



tradizioni

NEWSLETTER OF THE ITALIAN FOLK ART FEDERATION OF AMERICA

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PRIMAVERA

Just as *primavera* (springtime) is desperately trying to radiate the aromas, sounds and the exuberant life of summer, we at IFAFA greet you with the same enthusiasm. We sincerely hope that your holiday season was full of heartfelt memories and that we all are spending this New Year filled with good health, close family and good friends.

As one good friend to another, however, I must share with you that I am very excited about events that will be taking place in the Italian Folk Art Federation of America, affectionately known as IFAFA.

We will, of course, be "shuffling off to Buffalo" for our annual conference on October 2, 3, 4 and 5, 1997. We remind you that we are elongating our conference this year from three days to four days for those of you who can stretch that vacation time. We always feel as though we just didn't have enough time. Details about hotel, prices and registration are included in this issue of *Tradizioni* and detailed by our 1997 Chairperson, Lucy Cullens.

Another bit of exciting news that I must report is that IFAFA will be going "high tech!" Our representative and creator of *Tradizioni*, Jackie Capurro from San José, CA, is currently preparing an "IFAAFA Web Page." Until quite recently, I would have quizzically asked, "Che cos'è?" as I am sure many of you are voicing this same response. A web page is a document that is designed for computers on the Internet. This web page will be visible world-wide for all interested parties. I cannot tell you of the ramifications of this process. As well as relating information about the formation of IFAFA, it will provide details about member groups, educational information about costumes, music, and dances and, of course, all that is relevant to our field of expertise and interest. To Jackie, we say "hats off and kudos" for giving our Federation this colossal opportunity.

Please wish me God-speed for I am off to Italy on June 12, and will return July 9, 1997. I am taking my grandchild, Adrienne, to show off the country that her Nonna fell in love with many moons ago. Just call me "Zia Mame" or "Auntie Mame".

Allora, ciao e ci parliamo quando ritornerò.

Jane P. Ferro

LA FRACCHIE by Barbara Grieco

Among Italians, some common traits are competitiveness and creativity. Add to this mix an uncanny ability to solve problems in a truly ingenious manner. A tradition that would illustrate this unusual combination was related to me by my friend Michael.

Such a tradition, he told me, is perpetuated in his hometown of San Marco, Lami, called *La Fracchie*. Upon being questioned for more details, he related that *La Fracchie* goes back hundreds of years, but that, in our modern-day society, this unusual happening still attracts an international audience. A yearly event, *La Fracchie* takes place on Holy Thursday night and consists of a parade of hollowed-out tree trunks filled with wood. The wood in the trunk is ignited. The trunk is then tied to a pole by a heavy chain so that it can be pulled down the main street. There can be as many as twenty flaming trees in one procession.

The more creative competitors build small churches on the trunk which are illuminated by the fire within. Even small boys gather sticks and pull their own little

fires. The purpose is to symbolize the illuminating of a path for the Virgin Mary as she was looking for the lost Jesus.

As the centuries passed, the competitive urge intensified. Soon, the bearers of the trees were given numbers. Along with the numbers came judges. And before you knew it, prizes were awarded for the biggest fire, the most decorative, etc. Usually, only the wealthy could afford to hire men to cut the tree, prepare it, buy the wood, and drag it.

In the early 1950s, Michael and his friends were going to emigrate to Canada. Being Italian, even before they left, they started to feel nostalgic for their hometown and its traditions. To ease the pain of parting, they decided to enter *La Fracchie*.

Being poor, they could fulfill their desire by an abundant amount of ingenuity. First, they had to get permission from the mayor to cut down a tree from the forest. Done. They picked a tree not too far in so they could drag it to the road. Luckily, they had a friend with a truck who took it back to town.

Problem: where could they keep it? No one in their small town had huge plots of land as we do, so they finally agreed that the only available space was at the far end of the schoolyard. They got permission to proceed with preparations there. After work, they happily trimmed the branches and hollowed out their prize tree trunk.

