



# tradizioni

NEWSLETTER OF THE ITALIAN FOLK ART FEDERATION OF AMERICA

Editor: Jackie Capurro

IFafa Website: [www.italian-american.com/ifafa](http://www.italian-american.com/ifafa)

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## Letter From the President

Dear IFafa Members,

Over the past year, I assume all of you have read my letters, and have learned by now that I by no means run short of things to say! I usually try to touch on several topics within each letter, but this letter will be a little different. I'd like to focus on one very important topic – our annual IFafa conference.

As all of you are aware, the IFafa conference is right around the corner. This year, it will take place in the beautiful city of Sacramento – the capital of the great state of California. *Balliamo!*, a long-time member group of IFafa, will be hosting the weekend events, which are scheduled to be held October 24<sup>th</sup> through the 26<sup>th</sup>.

Doris Beckert (IFafa Board Member and director for *Balliamo!*) and her group have been working very hard over the past year to put on a unique and wonderful experience for all the participants. I encourage you to read more contained in this copy of *Tradizioni* for information on all the fantastic workshops and events she and her group have planned. (See below; registration form on pages 3 and 4.)

I have strong hopes that I will see a very large turnout for this year's event. IFafa is in the middle of a deep transitional period, moving towards new goals and a new outlook, and I'm asking that everyone be a part of it! If money is an issue, I remind you of IFafa's Scholarship Program, which provides a \$75 cash scholarship to any student under the age of 22 who takes part in the conference workshops.

Finally, I mentioned in my last letter to you that I all but secured a group from Italy by the name of *DisCanto*. Unfortunately, IFafa simply did not have the necessary funds to support the logistics of such a contract. I am, however, now working with another group by the name of *Newpoli*, in an attempt to secure their group for a Friday night visit. More information on this to come.

As I said before, IFafa is working through an exciting transition, investing in new ideas and a fresh outlook on the past as well as the long road ahead. I sincerely hope you'll join us in Sacramento and help take part in this organization's shift towards the future! I look forward to seeing all of you soon!

Mark DeSanctis

President

Italian Folk Art Federation of America

## IFafa Conference 2008 in Sacramento, California

"Thar's gold in them thar hills!" was the rallying cry of the 49'ers who swarmed to California seeking their fortunes in gold. Now in 2008, *Balliamo!* and the Italian Cultural Society invite you to come out West and discover Sacramento, the capital city of the "Golden" state.

Before or after the conference, take time to visit our historical sights: Sutter's Fort, the terminus of the Pony Express, Old Sacramento, the Railroad Museum, the renovated Capitol with a statue of Christopher Columbus in the rotunda, and much more. And if you have plenty of time before or after the conference, we're halfway between Lake Tahoe and San Francisco and close to the Napa Valley. But better yet, we have the nearby Shenandoah Valley wine region in the nearby foothills of Amador County.

Early birds will have an opportunity on Friday to tour our new Italian Center and enjoy a light luncheon for only \$10.00. Registration will begin at 4:00 pm on Friday, October 24, and the evening will include meetings, easy dancing, and perhaps a surprise! We're still working on that.

We are planning a full program of workshops all day Saturday. At the Saturday luncheon, you will enjoy the dancing of our youngsters, *I Bambini*, who are eager to entertain you. For the Saturday luncheon, we'll have Caesar salad with chicken and a chef's choice for dessert. For Saturday and Sunday breakfasts, you'll enjoy an executive continental breakfast (OJ, fruit, muffins, Danish, croissants, banana nut bread, jam and butter, coffee and tea).

Saturday night, we will have the gala *Festa Folcloristica*, complete with banquet, folk dance exhibitions, chorus, awards, and social dancing to live music. Remember to come in your Italian dance costume. Members of the community have been invited, so our numbers should swell for this festive event. The honoree for the evening will be Mr. Rob De-Feo, publisher of *In Buona Salute* <[www.saluteitalianmagazine.com](http://www.saluteitalianmagazine.com)>.

