

# THE MALTESE PRESENCE IN NORTH AMERICA



## E-NEWSLETTER

Issue 12

MARCH 2020



**H.E. Ambassador Vanessa Frazier, Permanent Representative of Malta to the UN,  
Presented a Personal Donation of Maltese Text and Reading Books  
to the Maltese Centre NYC on Saturday, February 8<sup>th</sup> (see pages 17-18)  
(l to r) Eddie Debono, Rita Grech, Ambassador Vanessa Frazier,  
Giovanni Buttigieg, Francesca Cassar**

## EDITORIAL COMMENT



**Dan Brock**

Once again, we have an issue with a wide range of topics and of activities, both recently and to come, within the Maltese communities throughout North America. (pages 13-18). I wish to thank also those who have been regularly keeping me informed of activities within their community and those who have recently come on board. There are still a couple of others I would encourage to send material from their area to this newsletter so that their events can obtain wider promotion.

The account of Achille “Cony” Sapienza as possibly the first Maltese resident of both Schenectady, NY and Detroit, MI, appears on pages 5-6. This was originally intended for the February issue but got crowded out at the last moment.

As the two longest-living persons of Maltese birth, living in North America, both died in March, it was decided to feature them in this issue. (pages 9-11) I can't thank members of the Grech and Farrugia families enough for the cooperation received and the information and photos they shared.

It was noted in the February issue that, as I researched material for an account of Jenise Spiteri and her goal to represent Malta at the 2022 Winter Olympics, I became intrigued with the intermarriage of her family with persons having the Spiteri surname and how her family ended up in California. My findings appear in the article on pages 19-20.

The timely article by Vanessa Conneely of the *Times of Malta*, relating to the reaction of two Maltese Americans to Democratic

presidential candidate Peter Buttigieg, appears on pages 8-9. Lisa Buttigieg-LiGreci of Michigan is a regular contributor of material and photos to this newsletter. Joe Gauci of Arizona is the administrator of “Maltese of Arizona” on Facebook and has accepted me as a member.

As we have now entered in the lenten season, a short pictorial article on the Carnival Dance of 1957 in London, Ontario, has been included (page 7), as well as the passion play of 1989, held in the same city (page 12)

Several years ago, while going through the issues of *The Times of Malta*, mainly for the months of May and June 1948, in the National Library of Malta (Bibliotheca) in Valletta, I came across a letter to the editor by John E. Domenico in the March 18<sup>th</sup> issue. Domenico had immigrated to Canada the year before and, with that country willing to accept some 500 men and their families from Malta, was offering some practical advice to those thinking about coming to Canada. pages 6-7)

The article on pages 20-22 is largely the same as that which appeared in the March/April 2016 issue of *The Maltese Canadian Club of London Newsletter*, pages 15-16, and shows how a family was reunited with items donated to the Club several years earlier.

In addition to those who have contributed information and photos pertaining to their respective organization I would like to especially mention Dr. Raymond Xerri, Consul General of the Republic of Malta for Canada. Dr. Xerri has also submitted his monthly message in Maltese, as well as in English. (pages 4-5). I also wish to publically thank Fr. Mario Micallef, MSSP, for allowing me to cull his Sunday homilies for spiritual direction to the readership.

As with each issue of late, both Mark Caruana of NSW, Australia and Mona Nicholas of the Bay Area, California have been of invaluable assistance. Mark joyfully provides me with information gleaned from passport applications and, on

occasion, copies of the actual documents. I rely heavily on Mona for catching errors and omissions throughout each issue.

You are encouraged to let me know what is happening in your communities and to submit articles. In the past month two suggestions for potential articles have been forwarded to me and I intend to follow up on each of them.

Again, one can read this and earlier issues on line by going to <http://maltese-americanscsf.org/maltese-journal.aspx> on the web page of the Maltese-American Social Club of San Francisco.

Also, I can be reached at [dbrock40@worldline.ca](mailto:dbrock40@worldline.ca) and, if the need should arise, can provide you with my mailing address and telephone number.

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## GLEANINGS FROM THE SUNDAY BULLETIN

### PASTOR'S THOUGHTS...



*Fr. Mario Micallef, MSSP, is pastor of St. Paul the Apostle, Toronto, the only Maltese national parish in North America. These "Pastor's thoughts..." are extracts from his commentaries on the Sunday readings which are published in the Parish's Sunday Bulletin.*

#### A Wake-up Call

Repentance or conversion is not necessarily what happens when a great sinner becomes a saint! It is, rather, a wake-up call, inviting us to realize that all that has to do with heaven is really close to us. Our God is not a distant God. He is the Emmanuel whom we have celebrated during our Christmas festivities: the God-is-with us. Conversion happens when, realizing the beauty of living for our God, my life takes a different meaning. It does not necessarily change who I am, my character, or my personality....

....What is it that God is telling me in my life? I know that I am not alone. Jesus' "great light" comes to enlighten and clarify my choices and my decisions. Then, I know that he is with me, providing me with all that I need to fulfil my mission.

#### Jesus' Light Can Do Wonders

As we slowly move into the new year, Jesus is being presented to us, not just to his Father. He comes to us as "light" to enlighten our darkness. As we journey into our own temple during these days, let us take him into our arms like Simeon did. Let us cradle him, enjoy his presence, and gaze into his loving eyes. And let us allow his light to shine from his eyes into ours. No matter how dark our lives might sometimes feel or be, his light can always do wonders!

#### What Faith Is All About

Paul's coming to Malta was no human endeavor. It was purely God's providence in action. There is no doubt that the people of Malta had always been a religious people. The thousands-of-years old temples scattered throughout the islands are ample testimony to this....One may manage to escape a storm, but there is no way one can run away from divine justice!....

By now Paul must have understood how God was constructing this story. So, Paul the evangelizer did what he knew best....The people of the island flocked to listen to him. And he shared with them that wonderful gift he had received on that faithful day on the road to Damascus – the gift of faith.

This is what real faith is all about. It is not merely something for me to keep. Rather, it is something to live and to share. The gift of faith our ancestors had received from Paul has been handed on to us through many generations....

It is up to us, now, to live it and share it. This would be the best way to thank and honor this great Apostle for what he gave us.

#### Let Us Allow Jesus to Transform Us

Perhaps sometimes we try too hard to be good and obedient in our lives. Maybe fear of punishment still dictates to us what we should or should not do. A true encounter with Christ helps us to move from law to grace, from rules to love, from duty to thanksgiving. "Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven," Jesus tells us....Let us allow him to transform us, remembering that this kingdom is being offered to us in the here and now.

#### Love Has No Limits, No Boundaries, No Exceptions

As far as Jesus is concerned, love has no limits, no boundaries, no exceptions....

....To test myself as to whether I live my life as a true follower of Jesus, I have to ask myself how do I respond to wrongs received? How do I relate to those who do not love me, or who cannot give me anything?

