



tradizioni

NEWSLETTER OF THE ITALIAN FOLK ART FEDERATION OF AMERICA

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

Everyone have a great summer and rest up for the super time we are going to have in Pittsburgh in October. More info inside. With your participation, we will make this conference the greatest. From our listing on the internet, we are receiving many inquires about IFafa, and some new members have joined.

IFafa has decided to print the third edition of Elba's book, *Folk Dances, Costumes, and Customs of Italy*; copies will be ready soon.

Recently I purchased a book called *Pani & Fili: Breads and Threads of Italy* by Vima deMarchi Micheli and Dolph Gotelli. Ms. Micheli shows her readers the importance of Italian needlearts and the time spent in making elaborate breads for feast days in Italy. We don't know which came first: did the bakers copy the lacemakers or vice versa? This book is a must for anyone decorating a St. Joseph's table. Ms. Micheli has agreed to let IFafa buy and sell some of her books at a profit. Write to IFafa if interested in purchasing a copy.

See you in October!!

*Yours in Italian folklore,
Anna Marie Fiori*

REVIEW OF THE 1999 IFafa CONFERENCE IN MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN

by Meri DeLorenzo Howard

I attended last year's IFafa Conference in Milwaukee and had a wonderful time meeting people from around the United States who share my passion for Italian folk music and dancing. Although I was the only person present from Los Angeles, I met people from New Jersey; Virginia; Des Moines, Iowa; San Jose, San Francisco, and Sacramento, California; Dallas, Texas; Rockford, Illinois; Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Canton, Ohio; and, of course, the host group from Milwaukee.

Milwaukee has an active Italian community with a large Italian Community Center. Some of us went on a tour of the community center which is huge. It has two large ballrooms, a restaurant that is open to the public every day, and an indoor bocce court. They made a nice lunch for us, and some of us played bocce. As a side note, the Italian community in Milwaukee holds a Festa Italiana every year in July and it usually raises about \$500,000 for the center in 4 days.

The organizer for the event was Linda DeSanctis along with her sisters Suzie and Lisa and brother Mark. They were helped enormously by the Italian Dance Group of Milwaukee of which they take part. Its president is Talia Salamone. The DeSanctis children come from a long history of Italian folk dancing since their father, Mario, taught Italian folk dancing and they grew up with the tradition. The Italian Dance Group of Milwaukee itself has been in existence for approximately 55 years.

At the conference, there were workshops on dance steps, singing, costume design, Italian language, cooking, palm weaving, *il ceppo* (the Italian Christmas tree), websites, and Italian history. We had time for recreational dancing, partying and eating good food.

At the Saturday night Festa Folcloristica, we were served a wonderful banquet. Those who had them came in costume. *Il Quartiere Italiano* from San Jose, California, and the *Italian Dance Group of Milwaukee* performed dances. *I Gagliardi Italiani* from Canton, Ohio, sang, and several of us sang a medley of Italian folk songs in honor of Jane P. Ferro, an inspirational member of IFafa who passed away in 1998. We were serenaded by the *Sicilian Serenaders* and danced the night away to the band, *La Nuova Immagine*.

IFafa will be meeting again this year in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in October. Blaise Panizzi and *I Campagnoli* are hosting the event. Let's keep the momentum of Italian folklore going. I look forward to seeing all of you there.

MEET OUR ITALIAN FOLK TROUPE

Amici Italiani, Rockford, Illinois

Amici Italiani (Italian Friends), established in 1985 by Shirley Martignoni Fedeli, gathers Italian-Americans of all ages and backgrounds to learn and share the rich tradition of Italian Folk Dance. The main goals of *Amici Italiani* are to preserve and share the Italian culture by educating and entertaining audiences with the color and warmth of the rich Italian heritage of its members.