On Sunday, for those who wish to attend Mass, transportation will be provided to the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament downtown. This has been recently renovated to its former glory, and it is an inspiring place to worship.

So take advantage of the rare opportunity to go **west** for your 2008 conference!

--Doris Beckert, Director, *Balliamo!*

## The Italian Picnic

We have Italian American picnics. This is an annual celebration in our family. We used to have Italian picnics when my grandparents were alive almost every Sunday during the summer. My grandfather had formed strong bonds of friendship through the years. Mostly, they were *paesani* from their beloved Sicily. They had a deep understanding of each other. The security they needed while they were adjusting to America came from these families. These Italian picnics were held at my grandparents' truck farm. Most of the food was provided by my grandparents, but every family also brought food.

There were many children who drank a lot of soft drinks that were made cold by resting in a tub of ice. The men played *morra* and *bocce*. The women chatted about this and that. Italian immigrants were good cooks, but my aunts were even better. They learned from grandmother that food had to be better than good. My grandfather raised most of the vegetables; he was so proud of his basil, pole beans, eggplants, tomatoes, and peppers. We ate a lot of vegetables, and many pasta dishes had vegetables. Vegetables were *cunzatti* with a slice of bread and a clove of garlic browned in olive oil and poured over them. As I reflect on our Italian picnics, it was good -- no, *delizioso* -- peasant food.

One of my favorite picnic foods was charcoal veal cutlet. The menu included pasta, vegetable dishes, homemade bread, *vino*, fresh-picked corn, fruits, Italian cookies, ice cream, etc. The food was always delicious and inviting. Chicken has never tasted as good as the ones my grandfather raised; they were allowed to freely scratch for food. I can still see my grandfather killing chickens. After they were killed, the birds still fluttered their wings. The birds were held upside down until the blood drained to their heads. Almost no part of the fowl was ever wasted. Chicken made our picnics a special day.

My grandmother bought a fifty-pound sack of flour. She made bread twice a week. She was used to making a large supply of loaves since she once had to bake for a family of eleven. She had to bake quite a few loaves for about sixty people; at some picnics there were more, and at others there were fewer.

There was lots of wine, but I never recall seeing someone drunk. My grandfather made his own wine in the autumn. He would buy boxes of California grapes. He had a wine press; the wine was put into a barrel. The aging process resulted in a wine that was my grandfather's delight and was served at our picnics.

Our Italian picnics took place over forty years ago. They were so special; I still recall those happy occasions. I have photos and, at family picnics, I pass them around. My aunts don't recall them as I do, since they had to do all the hard work.

Our Italian American picnics fall short, but, like most things in life, we have to deal with change. We still serve Italian food, and they keep our family ties strong, but so many have died. Now a new generation is exposed to a little of what we had, and my hope is that they will have wonderful memories. I was fortunate. I had a rich, full life growing up. I had a strong family. I'll always remember the importance of our weekly picnics, making our family stronger.

— Professor/Cav. Philip J. DiNovo

### Italian Expressions and Poetry About Food

Enjoy the following regional sayings and poems which illustrate the Italians' love for food.

*Quando un contadino mangia un pollo, o è ammalato l'uno o è ammalato l'altro.* ('When a peasant eats a chicken, either one or the other is sick.' In other words, since chickens produce eggs, killing one to eat it only makes sense if the chicken is sick, or if it is needed to make a sick person well.)

Insalata, ben salata, Greens, well salted,  
poco aceto, molto oliata, little vinegar, well-oiled,  
mille volte rivoltata. tossed one thousand times.  
(An old expression describing the best way to prepare a salad. Notice *ben salata* - the Romans liked to use a lot of salt, since salt was money and it showed that they had wealth. Both the word *insalata* and our English word 'salary' come from the Italian word for salt: *sale*.)

*Il magnar non vale un'acca se alla fine non sa di vacca.*  
(A meal is worthless if it doesn't taste of milk at the conclusion.' Lombardo expression, denoting their love for cheese at the end of a meal.)