....Lent is a time when we are invited to improve our lives, to do that qualitative leap Jesus is asking for. And, during this time, the Church gives us some tools to help us do what, by our own efforts, we cannot do. Because, let's be honest, what Jesus is asking is not easy! More quality time for prayer, aided by almsgiving and some sacrifice (the three things which are greatly encouraged for Lent) will surely help us in achieving our holy desires.

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**St. Paul the Apostle Church,**  
**3224 Dundas St. W. Toronto, ON M6**  
**1-416-767-7054**

*Fr. Michael Borg was the first pastor of a Maltese ethnic parish in Detroit. He arrived in December 1920, having sailed on board the Olympic from Cherbourg, France. Fr. Borg was a native of St. Lawrence Parish in Vittoriosa, Malta. His first Mass in Detroit was celebrated in the Knights of Equity Hall and his sermon was preached in Maltese.*

## Lejn rappreżentanza xierqa Maltija-Kanadiża fil-**Ħames Konvenzjoni għall-Maltin li Jgħixu Barra minn Malta, il-Belt Valletta, 6-7 ta' Ottubru 2020**



**Dr. Raymond Xerri,  
Il-Konslu Ġenerali /  
Consul General**

Il-Kalendarju, tal-Attivitajiet li saru fil-komunitajiet Maltin-Kanadiżi mifruxin mall-Kanada kollha, għax-xahar ta' Frar, ġie miġbur, ippubblikat u kien ta' suċċess kbir bi kliem ta' apprezzament kontinwu minnkom. Dan kien proġett importanti, li sar għall-ewwel darba ftant dettal u bil-kolaborazzjoni sħiħa tal-Federazzjoni Maltija-Kanadiża, tal-Klabb tal-Futbol Melita, tal-Każin tal-Banda Maltija u tal-għaqdiet kollha madwar il-Kanada. Anke attivitajiet li saru fi provinċji oħra ġew inklużi. Nixtieq inwassal kelma ta' ringrazzament u apprezzament tal-kooperazzjoni u talli kulhadd fehem l-importanza ta' dan il-proġett li jirrikjedi ħafna xogħol però li l-effett pożittiv fuq il-komunità kollha huwa mpresjonanti. Għal darb'oħra flimkien innexxielna noħorġu l-Kalendarju ta' l-attivitajiet għal Marzu 2020.

### **Is-sehem tiegħek fil-Konvenzjoni u s-suggerimenti lill-Kunsillieri Maltin-Kanadiżi**

Bħalma ħabbart fuq il-Facebook webpage tal-Konsolat Ġenerali għar-Repubblika ta' Malta fil-Kanada, il-Gvern Malti ndika li bejn is-6-7 t' Ottubru 2020 ser jorganizza l-**Ħames Konvenzjoni għall-Maltin li Jgħixu Barra minn Malta**. Minħabba li fil-Kanada nsibu t-tieni l-akbar komunita' Maltija li tgħix barra minn Malta wara dik tal-Awstralja, in-numru mistenni li jattendu l-Konvenzjoni mill-komunitajiet Maltin fil-Kanada huwa mdaqqaqas. S'issa taw l-applikazzjoni tagħhom erbatax-il persuna mill-Kanada, iżda hemm bżonn ta' aktar persuni, speċjalment żgħażaġħ li jinteressaw ruħhom. Dawn għandhom japplikaw u jipprezentaw l-ideat tagħhom dwar it-tema magħżula għal din il-Konvenzjoni li hi, 'Inzommu Kuntatt.'

Min jixtieq applikazzjoni jista' jiġbor kopja mill-Uffiċċju tal-Konsulat Ġenerali, mill-Malta *Info Stations* diversi jew jikteb email lill-Konsulat Ġenerali fuq [maltaconsulate.toronto@gov.mt](mailto:maltaconsulate.toronto@gov.mt) kemm jista' jkun malajr. Aktar dettalji jingħataw fil-gimghat u x-xhur li ġejjin.

Rigward il-**Ħames Konvenzjoni għall-Maltin li Jgħixu Barra minn Malta** ser jiltaqa' l-Kunsill għall-Maltin li

## **Towards a good Maltese-Canadian representation at the Fifth Convention for Maltese Living Abroad, Valletta, 6-7 October 2020**

The Maltese-Canadian Calendar of Events for the month of February, was a 'collective effort' led by the Consulate General of Malta to Canada in full cooperation with the Maltese-Canadian Federation, the Melita S.C., the Malta Band Club and all the other associations and Maltese-Canadian communities that organise events throughout Canada. It was the first time ever that such a detailed calendar was attempted and it was a resounding success. A word of appreciation is in place not only for the work involved, but also the fact that all clubs understood the importance of such a tool of unity. Thanks to the same strong community and collective effort, we are now publishing the Maltese-Canadian Calendar of Events for the month of March 2020.

### **Your participation at the Convention and your suggestions to the Maltese-Canadian Councillors**

On the Facebook webpage and Instagram of the Consulate General of the Republic of Malta, I announced that the Government of Malta will be organising the 5th Convention for Maltese Living Abroad between 6-7 October 2020. Since Canada hosts the second largest Maltese Community living outside of Malta, following Australia, the number of Maltese-Canadians expected to attend and participate is sizeable. So far there have been 14 applicants, however, a larger number is expected and can apply to attend and participate, especially young Maltese-Canadians who wish to get their message, suggestions and ideas across within the Convention theme which is, 'Keeping Connected.'

Whoever wishes to apply and present a paper may collect a copy of the application form from the Office of the Consulate General, from the Malta Info Stations in the usual places or can email at the earliest on [maltaconsulate.toronto@gov.mt](mailto:maltaconsulate.toronto@gov.mt). Further details will be provided in the coming weeks and months.

A meeting will be held regarding the Fifth Convention of the Maltese Living Abroad and the usual statutory once-a-year meeting of the Council for Maltese Living Abroad, established by Act XX of 2011. Brandon Azzopardi of Mississauga, Ontario and Sue Schembri of Coquitlam, British Columbia are the two Maltese-Canadian Councillors who will be representing all Maltese-Canadians at these very important forums where suggestions, comments and challenges are brought to the table and solutions are discussed and found to improve the lives of Maltese-Canadians both in Canada and Malta.

Jgħixu Barra minn Malta, imwaqqaf bl-Att XX tal-2011 mill-Gvern Malti, fejn Brandon Azzopardi (minn Mississauga, fil-Provincja ta' Ontario) u Sue Schembri (minn Coquitlam, fil-Provincja ta' British Columbia) huma ż-żewġ rappreżentanti Maltin-Kanadiżi li se jirrapreżentaw lill-Komunitajiet Maltin-Kanadiżi kollha f'din il-fora, hekk importanti fejn jiġu diskussi l-isfidi, is-suggerimenti u l-kummenti dwar dak kollu li jolqot lill- Maltin fil-Kanada.