Detail to authenticity is maintained with Rosie Scalise Wolford as Director and Bea Giammarese Ricotta as Dance Instructor. Dances performed are researched through IFAFA, in which *Amici Italiani* has active membership. These dances, including various Quadriglias, Saltarellos, Mazurcas, Tarantellas, and Codigliones, are taught to *Amici Italiani* dancers by Bea Giammarese Ricotta.

In November, 1995, *Amici Italiani* hosted the national Italian Folk Art Federation of America conference that called members from all quadrants of the United States: California, Texas, Wisconsin, Iowa, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Florida. It was one of the largest conventions gathered. Many lectures, presentations, and dance demonstrations educated IFAFA members. An award was given to *Amici Italiani* for its outstanding services.

A few years ago, *Amici Italiani* established a children's troupe. The children range in age from 8 to 12 years. They have danced at Festa Italiana; the Children's Museum; the Discovery Center; First Night; and other events throughout our city.

Amici Italiani has performed for Rockford's On the Waterfront Festival; Beattie Is Festival; Fourth of July Celebrations; Ethnic Heritage Museum; Rockford Museum; Festa Italiana; Kinderconcert with the Rockford Symphony; River Fest in Beloit, WI; the Como Inn in Chicago, IL; and also in Merrillville, IN, and Des Moines, IA. The troupe has also performed at various church festivals, civic events, nursing homes, schools, wedding celebrations, and other private parties. The latest honors of the troupe include representing Italy in the 1994 Soccer World Cup Opening Ceremonies at Soldier Field in Chicago.

DES MOINES DANCE TROUPE REJOICEFUL OVER RECOVERY OF YOUNG MEMBER

On April 1, 2000, 5-year-old Leah Romeo, a member of the Des Moines *Il Trattenimento Italiano* dance troupe, was run over by a large sports vehicle. Her first two nights were extremely critical - no broken bones but severe internal bleeding and her spleen had to be removed. One lung was collapsed and the other had just a very small area open. After many prayers by her family and friends AND members of IFAFA, the miracle happened. She spent about 10 days in intensive care and another week or so in the hospital. On April 26, 2000, she joined the group in dancing in downtown Des Moines for the Catholic Diocese Jubilee Celebration. Yes, it is truly a miracle. She is so tiny but, knowing Leah and how feisty

she is, God knew he had to leave her around for a while to keep all of us on our toes.

On Sunday, May 7th, the folk dancers of the group held a dance-a-thon, both in celebration and to help with the burden of outstanding medical bills. Another unbelievable event. The temperature was about 85 degrees, and the parking lot of the Cultural Center was extremely hot, but, with lots of chocolate chip cookies and gallons of water, the children and adults were able to make it through the afternoon AND brought in around \$1,400. I even danced, bad knees and all. What a group! No wonder I am so very very proud of them! --- Mrs. "C" (*Patricia Civitate*)

ETHNOGRAPHIC MUSEUMS IN ITALY

In this issue, we continue with a listing of Italy's "ethnographic" museums which may contain folk materials for research purposes. Please feel free to send in any additions or corrections that you discover in your travels.

In the region of **Sicilia**, you may want to visit one of these museums of folk traditions:

- Museo etnologico, 95041 CALTAGIRONE (Catania)
- Servizio Museografico, Università degli Studi, piazza Marina 90133 PALERMO
- Museo etnografico siciliano «G. Pitré», Parco della Favorita 90100 PALERMO 091 - 465300
- Museo Internazionale delle marionette, via Dante, 322 90141 PALERMO
- Museo Etnografico Siciliano Pitre' Palazzina Cinese, via Duca degli Abruzzi 90100 PALERMO 091-6711060
- Museo Ibleo delle arti e tradizioni popolari, via Merce' 97015 MODICA (Ragusa) 0932 - 945081
- Casa museo regionale Antonino Uccello, piazza del Popolo 96010 PALAZZOLO ACREIDE (Siracusa) 0931 - 881499
- Museo etno-antropologico della Valle del Belice, via le Vespri Siciliani 91024 GIBELLINA (Trapani) 0924 - 67877
- Museo della Civiltà Contadina, 93010 MILENA (Caltanissetta)