Now, the biggest hurdle was how could they obtain wood for the fire? Most people simply bought it. But, being poor, they could not. Ingenuity came into play. They would simply knock on people's doors and ask for wood for *St. Joseph's Fire*. Most people were poor themselves, but managed to spare a piece or two. After all, they rationalized, it was for a good cause: the poor against the rich, so to speak.

As testimony to the generosity of the poor, Michael and his friends got so much wood that they sold the excess! However, their efforts were not in vain. With this one-and-only effort, and equipped with a burning desire to win, they succeeded in garnering first prize!

IL SALTARELLO ABRUZZESE



This piece is to be played three times through.

IFAFA ON-LINE!

As Jane mentioned in her President's message, this summer I will create a Web Page for IFAFA, placing us strategically in the fast lane of the Information Highway. In addition to information about IFAFA, we'd also like to include information about the current IFAFA member groups, but not without your permission.

If your group is currently paid-up, and you'd like information about your group included on the IFAFA Web Page, please send pertinent information to me at the address below, including the name of your group, a contact name, address, and phone number, a brief resumé, your group's logo, and/or a clear photo of your group in action.

For those of you who have already completed and returned the questionnaire that was mailed to you (as mentioned in the last issue of *Tradizioni*), you don't need to duplicate the information you've already sent me, but do write or call me to give me your permission and to let me know how much information you would like to have included on the Web Page. *Mille grazie!*

Jackie Capurro (408) 274-3764

2512 Glen Hastings Court San José, CA 95148

IL SALTARELLO ABRUZZESE

Here are the words to the music, if you are lucky enough to have someone in your group who can sing in the Abruzzese dialect. JPF

Sone luriganette
Nu balle pazziaelle
Na bella saltarella
Che l'alme fa tremà
Tiri, tirà, tiri, tirà

Treme pi l'aria doce
Li note spinsierate
Feste d'innammurate
Chi mo n'è po' rvascià
Tiri, tirà, tiri, tirà

A balle campagnole
Sebbene vicchiarelle
Tu sci come na stelle
Che n'po' muri ma' ma
Tiri, tirà, tiri, tirà

Jamme linucce
Passame a fianche
Sa mana bianche
Falla scruccà

(Quattro battute di mano)

Votete tnrone
Guardeme mbacce
Damme su vracce
Nen te sbaglià

(Quattro battute di mano)

Damme su vracce
Nen te sbaglià
Siente lu sone
Tirà, tirà

SALTARELLO ABRUZZESE

This dance was arranged by Rose Grieco from figures taught by Mimi Amato of Rome, Italy.

FORMATION:

Men and Ladies are in two lines, facing each other.

INTRO: After 2 measures of music (Men with arms at side, Ladies holding skirts), bow first to R, then to L, and to each other. Leader carries tambourine.

STEP 1: Moving to R, leap on R foot, closing behind instep with L (Couple) 3 times, then pivot on R 3 times CW and hold. Repeat all starting L.

CHORUS:

MEN: *Saltarello* step, (leap on R with L pointed behind instep, leap on L with R pointed behind instep) 14 times, 4 claps.

Move towards partner, link R arms, turning CW, (this takes 4 steps) then turn back into place with 4 steps, end with 4 claps.

Repeat by linking L arms, turning and back into place. [NO CLAPS]

LADIES: While Men do *Saltarello* step, Lady does "Grembiule" with a brushing step with R while hopping on L. She fluffs her apron (grembiule) 14 times, then 4 claps. This is done in place while facing partners. She moves towards partner for remainder of CHORUS, as described above.

-- REPEAT INTRO --

STEP 2:

MEN: Raise R knee, clap under it, repeat with L, and 2 more times. (6 counts).

LADIES: Arms high, point R foot 2 times, then L and repeat 2 more times. PARTNERS come towards each other, arms low at sides, with R shoulders touching, kicking forward, move around CW (11 counts) and back into place.

-- REPEAT CHORUS --

-- REPEAT INTRO --

STEP 3: Stamp R, brush L moving to R. 6 counts pivot CW 3 times. Repeat all to L. (Men and Ladies are moving in opposite directions.)

