



# tradizioni

NEWSLETTER OF THE ITALIAN FOLK ART FEDERATION OF AMERICA

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## STATE OF THE FEDERATION by Jane P. Ferro

Much has transpired since your last edition of *Tradizioni*. We feel it necessary to fill in and bring you up to date. An initial occurrence was that Anna Marie Fiori, long-time devoted member of our organization, reluctantly found it necessary to pass the gavel of presidency on to Jane P. Ferro, VP. Although her tenure was short-lived, her dedication for the advancement of IFafa will inspire me to fulfill her aspirations as well as my own. We heartily thank Anna Marie not only for her presidency, but for past years of cooperation and creativity.

This left a vacancy in the post of Vice President. During the board meeting in March of 1993, Lena Chianese was nominated and voted in to fill this position. We have worked with Lena for years and know she will give 120% to her office.

Long-time dedicated editor of our *Tradizioni*, Dr. Anthony F. LePera, has also found it necessary to resign due to personal responsibilities. We will miss Tony's personal touch in our newsletter and offer our sincere appreciation for the countless hours he has unselfishly donated. Realizing that whoever would be requested to fill Dr. LePera's position would have to be one well-versed and knowledgeable in the realm of Italian folklore, we think that our choice for editor will be appropriate. Dr. Maria Elisa Ciavarelli has accepted this position. We know that she will bring the same energy she has for life itself to this new challenge. Maria Elisa requested the cooperation of our membership in submitting articles for publication. Please make sure they are typewritten [in upper and lower case] and double-spaced. Send to: Dr. Maria Elisa Ciavarelli, 5934 Loretto Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19149.

Unfortunately, due to lack of funds, we found it necessary to temporarily suspend publication of *Tradizioni* in 1993. It pleases us greatly to announce that we once again have the resources for this integral facet of our Federation. During the blackout period, Dr. Joseph J. Bentivegna came to our rescue with bulletins to keep our membership informed. Indeed without his many hours of solo effort, we would have had no venue for our conference in Dallas. Molte grazie to Dr. Joe.

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## 1993 IFafa CONFERENCE A BIG SUCCESS, PARTNER! by Jane P. Ferro

If you missed IFafa's conference of 1993 in Dallas, Texas, I must inform you that you missed a beauty! From pick-up on Friday to take-off on Sunday, we were treated with Texas hospitality. First class was the only adjective we could use to describe this conference. Having hosted two of these events, we can fully appreciate the planning and work involved. There is much to be done months before the actual conference. You missed the camaraderie and that certain magic that develops when attendees from all over the United States and Canada ban together with a common love for Italian folklore.

The workshops were informative and the displays outstanding. I ate guacamole and treated myself to fajitas for the very first time. However, I must admit I could have used some written directions on proper eating procedure with the latter.

Heart-rendering is the only way we can describe our sentiment upon seeing the number of young people involved in the Italian folklore arena. Indeed, it is safe to declare our 1993 conference in Dallas a success and we heartily applaud Maria Chobany and the Italian Club of Dallas for an effort that went beyond the call of duty. By the way, you also missed seeing me in my ten-gallon hat complete with my *ciocce* with the spurs in the back. What a spectacle to behold!

More on the 1993 Dallas Conference on page 2 . . .

## CONGRATULATIONS, CAVALIERE!

Prof. Philip J. Di Novo of the State University of New York, SUNY-Morrisville, has been awarded the rank of *Cavaliere* in the Order of Merit of the Republic of Italy.

The award is being conferred in recognition of his numerous contributions to the Italian-American community. He is founder of the American Italian Heritage Association, founder of the Italian Cultural Center and Museum, Utica, and founder of the Northeast Federation of Italian-American Organizations. He also serves on several boards of directors of Italian-American organizations, including IFafa.

