



tradizioni

NEWSLETTER OF THE ITALIAN FOLK ART FEDERATION OF AMERICA

Editor: Jackie Capurro

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IFafa Committees

Several years ago three committees were set up to help improve the functions of IFafa. Those committees were Membership, Public Relations & Marketing, and Folk Art. In addition to these three committees, our constitution also provides for two additional committees: Budget & Finance and Development.

At a recent Board Conference Call, it was decided to envelope the duties for the Budget & Finance Committee into the duties of the Treasurer, thus eliminating that committee. For the purpose of less confusion, the name of the Development Committee was changed to the Fundraising & Development Committee. There are now four standing committees:

Membership Committee

Chair: [Paul Torna](#)

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](#)

Members: Sam Alioto, Jackie Capurro, Gina Marie Jorgensen

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 to promote the public's awareness of IFafa.

Folk Art Committee

Chair: [Meri DiLorenzo Howard](#)

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

The Folk Art and Development 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 Italy; finding sources (e.g. in libraries, online, 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](#)

Co-Chair: (position currently open)

Members: 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, below.

Membership Committee Chair Paul Torna: paultorna@verizon.net

Public Relations & Marketing Committee Chair Bea Ricotta: bricotta@rrstar.com

Folk Art Committee Chair Meri DeLorenzo Howard: meridelorenzo@gmail.com

Fundraising & Development Committee Chair Joyce DeLaurentis: jd@goeaston.net

My Thanksgiving Story

The story that I am going to tell about is similar to the one I presented at the Kimmel Center for Peter Nero and the Philly Pops in celebration of the 60th anniversary of the USO. And I might add that my presentation and performance was voted the best program of the 2005 season.

As you know, the purpose of the USO was to bring a touch of home to our service men and women and it has been written that few events have left a more lasting emotional impression on them than USO shows. The USO has brought top quality entertainment to millions of US military personnel throughout the world since 1944 and I am proud to have been a part of that development. My relationship with USO dates back to the beginning of my career and, at age 11, I started doing USO shows for our service men and women. Many of you, I'm sure, remember Jack Steck (Starlite Stairway), Stanley Broza of the Children's Hour, Bailey Goss (Baltimore, MD), and Paul Whiteman. (Right after the incident, I was invited on his New York radio show to perform with his 100 piece orchestra and tell my story. He then presented me with a gold watch for my services with USO.)

Over the years many articles have been written about my USO days such as: The Longest Hour, Lucky to be Alive, Songs in the Key of Life, Accordionist Plays and Lives with Gusto, Musician 18 Safe after Plane Crash; and the most recent one called "Not Everything Goes Accordion to Hoyle" appeared in the official publication of Korean war veterans called The Graybeards.

This is my story: on Thanksgiving Day, November 26, 1953 I survived a plane crash while traveling with the USO. After winning the Arthur Godfrey Talent Scouts show, I was called by the USO organization in New York to headline a USO unit. "Broadway Ballyhoo," made up of ten performers, was formed, and I was chosen as band leader and accordion soloist. And at 18 I became the youngest USO entertainer. The tour which was scheduled for Japan, Korea, and the Pacific Islands for 17 weeks began quietly and without fanfare. We left from La Guardia airport in New York on August 31, 1953, and arrived in Tokyo, Japan, four days later. After rehearsing for three days, we were ready for the 17 weeks that lay ahead. And for the next 70 days we performed 2 and 3 shows a day in different towns and military bases in Korea (30) and Japan (15). We never did get to the Pacific Islands.

The Broadway Ballyhoo unit collectively had many years of show business experience with such names as Bob Hope, Woody Herman, Ed Sullivan, the Dorsey Brothers, Xavier Cugat not to mention stage and screen and TV experience. Our show ran two hours and was a top notch variety production from beginning to end. It consisted of a guitar and banjo act (Bill Roberts), a magician (Norma Krieger), a dance act consisting of mother, father, sister, brother (the Evans family), and my accordion solos. Our trio consisted of accordion (Joe Soprani), trumpet (Ed House), and drums (Mel Zelman)... and comedian (Joe Wong) ... ten people in all. I remember on one occasion when it got so cold (all performances were outside) we wore gloves during the show. But, I managed to play *Flight of the Bumblebee* with gloves.