### **San Patrizju, San Ġużepp u l-Felsien ta' Malta**

Fiz-17 ta' Marzu ġewwa l-Kanada niċcelebraw il-festa ta' San Patrizju u f'Malta l-Festa ta' San Ġużepp u Jum il-Felsien, fid-19 u l-31 ta' Marzu rispettivament. Din is-sena, Malta tfakkar l-41 sena minn meta l-aħħar Forzi Militari Ingliżi telqu minn xtutna u komplejna t-triq sabiex sirna Repubblika fl-1974. F'dan ix-xahar, jibdwu ukoll jiżiedu l-attivitijiet tal-komunitajiet Maltin madwar il-Kanada b'attivitijiet ta' ġewwa bħal-logħob tal-futbol mit-tim Malti-Kanadiż ta' Canucks / Melita S.C. u xi wħud jibdwu jippreparaw sabiex iżuru lill-Gzejjer Maltin għal żmien il-Għid.

O Mulej, bierek dejjem lil Malta u lill-Kanada.

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### **ACHILLE "CONY" SAPIENZA: FIRST MALTESE RESIDENT OF SCHENECTADY AND DETROIT?**

**Dan Brock**

Achille or Achilles Sapienza was born on April 18, 1883 in Sliema, Malta to Joseph Edgar and Virginia (Camilleri) Sapienza.

On July 7, 1905, he and a presumed cousin, Edgar Camilleri, were issued a passport to travel to Canada. Edgar was born on January 6, 1885, in the parish of Stella Maris, Sliema, a son of the late Dr. Ettore & Teresa (Pace) Camilleri.

Both single, Achille and Edgar immediately made their way to Liverpool, England. There, on July 13<sup>th</sup>, they set sail on board the *Tunisian*, purportedly for Winnipeg, Manitoba, by way of Quebec City and Montreal. While both listed their occupation in Malta as farmers, it is believed this and the destination of Winnipeg were a ruse to be accepted as immigrants by Canadian authorities. Unlike the over-whelming majority of Maltese immigrants to North America at the time, they were both literate and able to afford "second cabin class," as opposed to "steerage" for their Atlantic crossing.

They disembarked at Montreal on August 1<sup>st</sup>. Rather than travelling by rail to Winnipeg, Achille, and presumably Edgar, crossed over into Detroit, on or about August 17<sup>th</sup>, "for a visit." Achille had now listed his occupation as "clerk," i.e. clerk.

The young man must have returned to Canada as, later in 1905, they crossed into the United States by

### **March celebrates St Patrick's, St Joseph and Malta's Freedom Day**

On the 17<sup>th</sup> of March, in Canada, one celebrates St Patrick's Day, while in Malta the Feast of St Joseph and Freedom Day are celebrated on the 19<sup>th</sup> and on the 31<sup>st</sup> of March respectively. Also, Malta will be celebrating the 41<sup>st</sup> year since British Military Forces left the islands and the Maltese continued the road towards becoming a Republic in 1974. During this month indoor activities start to increase in the Maltese-Canadian communities and marks the start of the soccer season by the Maltese-Canadian soccer team Canucks/Melita S.C. Also, many prepare for a visit to the Maltese Islands for the Easter period.

May God bless Malta and Canada.



### **March 31, 1979, the Last of the British Armed Forces Leave Malta after 181 Years.**

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way of St. Albans, Vermont.

The whereabouts of Edgar Camilleri for the next few years is uncertain. He doesn't appear on the 1910 Federal Census for the United States. We pick him up again, in August 1911, in Sliema, where he married Margherita Zammit. They and their three children immigrated to New York City in December 1920.

As for Achille Sapienza, we find him living at 543 South Centre Street, Schenectady, by March 1906. His younger brother, Edgar Sapienza, born August 6, 1884, in Stella Maris Parish, Sliema, gave Achille's name and address as his destination on boarding the *Majestic* in Liverpool in early April.

It would appear that Achille had found employment at the General Electric Company as, at the time of the 1910 census, his brother Edgar was employed in Schenectady as an "electrician" at an "electric works." As noted in the January issue, page 16, the General Electric Company and the American Locomotive Company (ALCO) were the industrial powerhouses in Schenectady at the time.

By the end of 1906, several other Maltese men were living at 543 South Centre Street. One of these was Pasquale Demajo who had arrived in New York Harbor in early October 1905 and had noted he was en route to his friend Calcedonio Attard who was living in Guthemburg, New Jersey.

Both Peter Paul Azzopardi and Victor Caruana were on their way to join their friend Pasquale Demajo in Schenectady after stepping off the *St. Paul* at the Port of New York on October 7<sup>th</sup>.

By coincidence, Carmelo Dimech disembarked from the *Calabria* on the same day, and gave the same Schenectady address as his destination. In his case, however, he had a cousin by the name of Busuttill also living at 543 South Centre Street.

In addition to Edgar Sapienza, Peter Paul Azzopardi, Victor Caruana and Carmelo Dimech, a fifth Maltese immigrant to show up in Schenectady in 1906 was Carmelo Micallef. He was joining his cousin, "Mrs. Patrick Farrelly," at 354 Adorion(?) Street.

Now whether Pasquale Demajo, "Mr." Busuttill or Mrs.

Patrick Farrelly arrived in Schenectady before Achille Sapienza is not presently known. If Achille were not the first Maltese arrival in Schenectady, he was certainly among the first.

While other emigrants from Malta were to settle in Schenectady in the ensuing years, Achilles soon left for Detroit.

There, he found work as a machinist and, on November 3, 1909, married a 23-year-old factory hand, Pauline Georgi, who had been born in Germany. By this time, Achille was also known as Cony or Cooney.

Now the 1900 US Federal Census gives no record of any person of both Maltese birth and blood living in Detroit and the 1910 census names but two, Cooney Sapienza and Angelo De Rosa. According to De Rosa, he came to the United States in 1885. His arrival in Detroit, however, would have been between 1900 and 1910.

Again, if Achille (aka Cony, Cooney) Sapienza were not the first person of Maltese birth and blood to settle in Detroit, he was indeed among the first.

Achille Sapienza's wife, Pauline or "Paula" died in Farmington, MI on January 20, 1925.

On December, 28, 1925, Achille, was married in Detroit, by the Catholic priest, Fr. John J. Hunt, Mary Jane Drapeau, a native of Michigan who was 10 years Cony's junior. The Sapienzas were to have two children, Helen Marie and Robert Dean, born in 1928 and 1931 respectively.

By the time of Cony's death in Wyandotte, MI, on September 29, 1951, the family surname had morphed to Sapienz. Cony Sapienz's remains were interred in Grandlawn Cemetery, Detroit.

His widow, Mary Jane Sapienz, continued living for some time after at 15051 McLain (Mclain) Avenue in Allen Park. She died in Dearborn on February 21, 1962.

As for Edgar Sapienza, Cony's brother, he appears to have joined his brother, Cony, in Detroit, sometime after 1910. In early November 1914, he crossed over into Windsor, Ontario and signed up with the Canadian Infantry. He was assigned to the 18<sup>th</sup> Battalion and, on the night of April 26, 1916, was instantly killed, at St. Eloi, near Ypres, in West Flanders.

