



# tradizioni

NEWSLETTER OF THE ITALIAN FOLK ART FEDERATION OF AMERICA

Editor: Jackie Capurro

Website: [www.ifafa.us](http://www.ifafa.us)

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## Have You Checked Out IFABA's NEW website?!?

In 2017, IFABA Board Members worked with a new ISP to design and totally re-vamp our website. Check out the new website at <http://www.ifafa.us>. Please explore the site! The ARTICLES link provides many pages of articles related to Italian folk arts, and new articles are added frequently. Admire the variety of Italian folk costumes pictured in the COSTUME GALLERY. Check out the complete index of all articles that have ever been published in IFABA's TRADIZIONI NEWSLETTER. Introduce your children to Italian culture and vocabulary with the games and puzzles on the ITALIAN FOR KIDS link. Also, we are constantly working to better organize photos, videos, and other resources, so we welcome your suggestions and contributions. Email us at [info@ifafa.us](mailto:info@ifafa.us).

### IFABA on Social Media

IFABA has had a FaceBook page for several years, but you can also now find us on other social media as well. Here's how to reach us:

FaceBook: <<https://www.facebook.com/Italian-Folk-Art-Federation-of-America-IFABA-266954346772587/>>

Instagram: <<https://www.instagram.com/italianfolkartfederation/>>

Twitter: <<https://twitter.com/ItalianFolkArt>>

IFABA email address: <[info@ifafa.us](mailto:info@ifafa.us)>

### IFABA Face Book Page

If you use Face Book, be sure to find IFABA's FB page and follow it. We post information about our members' activities, folk events in both the U.S. and Italy, and other items of cultural or folkloric interest. Once you receive our posts regularly, please interact with us! It "boosts our ratings" the more people *like* and *comment* on the postings, so please visit frequently and boost the ratings by liking and commenting often on the posts. Just looking at the page, but not participating, is not as helpful.



We would also like to receive more news from IFABA troupes and individuals that we can post. Even if it is not likely that someone in California would be able to attend an event in, say, Rockford, IL, including posts about local events shows the breadth of IFABA's activities, and, when someone local does *like* a post, that person's *like* may be seen by others who may then become aware of, and join, our page. If you have events that you would like to see on the IFABA FB page, you may add it as a Visitor Post, or you may email pictures and brief descriptions to Jackie Capurro at <[viva\\_ifafa@hotmail.com](mailto:viva_ifafa@hotmail.com)>.

## St. Joseph Altar Celebration in Des Moines, IA

This year marked the 21<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the St. Joseph Altar Celebration sponsored by the Italian-American Cultural Center of Iowa. This event was successful because of the many hours that numerous volunteers spent making sure that this would be a truly traditional and spiritual undertaking. Sincere thanks to all those who made it happen.



Central St. Joseph Altar

Kathy Foggia and Mary Romanelli began early in February setting up the hall with the backdrop curtains and the three-tiered steps that formed the altar. They covered the steps with linens, attached the table skirts, and then proceeded to add the decorative breads, altar identification cards, and other symbols of faith. John Heldreth and Joseph Boehm donated additional fruits and vegetables and completed the decoration of the altars.

Family altar sponsors were the Cordaro, Leo/Marasco, Joseph Tumea, Joseph Tursi, and the John J. Rand, Jr. families. Other altar sponsors were the Italian-American Women of Iowa, Società Vittoria Italiana and their auxiliary, Society of Italian-Americans and their auxiliary, and the Victor Romanelli Knights of Columbus.

Ladies who spent several days and hours making fresh pasta and baking the traditional cookies included Yvonne Aversa, Joanne Caligiuri, Ellen Celsi, Mary DeFazio, Amy Gentosi Copley, Joyce Leto, Sue Ligouri, Therese Riordan, Tammie Sposeto, Gloria Stefani, and Dee Dee Underwood. Nancy Dance and Lucy Cosenza made and donated several St. Joseph traditional Sicilian breads.