In **Liguria**, the following museums may provide some good research material:

- Museo di Storia e Cultura Contadina, Loc. Rivarolo, salita al Garbo, 49 16166 GENOVA
- Museo etnografico e della stregoneria, 18010 TRIORA (Genova)
- Museo contadino della Val Trebbia, piazza del Municipio 16028 ROVEGNO (Genova)
- Museo storico etnografico della Valle Scrivia, San Bartolomeo di Vallecaldà 16010 SAVIGNONE (Genova)
- Museo etnografico del Ponente Ligure, 18010 CERVO LIGURE (Imperia) 0183-408197
- Museo Etnografico e della Stregoneria, corso Italia, 3 18010 TRIORA (Imperia) 0184 - 94089
- Esposizione permanente per un Museo Contadino, Fraz. Cassego c/o Scuola Elementare 19028 VARESE LIGURE (La Spezia)
- Museo della Storia, Cultura e delle Tradizioni locali della Val Varatella, Palazzo del Comune Vecchio, via G.B. Parodi 17020 TOIRANO (Savona)

IFafa CONFERENCE -- OCTOBER 20, 21, AND 22, 2000

Radisson Hotel Greentree
101 Marriott Drive, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
412-922-8400

Once again we are planning an informative, fun and exciting conference in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. It will take place at the Radisson Hotel Greentree. Hotel reservations should be made before September 15, 2000. The hotel rate for the conference is \$79 per night, per room, for one to four people. Please contact the hotel directly for your room reservation(s).

Special airfare rates are being offered to conference participants on US Airways. You may take advantage of this discount by calling Lisa Vollberg (a member of *I Campagnoli*) at 1-800-451-4488 ext. 4093. Lisa can also help you with room reservations at the Radisson.

Tentative Program of Activities

Dance Workshops

Blaise Panizzi (Assistant Director/Choreographer: *I Campagnoli*, Pittsburgh, PA) Dances to be announced.
Federica Calvino Prina (Genova, Italy) A number of dances will be presented by Federica. She has an extensive repertoire of dances from all regions of Italy, and we will choose some exciting ones to be taught at the conference.

Other Activities

Annual Meeting will be held Friday evening.

Friday Evening Reception - Hosted by *I Campagnoli*. In addition, Jackie Capurro and members of *Il Quartiere Italiano* will take time after our Friday evening meeting to get everyone into the spirit of the weekend, presenting a couple of mixer dances for all to enjoy.

Song Workshops - Led by: Mary Ferro Salopik. Old favorites will be reviewed and some new numbers will be taught.

The History of Italian Music - Presenter: Professor Lorenzo Malfatti, world-renowned opera singer and voice teacher with possibly the largest Italian music collection.

St. Joseph Bread/Fig Cookies - Presenter: Gene Fedeli

Palm-Weaving, Italian Language Class, Regional Study (Tuscany) and other interesting presentations will be available.

Festa Folcloristica Banquet (Saturday Night) Beautiful costumes, regional banners, a great dinner, and, of course ... music and dancing.



Please cut your registration form here (or photocopy it), and mail it to:

Blaise Panizzi, 116 North Vireo Drive, McKees Rocks, PA 15136
Email: bpanizzi@post-gazette.com

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 _____

The deadline for conference reservations is September 15, 2000. The deadline for reservations for the Festa only is October 6, 2000. Please indicate the number of tickets needed in each category, and carry out the dollar amount:

Entire Conference:			
IFafa Member (adults)	\$85	_____	\$ _____
IFafa Member (students through high school age)	\$65	_____	\$ _____
Non-Member	\$95	_____	\$ _____
Saturday Workshops Only	\$40	_____	\$ _____
Festa Folcloristica Banquet Only (Saturday night)	\$40	_____	\$ _____
Saturday Workshops and Festa Folcloristica	\$70	_____	\$ _____
	TOTAL ENCLOSED		\$ _____