El vin bon, Good wine,  
l'omo bravo, the trustworthy man  
e la dona bela and the beautiful woman  
dura poco. don't last long  
--Old Proverb from Friuli

### In Memoriam: James B. Tortora

James B. Tortora was one of the founding members of *I Gagliardi Italiani*, in 1975, in Canton, Ohio. Jim was born in 1924, and after a very full life, filled with family, friends, travel, and wonderful gestures of friendship and service, he died in August 2007 at the age of 83.

Born in Capagatti, Italy, in the province of Abruzzi, Jim lived most of his life in the Canton area of Ohio. He was a member of St. Anthony's Parish. He had been a general contractor for over 50 years. Besides being a co-founder of IGI, Jim was a co-founder of the following additional organizations: Stark County Italian-American Festival, St. Anthony's Holy Name Society, Ben V. Marconi Lodge #1628, May's Barber Shop Crew.

He was also a past president of the Stark County Home Builder's Association. He was a WWII veteran and was devoted to his family and friends. Jim Tortora was passionate about his Italian heritage, about *I Gagliardi Italiani*, and about IFAFA. He was well known as a proponent of Italian folk songs and dance. At his funeral mass, the words from "I Am The Lord of the Dance" were printed in his service program. Included here are the words from the chorus.

*Dance, then wherever you may be.  
"I am the lord of the dance"; said he.  
"I'll lead you all, where ever you may be,  
I will lead you all in the dance", said he.*

Jim surely did! We love him. We honor his contributions and our memories of him, and we miss him. God bless you, Jim. *Grazie tanto!*

Alice Cleary, *I Gagliardi Italiani*

**Conference Information**  
**Italian Folk Art Federation of America (IFAFA)**  
**October 24 – 26, 2008**

**Hosted by *Balliamo!* and the Italian Cultural Society of Sacramento, California**

Hotel reservations are made directly through Radisson, 500 Leisure Lane, Sacramento.  
Reservations: 916-922-2020. Specify "IFAFA" for conference rate of \$109.00 single/double, \$119 triple, \$129 quad.

**Deadline for booking rooms at this rate is September 24, 2008.**

To view hotel information on line: <radissonsac.com>

Transportation from Sacramento International Airport (SMF): Super Shuttle: 1-800-258-3826 or www.supershuttle.com

**Registration Information:** Full conference fee includes all activities, workshops & meals. (Registration Form on page 4)

**Partial Registration available** for: a) workshops/lunch only, or b) *Festa Folcloristica* Banquet only, or c) Saturday activities only (workshops, lunch, *Festa Folcloristica* Banquet).

**Preliminary Conference Workshops**

Dance Workshops:

- Dance to be announced, taught by Mark DeSanctis of *Tradizione Vivente*, Milwaukee, Wisconsin
- *Ballo Abruzzese*, taught by Jackie Capurro of *Il Quartiere Italiano*, San José, California
- *Tarantella Calabrese*, taught by Stacie Jensen of *Balliamo!*, Sacramento, California

General Interest Workshops:

**Authors Panel**

- Mary Saluti Silva: Italians of Siskiyou County
- Barbara Carle, Prof. of Italian at CSUS: Various poetry collections
- Carolyn Fregulia: Italians of Amador County

**Vima Micheli**

- Costumes of the Siena Palio with slides
- Antique pieces of lace

**Robert Petta**

- Sicilian *carretta* made by his father, Vito Petta, will be on display. Robert will talk about cart history and the building of the cart.

**Doris Beckert and others**

- "So You Think You Want to Learn to Dance?" A fun start for beginners who want to learn some easy dances, and a clinic for prospective dance leaders who want to start a dance group.

**Tentative:** Speaker on Italian opera and the California Gold Rush.

**Tentative:** Art Historian, with slides, who will speak on three Italians who furthered their careers in China. Two were artists, and one was Marco Polo.

**Other**

- Pre-Conference Tour and Luncheon: Friday, 11:00 am, at Sacramento's new Italian Cultural Center.
- Sunday morning Mass: transportation for conference participants will be provided to the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament.
- CDs of dance workshop music free to all who register for dance workshops. Video/DVD of entire event will be available to order separately. Group photo available separately.