Following a welcoming greeting by President Paolo Bartesaghi, the children of the *Ragazzi* Folk Dance Group presented the *tupa tupa* (knocking) pageant. Dressed as Jesus, Mary, and Joseph with the angels and saints, they sought food and shelter at the dinner. When they had been welcomed by the guests, they took their place at the table reserved for the Holy Family. Fr. Chris Fontanini and Deacon Tony Romeo then officiated at an altar blessing ceremony.

Special thanks to Capital City Produce, Graziano Brothers Grocery, and Tumea and Sons Restaurant for their generous donations to our altar, dinner, and luncheon.

Hats off to members of the Board of Governors who worked tirelessly in the kitchen and serving guests the night of the dinner. They were joined by volunteers Deb Pane and Teresa Russo-Dyer.

Mille grazie, everyone. St. Joseph was truly honored and will bless each and every one!



Leo/Marasco family altar



Civitate Family Altar



Tumea family altar



Children dressed as the Holy Family, Angels, and Saints from the 'tupa tupa' presentation

-- Patricia Civitate, Italian-American Cultural Center of Iowa  
and Director of *Il Trattenimento Italiano* Folk Dance Troupe

## St. Joseph's Altar in New Orleans



Local St Joseph's Day altar in New Orleans

IFAFAs President Leslie Gigliotti visited New Orleans in March and shared these pictures from a St. Joseph's Altar that she saw in a hotel there. Churches, supermarkets, parochial schools, private homes all have viewings. The paper in New Orleans puts out a listing of altars that can be visited.



Alligator 'vestedde'

Alligators made of bread and a crayfish too! And traditional wheat design that they showed us in our *vestedde* class that some of you may have made in the workshop at last fall's IFAFA Conference in Rockford, IL.



Crayfish 'vestedde'



Sheaf of wheat 'vestedde'

Leslie was also able to stop at the American Italian Cultural Center to tour their museum and meet their director. These two pictures were taken at the cultural center.



St Joseph's altar at the New Orleans Cultural Center



Sicilian cart at the New Orleans Cultural Center

For more information about the American Italian Cultural Center in New Orleans, check out their website: <http://americanitalianculturalcenter.com/>

## Faces of Faith: An Italian-American, a Catholic and a Bridge Builder

The following article about long-time IFAFA Member Cav/Prof Philip DiNovo was published in the Albany Times Union on October 6, 2017



**Background:** He was born in Albany and graduated from the University at Albany and went on to earn a master's in business administration. He taught that subject for 32 years at SUNY's Morrisville College. He and his wife Mary live in Albany. He's the founder and president of the American Italian Heritage Association and Museum in Colonie and was knighted by the Italian government in 1994 for his longstanding work in the Italian-American community.

### **What inspired you to create an organization for Italian Americans?**

My father's father, Philip DiNovo, came to the United States in 1901. Later, his wife, my grandmother, came to this country later as did my maternal grandparents, all of them from the same town in Sicily. They had a great influence on my life, but like most young people it was only later that I fully understood that my Italian heritage and culture were a treasure. In 1978, after reading "Blood of

my Blood" by Richard Gambino, who is considered the father of Italian-American studies, I put into action a desire to preserve my Italian heritage. I called some fellow professors and we formed the American Italian Heritage Association. As time went on, I saw the need for a museum and we opened ours in Utica, which had a large Italian-American population. The mission is to honor Italian immigrants throughout history and tell the story of the contributions of Italian Americans. The first Italians came to Albany in 1624, and Italian Americans have had a prominent place in local history. In 1998 our association was looking for a new home in the Capital Region. We found the old and beautiful Our Lady of Mercy Church in Colonie. It was built in 1922 and had been an office building since 1975. It needed a lot of work and it took us five years to raise the money and meet the requirements to open to the public in 2009. Since then, we have had visitors from 32 countries. We are important resource for the community. We have a dedicated group of volunteers. This year marks my 39th as a volunteer.