## A REVIEW OF THE 1993 IFABA CONFERENCE IN DALLAS, TEXAS

by Rita Tonitto

A BIG (believe me, nothing is small in Texas!) "Howdy Partner" from members of I Colori Italiani and the Italian Club of Dallas greeted IFABA conferees from California, Illinois, Iowa, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin and Ontario. For some, it was a first-time visit to Texas and for others a first-time attendance at an Italian Folk Art Conference . . . no one was disappointed.

After a welcome from co-Chairs Maria Miletta Chobany and Carrie Polinzi Harris, the Friday evening get-together moved right into dancing with Elba Farabegoli Gurzau. This was followed by an impeccable performance by the Club Roma Dancers, St. Catharine's, Ontario, all of whom were well-matched couples in their teens. Kudos as well to the Italian Group of Milwaukee. What a delight to see a three-generation span with the little ones keeping up step-for-step with the teens and the senior couples.

A continuous display and workshop on BOBBIN LACE MAKING was conducted by Elena Cola, proprietor of Pins and Bobbins, Dallas. A blue pillow was a most effective background for the delicate white lace Madonna Elena was working on and using for teaching and demonstrating. Many of the items on display were for sale and included vests, blouses, collars, umbrellas, church dolls, tablecloths, pin cushions, Christmas decorations, sun catchers, etc. Nelly Pettersen and Laura Smith assisted. Both have studied with Elena and showed lace from their personal collection. Nelly and Laura were responsible for gathering and exhibiting an extensive array of Bomboniere (the favors conferred upon guests on special occasions such as weddings, baptisms, and confirmations), and Easter breads, bread dolls, sweet breads, and a Christmas Ceppo (a four-tiered structure decorated according to tradition).

The Italian Club of Dallas (ICD), sponsors of I Colori Italiani, lent their reproduction of a SICILIAN CART. Displayed in the hotel lobby, it became the centerpiece for many photo sessions as well as a conversation piece for other guests in the hotel.

Saturday began early with a sumptuous buffet breakfast served by the Embassy Suites Hotel and, then, off to the workshops. The committee outdid itself and provided a great variety from which to choose. IT'S ALL IN THE WAY YOU SAY IT, was a thought-provoking discussion by Mrs. Vincenza Biondi (ICD), pinpointing how the media distorts and corrupts the Italian language. Italian family names were among the examples cited. How sad that so many Italian-Americans, themselves, do not know the correct pronunciation. The lesson drawn by the class was to commit to a greater sensitivity and greater knowledge of the language in

order to be better equipped to promote proper pronunciation.

Joseph Biondi (ICD) gave a first-hand report in his workshop on LA FESTA DEI GIGLI. With slides and a commentary, including the historical background of this tradition-loaded festival as well as his personal observances, the audience felt the "weight" of the spectacle. *Gigli* translates as Lilies; however, the lilies have become towers borne through the narrow streets of Nola on teams of men's shoulders.

Silvia Calesini (ICD) talked on the HISTORY AND CULTURE OF ITALY'S REGIONS, providing a brief overview on the characteristics, geography, traditions, historical figures, etc.

ACCORDIONS from his personal collection were exhibited by Nick Ballerini (ICD), well-known accordionist and Past President of the Texas Accordion Association. Several of the instruments were antiques. He played each one while providing historical information, answering questions and sharing many personal tidbits of his career and interaction with other well-known accordionists.

IMAGES FROZEN IN SILVER (YOUR FAMILY PHOTOS) was an intriguing title and a new subject for the conference. This was given by Nick Cirincione (ICD) who discussed archival preservation of documents and photographs of one's family or organization. It was mind-boggling to learn that generations captured in colored photography may be doomed. Color photos do NOT last forever. Most of us can rummage through boxes and find black and white photos of grand and great grandparents. Will future generations be so fortunate?

The DANCE WORKSHOPS continued to draw the greatest number of participants. Blaize Panizzi, dance director and choreog-

rapher of I Campagnoli was back by popular demand. His repertoire included a reprise of IL MERLETTO. This dance was choreographed by Eugene Richards whose inspiration came as he watched women in Abruzzo making lace (merletto).