## **MIGRATION TO CANADA Useful Facts and Prospects**

**JOHN E. DE DOMENICO**

*Editor's note: Seventy-two years ago, in the Times of Malta, March 18, 1948, the following article appeared. It was reprinted in The Maltese Canadian Club of London Newsletter and had been written by a Maltese emigrant who had settled in London, Ontario, with his English bride, the year before.*

An item in an Ontario newspaper recently caught my eye. It was a notice by the Canadian Immigration Authorities in Ottawa, announcing their decision to make arrangements for "500 selected Maltese Immigrants" to be brought to Canada.

Having made their decision the authorities in Canada usually act pretty fast, but I hope that I am still in time to welcome those who have been selected (and any others who intend making their way over here); and also to say that if I can be of any service I would be very pleased to give any information.

I believe there are very few Maltese in Canada. The reason for this is possibly because the Canadian Government has only been allowing entry into Canada to those who were either born or naturalized in the United Kingdom or the *Dominions*. The news of the reversal of this decision has been a really wonderful surprise and, for the benefit of those who are about to take the long trek to Canada, I would very much like to say a few words about this great country.

### **Canada Still Remembers**

Since the publication of the Government's plan, the newspapers have expressed in very definite terms the warm welcome the "gallant defenders of the world's most bombed spot" would receive in Canada. Unlike some other countries, Canada still remembers the headline Malta made in the dark days of World War II and the people here are prepared to welcome the Maltese emigrants in such a way as to make the "starting-anew" much more interesting, pleasant and easy.

## Weather, Housing and Food Details

As the selecting officers in Malta will probably give all the information in detail, I will only put a few facts down in as brief a manner as possible.

*Weather:* Canadian winters – from about November until March – are cold with temperatures down to about 14 degrees in this part of the country. Further north, around Montreal, etc., it is even colder. There is plenty of coal to burn, however, and Canadian homes are exceedingly well-heated – in fact rather over-heated by English standards. From April to October I would say the weather is pretty much like that in Malta during the spring, summer and autumn.

*Housing:* This, here, is still a very great problem. Houses and flats to rent are extremely difficult to find (although not impossible). There are hundreds of nice little houses for sale, however with a price-tag ranging from about 4,000 dollars to 8,000 dollars, or £1,000 to £2,000. It is also easy to buy a house on the easy instalment plan providing you can put approximately one-third cash down and the remainder to be paid in instalments of about 20 dollars to 40 dollars per month.

*Food:* This is most definitely the land of plenty and I have never seen such a great variety of food in such inexhaustible quantities. The price of food is, in my opinion, very reasonable having regard to the average weekly earning of say 30 dollars to 40 dollars. A few figures would perhaps paint a clearer picture. Bread sells for about five pence; milk is about nine pence per quart; eggs about 2s. 6d. per dozen; meat (beef) 2s. 6d. per pound; butter is one of the rather expensive items, selling at 5s per pound.

## Clothing and Employment

*Clothing:* There is also an abundance of men's, women's and children's clothes. The best man's suit obtainable costs around £15 (English wool and really high class style); shirts at £1 each (the best); shoes at £2.10s. per pair (also the best) and overcoats for about £15. Women's clothes are also very reasonable with beautiful "New Look" summer costumes at about £1.10s; winter coats at £5; nylons (the best) at 7s. 6d.

*Employment:* I understand that immigrants will be fully looked after by the authorities with regard to employment. Furthermore I believe this to be entirely up to the drive, ability, etc. of the individual so I will say very little about this subject. The usual starting wage for a married man is at around 30 dollars weekly; very high wages (up to 80 dollars) are paid to people with real trade ability.

I have covered the important points to the best of my ability. If there should be anyone requiring some further information I would be very pleased to hear from them. They should write to John E. De Domenico, 518 Central Avenue, London, Ontario, Canada.

## THE CARNIVAL DANCE OF 1957

Dan Brock

A Carnival Dance was held on the rented quarters of the Maltese Canadian Club at 63½ Dundas Street, London, Ontario, on Saturday, March 2, 1957, four days prior to Ash Wednesday. While dress for this occasion was optional, fancy dress was preferable and most did show up in costume. Music was provided by Emmanuel "Lee" Pavia and his band.



Both Adults and Children Attended



(l to r) Mary Vella holding her baby daughter Margaret, Emily Pavia, Irene Zammit and her sister Lily Micallef and Maria Psaila.

Photos courtesy of Yvonne Mitchell

*The first Maltese family to have settled in Kamloops, British Columbia is believed to have been that of Francis Cassar Torreggini in 1947.*

**THE BUTTIGIEG EFFECT: 'AMERICANS ARE FINALLY PRONOUNCING MY NAME RIGHT'**  
**US children of Maltese immigrants savouring presidential candidate's rise**

**Vanessa Conneely**



*Ms Conneely holds a masters in journalism and broadcasting. She has been a freelance reporter for The Irish Times since December 2012 and a full-time journalist for the Times of Malta since October 2019.*

Malta is receiving a lot more attention since Democrat candidate Pete Buttigieg launched his bid to become US president, Maltese people living in the US say. The openly gay politician, whose late father was from Hamrun, surprisingly beat fellow Democrat Bernie Sanders in the first poll in Iowa this week [February 3<sup>rd</sup>] in the race to contest Donald Trump on November 3. "Everyone I know asks if we're related, because it's not a very common name here," says Lisa Buttigieg-LeGreci, whose father emigrated from Paola with his family when he was two.



**Lisa Buttigieg LeGreci**

**"Everyone I know asks if we're related."**

Photo by Dori Sumter

"I have to explain to them that Buttigieg is a very common surname in Malta and it's not likely that we are related. But you never know, right? We could be distant cousins!"

The Michigan resident says it has also helped people pronounce her name correctly for the first time in her 60 years.

"Growing up with the name Buttigieg was interesting. No one ever heard of it or could pronounce it. That gave

me the opportunity to tell people I was Maltese and my family was from Malta.

"The funny thing is, we never pronounced our last name correctly either. When my father enlisted in the army for World War II, his boot camp sergeant mispronounced his name as 'beauty-jay'. Even though it didn't sound anything like it was spelled, my dad said; 'When you're in boot camp, you never correct your sergeant.'"

When he got back from the war, her father never stopped pronouncing the name that way, even though the rest of his family said it correctly.

*I would love to meet him some day. Maybe I could make some pastizzi for him!*

Somehow, the American pronunciation became Butt-i-gee and/or Butt-i-gig.

"I have no idea how that happened, I guess because that is how it's pronounced phonetically in English. I always made it a point to tell people of the different pronunciations and that the proper way they say it in Malta is 'Boot-edge-edge'.

"I think it sounds more like Boot-a-jeej and I plan to tell candidate Pete when I meet him."

Lisa, who is active in several local Maltese groups around Detroit, says she will definitely vote for the Democrat should he become the party's candidate between now and June. That has suddenly become a bigger possibility after Iowa.