### **What role does Columbus play in Italian-Americans' understanding of their heritage?**

Millions of Italian immigrants at the turn of the 20th century were the target of prejudice and discrimination. In some places they were not considered white but a mixed race. In 1891, 11 immigrants in New Orleans were taken out of a jail and lynched. That same year, President Benjamin Harrison proclaimed Columbus Day a national holiday. Americans agreed that Columbus was worthy of the honor. Italian immigrants back then could point to Columbus who made the New World known to the old and changed the world in such a way as has rarely happened in human history. Italian Americans today take pride in Columbus' momentous accomplishment. Like all our heroes he felt short, but what he did for the world far outweighed his faults. We acknowledge the suffering of indigenous people after European exploration, but Columbus is not guilty of genocide, which is an attempt to kill a whole people as happened in the 20th century in the Armenian and Ukrainian genocides and the Nazi Holocaust. There is so much good about the man that most people do not know. We will honor him at our museum on Monday at 11 a.m. and we would be happy to honor Native Americans on another day.

### **What's religion's role in your life?**

God is the most important person in my life. Prayer and the reading of the scriptures remind me daily of the purpose of my life. Any gifts and talents we have are gifts from God to be used in the church and the community. I often had to convince my students they had talents they did not recognize. My Catholic faith and the role of lay ministry are important to me to be present and active in the world. The laity have a distinct role in bringing the divine message to every aspect of life. I have also been influenced by the Christopher Movement, a Catholic organization that stresses the strength of people to do good in the community. Its motto is a Chinese proverb: "It is better to light a candle than curse the darkness." My wife Mary and I are active members of a wonderful parish, All Saints Catholic Church in Albany where I am a eucharistic minister, lector and altar server.

I have a great interest in the ecumenical movement and am so happy to see people of faith talking and working together.

The American Italian Heritage Organization has members from many different traditions. When I was in college I was asked by Methodist landlady to go to her a supper at her church, I said, "I am Catholic." She said, "You can eat, can't you?" In those days we did not go to other faiths' places of worship. Thank God things have changed. Several weeks ago I was invited to a Jewish Shabbat service at Congregation Beth Israel in Schenectady, which was honoring a young member who was going to spend a year in Israel.

### **How did growing up in Albany shape your view of history?**

I was raised in Arbor Hill in Albany. It was a mixed ethnic and racial neighborhood, and being there was just wonderful. No matter how old I am or where I've lived, I will always have great memories of the place where my grandparents and their many children lived. I keep reminding our members to learn more about their history and heritage, to appreciate and pass it on to future generations.



--Rob Brill, for the Albany Times Union, Albany NY

## Global Tarantella: Reinventing Southern Italian Folk Music and Dances

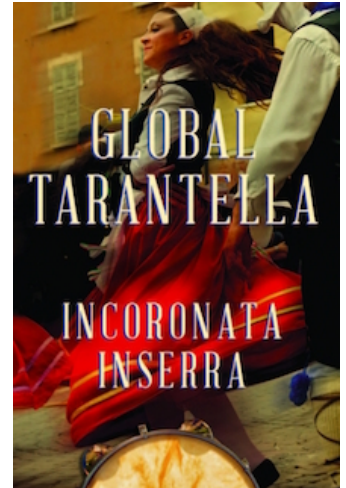
Incoronata Inserra, Virginia Commonwealth University

In *Global Tarantella* (University of Illinois Press, 2017) Incoronata Inserra ventures into the history, global circulation, and recontextualization of tarantella, a genre of Southern Italian folk music and dance. Examining tarantella's changing image and role among Italians and Italian Americans, Inserra illuminates how factors like tourism, translation, and world music venues have shifted the ethics of place embedded in the tarantella cultural tradition. Once rooted in a world of rural Catholicism, tarantella now thrives in urban, secular, migrant, and ethnic settings. Inserra reveals how the genre's changing dynamics contribute to reimagining Southern Italian identity and shows how its global growth promotes a reassessment of gender relations in the Italian South, helping create space for Italian and Italian American women to reclaim gendered aspects of the genre.