November 26, 1953, which started out like any other day on the tour, was to be a day that I will remember for the rest of my life. We had just completed our first show at Iwakun I Air Base and were scheduled to fly to Miho, Japan, less than an hour away. We were treated to a Thanksgiving Day dinner before departing and were scheduled for two more shows in Miho. The military flight was routine and was scheduled to depart at 1:30pm. However, because of engine problems our flight (C-47) was canceled. Another plane (C-46) was available for our use. We finally boarded the plane at 4pm. By that time, however, we picked up 15 more passengers and many bags of U.S. mail.

After having performed over 100 shows in 73 days in 15 cities in Japan and 30 cities in Korea for over 200,000 troops and traveling over 15,000 miles, it was not difficult to determine that this plane was overcrowded and overloaded. But, we were assured by the officers in charge that "everything is fine."

We were five minutes away from Miho, but it was raining and getting dark, making it difficult for the pilot to find the runway. He circled and tried again. This time he was instructed to come in on GCA (ground control approach). When the pilot realized that he overshot the runway, he tried to gain altitude but couldn't. We sensed trouble. At that moment there was a tremendous jolt. We did not know it at the time but, we were traveling 140 miles an hour when we hit water. We came to a halt approximately 4 miles from shore. Lights inside the plane had gone out and for a moment it looked like the end. There was a pause after impact. No explosion! No fire! There was quiet calm. All of a sudden crewmen came flying by passing over all the mail and baggage that had been strapped in the center of the plane and shouting at us to get out of the plane! Split-second decisions had to be made from this point on. One of the crewmen managed to open the four escape hatches. Two life rafts were tossed out and inflated. Each life raft, we were told, can hold twelve people. Thirty people were aboard the plane. It didn't take much to figure out that some of us would not fit in the raft. 30 people were aboard the plane; 10 USO members, 5 crewmen, and 15 other passengers. Most of the passengers were out of the plane by now, but our trumpet player, our unit manager, and I were still on the wing

trying to make up our minds what to do next. The plane was sinking fast. Our manager suddenly realizes that he left his briefcase on the plane with our passports and important documents so he decides to go back in to retrieve it. When he came back out he realized what he had just done and almost threw the briefcase back in. Then our trumpet player, who was a camera buff, decides that this was a good time to record these moments for posterity and from the sinking plane he began to grind his camera like mad. It was amazing! I had never experienced anything like it. The three of us finally jumped from the plane into the icy waters. There we were in the very cold sea not knowing what was going to happen next. Were we going to survive? Did we have to worry about sharks? In less than 5 minutes we had evacuated the plane which was disappearing before our eyes. We lost all of our possessions; including our wardrobe, music, our instruments and my \$1200 accordion which was a gift from my grandfather. Everyone was calm at first but, by now, an hour later, some of us began to panic and became hysterical. Shock was beginning to set in. We thought we would freeze to death. Suddenly from a distance we could see a light coming in our direction. It was one rescue boat to bring in the 30 survivors. The air force rescue team expected the usual; no survivors. We were all taken to the base hospital and a week later we were making arrangements to get back to the USA. Needless to say, after that experience no one wanted to fly. It took us 14 hours by train from Miho to Tokyo, 14 days on the USN General O Darby military troop ship from Yokahama to Seattle, and from Seattle everyone went their separate ways. It took me 3 days by train to Philadelphia. It was the longest and loneliest 3 days of my life. I arrived home at 30th Street Station in Philadelphia on December 27, 1953, to the waiting arms of my loving family.

After the crash I promised myself that I would never fly again as long as I lived. Two years later, I auditioned and was accepted into the United States Air Force as accordion soloist with the United States Air Force Band in Washington, DC, for 4 years and traveled the globe. How, you asked? By plane, of course!

