



tradizioni

NEWSLETTER OF THE ITALIAN FOLK ART FEDERATION OF AMERICA

Editor: Jackie Capurro

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2013 IFafa Conference in Boston (Watertown), MA

Il Gruppo Folcloristico Ricordi d'Italia, under the direction of Margherita Drake, hosted the very successful 2013 Italian Folk Art Federation of America Conference October 25-27 in Boston, MA. Participants gathered Friday evening for meetings, dancing, and socializing.

Throughout the day on Saturday, participants had their choice of a number of dance sessions and informational/craft sessions. Bea Ricotta of *Amici Italiani* in Rockford, IL, taught *la Polca di Lucigano*; Mark DeSanctis and Susie Christiansen from *Tradizione Vivente* in Milwaukee, WI, taught *la Tarantella di San Rocco*; and Larissa and Maria Chobany of *I Colori Italiani* of Dallas, TX, taught *la Furlana Bergamasca*.

Roger Marocco lectured about Venetian Mask-Making, followed by a craft session led by Gina Jorgensen of Milwaukee in which participants created their own Venetian masks. MaryAnn Bucci from Philadelphia's *Vivaci*, led the group in Italian folk songs. Guido Farina told of the history of Monte Cassino in WWI as seen through his own eyes. Carolyn Martino, professional storyteller, delighted everyone with Italian Folk Tales, and participants learned to play a variety of Italian card games.

Saturday evening, participants and guests enjoyed an authentic 4-course Italian dinner provided by Maria's Catering and danced the night away to the sounds of The Ambrosiani Band.

Mark DeSanctis demonstrating a dance sequence.



Roger Marocco modeling a Venetian mask.



Left: Participants create their own Venetian masks, as modeled below.



Left: *Balliamo* dance troupe in their Italian Renaissance costumes.

Below: Costumed participants pose for a group photo before entering the Saturday evening banquet.



American Culture Seen From an Italian Window: CONFRONTATION

Have you ever asked yourself any of the following questions?



- America is known to be the best democracy in the world and the country of freedom; is it completely true?
- Do you have any doubt?
- Have you ever dived into the root causes of your own behaviors or thinking?
- Is confrontation necessarily and always a negative thing and should it be always avoided? Or could it be a tool or a way to better understand and learn from each other?
- Does a perfect way to act or behave exist?
- Could any action be justified by the culture you come from?

IFAF member Carlo Biondolillo has published a book titled, American Culture Seen From an Italian Window: CONFRONTATION, which deals with these questions.

It is available on Amazon through this link: <<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B00EDQ634Y>>.

100% of the profit will be donated to a non-profit organization located in Carlo's hometown of Rochester, MN: Gift of Life Transplant House <[http://www.gift-of-](http://www.gift-of-life.org/)

[life.org/](http://www.gift-of-life.org/)>.

HAVE TALES . . . WILL TRAVEL

In *Riccitello and Riccitella*, the Italian version of *Hansel and Gretel*, the abandoned children find a cottage in the woods made, not of gingerbread (that's German!), but one filled with sausages, ham, salami, bread, and cheese! That's Italian!

That's because folktales travel. The same tale is often found throughout Europe, the Americas, the Middle East, and Far East. But it was in Italy that many of these oral tales were first written down. The earliest versions of *Puss in Boots*, *Rapunzel*, *Sleeping Beauty*, and many others were first recorded in writing in Italy. But, as the Tuscans say, "A tale is not beautiful unless something is added to it," and Italian tales are definitely Italian!

In my program, *Bella Notte*, I tell Italian folktales, legends, jokes, cultural history. I was a presenter at the recent IFAFA Conference in Boston, MA, and I missed a lot of you.

Well, like folktales, I travel . . . and I would love to come to your organization and tell you more Italian tales. Call me for details at 401-721-9980 or email me at Cmartino13@verizon.net

-- Carolyn Martino

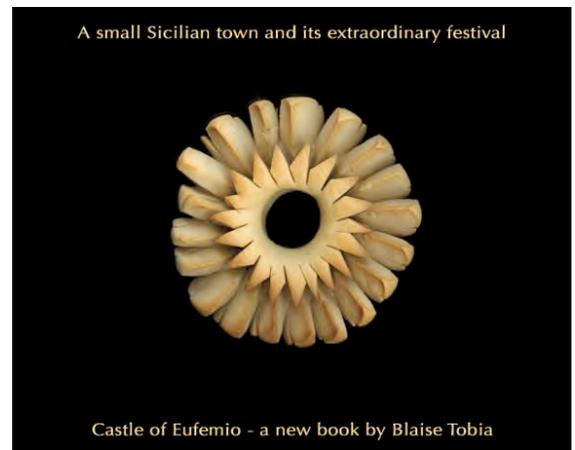
Storyteller, Humorist, Educator, Inspirational Speaker

"Without stories, we would die of seriousness!"

Castle of Eufemio: The Festival of *la Santissimo Crocifisso*

Castle of Eufemio - a small Sicilian town and its extraordinary festival by Blaise Tobia, has been published by the Achilles Press in association with the America-Italy Society of Philadelphia. Tobia has a special relationship with the *paese* of Calatafimi—all four of his grandparents were born there and many relatives remain. Although he has extensively documented the town over a twenty-year period, he was amazed at the extent to which it opened itself up to photography during its festival; these images offer remarkable glimpses into its social and cultural life.