"I am a huge fan of Pete. I think he has a fresh younger perspective on things. I like the way he carries himself. He's not running a negative campaign. I agree with his policies on income and fair wages. Especially for our teachers and minimum wage workers. He is also pro-environment. However, I don't agree with his views on abortion.



**Pete Buttigieg:**

**Topped the polls in Iowa. Lisa is hopeful.**

"I would love to meet him someday. Maybe I could make some pastizzi for him!"

Another Maltese-American who is desperate to meet the presidential-hopeful is chef Joe Gauci. He is the owner of Malta Joe's Baked Goods in Arizona and travelled to Malta in 2014 to learn how to make the perfect pastizzi. He now ships the traditional Maltese

dish around the US and is enjoying the extra interest Mr Buttigieg is bringing to his restaurant. "My business is booming," says Joe, whose parents migrated from Tarxien and Paola in 1950.



**Joe Gauci: His pastizzi business is booming.**

"Malta has been living under the radar for so long and now, with the Information Age, people are discovering our diamond in the Mediterranean Sea."

Like Lisa, Joe, 55, is an active member of the Maltese community in his state – and runs the Facebook Group 'Maltese of Arizona'.

He also says he will vote for Pete Buttigieg should he become the Democrat choice.

"We have a robust Maltese community. Through my pastizzi business, I have gathered dozens of Maltese families who thought they were the only Maltese around, but now that is changing.

"I have definitely seen a surge in interest since Mr Buttigieg started his campaign. When people come in to buy pastizzi, they get a lesson in Maltese heritage.

*\*This article appeared in The Sunday Times of Malta, February 9, 2020. See [timesofmalta.com/articles/view/the-buttigieg-effect-americans-are-finally-pronouncing-my-name-right.769414](https://timesofmalta.com/articles/view/the-buttigieg-effect-americans-are-finally-pronouncing-my-name-right.769414). Printed with permission of the editor.*

**Dr Raymond C. Xerri**  
**Consul General of the Republic of Malta to Canada**  
**3280 Bloor Street West**  
**Centre Tower, 10<sup>th</sup> Floor, Suite 1060**  
**Etobicoke, ON M8X 2X3**  
**CANADA**

**TEL: 001 (416) 207 0922, 207 0989**  
**Fax: 001 (416) 207-0986**  
**Emergency Cellphone: 011 (416) 832 4607**  
**VOIP General (if you are calling from Malta):**  
**2204 2127**  
**E-Mail: [raymond.c.xerri@gov.mt](mailto:raymond.c.xerri@gov.mt)**  
**Generic Email: [malta\\_consulate.toronto@gov.mt](mailto:malta_consulate.toronto@gov.mt)**

## **LONGEST LIVING FEMALE IMMIGRANTS TO NORTH AMERICA FROM MALTA\***

**Dan Brock**

Monday, March 23<sup>rd</sup>, will mark the first anniversary of the death of Carrie Grech.



**Carrie Grech in Later Years**

Carmela, the daughter of Joseph and Josephine (Aquilina) Mifsud, was born in Msida on November 14, 1913, thereby making her 105 years and 129 days old at the time of her death. She was the third of seven children, two boys and five girls.



**The Mifsud Family c. 1930**  
**(l to r) Front row: Connie, Josephine (mother),**  
**Joseph (father), Charlie, Katie, Mary**  
**Back row: Rita, Carrie, Tony**

On September 9, 1934, at the Chapel of Our Lady of Lourdes in Floriana, Carrie married George Grech the

son of Lewis and Catherine (Mallia) Grech. George was born in Msida on January 22, 1912.



**Wedding Photo of Carrie and George**

As Msida was not far from the submarine bases and the Grand Harbour, it was subjected to numerous raids and bombings, first by the Italians and then by the Germans. For Carrie, her husband and their three daughters, it became routine, when on hearing the sirens, to run up Gwardamanga hill to the air raid shelter. It was during the air raid of Wednesday, August 5, 1942, that Carrie's fourth child, Mariana, was born in that air raid shelter.

On May 22, 1952, Carmela left Malta, on board the *Nea Hellas*, with four of her children: Margaret, Mary "Marie", Aloysia "Louise" and Joseph "Joe". After disembarking at New York on June 4<sup>th</sup>, they left for 1421 Labrosse Street, in the Corktown area of Detroit to be reunited with Carmela's husband George and two children, Vittoria "Vickie" and Mariana "Mary Ann" who had arrived in the United States the year before, also on board the *Nea Hellas*.

A final get-together had taken place in the Mifusd household on Sunday, May 18<sup>th</sup> and a photograph was taken in the nearby field owed by Joseph and Josephine.

At the time of her death on March 23, 2019, Carrie was survived by seven of her eight children, 23 grandchildren, 44 great-grandchildren and four great-great-

grandchildren.



**On the Eve of Leaving for the United States  
(l to r) Front row: Marie, Margaret, Louise (holding doll), Jo Bolger (Carrie's niece), Carrie (holding Joe)  
Back row: Connie (Carrie's sister), Joseph & Josephine Mifsud, Elsie Mifsud (Carrie's sister-in-law)**

Photos courtesy of the Grech family

\*\*\*

March 6<sup>th</sup> will mark the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the passing of Maria Carmela Farrugia reported to be the oldest living Maltese immigrant to North America.

At the time of her death in 2005, at Mount Hope Centre of Long Term Care in London, Ontario, Carmela was 106 years, 243 days old.

Carmela was born on July 5, 1898, in Senglea, to Stefano and Concetta (Scicluna) Sant' Angelo and one of four children to live to adulthood.

As her father was in the British Merchant Marine, the family spent a few years in Gibraltar. (The black and white photo below is believed to have been taken there.)

On February 6, 1923, in Senglea, she married Giovanni "John" Farrugia. John was born in Senglea on February 23, 1892, to Gregorio and Guiseppa (Scicluna) Sant' Angelo. He operated a men's clothing store in Senglea. Both the store and the Farrugia home were destroyed during the Second World War.

John died on November 29, 1946 and Carmela raised the nine children, still at home, singlehandedly. One by one, these children started to leave home and even Malta. Most went to Canada.

With eight of her 10 children living in Canada, Carmela came over on her own, by plane, for a visit in the summer of 1958 and ended up staying. She then lived with her sons Steve and Eddy in London, Ontario.



**Farrugia Family Photo, Monday, October 4, 1948, as Jane Is About to Board the *Radnik* to Join Her Husband, George Porter, in London, Ontario (l to r) first row: Sid, Eddie, Evelyn, Peggy second row: Maria, Janie, Carmela (mother), Frank**

Courtesy of Camela's granddaughter Mable Higgins

Later, Carmela lived in her own apartment there until, at the age of 100, she fell and broke her hip. She then went to live at Marian Villa (now the Mount Hope Centre of Long Term Care).

Carmela was survived by eight of her 10 children and several grandchildren, great-grandchildren and great-great grandchildren.

She was interred in St. Peter's Cemetery, London.