**Festa Folcloristica Banquet**

The public will join IFAFA Participants for a gala evening of dining, ballroom dancing and entertainment, including an entrance march of costumed IFAFA members, chorus, folk dance exhibitions, proclamations, and awards. The three entrée choices for the banquet are *Tuscan Chicken* (breast of chicken in herb and parmesan breading with caper *buerre blanc*), *Flat Iron Steak* (with caramelized onion and crumbled gorgonzola & roasted tomato parmesan), *Vegetarian Wellington* (oven roasted vegetables sautéed in olive oil & garlic, served with basil in a puff pastry). All entrées are served with Spinach Walnut Salad and Amaretto Mousse Cake. Dinner includes rolls & butter, vegetable & rice, coffee & tea.

# 2008 IFAFA CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FORM

Please complete form below (or photocopy it); **make check payable to IFAFA.**  
Mail form and check to: Laura Leonelli, 5048 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Sacramento, CA 95820.  
Questions? Call Laura at 916-739-6014, or Doris Beckert (Director, *Balliamo!*) at 916-482-8674,  
or E-mail to <sacifafa@yahoo.com>.

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City, State, ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

Group Affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_ IFAFA Member?  yes  no

*Festa* Banquet entrée choice:  Tuscan Chicken  Flat Iron Steak  Vegetarian Wellington

Indicate number of registrations and calculate cost:

Full Conference: Adult, IFAFA Member **(After Sept. 24 = \$135)** # \_\_\_\_\_ x \$120 = \_\_\_\_\_

Full Conference: Youth (22 and under) # \_\_\_\_\_ x \$80 = \_\_\_\_\_

Full Conference, Adult Non-member # \_\_\_\_\_ x \$130 = \_\_\_\_\_

Friday Luncheon at Italian Center # \_\_\_\_\_ x \$10 = \_\_\_\_\_

Saturday Morning (circle one) **or**  
Saturday Afternoon Only: Workshops/Lunch # \_\_\_\_\_ x \$55 = \_\_\_\_\_

Saturday All Day: Workshops, Lunch # \_\_\_\_\_ x \$75 = \_\_\_\_\_

*Festa Folcloristica* Banquet: Saturday # \_\_\_\_\_ x \$55 = \_\_\_\_\_

Total Amount of Check: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

If registering for an entire group: On a separate sheet of paper, list each individual's name, address/phone/email, banquet entrée choice, age for youth grant, fees/categories, and any other pertinent information. Mail with completed form above.

Please complete the follow sections, *if applicable*:

- Our group would like to present a guest performance Saturday evening at the *Festa* Banquet.

Name /Group Name/ City: \_\_\_\_\_

Set-up/Equipment needs: \_\_\_\_\_

Program Title/Description: \_\_\_\_\_

- Youth Grant (age 22 and under): I would like to apply for a \$75.00 IFAFA Grant to support my conference attendance. In accepting this grant, I agree to be an active participant in all conference workshops and activities. \$75.00 will be reimbursed after completion of the conference.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Group Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

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## The Accordions of Castelfidaro

The town of Castelfidaro, about 7 miles north of Recanati on the Adriatic coast in le Marche, has two important claims to fame. One is military: Castelfidaro gave its name to an historic battle fought there on September 18, 1860, when troops in combat for the unification of Italy under the Savoy kings defeated the army of the Papal States, forcing it to retreat to Ancona and eventually to surrender. The other is musical: Castelfidaro is one of the world's leading producers of accordions. The first accordion was invented by Paolo Soprani, who based his new instrument on the principle of a hand organ. Soprani opened the first accordion factory at Castelfidaro in the 1870s, and the instruments have been a major factor in the local economy ever since. An accordion museum in the 16<sup>th</sup>-century Town Hall holds almost 150 of the instruments; exhibits include accordions made between 1840 and 1968. The instruments are also works of art that feature precious handcrafted decorations of mother-of-pearl and beautifully worked metal fittings. Technology is making a difference in accordions, as Castelfidaro's manufacturers introduce technical innovations in the instruments that they export throughout the world.