A few years ago, the Italian community in Pittsburgh hosted Il Gruppo Folcloristico d'Oristano. Their stay provided an opportunity for interaction with I Campagnoli. Dances and music were exchanged and Blaize's workshop included the BALLO SARDO from Oristano. It is in the typical line-dance style of Sardegna, fast-stepping and spirited with intricate line configurations.

Blaize's third piece was the TARANTELLA PIZZICA, choreographed by him to music researched in Puglia and recorded by Alessandra Belloni, Artistic Director of I Giullari di Piazza, New York.

The IFABA CHORUS, comprised of participants from all our member groups, gets together for a practice session at each conference. This year, the workshop was directed by Jane P. Ferro, Director of I Campagnoli. During the workshop the singers pull together a bevy of Italian folk songs which are performed in the evening. The IFABA CHORUS was initiated some years ago and is improving with age like fine wine. It must be so — a guest in the hotel (a business man from Milano) heard the singing, ventured to find out what was going on, and stayed!

Joanne Giamalva Wargo, dance instructor of the Amici Italiani, Rockford, Illinois, debuted as a workshop leader with IFABA. She taught the BALLO DI SAN CALO (refers to St. Calogero, patron saint of Aragona). The dance is a lively tarantella with complex patterns. It was taught to the Amici Italiani

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### UPCOMING IFABA CONFERENCES

1994 - NO CONFERENCE

1995 - Mark your calendars: November 10, 11, 12, the Clock Tower Resort Hotel & Conference Center, 7801 East State Street, ROCKFORD, ILLINOIS 61125, (815) 398-6000.

The AMICI ITALIANI are hosting. They have been working diligently since before the 1993 conference in Texas, having committed to bringing a performing group from Italy. IFABA has talked about doing this for many years, and we wish the AMICI every success in this endeavor. With ample time to plan and prepare, we urge support and participation from all our members and readers. Among the many workshops being considered is one on *Commedia dell'Arte*, a new subject for a conference. It all sounds exciting and enticing.

The event is being spearheaded by Shirley and Gene Fedeli. Suggestions are being sought. Also, consideration will be given to anyone desiring to lead a workshop. Write the Fedelis at 3628 North Court Street, Rockford, IL 61103, or give them a call evenings (815) 877-2888.

## REVIEW OF 1993 IFAFA CONFERENCE

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by I Cumpari Ragnunisi from Aragona, Sicily. In 1989 the Ragnunisi appeared at Rockford's annual Festa Italiana and the two groups met and exchanged ideas.

In a children's workshop, Maria Chobany shared THE LEGEND OF LA BEFANA, a skit she produced and directed for I Piccoli Colori of Dallas. Maria is Dance Director of I Colori Italiani and I Piccoli Colori of the ICD.

On a more serious note, Laura Lafergola of the Club Roma, St. Catharines, Ontario, led a discussion on FUND-RAISING, an ever-necessary subject for group directors and sponsors.

Saturday's luncheon was a colorful, typical Tex-Mex menu. The highlight of the hour was the delightful and endearing performance by I Piccoli Colori.

Saturday evening's menu for the Festa Folcloristica was more in keeping with our Italian heritage, highly seasoned by the performance of our host group, I Colori Italiani.

A wonderful show, including the singers who were directed and accompanied by Mary Ellen Di Tucci. Il Trattenimento Italiano of Des Moines, Iowa, under the direction of Patricia Civitate, also appeared.

IFAFa honored two members of ICD, Vincenza Biondi for her love and knowledge of Italian folk arts and Bianca Pellizzi for her service to the Italian community in Dallas.

Sunday morning Mass in Italian has become traditional at our conferences and proves to be a very simple and very moving experience. Mass was celebrated by Fr. Julius Leloczky who was touched by the singing of hymns in Italian and the spontaneous harmony.