**Carmela as a Teen with Her Younger Brother Vincenzo Like Queen Elizabeth II, Throughout Her Life, Carmela Was Renowned for Her Stylish Hats**

Courtesy of Her Mabel Higgins



**Carmela Farrugia (front and centre) on Her 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday with Her Eight Living Children (l to r) Front row: Evelyn, Peggy, Carmela, Maria, Jane Back row: Stephen, Frank, Edward, Sid**  
 Courtesy of Camela's youngest child Edward Farrugia



**Carmela Farrugia on Her 106<sup>th</sup> Birthday with Her Daughter Jane Porter**  
 Courtesy of Her Granddaughter Brenda Bandy

The oldest Maltese immigrant to date is Filomena Muscat of the UK, who died on June 8, 2016, at the age of 108 years, 78 days. She had been born in Zejtun, Malta on March 22, 1908.

The oldest known person who was born and died in Malta is Connie Galea. She was born on December 31, 1890 and died on October 1, 2000 at the age of 109 years, 275 days.

*\* I wish to thank Joe Grech, Jean Krystyniak, Mary Ann Meilak, Margaret Micallef, Edward Farrugia, Mabel Higgins and Brenda Bandy for their assistance with this article.*

**LEHEN MALTI**  
(Maltese Voice)  
**OMNI 1 Southern Ontario**  
Saturdays 8:30 a.m.  
Mondays 3:30 a.m.  
Tuesdays 11.30 a.m.  
Wednesdays 11:00 p.m.  
Thursdays 8:30 a.m.

**OMNI British Columbia/Pacific**  
Saturdays 2:00 p.m.

**OMNI Alberta/Prairies**  
Saturdays 2:00 p.m.

**THE PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST**

**Dan Brock\***

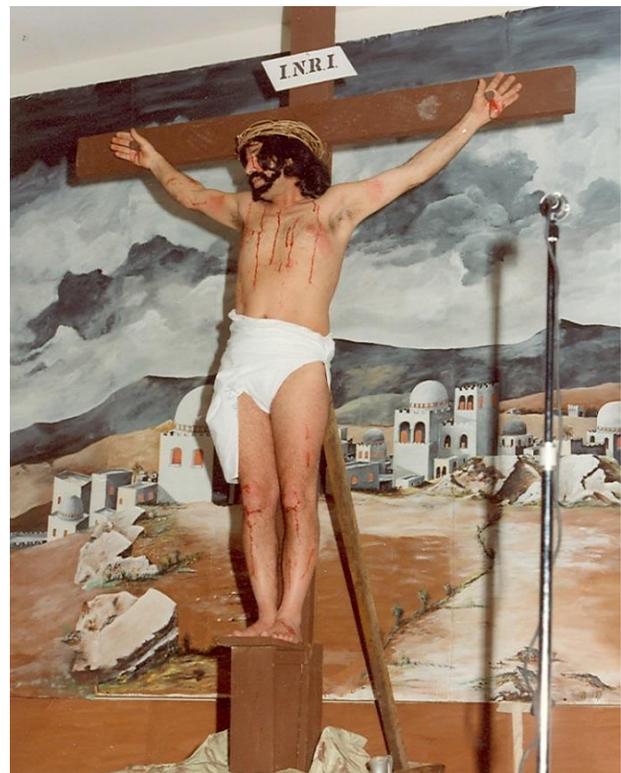
11-Maltese Actors of Toronto, performed *Ġesu ta' Nazzarett* at The Maltese Canadian Club of London on Good Friday, March 24, 1989.



**Jesus (C. Zammit) Stands before Pilate (H. Gauci)**



**The Women at the Foot of the Cross  
in This Scene Would Have Been  
Mary (M. Fenech), the Mother of Jesus,  
Mary Magdalene (R. Kriewaldt) and Possibly  
Martha (R. Kriewaldt) and Mary (M. Astarita)  
the sisters of Lazarus (J. Calleja).  
The person in the dark robe to our left  
was the High Priest Caiaphas (S. Attard)**



**Jesus on the Cross**

*\*This is based on an article which appeared in the Maltese Canadian Club of London Newsletter, March/April 2012*

**ACTIVITIES WITHIN  
THE MALTESE COMMUNITIES**

**Dan Brock**

**The Bay Area, California**

**Maltese-American Social Club of San Francisco**

A trip to the Cache Creek resort Casino took place on Saturday, February 15<sup>th</sup>.

The St. Patrick's Day Dinner/Dance will be held at the Club on Saturday, March 14<sup>th</sup>.

**The Greater Toronto Area, Ontario**

**Consul General of the Republic of Malta to Canada**

John Vella, President of the newly-formed St. Paul the Apostle Mission Group, paid a courtesy call to the Consulate General Office on Tuesday, January 21<sup>st</sup>. John explained the mandate he was entrusted with by the Missionary Society of St. Paul (MSSP), led by Fr. Mario Micallef, Pastor of St. Paul the Apostle Parish, to work in assisting MSSP missions worldwide.



**Consul General Dr. Raymond Xerri and John Vella**

Dr. Raymond Xerri, while in Malta, presented a cheque, on January 2<sup>nd</sup>, for €700, to Fr. Martin Micallef, Chairperson of Dar tal-Providenza in Siggiewi, Malta. This represented the monies donated by the Maltese Canadians in the GTA towards Dar tal-Providenza.



**Fr. Martin Micallef  
Expressing Thanks to Those Present**

The diamond wedding anniversary of Michael and Theresa Camilleri was celebrated at The Sultan's Tent & Café Moroc, in Toronto, on Friday, February 7<sup>th</sup>. Their daughters, Joanne and Christine Camilleri, are entertainers here. Among the guests was the Consul General of Malta for Canada, Dr. Raymond Xerri.



**Michael and Theresa Camilleri**

On the morning of Thursday, February 13<sup>th</sup>, the Consul General of Malta met with the Executive Committee of the Maltese-Canadian Museum Archives and Visitors Centre. Both parties discussed future plans for the Museum and upcoming events to be organized in conjunction with the Office of the Consulate General.



**(l to r) Rose Cassar, Deborah Lighfoot, Richard Cumbo (curator), Dr. Raymond Xerri, Fr. Mario Micallef (chairman), Carmen Galea and Mani Mifsud**

Two successful Q & A sessions were held with the Consul General of Malta on the weekend of February 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup>. The first took place on Saturday afternoon at the Melita Soccer Club. The second was held, the following afternoon, at the Malta Band Club.



**Q & A at the Malta Band Club Sunday, February 16<sup>th</sup>**

**Maltese Canadian Business & Networking Association (MCBNA)**

The MCBNA is sponsoring “A Taste of Malta Live Cooking Demos,” on Thursday, March 26<sup>th</sup>, in part to support the St. Paul the Apostle Parish Mission Group which will be going to Huancañé, Peru in August to assist Bishop Giovanni Cefai, MSSP. (See below.)