Organizing Institution: Calandra Italian American Institute

For more information, contact the Calandra Italian American Institute at:

<https://qcpages.qc.cuny.edu/calandra/institute/contact-us/contact-us>



### Festa del Grano, Molise

Every year on July 26th, **Jelsi**, a small town in the Province of Campobasso, celebrates **Festa del Grano** (Feast of wheat) to honor Saint Anne. Wheat symbolizes the joy of the harvest. Street and houses are decorated with sheaves of wheat. The most spectacular event is the parade with allegoric floats and “**traglie**”, old means of transportation for the haystacks. In addition, folk shows, music and fireworks shows.

The festival dates back to 1805, when the tradition says that Saint Anne protected Jelsi during a terrible earthquake. From then on, Saint Anne's statue is carried in procession every July 26th.



These flowers, handmade from wheat, are just one facet of the elaborate tradition in Jelsi.



Floats and other decorations are also made entirely with wheat.



For more, visit this English language site with several videos detailing the event:

<http://annoeuropeo2018.beniculturali.it/.../festa-del-grano-.../>

-- Janine Giarrusso (FB post) and Pasquale Zeoli who posted FB photos from the Festa

# IFafa Board of Directors

## Executive Board/Officers

President: Leslie Gigliotti  
Vice-President: Joyce DeLaurentis

Acting Treasurer: Joyce DeLaurentis  
Secretary: Jackie Capurro

## Board of Directors

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Maria Chobany  
William Giovanetti  
Meri DeLorenzo Howard

Bea Ricotta  
Stephanie Ricotta  
Karen Rosanio  
Paul Torna  
Danita Wendorf

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## IFafa Committees

The following Committees are in charge of much of the progress that has been and will be made for IFafa. The organizational model of each committee should consist of a minimum of five members: one Director to serve as Chairperson, along with two additional Directors and a minimum of two non-Board members to fill out the minimum requirements. There are four standing committees:

### **Membership Committee**

Chair: Paul Torna < [paultorna@verizon.net](mailto:paultorna@verizon.net) >

Members: Karen Rosanio, Danita Wendorf

The Membership Committee is responsible for sending out reminders about annual dues, recruiting new members, and working with the Public Relations and Marketing Committee. Activities include sending membership info or making presentations to schools and universities where Italian is offered and searching the web for links to like-minded groups.

### **Public Relations and Marketing Committee**

Chair: Bea Ricotta < [bricotta@rrstar.com](mailto:bricotta@rrstar.com) >

Members: Sam Alioto, Jackie Capurro, Gina Marie Jorgensen, Stephanie Ricotta

The Public Relations and Marketing Committee is responsible for maintaining the visibility of the organization, to keep IFafa in the public eye. Responsibilities include the IFafa website, press releases, web contacts, and personal contact with newspapers, magazines, and online sources (Facebook, Instagram, etc.) to promote the public's awareness of IFafa.

### **Folk Art Committee**

Chair: Joyce DeLaurentis < [jd@goeaston.net](mailto:jd@goeaston.net) >

Members: Jackie Capurro, Larissa Chobany, Maria Chobany, Susie Christiansen, Janine Giarrusso, Meri DiLorenzo Howard

The Folk Art Committee is responsible for researching new ideas and resources for expanding our knowledge of Italian Folk Arts. Such research includes locating and corresponding with other folk troupes in both the United States and Canada, as well as Italy; finding sources (e.g. in libraries, online, in your own community, etc.) for information on dances, songs, costumes, instruments, etc.; and developing the means of storing and disseminating the accumulated information.