The Annual Meeting followed, called to order by President Jane P. Ferro. Jane acknowledged Gov. Ann W. Richards' proclamation designating November "Italian Folk Art Federation of America" month in Texas. On behalf of IFAFA, Jane extended heartfelt thanks to Maria Chobany, her husband An-

drew, Carrie Harris, their Committee, and the members of I Colori Italiani and the Italian Club of Dallas for their hospitality and generosity which, in every way, contributed to another successful and memorable IFAFA conference.

As the plane moved from the tarmac onto the runway turning me westward, I was awed by the brilliant sunset over the Texas plain. After several overcast days obliterating those famous blue skies and Texas bright stars, the immense western horizon totally captivated me. No hills. No dales. No trees. Very strange for me, a Jerseyite.

I was glued to the window and glad for the solitude. Emotions welled up as I gazed and thought of the pioneers and early immigrants, the great physical and mental strength they had to have possessed to tame this territory. Formidable, compared to those who settled in the cities. Imagine: no electricity (no radio, telephone, TV, light); no cars; no stores, hospitals, churches, schools; no neighbors. A daily commuter to New York City, I now can truly appreciate what "wide open spaces" are!

## INTERNATIONAL FOLK FESTIVALS

International Folk Festivals showcase folk performers from around the world. Through singing, dancing, music, instruments, costumes, food, entertainment, lectures, workshops, exhibits, parades, etc., one can discover and learn about different cultures. The events noted here are held annually, generally in the same time frame each year. If you know of others, write Rita Tonitto, c/o IFAFA.

FOLKMOOT USA  
Waynesville, North Carolina  
July 28-Aug. 7, 1994  
704-452-2997

INTERNATIONAL FOLKFEST  
Murphreesboro, Tennessee  
May 13-20, 1994  
615-896-3559

FESTIVAL FOLKLORIQUE  
Lachine (Montreal), Quebec  
June 28-July 3, 1994  
514-634-7526

WORLDVEST  
Cornwall, Ontario  
July 4-July 10, 1994  
514-524-8552 (days)  
514-466-0975 (eves)

WORLD FESTIVAL MONDIAL  
DE FOLKLORE  
Drummondville, Quebec  
July 10-July 19, 1994  
819-472-1184

Following is a truly superb piece which is derivative of the Alpine soldiers. Realizing that he is dying, the Captain commands his Officers to distribute his remains in five ways. The first portion is to be sent to the King of Italy so that he will know the loyalty of his Alpine Soldiers. The second is to be sent to his battalion so they can remember their Captain. The third goes to his Mother to remember her dear son. The fourth goes to his beloved so she can recall her first love. The fifth shall be strewn over the mountains to cultivate the flowers. This selection is indicative of the steadfast loyalty of these world-renowned soldiers. It is interesting, however, to note that, in listing his priorities, his Mother precedes his loved one.

-- Jane P. Ferro

### IL TESTAMENTO DEL CAPITANO



Il ca - pi - ta - no l'è fe - ri - to, sì, l'è fe -



- ri - to e sta per mo - rir e manda a di - re ai suoi Al-



- pi - ni per - chè lo ven-ga-no a ri - tro - var.

I suoi Alpini gli mandan a dire  
che non han scarpe per camminar.  
"O con le scarpe, o senza scarpe,  
i miei Alpini li voglio qua!"

"E io comando che il mio corpo  
in cinque pezzi sia da taglià:  
Il primo pezzo al Re d'Italia,  
che si ricordi del suo Alpin.

E co'fu stato alla mattina  
i suoi Alpini sono arivà:  
"Cosa comandelo, sior Capitano  
che i suoi Alpini sono arivà?"

Secondo pezzo al Battaglione,  
che si ricordi del suo Capitan.  
Il terzo pezzo alla mia mamma,  
che si ricordi del suo figlio Alpin.

Il quarto pezzo alla mia bella,  
che si ricordi del suo primo amor.  
L'ultimo pezzo alle montagne,  
che le fioriscano di rose o fiori."