CHORUS: On last 4 counts, make final turn CCW, and pose, looking over R shoulder at partner, with L arm circling overhead, and R arm down.

Italy on the InterNet

A variety of interesting websites can now be accessed on the World-Wide Web. Here is a list of some related URLs. Please keep in mind that websites change, sometimes daily. The following websites were in existence at the time this newsletter went to press.

Italian Music/Folk Music:

<http://www.cilea.it/music/entrance.htm>

<http://chpc06.ch.unito.it/~ravera/folk.html>

http://ounworld.compuserve.com/homepages/Chuck_Morse/WFMA.htm

<http://www.inrete.it/robidroli>

<http://www.dug.edu/Tamburitans/>

The Embassy of Italy homepage:

<http://www.italyemb.nw.dc.us/italy/>

Istituto Italiano di Cultura:

<http://www.best.com/~amedeo/index.html>

Italian Genealogical Information:

<http://netcom.com/~larosaf>

<http://www.xs4all.nl/~tardio/index.html>

<http://www.phoenix.net/~joe/>

<http://www.cimorelli.com/pehome.htm>

Info about books published in Italy/in Italian:

<http://www.libreria.it/>

<http://www.alice.it>

Italy on the Net/Directory of Italian Resources:

pi.cnr.it/NIR-IT

<http://italia.hum.utah.edu/doc/risorse.html>

<http://www.nis.garr.it/www-dir/www-dir.html>

<http://www.doit.it/cgi/teroldi/stat.pl>

<http://www.cilea.it/WWW-map>

<http://www.stelnet.com/>

<http://www.mi.cnr.it/WOI>

<http://www.lainet.com/~initaly>

<http://www.nettuno.it/electric-italy/index.html>

Accordions:

<http://chpc06.ch.unito.it/~ravera/accordion.html>

Ghironda/Hurdy-Gurdy:

<http://chpc06.ch.unito.it/~ravera/ghironda.html>

Gruppo folclorico "Canterini di Serrastretta":

http://www.gol.it/gfes/gru_ital.htm

Gruppo folclorico "I Bej":

<http://www.bcs.it/bej/welcome.html>

Carnevale Massafrese:

<http://www.194.20.210.41/Carnevale/home.htm>



If you are familiar with additional websites that may be of interest to italo-philis, please contact me at 408-274-3764, or send them to my e-mail address: « jackie_capurro@wvmccd.cc.ca.us ». We'll publish them in a future issue of *Tradizioni*. JSC

MEET OUR ITALIAN FOLK TROUPE

"Il Trattenimento Italiano" of Des Moines, Iowa

Il Trattenimento Italiano had its start in 1959, when Patricia Civitate learned *La Tarantella Napoletana* as a youngster. When Patricia became a Girl Scout Troop Leader, she taught the dance to her troop of girls who represented Italy at various scouting events, whenever international cultures were being presented. In the early 1970s, Pat had a group of eight to ten children who wanted to dance, but *La Tarantella Napoletana* was the only Italian folk dance she knew.

In 1980, Patricia felt that there had to be more information available about Italian folk dances. She tried writing to Italian-American magazines but received no assistance. Shortly thereafter, she learned about IFAFA in a conversation with Rita Tonitto. Pat attended the 1981 IFAFA Conference in New Jersey and just happened to share a room with Elba Farabegoli Gurzau. In 1983 she traveled with IFAFA to Italy where she videotaped several dances.

Soon, her group's repertoire grew. In a few years, at an IFAFA Conference in Philadelphia, PA, Pat taught a workshop on teaching Italian dances to children. Rita Tonitto states that Pat's presentation was such an inspiration to many of the adult dancers present that some adult groups returned to their cities and began forming children's groups. In 1988, *Il Trattenimento Italiano* hosted the IFAFA Conference in Des Moines.