A BIT OF THE ABRUZZO REGION

ABRUZZESE CHILD'S VERSE

Parents and grandparents in the Abruzzi region have a traditional little verse which is recited while their child (or grandchild) sits on their knee. While reciting the rhyme, the parent gently caresses the child's face guiding the child's own little hands with his/her own. At the end, when they reach *frusta, frusta*, the child is "slapped" **very gently** on both cheeks. Children in the Abruzzo love this as an American child might enjoy *This Little Piggy Went to Market!*

Here is the verse in standard Italian and in English:

Micio Micio Gatto, Che ti mangiasti sera? Pane e formaggio. Micio Micio Gatto, Frusta, frusta*, Che non è vero!	Kitty Kitty Cat, What did you eat last night? Bread and cheese. Kitty Kitty Cat, Slap, slap, 'Cause it's not true!
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**Frustare* actually means *to whip* which may seem extreme here, but the child receives only a gentle pat!

WEBSITES ABOUT THE ABRUZZO REGION

If you are of Abruzzese heritage, or if you're interested in learning more about this beautiful, but often-neglected region, check out the following websites. At «<http://abruzzo2000.com>», you can sign up to be on a mail list where you can read about a variety of topics related to the Abruzzo region, or you can contribute your own Abruzzesi family traditions, stories, or recipes. Subscribing to their mail list is free. Another site, called the "The Wonderous (sic) World of Abruzzo, Italy," can be found at «<http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Estates/4152/abruzzo.htm>».

IN MEMORY OF EMIGRANTS

A plaque in memory of emigrants is found on a wall of Villa Di Costanzo in Paganica, in the Abruzzo. It speaks to all of us who left Italy or who are descended from those who left Italy, and to our families who remain in Italy.

Lasciarono la famiglia, la casa, la Terra natia, con la speranza di farvi ritorno un giorno liberi dal bisogno che li aveva costretti a partire. Non sono più tornati, ma non li abbiamo dimenticati.	They left family, home, native Land in the hope that they would return one day free from the need that obliged them to leave. They never returned, but we have not forgotten them.
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ITALIAN-AMERICAN MASTER STONE CARVERS

The Stone Carvers: Master Craftsmen of Washington National Cathedral was released in November, 1999, by the Smithsonian Institute Press. Author Marjorie Hunt provides an intimate look at how two Italian-American master stone carvers, Roger Morigi and Vincent Palumbo, have contributed to America's artistic and cultural heritage. The two men have spent decades creating sculptural works that embellish the Cathedral. The book also records the stone-carving process, the preferred tools for different stages of carving, and the techniques used to create the effects of light and shadow. The cost is \$27.95 (plus \$4.50 postage and handling). To order, call 1-800-782-4612, or check your local bookstore.

AIHA RELOCATES

The American Italian Heritage Association (AIHA) has relocated their international headquarters to Albany, New York. The AIHA has members in 48 states and across the globe who receive a bi-monthly newsletter in English, with news, traditions, customs, culture, and history. The AIHA also hopes to open a national Italian American Museum in Albany similar to the one in Utica, New York, which closed in 1985. For more information, contact long-time IFAFA supporter Prof./Cav. Philip J. DiNovo, AIHA President, at 518-435-0591.

NEW CD OF ITALIAN TARANTATA

Alessandra Belloni, who presented authentic Italian dances at our 1997 IFAFA Conference in Buffalo, NY, has recently released a new CD, entitled *Tarantata: Dance of the Ancient Spider*.

This CD allows you to immerse yourself in the mystical-erotic trance rituals, love laments, and haunting prayer songs of southern Italy. Also performing on the CD are John LaBarbera, Glen Velez, Steve Gorn, Charlie Giordano, and Joe Deninzon.

The CD is available from *Sounds True* for \$16.98 plus shipping and handling. Call 1-800-333-9185, or visit the website at «www.soundstrue.com».