### **Fund-Raising and Development Committee**

Co-Chair: Joyce DeLaurentis (Second co-chair position currently open) < [jd@goeaston.net](mailto:jd@goeaston.net) >

Member: Stephanie Ricotta

The Fund-Raising and Development Committee is responsible for devising and maintaining programs to solicit and receive gifts and donations, bequests, legacies, and real or personal property. This will involve researching and applying for grants that will assist IFafa in furthering its goals and suggesting ideas for fund-raising events and activities. The Fund-Raising Committee will also work with the Folk Art Committee which will be proposing programs and initiatives that will make fund-raising objectives more specific.

As a member of IFafa, especially our younger members, your voice should be heard!! Our Committees have fewer members than we'd like. We're looking for your input! What do we, as an organization, need to do to sustain your membership, foster growth, and ensure the future of IFafa? Clearly, your ideas and opinions hold a great deal of value on moving this organization through to the future. Committee activity need not take too much of your time, and, the more members a committee has, the easier it is to share the responsibilities. If you would like to serve on a committee, please email the appropriate Committee Chair.

## 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 *Emilia-Romagna*.



Contadina dei dintorni di Parma  
Countrywoman from the outskirts of Parma

Blouse of homespun cloth gathered at the neck and the wrists (sleeves pushed up in the drawing). Vest of cotton, with no collar and no sleeves. Cotton skirt gathered at the waist. Apron of patterned cotton. Also of cotton is the scarf for the hair and the shawl that covers the shoulders (not always worn).



Pescatore adriatico  
Adriatic Fisherman

Over a thick brown sweater is a woolen waistcoat. The pants are of a sturdy cloth, with openings at the sides, partially covered with coarse woolen gaiters. The large overcoat is of thick wool, edges and seams highlighted with piping and colored wool and lined with plaid wool. (detail) The pockets are also adorned with colored piping and wool. (detail) Clogs of thick leather with wooden sole. Woolen scarf around the neck. Woolen cap on the head.

## Film: MY COUNTRY

Living a quiet, middle-class life on the northwest side of Chicago, Luciano "Lucky" De Luca, a young, 20-something Italian-American with a passion for photography, lives at home with his immigrant father, Vincenzo, in his late 60's. His health ailing, Vincenzo confides in Lucky about a past indiscretion — a son he fathered during his service in the Italian army (before meeting and marrying Lucky's late mother in the U.S.). Setting off a whirlwind of questions and emotions, Vincenzo passes away shortly after leaving Lucky only a name and childhood photo of the boy. After much soul-searching, Lucky decides he'll travel to Rome to find his half-brother, Francesco, now in his mid-30's

The two brothers -- one American, one Italian -- who've never met take a road trip from Rome to the unknown but picturesque region of Molise on a journey to spread the ashes of their late father in the small town where he was born.

This film was initially released in August 2017. Giancarlo Iannotta directs, produces, and stars in the film, for which he also wrote the screenplay.



HOW TO CONTACT US

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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 "IFAF A – Founder's Fund" and mailed to: IFAFA Treasurer, P. O. Box 25957, Philadelphia, PA 19128.

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:  
IFAF A Treasurer  
P.O. Box 25957  
Philadelphia, PA 19128

Contributors to this Issue of *Tradizioni*

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

- |                                     |                  |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| Rob Brill                           | Janine Giarrusso |
| Patricia Civitate                   | Leslie Gigliotti |
| Cav/Prof Philip DiNovo              | Pasquale Zeoli   |
| Calandra Italian American Institute |                  |

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**

You may also join online! <https://www.ifafa.us/modern/join-us/>

- \$20 membership (adult, 21 and over)                       \$10 membership (under 21)

Contributing to the work of IFAFA: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Contributions are tax-deductible. Make checks payable to IFAFA Mail to:  
IFAF A Treasurer, P. O. Box 25957, Philadelphia PA 19128