The three-day festival of *la Santissimo Crocifisso* (the Most Holy Crucifix) now takes place only every seven or eight years (it once was a triennial event) and it thoroughly exhausts the town each time it is held. It is an opportunity for religious devotion, civic pride, and the kind of one-upmanship in generosity that is part of Sicilian culture. Calatafimi itself is a modest agricultural town, not particularly beautiful or prosperous, that—like many southern Italian *paesi*—has seen its population shrink during a century of emigration. Unlike most similar towns, however, it is the site of a remarkable cultural treasure: Segesta, perhaps the best preserved Doric temple in the world. In addition, it was the site of Garibaldi's first battle for Italian unification in 1860, so every Italian school child knows of it and streets throughout Italy are named after it. The town name *Calatafimi* is Arabic for "Castle of Eufemio," referring to the tragic figure Eufemio I, the legendary self-proclaimed first king of Sicily, who inadvertently opened up the island to Saracen conquest in 827.



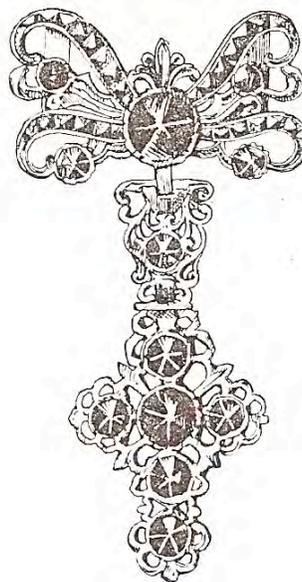
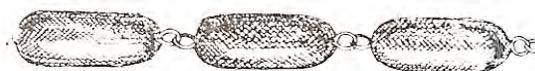
Tobia is a Professor of Media Arts in Drexel University's Antoinette Westphal College of Media, Arts and Design, in Philadelphia. The texts are bilingual—English and Italian. [96 pages, with 39 color images] For more information or to order, contact Blaise Tobia at 215-387-9706 or <tobia@drexel.edu>.

Regional Italian Folk Costume

We continue the 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. In this issue, we highlight a costume from the region of *Piemonte*.

Flower Vender in Torino

Headdress of organdy decorated with two or more finely-pleated ruffles held up by thin iron stays. Bodice of wool; full skirt above which she wears one or two cotton aprons. Neck scarf in flowered coarse wool. Necklace of gold cloth-covered beads, some wrought gold, of varying sizes (see detail). Knit stockings; leather pumps. On the chest may be stitched a cross of faceted gold, of the type illustrated in the detail.



American Italian Heritage Association and Museum on WMHT-TV

Prof/Cav Philip DiNovo, founder and head curator of the American Italian Heritage Association and Museum in Albany, NY, recently was approached by WMHT-TV, Educational PBS Television for New York's Capital Region, to film some shots in the museum for their TV series, Path Through History.

DiNovo was very excited about this opportunity and the recognition received by the museum. He says, "I wanted to share this good news with you! It has taken time but when you think of immigration in this area, our museum comes to mind. We have to do much more of this so more people we know about us and want to visit."

To see the TV spot, click on: <http://www.wmht.org/blogs/path-through-history-interstitials/peopling-new-york-slate-valley/>

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Founder's Fund

The Elba Farabegoli Gurzau Founder's Fund was originally established as a living memorial to the founder of the Italian Folk Art Federation of America. Contributions for any intention, i.e. birthday, anniversary, or other special occasion, as well as in memoriam, are used only for artistic endeavors.

Donations may be made payable to "IFAFA – Founder's Fund" and mailed to: IFAFA, c/o Treasurer, P.O. Box 3185, Fort Lee, NJ 07024.

When sending a donation to commemorate an event, please: Identify the occasion and give the full name of the individual to be honored. Also give the full name and address to whom the announcement is to be sent. The contributor should also provide his/her name, address, and telephone number.

A special letter, announcing the contribution and naming the contributor, will be forwarded to the honored person or family, and an acknowledgement will be sent to the contributor.

FOLK DANCES, COSTUMES AND CUSTOMS OF ITALY

by Elba Farabegoli Gurzau

Softcover book, 128 pages, including black-and-white and color illustrations. Seventeen dances with description and notated music, information about Italy, costumes, customs, etc. Comes with recorded music to accompany the dances, your choice of CD or audiocassette.

Price: \$25.00 plus \$3.95 for handling and postage.
Be sure to specify CD or cassette.

Please make check or money order
payable to IFAFA and mail to:
IFAFA Treasurer
103 Greenbrier Drive
Carnegie, PA 15106

Contributors to this Issue of *Tradizioni*

The editor would like to thank the following people for contributing articles and/or information for this issue:

Carlo Biondolillo

Gina Jorgensen

Prof./Cav. Philip J. DiNovo

Carolyn Martino

Margherita Drake

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.

Membership in IFAFA

You may also join online!

<http://www.italianfolkartfederation.org/EN/Membership.asp>

Individual Membership:

- Youth (under 18): \$18/year
- Adult (18-60 years of age): \$24/year
- Senior (60 and up): \$18/year

Performance Groups:

- Groups (up to 10 members): \$100/year
- Groups (10+ members): \$150/year

Contributing to the work of IFAFA: \$ _____

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