The group now functions under the auspices of the Italian American Cultural Center in Des Moines, but the dance group itself remains self-governed, under Pat's leadership. As members of their Cultural Center, they enjoy the privileges of state and federal tax exemption.

The adult group of *Il Trattenimento Italiano* currently consists of 6 men and 8 women. Their *Ragazzi* group is made up of 12 children. New members are recruited through invitations in their newsletter and through personal contact. The costumes worn during performances represent various regions of Italy; several members have more than one costume and often change during the course of a performance. The repertoire of *Il Trattenimento Italiano* includes folk dances, folk tales, and historical background narration. Information on dances and costumes has been gleaned from Elba Gurzau's book, at IFAFA conferences, and at other folk dance classes. Additional knowledge, of both dances and costumes, has been passed down through family history, or has been researched during travels in Italy.

Pat Civitate states that their group has had so many interesting experiences over the years that it is hard to know where to begin! One year, *Il Trattenimento Italiano* was invited to participate in IRONWORLD USA in Hibbing, MN. They had prepared a program of dances and a fashion show of costumes that would mean three or four changes of clothing. Moments before they were to perform in a small tent, and after all the costumes, instruments, and props had been laid out, it began to rain. The group was asked to pack up their things and move to a big amphitheater. They loaded everything onto golf-cart-style vehicles, ran to the new area, laid out their things again, and prepared for their program. The group had never danced on such an enormous stage. They had completed their entrance dance and began their fashion show of costumes and instruments. The dancers were so overwhelmed by the size of the stage and by the audience that the first young lady in the fashion show just turned and walked off the stage.

During this same show, the group was performing *La Tarantella Allegra*. One of the young men had worn thin stockings, and, during the first high kick, his shoe flew off and landed upstage. His partner was alert, however, and, as she did the runs around him, she slid his shoe back to him. Neither one of them missed a beat!

Another time, they were performing for their Bishop's 75th birthday. They were dancing *Latino d'Amore*, and, before the bride even started, the ribbon of one of the young ladies came untied. She simply stepped back, ribbon in hand, and no one ever knew that it had broken.

Patricia tries to emphasize to her dancers, especially to the children, the importance of self-discipline and professionalism. In her own words, "We have learned through the years that, if something unexpected happens, like the ribbon coming untied, or the pompons on the trousers of two dancers getting entangled, or the music suddenly being overcome by the blasting of a train whistle in the background, don't make an issue of it. Don't make any faces, don't make remarks to your partner, or other dancers. Just keep on going like nothing is happening, in some cases, like it is a part of the dance."

This happened once when the *Ragazzi* group was dancing. They were doing *La Raspa*, and, when the children were to change partners, they found two girls were dancing together and their boy partners were also dancing together. They were so young that they didn't even realize what had happened but they kept right on dancing. Patricia says, "It was a great opportunity for me to congratulate them on being professional."

The growth of the group from children to adults is a great source of pride for Patricia; several of the "children" who were members of the fledgling group in the 1970s are still dancing with the group. But growth also brings change, and three of the dancers will be unavailable for this fall's *Festa Italiana* because they will become new parents by the end of the summer!

IFAFA extends its congratulations to the new parents, and especially to Pat Civitate and *Il Trattenimento Italiano* for the longevity of their group!

IFAFA CONFERENCE -- OCTOBER 2, 3, 4, AND 5, 1997

by Lucy Cullens

As this year's conference chairperson, I am very pleased to submit the following proposed itinerary. We are very excited to have the opportunity to host this annual event, and we know that you will share our enthusiasm when you read of the following planned activities.

JUDY MAZZIOTTI, teacher of Italian for more than 25 years, will provide a Lecture/Presentation on teaching and advocating for Italian Language instruction in the Elementary and Middle Schools.

ALESSANDRA BELLONI, expert percussionist and dancer, will give workshops on those favorite Italian dances as well as teaching us all how to properly play our tambourines.

THE CORO ALPINO OF BUFFALO, singers and musicians of folk music, will offer instruction from experts in music, lyrics and pronunciation. Songs from Sicily to the Alps. We will include some contemporary Alpine Songs.