"GROWING UP ITALIAN" POSTERS

Joe Federici has produced the poem, *The Joy of Growing up Italian*, as an 18" x 26" laminated poster. For more information or for ordering, please e-mail «littleguy3@webtv.net», call (203) 894-1815, or write, FIRST STEP GROUP, Joe Federici, One Winterberry Lane, Ridgefield, CT 06877.

NIAF BOOK: ITALIANS IN AMERICA

The National Italian American Foundation will soon release "Italians in America," a lavishly-illustrated coffee table book, edited by Gay Talese, celebrating the well-known and little-known contributions of Italian Americans in science, business, medicine, politics, entertainment, education, and much more.

There are a variety of purchasing options for individuals and for groups who wish to use the book as a fund-raiser. For information, contact Sandro Diani or Vita Corallo Rowe at 212-989-8700.

REGIONAL ITALIAN FOLK COSTUMES

From the book, now out of print, Il Costume popolare in Italia, by Emma Calderini, published by Sperling & Kupfer, Milano. In this issue, we highlight two costumes from the island region of Sardegna.



Launeddas Player of Iglesias, Sardegna

Shirt of homespun cloth, with soft collar turned down. The wide sleeves are gathered and buttoned at the wrist. Over the shirt, a collarless, sleeveless vest of blue woolen cloth with silver buttons. Over the vest, a close-fitting woolen jacket, with rather straight sleeves, with or without turned-back blue cuffs over which is worn a sleeveless vest-coat made up of four sheepskins. The trousers, with wide bell-bottom pant legs, of black *orbace*, are held at the waist by a belt of silk. The legs are covered with heavy knee-length socks of *sayale*. Shoes of thick leather. The hair is covered with a cap of black silk, over which he wears a stocking cap of black *orbace*.



A Woman of Desulo, Sardegna, In Everyday Dress

The ankle-length blouse of white fabric is gathered at the neck, held by two buttons of gold or silver filigree. The shoulders may or may not be hand-embroidered, and are adorned with many thin pleats along the seam of the sleeves, giving them great fullness; the sleeves close at the wrist with a thin cord. The short, sleeveless vest is of *scarlatto*, decorated with strips of silk and various stitches of colored embroidery. It attaches in the front by means of a hook and eye closure, usually of silver. The skirt of red *orbace*, which is dyed black when in mourning, is of all one piece, made in a bell shape, very close-fitting at the hip. At the top it is tied at the waist with blue ribbons, and at the bottom it is decorated with a wide stripe of *scarlatto*, with a wide blue ribbon (about 10 centimeters wide), sewn onto the skirt with embroidery stitches of colored silk. The apron of red *orbace*, rectangular in form, is flat and smooth, hemmed with blue ribbon attached with embroidery of yellow silk, with ribbons applied at the corners ending with small silk tassels. Across the center, horizontally, blue ribbon is also applied, tacked down with embroidery of colored silk. The apron closes in the back at the waistline by means of a small chain and a hook. Over the vest can be worn a jacket with sleeves of red *scarlatto*, decorated with blue ribbons and embroidered; it is open in front with no buttons of any sort. The embroidery is in the colors of yellow, lemon, and green. The cap of red *scarlatto* is decorated with a beautiful blue ribbon, worked with silk embroidery in the same colors as the dress embroidery and is held on with two silk ribbons that are tied under the chin. Over all this, during winter and in any case when going out, is usually added a black hooded cloak, tied with ribbons and embroidered in black. The shoes are of leather, usually black, hand-sewn.

note about the fabric, from Dr. Sabina Magliocco, California State University, Northridge: Orbace is a thick woollen cloth woven from the wool of indigenous Sardinian sheep and used to make the pleated skirts women used to wear. It's almost like a thick felt, because, after being woven, the fabric was also fulled (soaked in hot water) to make it shrink. Scarlatto can simply be used to refer to any red fabric, regardless of its composition, although most commonly this would have been wool. Sayale is a linen and wool blend with a twill weave which was used to make a number of wardrobe items.