## STATE OF THE FEDERATION

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Since my primary objectives outlined in our bulletin were not in full circulation, I would like to repeat myself and share these objectives that I will focus on during my tenure.

I believe that it is imperative for us to tackle the problem of dues collection. I realize the problem and indeed have been guilty personally of actually forgetting when I had last paid my dues.

In December, Pittsburgh board members met and posted approximately 200 letters informing members that dues shall run January to December and would be payable before the fact in the previous year. We have gotten a very good financial response from this effort and will continue the process every December.

It has been brought to our attention by Ms. Karen Gottier that it is imperative for us to adopt one language in preparing syllabi for dances. I recognize this need and have made it a priority since these dances will have to be catalogued and preserved. If you feel that you have the expertise required and would like to be on the committee deciding what wordage will be applied, please write to us stating your intentions.

We are presently compiling a directory that will list books, cassettes, videos, music, services, and any item pertaining to the realm of Italian folk arts. They will be noted along with names, addresses and telephone numbers of parties willing to sell, lend, or process merely for cost involved. If you have materials or services to offer and wish that they be included in the first edition, please send the information to me, along with conditions under which you wish to transact your offering.

Last, but certainly not least, we are committed to nurturing activities and continued interest of our young people. We are very much focused and aware that, indeed, they are our future. Please inform us as to any thoughts that might contribute to the fulfillment of this goal.

Our organization is very much alive and doing very well, thank you. We fully realize the value of an international federation such as IFAFA and are passionately resolved to achieve our new goals while maintaining the status quo with the viable activities we now possess. We can and will indeed bring these goals to life, but only if you will take the time to lend your help and cooperation.

Sincerely yours in Italian folklore,  
Jane P. Ferro, President

The purpose of the ITALIAN FOLK ART FEDERATION OF AMERICA (IFafa) is to preserve and foster interest in Italian folk art; to research Italian folklore, traditions, customs, costumes, dances, songs, instruments, etc.; to act as a center for gathering, storing, and disseminating the information; and to bring together Italian folk performing groups and other interested individuals.

IFafa is an outgrowth of the Italian Folk Art Project initiated at the Nationalities Service Center (NSC) of Philadelphia in 1977. With the assistance of NSC and the leadership and dedication of Cav. Elba Farabegoli Gurzau, IFAFA was incorporated May 7, 1979, in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as a non-profit cultural and educational organization.

## ITALIAN FESTIVALS

Italian Festivals are sponsored by the Italian-American community and often include food, games, rides, and a grand variety of entertainment. If there are others, write Rita Tonitto, c/o IFAFA.

IOWA, Des Moines :

July 29, 30, 31

515-244-4672; Patricia Civitate

ILLINOIS, Rockford :

August 2, 3, 4

815-877-2888; Gene Fedeli

OHIO, Canton:

June 24, 25, 26

216-477-9607; Frank Mariano

WEST VIRGINIA, Wheeling:

July 22, 23, 24

304-233-7709; Tourist Bureau

WISCONSIN, Milwaukee :

July 15, 16, 17

414-543-5486; Mario De Sanctis

## PUBLICATIONS OF INTEREST TO IFAFA MEMBERS

"The Best of Tradizioni," a collection of articles from past issues of *Tradizioni*. Please send \$3.00, payable to IFAFA, to Jane P. Ferro, 28 Warren Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15205.

Studies in Italian American Folklore, edited by Luisa Del Giudice. For information on ordering, write Utah State University Press, Logan, UT 84322-7800, or call (801) 750-1362.

Black Madonnas: Feminism, Religion, and Politics in Italy, by Lucia Chiavola Birnbaum. Cost is \$35 plus \$3 postage; NY add 8% sales tax. To order, write Northeastern University Press, c/o CUP Services, Box 6525, Ithaca, NY 14851.

I am interested in:

- Membership
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(send for application)
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(non-performing)
  - Individual \$10.00
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