian and you don't like artichokes? Better get your DNA tested, there may be some family secrets you aren't privy to.



Artichokes, *carciofi* in Italian, have been cooked and eaten around the Mediterranean for at least two millennia. While the ancient artichoke is known as the “aristocrat” of the vegetable world, in reality, it is a thistle, part of the daisy family. Artichokes most likely originated in Tunisia and Sicily and now are grown mostly in the regions of Puglia, Sicily and Sardinia as well as in France, Spain and CA in the US.

In the first century, Romans pickled artichokes in honey and feasted on them year round. While other countries usually eat the leaves and discard the stalk, in Rome they usually trim the hard, outer leaves along with the base and exterior part of the stem before preparing and cooking the artichokes whole, making the result fully edible. Many Romans believe the stem, or gambo, to be the best, most flavorful.

The artichoke has been famous since ancient Greek and Roman times: Plinius, for example, describes its therapeutic properties. But, strangely enough, the artichoke seems to have disappeared from the known world for centuries, only to reappear at the beginning of the Middle Ages in Sicily, where it was imported by the Arabs who called it Al-charschof or Alcharscoufa. But just how did it reach Florence, the Medici family and later, the French court?

It was thanks to Filippo Strozzi, the famous Florentine banker, one of the most dangerous rivals to the Medici's economic and political supremacy in Florence. In 1466, Filippo Strozzi brought the first artichoke to Florence, along with other exotic plants he had brought back from Southern Italy. By 1473, it had arrived in Venice.

Catherine de Medici is said to have brought artichokes to France in the 16th century when she arrived from Florence at the age of fourteen to marry the future Henry II. She apparently ate a lot of them too, which, given the artichoke's over-sexed reputation. Tough on the outside

and soft on the inside, artichokes are well versed in the game of hard-to-get. She thus scandalized the more straight-laced of the court.

Artichokes are also the subject of a little-known chapter in the history of organized crime. Almost a century ago, New York City mobsters weren't just bootlegging, gambling, and loansharking. They were engaged in another shady million-dollar operation: artichoke racketeering.

In the 1890s, Italian immigrants first brought the artichoke to California, where it thrived in the cool, foggy fields of Monterey County. Within a few years, local businessman, John Debenedetti, quit his day job and dedicated himself to developing California's artichoke industry.

He discovered that big profits were to be found not in his hometown, where the vegetable sold for a nickel, but in the northeast, where Italian-Americans, eager to get their hands on an old-world delicacy, would pay fifty cents to a dollar. Especially sought after was the baby artichoke, more versatile than the larger Globe variety, and used in fried, Roman-style preparations.

In 1917, Debenedetti established an artichoke growers' association in Half Moon Bay, just south of San Francisco, and soon farmers began shipping crates cross the continent in newly refrigerated train cars.

In short order, the artichoke's popularity exploded in NY and Philadelphia where vendors sold them from pushcarts. Soon, in markets in Italian neighborhoods in New Jersey, Massachusetts, and Connecticut, it became a springtime staple from CA.

The 1921 edition of Fannie Farmer's cookbook was the first to feature recipes for boiled artichokes (served with béchamél or hollandaise), deep-fried artichokes, and another variation, stuffed with ground chicken and drizzled with thin white sauce. “No new vegetable has ever made so rapid an inroad into the market as the artichoke,” said L. Casazza, a wholesale merchant, speaking to the New York Times in 1926. “Just a flavor of garlic is necessary.”

But the story of the American artichoke took an unusual turn, thanks to Ciro Terranova, New York City underboss of the infamous Morello Family, an artichoke dealer who set out to corner the U.S. market for the California commodity.

The Sicilian-born Terranova, who traveled in an armored limousine with bullet-proof windows, sent his men to coerce importers into selling them artichokes at a fraction of the original cost. Those who refused to cooperate were savagely beaten by the mob. In turn,

Terranova sold his seized artichokes to local vendors, doubling prices and pocketing the profits.

His racket earned him a nickname: the Artichoke King. By 1930, New York newspapers featured regular reports about a criminal enterprise that stretched all the way across the continent to California, where Terranova's armed thugs intimidated growers into selling their crop directly to them.

By 1935, the Sicilian American Mafia had controlled the American artichoke market for at least two decades, wresting millions of dollars from growers, distributors, and consumers. And this was just one of their food-based rackets. Many other *agromafia* operations, which profited from citrus fruits, olive oil, avocados, and more, persisted or emerged over the following decades.



At 6:30 AM one morning in December 1935, help finally came from Fiorello LaGuardia, New York City's mayor. Police trumpeters roused the workers at the Bronx Terminal Market. Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia climbed onto the back of a vegetable truck and read from a statement, proclaiming an emergency and banning baby artichokes for posing a "serious and threatening emergency" in the city. According to the Pittsburgh Press, LaGuardia made his message clear: "I know you dealers are honest men," he shouted, "and as long as I am Mayor, no racketeer, thug or punk is going to intimidate you."

Kidnapping, extortion, and murder could be traced to sales of the thistle, explained the mayor, leaving him no choice but to banish it from New York, beginning the day after Christmas. "I like artichokes, particularly with hollandaise sauce," he conceded, but the ban "will remain in force until the grip of the racketeers is broken."

Criminal prosecutions followed, but the ban piqued the public's curiosity, making artichokes more popular than ever. "Local wholesalers were swamped with orders," explained historians Michael Svanevik and Shirley Burgett. "The furor was such that LaGuardia's ban was lifted within a week."

Criminal investigations targeting Terranova and his men soon destroyed the racket. Indictments and prison sentences followed. By the end of January 1936, importers were freely selling artichokes to the public at regular prices, much to the relief of California growers. Just two years after Mayor La Guardia's proclamation, the Artichoke King died a poor man.

But the artichoke lived on, and in the wake of the ban, instructions for novice eaters began appearing in national newspapers and magazines. Mangiamo!

Recipes

Today, in Rome you can try Jewish artichokes (carciofi alla Giudia) in the legendary trattorie of the Jewish Ghetto, such as Sora Margherita and Giggetto – al portico d'Ottavia. For the no less excellent carciofi alla Romana (artichokes the Roman way) head to one of the restaurants of Rome serving typical Roman cuisine, such as Checchino in the Testaccio district, Lo Scopettaro, Checco er Carrettiere and Sora Lella. Most restaurants serving original Roman cuisine will serve both the carciofi alla Giudia and the carciofi alla Romana.

<https://www.inromecooking.com/blog/recipes/artichokes-roman-style-or-jewish-style-recipes-and-differences/>



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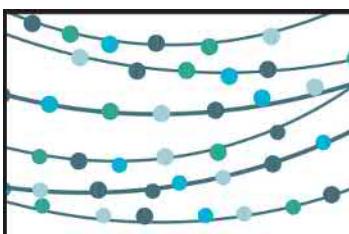
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L'OSSERVATORE LANCASTRIANO March, 2022

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Upcoming In-Person LICS Events

February 27, 2022 - DIGITAL ARCHAEOLOGY AT OPLONTIS

<https://www.lancaster-italian-cultural-society.org/events-calendar/>

March 20, 2022 - Winter Picnic and Election Meeting

May 15, 2022 - Sorrenti Family Estate and Winery Trip

Please check the LICS Website for updates.

www.lancaster-italian-cultural-society.org