**Q & A at the Melita Soccer Club, Saturday, February 15<sup>th</sup>**

**Maltese-Canadian Museum Archives and Visitors Centre**  
**St. Paul the Apostle Church Complex**  
**3224 Dundas St. W.,**  
**Toronto, ON, M6P 2A3**  
**1-416-767-7054**

**THE MCBNA PRESENTS:**

**A TASTE OF MALTA**

**LIVE COOKING DEMOS**

**PASTIZZI. ROSS IL-FORN. TORTA. BRUNGIEL MIMLI & MORE**

**Buffet Dinner**  
**Rabbit, Chicken,**  
**Roasted Potatoes, Imqarrun,**  
**Salad, Hobz Biz-Zejt & more**  
**CASH BAR**

**\$45**  
PER PERSON

**MALTA BAND CLUB**  
**5745 Coopers Ave, Mississauga, ON**  
**Thurs Mar 26th @ 6:30pm**  
**Tickets must be purchased in advance**

A PORTION OF THE PROCEEDS WILL GO TO THE ST PAUL THE APOSTLE MISSION GROUP

Melita Soccer Club Inc.

**MELITA SOCCER CLUB**

*Come Celebrate*

**St. Patrick's Day**

on  
Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Doors open at 6:30 p.m.  
**Main Hall at the Club**  
3336 Dundas St. West, Toronto

\* Dinner \* Dancing \* Cash Bar \*  
\* Music by DJ \*

Tickets - \$ 30.00  
For tickets & information  
please call 416-763-5317  
Tickets must be  
picked up by  
7<sup>th</sup> March 2020



**MELITA SOCCER CLUB  
WOMEN'S AUXILIARY COMMITTEE  
2020**

<p><b>Chairperson</b> <b>Secretary-Treasurer</b> <b>Directors</b></p>	<p><b>Lucy Chircop</b> <b>Adele Splteri</b> <b>Mary Tanti</b> <b>Patricia Xerri</b></p>
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A **Casino Rama Bus Trip** is planned for Saturday, March 28<sup>th</sup>. Cost \$5.00. Call Mary at 416-622-6819 one week before.

A **Soccer Team Fundraising Dinner** is also being held on Saturday, March 28<sup>th</sup>.

A **Euchre Night** is planned for Saturday, April 4<sup>th</sup>

**St. Paul the Apostle Parish**

This year's Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (January 18<sup>th</sup>-25<sup>th</sup>) culminated with a Prayer Service, led by Cardinal Thomas Collins, of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Toronto. This prayer service was held at 7:00 p.m., Sunday, January 26<sup>th</sup>, at Yorkminster Park Baptist Church, 1585 Yonge Street, Toronto.

The theme of the service was "They showed us unusual kindness" (Acts 28:2) and was attended by Anglican, Armenian Apostolic Church, Pentecostal and United Church congregations, as well as Roman Catholic and Baptist.

The Maltese-Canadian delegation was led by Fathers Mario Micallef, Ivan Burdian and Karm Borg of the Missionary Society of St. Paul, with a sizable number of parishioners of St. Paul the Apostle. Dr. Raymond Xerri, Consul General of Malta to Canada, represented the Government of Malta.

Following the service, a reception was held and the Maltese-Canadian delegation had an opportunity to have a photo taken with Cardinal Collins.

**MELITA SOCCER CLUB  
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
2020**

<b>President</b>		<b>George Xuereb</b>
<b>Vice-President</b>		<b>Arthur Xerri</b>
<b>Secretary</b>		<b>Mary Ann Piscopo</b>
<b>Treasurer</b>		<b>Charles Micallef</b>
<b>Directors</b>		
<b>Joseph Cassar</b>		<b>Mario D'Agostino</b>
<b>Jesmond Galea</b>		<b>Charles Gixti</b>
<b>Auditors</b>		
<b>Frank Apap</b>		<b>Joe Zammit</b>
<b>Trustees</b>		
<b>John Chircop</b>	<b>Tony Tanti</b>	<b>Fred Vella</b>



**Group Photo with Cardinal Thomas Collins**

**CORRECTIONS TO THE FEBRUARY ISSUE**

The Fenkata poster, page 14, column 2, should be omitted as it was for 2016!

The **St. Paul's Feast Dinner Dance** was held on the evening of Saturday, February 8<sup>th</sup>. The pastor, Fr. Mario Micallef, MSSP, gave a great dinner speech, followed by an address from the Consul General of Malta. Among the guests were the former Honourary Consul General, Milo Vassallo, and his wife.



**Milo Vassallo and Dr. Raymond Xerri**

The Malta Band performed a few traditional pieces and Enzo Gusman, Malta's renowned singer, entertained the rest of the evening.



**The Malta Band Performing After the Dinner**

**St. Paul the Apostle Youth Group**

## GAMES NIGHT

HOSTED BY ST. PAUL'S THE APOSTLE YOUTH GROUP



**ENTRY PER PERSON: \$10.00**

**WHERE: ST PAUL THE APOSTLE PARISH  
(3224 DUNDAS STREET WEST)**

**WHEN: FRIDAY MARCH 6<sup>th</sup>, 2020**

**TIME: DOORS OPEN AT 6:30 PM**

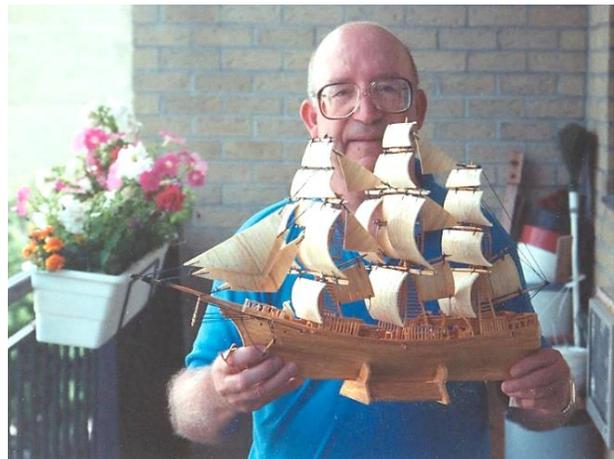
**TICKET ENTRY INCLUDES:**

- ❖ A VARIETY OF GAMES FOR ALL AGES
- ❖ PIZZA DINNER WITH BEVERAGES INCLUDED
- ❖ A FUN TIME FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY!

**Please email [stpaulyouthgroup@hotmail.com](mailto:stpaulyouthgroup@hotmail.com) for any questions.**

**London, Ontario**

Stan Mallia, a longtime member of the now defunct Maltese Canadian Club of London and the association which had preceded it, passed away in his 91<sup>st</sup> year on Sunday, February 9<sup>th</sup>. He will be remembered as a kind, warm-hearted and talented person.



**Stan Mallia  
with One of His Many Matchstick Creations**

Members of the Maltese community and friends will gather at the Mandarin Restaurant on Hyde Park Road in London, at noon, on Thursday, February 27<sup>th</sup>, to enjoy one another's company over lunch.