FRANCA PAGLIAROLI, News Producer for MS/NBC, will give an insider's point of view of media stereotypes. She has worked as a producer/researcher for familiar documentaries for *Arts and Entertainment* and *Fox TV*.

MARGE INGRAO has been teaching "pure and simple and authentic Italian cooking" since long before it was fashionable. You will love her easy and understandable recipes. No adapting of recipes here.

SECONDO CASAROTTO, CS (Rev.), will speak on the topics: "Famous and Less Famous Women in History" and "Treasuring our Past and Facing New Challenges."

OTTO BRUNO, Adetto Publishers (Rochester, New York), will bring us up-to-date with the best and latest publications by leading Italian-American writers.

GALA BANQUET (Saturday Night): Wear your traditional Italian costume or other finery for this spectacular event. Beautiful costumes, regional banners, a great dinner, and, of course ... music and dancing. This evening we will also honor an outstanding leader in the Italian-American Community locally and nationally.

There is much more that we will be sharing later, but we urge you to make plans now to attend.

The conference will take place at the Buffalo, NY, Hilton. Hotel Reservations should be made before September 1, 1997. Phone the Buffalo Hilton at (716) 845-5100 or at 1-800-HILTONS. The hotel rates for the conference are:

Single (1 person, 1 bed) \$79.00

Triple (3 people, 2 beds) \$95.00

Double (2 people, 1 bed) \$85.00

Quad (4 people, 2 beds) \$95.00



Please cut your registration form here, and mail it to:

Mrs. Lucy Cullens, 9 Tacom Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14216
(telephone: 716-875-4127)

Include your check (made out to IFAFA). List one participant per form, or attach a list of those attending.

Name _____ Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Group Name _____ Director/Officer _____

Indicate number of tickets needed in each category, and carry out dollar amount:

IFAFA Member	\$85.00	_____	\$ _____
IFAFA Member/Student (up to high school age)	\$65.00	_____	\$ _____
Non-Member	\$110.00	_____	\$ _____
Late registration (after September 17, 1997)	\$125.00	_____	\$ _____
Festa Folcloristica Banquet Only (Saturday evening)	\$30.00	_____	\$ _____

Regional Italian Folk Costumes



This is the second of a series of descriptions of folk costumes taken from the book, now out of print, Il Costume popolare in Italia, by Emma Calderini, published by Sperling & Kupfer, Milano. For this issue, to give the male dancers an equal opportunity, I have chosen a man's costume from the region of Lombardia.

Please remember that, if the name of the color appears [in brackets], it means that I have inserted the color that was used in the colorplate, and it may be that the color can be changed to the wearer's liking. However, when the original description includes the color of the item of clothing, it would be best to use that color.

A Mountaineer from near Sondrio, Lombardia

Stiff [black] felt hat (non-pliable brim). Straight-cut waistcoat/ vest, of red wool outlined with green ribbon. [Black] knee-pants of half-wool/half-cotton (linsey-woolsey). Woolen or cotton cable-knit stockings. Leather hob-nailed shoes.

[The book only provides this brief description of this costume, but here are my additional observations from the color-plate: The vest buttons are gold "balls" hanging from green ribbons or laces. The cummerbund is striped in shades of red, pink, and yellow on black. The shirt is white, I assume cotton or muslin. The trims on both the hat and the ties holding up his socks are red and green braided trim. And, by the way, he's carrying an umbrella, not a gun or a bottle of wine!] JSC

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.

I am interested in:

☐ Membership

- ☐ Performing Folk Group \$25.00
(send for application)
- ☐ Supporting Organization \$25.00
(non-performing)
- ☐ Individual \$10.00
- ☐ Student/Senior Citizen \$5.00

☐ Contributing to the work of IFAFA
\$ _____

Name:
Address:
City:
State/Zip:
Phone:

Contributions are tax deductible.
Make checks payable to "IFAFA"
c/o N.S.C.
1300 Spruce Street
Philadelphia, PA 19107

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