

## Rosanne Gulisano helps people capture memories

*By: Katie Leimkuehler/Triblocal.com staff reporter*

Rosanne Gulisano is a keeper of tales. She listens to people's life stories and more importantly teaches them how to capture their memories in written form.

She's heard the tragedies—like the memorable story of an 80-year-old Jewish woman who fled Germany right before WWII began who was fortunate enough to escape along with her mother, however her father perished under Hitler's regime.

And she helps people put those words on paper.

Gulisano visited the Clarendon Hill Public Library this summer to conduct a workshop on memoir writing. She has been speaking about the craft of writing memoirs since 1999 and published her book "From Intention to Reality: A Guide For Writing Your Own Life Story" about the process.

"It was an interesting class," said Lucy Tarabour, a librarian at the Clarendon Hills library. "She spoke about the important events in a person's life and then had us write something and share it with the group."

Tarabour said she wished her parents left her with a memoir.

"My father passed away 22 years ago, and my mother died about 3 years ago," Tarabour said. "I can't tell you how many times my siblings and I have wondered about things from the past and said, 'I wish I could ask mom or dad about this—they would know.' It would be such a gift to have a comprehensive life story from either or both of them."

Gulisano give tips and ideas to get people started writing about their lives. She hands out timeline sheets that help participants record the major events in their lives. Her workshop can be done in a single or multi-session format.

"A lot of people write it for themselves," Gulisano said. "Others write the memoir and give it as a gift to their children which is much better than a sweater that is the wrong size or color."

Tarabour said she began remembering other stories from her childhood after hearing participants read their stories. Gulisano said working with the memory is a key part of the workshop and encourages participants to bring photos to jog their memories and to only include the highlights in the memoir.

"People have to remember not every moment of their life is exciting and something people will want to read," she said.

Gulisano, who lives in St. Charles, works with libraries, independent living homes and even conducts family workshops where memories are often up for debate.

"With families everyone remembers things differently which can be really interesting, but it's about sharing the same experience through someone else's eyes," she said.

Gulisano has been working on her own memoir for years as part of an ongoing project. She meets with several friends once a month to share stories.

"It's fun to hear someone else stories and get to know people in a way I otherwise wouldn't," she said.

She said some of the stories she hears from friends include how their parents met and where their first dates were with their husbands.

Gulisano is in the process of filming her workshops to produce an instructional DVD and workbook to demonstrate the process of creating a memoir.

She said to create a memoir a person should set aside a few hours a day or a month and urges them to stick with their plan.

"I recommend that people set their own schedule and don't be unrealistic," Gulisano said.

She said the process can take anywhere from a few months to a year depending on how committed people are to the project, but sees it as a vital piece of family history.

"It is important to leave a legacy for your family and it helps participants pass on the values and hopes for future generations and in some cases so they don't make the same mistakes," Gulisano said.

Her next workshop will be at 10 a.m., Sept. 23 at the Lisle Park District, 11825 Short St. For more information, go to [www.lifestoriescreatingamemoir.com](http://www.lifestoriescreatingamemoir.com).