--Taken from *Italy Italy Magazine*, March/April 2003

## 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 two costumes from the region of Umbria.



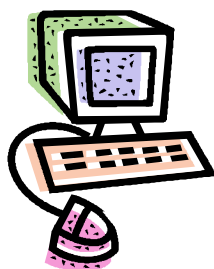
**LEFT:**  
**Costume da sposa a Perugia**  
**Wedding Dress from Perugia**

The entire dress is of taffeta with tiny embroideries. The bodice, tight at the waist, is trimmed on the sleeves with the same fabric, pleated and decorated. The skirt, bell-shaped, is wide at the base and gradually gets smaller and more gathered at the waist. On the head is worn a large tulle shawl, with floral embroideries in gold silk. Shoes of black leather. Stockings are also black. Gold and pearl earrings.



**RIGHT: Abito festivo dei dintorni di Terni**  
**Holiday Dress from the Area near Terni**

Bodice of satin brocade with long sleeves ruffled at the wrist and at the back. Long skirt of brushed silk gathered at the waist, decorated with two ruffled frills. Apron is also of silk. The scarf that covers the shoulders is of floral wool with short fringe, fastened at the front with a gold stickpin. White knit stockings. Low-heeled leather shoes. Hair is parted at the forehead and gathered at the back of the neck in braids fastened with silver *spadini* (sword-shaped hair pins). Large coral necklace with gold closure. Earrings of hammered gold.



## On The Web

Two links for cultural information about the four provinces of the region of the Abruzzo: Teramo, Chieti, Pescara and L'Aquila.

<[www.italyis.com/abruzzo/](http://www.italyis.com/abruzzo/)>

<[www.regione.abruzzo.it/turismo/cultura/musei/index.html](http://www.regione.abruzzo.it/turismo/cultura/musei/index.html)>

*PANDEMONIO folk group* is a group of professional artists who are working to promote Italian traditional music. For more information, visit: <[www.pandemonio.info](http://www.pandemonio.info)>.

*All Things Sicilian Blog Site*: You are now invited to chat and comment on the "All Things Sicilian" blog site. Share your travel stories and love of *Sicilia*! Visit < <http://www.allthingsicilian.blog.com>>. For more information, contact Alfred Zappala by phone at 866-GO-SICILY or by email: <[alfredmzappala@yahoo.com](mailto:alfredmzappala@yahoo.com)>.

*Italian Food Net* is web-based television for those who love Italian food and wine. The site offers cooking videos, tips on Italian wines, and links to Italian restaurants around the world. Visit: <[www.ItalianFoodNet.com](http://www.ItalianFoodNet.com)>.

*Tren Italia* takes you to the official website for the Italian train services. Visitors can search train schedule, book reservations, and get the latest updates on delays and cancellations. The site is in Italian. Visit: <[www.TrenItalia.com](http://www.TrenItalia.com)>.

## How to Contact Us

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 San Jose, CA 95148

### 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 "IFAF A – Founder's Fund" and mailed to: IFAFA, c/o Anna Marie Fiori, Treasurer, P.O. Box 1192, Rockford, IL 61105.

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

### This Issue's Contributors

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

Doris Beckert  
 Alice Cleary  
 Joyce DeLaurentis  
 Mark DeSanctis  
 Professor/Cav. Philip J. DiNovo  
*Italy Italy Magazine*

## FOLK DANCES, COSTUMES AND CUSTOMS OF ITALY

by Elba Farabegoli Gurzau

Softcover book, 128 pages, which includes black-and-white and color illustrations, 17 dances with description and notated music, information about Italy, costumes, customs, etc. Comes with recorded music to accompany the dances, your choice of audiocassette or CD.

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  
 P.O. Box 1192  
 Rockford, IL 61105

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

IFAF A 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

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 IFAFA \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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

Contributions are tax-deductible.  
 Make checks payable to "IFAF A." Mail to:  
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