AN ENTOMOLOGICAL HISTORY OF THE TARANTELLA

[Editor's Note: This article was originally published on the Internet by the Buffalo Museum of Science in February, 1997, as an informational item for a traveling exhibition about spiders. It was submitted for Tradizioni by Paul Torna of Ballerini e Voci d'Italia, Philadelphia.]

Music aficionados may know a lively Italian folk dance called the *tarantella*. It is characterized by rapid movements, foot tapping, and, on the woman's part, exaggerated flouncing of petticoats.

The *tarantella* has an interesting history with an entomological aspect that carries a lesson about the assignment of responsibility.

First recorded in the mid-14th century, the dance derives its name from the southern Italian town of Taranto. It originated as a manic response of field workers to the bite of a spider whose name is also related to Taranto — the tarantula. Those bitten suffered severe pain, muscle spasms, vomiting and delirium; some even died. No drugs were available to counteract the venom, and sweating associated with the dance gyrations may have been thought to flush it from the dancers' bodies. Indeed, they would continue for hours and even days. So common was the dancing that musicians patrolled the fields in expectation of being hired to play for the afflicted.

This supposed cure remained widespread for over 300 years and is even said to survive today in remote rural areas of Mediterranean countries. At the height of its popularity, it was witnessed by many well-known observers, including the British diarist, Samuel Pepys, and the British playwright, Oliver Goldsmith. In an act that hardly reflects to his credit, Goldsmith forced one of his servants to be bitten in order to study the effects. Fortunately for the butler, he only suffered minor swelling around the wound.

The accumulation of similar evidence by regional doctors eventually led to condemnation of the dancers. That was a time when religious fervor had led to a general suppression of

any kind of revelry, and the dancing certainly provided an excuse to disregard those restrictions. When he, too, found that the tarantula's bite had little effect, a 17th-century Italian physician wrote that the *tarantella* was the feigned activity of malingerers, wanton young women and half-wits, many of whom only pretended to be bitten in order to dance and vent their frustrations. Today's psychologists might more kindly describe it as a kind of mass hysteria.

At any rate, with the increasing condemnation of the practice, the mania declined. Even the name 'tarantula' was later assigned to species of another spider sub-order that includes the tarantula of our American Southwest. The Italian spider is considered today to be related to our harmless wolf spiders. So much for priority.

But we have not quite reached the end of our story. Modern entomologists returning to those southern Italian fields discovered an abundant population of 'malmignattes,' tiny and equally venomous relatives of our black widow spider. The larger and easier-to-find 'tarantula' wasn't the culprit after all. And at least some of those wildly gyrating Italian peasants were not just hysterics. So much, too, for their critics.

ITALIAN AMERICANS UNITE

Joe Anastasio, who posts our IFAPA website on his Italian American Website of New York, is also the founder of a Yahoo forum called *Italian Americans Unite* which can be visited on Wednesday evenings at 9:00 PM (NY time). To join in, go to «<http://www.italian-american.com/mail.htm>».

The goal of the forum, as its name implies, is to unite Italian Americans. One frequent topic is fighting Italian stereotypes. This issue has been facilitated by Manny Alfano who often posts on the Forum site, and who has his own site called the *Italian-American One Voice Committee* at «<http://members.aol.com/ItaliaAmOneVoice/>».

The purpose of the ITALIAN FOLK ART FEDERATION OF AMERICA (IFAPA) 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.

IFAPA 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, IFAPA was incorporated May 7, 1979, in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as a non-profit cultural and educational organization.

I am interested in:

- Annual Membership
- Performing Folk Group \$25.00, plus \$5.00 per member address (if new, send for application)
- Supporting Organization \$25.00 (non-performing)
- Individual \$10.00
- Student/Senior Citizen \$5.00
- Contributing to the work of IFAPA \$ _____

Name:
Address:
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Phone:

Contributions are tax-deductible.
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c/o N.S.C.
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Philadelphia, PA 19107

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