* * * * *

This story has been reported many times over the years and has appeared in many newspapers and magazines, but, I am still asked about it. Even after all this time, especially around this time of year, I relive every minute of that Thanksgiving Day of 1953. Happy Thanksgiving to all my friends, associates and family.

--Joseph Soprani, Philadelphia, PA

Rose Giarrusso Steps Down as IFABA Treasurer

Rose Giarrusso has served IFABA as treasurer for many years and decided to step down by the end of the 2015 year. Rose worked for the past few months to balance the books after the 2015 conference to hand them over to her successor.

The IFABA Treasurer is responsible for taking care of the books, all banking, and working with our CPA to file taxes. No current member of the board expressed an interest in serving in that capacity. Mark suggested that it may be necessary to "outsource" the position beyond the Board of Directors.

An email was sent to the general membership to see if there is anyone with accounting experience who would be interested in serving as Treasurer. If a member can be found who is interested in serving as treasurer, we would need to first vote him/her onto the Board of Directors and then vote him/her into the Executive Board position as Treasurer.

Mark DeSanctis has offered to serve as Acting Treasurer until a replacement comes forward and is voted into office. As a result, here is the current list of IFABA Officers and Board Members:

Executive Board/Officers

President: Leslie Gigliotti

Vice-President: Joyce DeLaurentis

Acting Treasurer: Mark DeSanctis

Secretary: Jackie Capurro

Board of Directors

Larissa Chobany

Maria Chobany

Mark DeSanctis

William Giovanetti

Meri DeLorenzo Howard

Bea Ricotta

Stephanie Ricotta

Karen Rosanio

Paul Torna

Danita Wendorf

IFafa MEMBER ACTIVITIES

Amici Italiani, Festa Italiana,
Rockford, IL, August 2016



Balliamo! California State Fair,
Sacramento, CA August 2016



Vivaci, Italian Heritage Night
Citizens Bank Ball Park, July 2016



IFafa Face Book Page

If you use Face Book, be sure to find IFafa'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! Please visit frequently and boost the ratings by *liking* and *commenting* often on the posts.

It "boosts our ratings" the more people *like* and *comment* on the postings. Just looking at the page but not participating is not as helpful. We would also like to receive more news from IFafa 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 IFafa'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 IFafa 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>.

Milwaukee's Festival of Danza e Cultura



Tradizione Vivente – Italian Dance Group of Milwaukee



Academy de Danza Mexico

Tuesday, November 1st, 2016

October is Italian Heritage Month, and we are celebrating with an infusion of culture!

The Italian Community Center, the ICC Culture Committee, International Holiday Folk Fair and Tradizione Vivente host the 4th Annual:

Festival di Danza e Cultura



Ina Oniū Drum and Dance Ensemble
(guest g)

Adults (Members) – \$8

(Non-Members)-\$8

Children 12 & Under – \$5

Performance Only – \$8



Donauschwaben Youth Dancers

Multi-cultural evening with performances by several local ethnic groups.

Italian cake, coffee, and soft drinks will be served included in admission.



Caledonian Scottish Dancers

Pre-sale tickets can be purchased at the ICC Office, by mail, or in person at the door.

Forms are also available in the Italian Times. For more information, call 414-223-2180.

***The Italian Community Center
Doors Open at 6:00 pm –
Program at 6:30***



Tamarind Belly Dancers

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*.

Winter Outfit of Pragelato

Cotton damask headdress with ribbons of silk and velvet (see detail). Dress of wool with puffy sleeves, these also decorated with ribbons of black velvet. Apron of worked silk. Shawl of worked silk, bordered with fringe, tied across the chest. Knit stockings. Short boots of heavy leather, laced up the front.



The First Day Of Census

--- Author unknown.

It was the first day of census, and all through the land,
each pollster was ready ... a black book in hand.
He mounted his horse for a long dusty ride,
his book and some quills were tucked close by his side.
'Twas a long winding ride down a road barely there,
toward the smell of fresh bread wafting up through the air.

The woman was tired, with lines on her face
and wisps of brown hair she tucked back into place.
She gave him some water ... as they sat at the table
and she answered his questions ... the best she was able.
He asked her of children. Yes, she had quite a few,
the oldest was twenty, the youngest not two.
She held up a toddler with cheeks round and red;
his sister, she whispered, was napping in bed.
She noted each person who lived there with pride,
and she felt the faint stirrings of the wee one inside.

He noted the sex, the color, the age,
the marks from the quill soon filled up the page.
At the number of children, she nodded her head
and saw her lips quiver for the three that were dead.
The places of birth she "never forgot"
Was it Kansas? or Utah? or Oregon ... or not?

They came from Scotland, of that she was clear,
but she wasn't quite sure just how long they'd been here.
They spoke of employment, of schooling and such;
they could read some ... and write some ... though really
not much.

When the questions were answered, his job there was
done
so he mounted his horse and he rode toward the sun.
We can almost imagine his voice loud and clear,
"May God bless you all for another ten years."

Now picture a time warp ... its' now you and me
as we search for the people on our family tree.
We squint at the census and scroll down so slow
as we search for that entry from long, long ago.

Could they only imagine on that long ago day
that the entries they made would affect us this way?
If they knew, would they wonder at the yearning we feel
and the searching that makes them so increasingly real?
We can hear if we listen -- the words they impart
through their blood in our veins and their voice in our
heart.

NINNA NANNA DI GESÙ BAMBINO

The image shows a musical score for the lullaby 'Ninnananna di Gesù Bambino'. It is written in G major (one sharp) and 2/4 time. The score is divided into five systems, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment line. The first system starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The second system ends with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. The lyrics are in Italian and describe the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem, lying on straw and hay, and being adored by his mother.

p

Ge - sù Bam - bi - no_è na - to è na - to in Beth -

lem.

È so - pra_un po' di pa - glia

mf

è so - pra_un po--- di fien. È so - pra_un po' di

fien, Ge - sù Bam - bi - no pian - ge, la mam - ma che lo_a -

do - ra è so - pra_un po' di fien.

Ninnananna di Gesù Bambino

Christmas Lullaby

Gesù Bambino è nato,
è nato in Betlem;
è sopra un po' di paglia,
è sopra un po' di fien.
E' sopra un po' di fien.
Gesù Bambino piange,
la mamma che lo adora,
è sopra un po' di fien.

Infant Jesus is born,
is born in Bethlehem;
He's lying on straw,
He's lying on hay.
He's lying on hay.
Infant Jesus is crying,
His mother is adoring him,
He's lying on a bit of hay.

Italian American Heritage Association & Museum *proudly presents*

ITALIAN CHRISTMAS MARKET

December 2nd & 3rd 10am-5pm
December 4th 11am-3pm

Italian Christmas Cards ~ Murano Glass Ornaments
Wood Ceppos ~ Italian Music CD's ~ Cookbooks
Gift-Boxed Estate Jewelry ~ Books for All Ages
Aprons ~ Italian Flags & Novelties
Befana Figures, Books, Crafts
Italian Playing & Greeting Cards ~ Candy
Homemade Baked Goods ~ Calendars
Assorted Hand-Knit & Crocheted Items
Framed Italian Sayings ~ Religious Articles
Hand Packed Olio Mediterraneo

and much, much more!

Relax, Sit & Enjoy Refreshments in our *Market Café*

Buon Natale

Italian American Heritage Association & Museum
1227 Central Avenue Albany, NY 12205
(518) 435- 1979
www.americanitalianmuseum.org

*Free
Ornament
Personalization*

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, c/o Treasurer, 103 Greenbrier Drive, Carnegie, PA 15106.

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
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:

Doris Beckert

Gina Jorgensen

Joseph Soprani

Prof/Cav Phillip J. DiNovo

Bea Ricotta

Paul Torna

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!

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

\$25 Extended Membership

\$15 Basic Membership

\$22 Extended Membership (under 18 or over 65)

\$12 Basic membership (under 18 or over 65)

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, 103 Greenbrier Drive, Carnegie, PA 15106