Mario Vella's Victory Against ALS 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Dinner Dance will be held at the Marconi Club of London, 120 Clarke Road, on Saturday, March 28<sup>th</sup>. Tickets are \$50 each and may be obtained by calling Fred Vella at 519-668-8835. (see poster below)



**MARIO VELLA'S VICTORY AGAINST ALS**

*10th Anniversary*  
**Dinner Dance**  
*Saturday, March 28, 2020*

Doors open at 5:00 p.m.  
Dinner at 6:00 p.m.  
Dance to follow with DJ Andy.  
Marconi Club, 120 Clarke Road, London

★ Auction Items   ★ Door Prizes  
★ Live Entertainment   ★ Raffle

Tickets: \$50.00 per person  
Call: 519-668-8835  
Email: mvella2001@rogers.com  
Website: mariosvictoryagainstals.com

A summer picnic is planned at Weldon Park, in Arva, between 1:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m., on Sunday July 5<sup>th</sup>.

#### Malta United Society of Windsor, Ontario

A **wood-fired oven pizza** meal with four choices was held on Saturday Feb. 8<sup>th</sup>

A **ravioli dinner** will take place on Saturday Feb. 29<sup>th</sup>. Another wood-fired oven pizza meal will be held on Saturday, March 14<sup>th</sup>.

On Saturday, March 21<sup>st</sup>, there will be a **ross-il-forn** dinner

There will be another **ravioli dinner** on Saturday, March 28<sup>th</sup>.

Fish and chips or **ricotta pie** will be the meal on Saturday, April 10<sup>th</sup>.

**Patata l-forn** (pork chops with roasted potato) will be the main course on Saturday, April 18<sup>th</sup>.

#### Metropolitan Detroit

##### Maltese American Community Club of Dearborn

The Festa of St. Paul was celebrated at the Club with a rabbit dinner on Saturday, February 1<sup>st</sup>, and was well-attended.



**Paul Borg, Pio Muscat, Carmel Borg and Joe Formosa Prepare the Dinner**



**Paul Borg Serving His Famous Rabbit Stew (stuffat tal-fenek)**



**Waiting in Eager Anticipation**



**The Evening Was Concluded with a Traditional Procession of St. Paul's Statue Led by Brian Vella, the Club's President**

Attendance at the Superbowl Party held downstairs in the bar on Sunday, February 2<sup>nd</sup>, was small but those present had a great time.



**Watching the Superbowl**

photos courtesy of Lisa LiGreci

A figolli-making class, taught by Lisa Buttigieg LiGreci, will be held at the Club at 2:00 p.m. on Sunday, March 22<sup>nd</sup>. The cost is \$5 for members and \$10 for non-members. Pre-made "naked" figolli will be available for sale and can then be taken home and decorated with

the family. A good variety of figolli cutters, shipped directly from Malta, will also be available for purchase. For further information, call Rita at 313-400-1134 or go to

<https://www.facebook.com/events/2561639747402933/>

Remember the dinners at the Club on most Friday evenings

### **New York City Maltese Center, NYC**

Representatives of the Permanent Mission of Malta to the United Nations New York paid a visit to the Center, Saturday, February 8<sup>th</sup>, on the occasion of the Feast of St. Paul's Shipwreck. Mass was celebrated in the evening by Fr. Anthony Saliba, the Center's chaplain.



**Centre Members Posing with Representatives of the Permanent Mission of Malta to the UN**

Facebook, Malta Centre NYC

A Mardi Gras was held at the Centre on Saturday, February 22<sup>nd</sup>.

### **READER COMMENTS RELATING TO THE FEBRUARY ISSUE**

Thank you for the Magazine. I enjoyed reading it. Great news about Jenise Spiteri bidding to represent Malta at the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics. Hope she makes it.

We will be here rooting for her, and to give her all the support she needs.

John Aquilina,  
Ambassador of the Republic of Malta to China

Best wishes and thanks for your great work.

Paul V. Azzopardi, Toronto, ON

Thank you for your newsletter...and all the commitment and dedication you are investing in this very valid and appreciated project.

Charles Buttigieg, Malta Migration Museum,  
Valletta, Malta

Kudos...for your continual efforts as you pull together a newsletter month after month that continues to promote the pride and joys of the Maltese people across North America and beyond!

Brenda Bandy, Sarnia, ON

## **HOW JENISE SPITERI'S PATERNAL GRANDPARENTS ENDED UP IN CALIFORNIA**

**Dan Brock**

The February 2020 issue of this newsletter, page 7, had an article on Jenise Spiteri of Redwood City, California, who is training to represent Malta in the 2022 Winter Olympics in Beijing, China.

In that article, it was noted that Jenise had stated, on one of the episodes of the television game show, *Let's Make a Deal*, that "My grandma had the maiden name that she married into and her mother also had the same maiden name that she married but none of them were related. They were all different families with the same last name."

It was noted that the intermarriage of the Spiteris was true as Jenise's paternal grandmother's maiden name was Carmela Spiteri and she married Joseph Spiteri and that Carmela's mother's maiden name was Gajtana Spiteri and she married Gorgio Spiteri.

This article proposes to show how Jenise's paternal grandparents, who were natives of Hamrun, Malta, ended up in San Francisco, California.

To trace the origins of Joseph and Carmela (Spiteri) Spiteri's arrival in San Francisco in 1947, one can go back to the year 1908, several years before Joseph and Carmela were even born.

Giuseppe "Joseph" De Brincat/Debrincat claimed, on the 1920 US Federal census, he had arrived in the United States in 1908. To date no list of passenger arrivals to North America has been found to substantiate this, nor has his passport application surfaced. A search of the lists of passengers sailing from Malta to Europe might confirm, however, the year De Brincat left Malta.

That Giuseppe was apparently living in Baltimore by 1911 is confirmed by the passenger list for his wife Elena and their three children—Carmela, Michele and Maria—who sailed on the *Prinzess Irene* from Naples in September of that year. The street on which Giuseppe was living in Baltimore began with an "A," but the name itself is otherwise indecipherable. Thus, it is not

presently known as to whether the family lived in Baltimore, Maryland or Baltimore, Ohio.

Then, on June 24, 1913, Carmelo Bajada disembarked from the *Chicago* at New York en route to join his friend "Mr. [Joseph] De Brincat" at 269 Front Street, in Baltimore, Ohio.

Carmelo was born, August 28, 1896, in Hamrun to Salvatore or Saverio "Tal-Hanut" Bajada and his wife, the former Carmela Genuis. On March 26, 1912, he had been issued a passport for Tunis, Tunisia.

Two months earlier, on January 9, 1912, Salvatore Bajada, the son of Coronoto Bajada, was also issued a passport for Tunis. Salvatore, had been born, September 8, 1884, in Xaghra, Gozo and was living at 109 Sda San Gaetano, Hamrun, with his wife Carmela and daughter Maria by 1912.

On April 12, 1914, Salvatore arrived in New York, having boarded the *Kaiser Franz Josef I* in Algiers. He too was en route to his friend Joseph Debrincat at 269 Front Street in Baltimore.

At this point, it would appear that this Salvatore Bajada was a younger cousin of the aforementioned Carmelo Bajada's father, Salvatore "Tal-Hanut" Bajada.

Salvatore the elder, was born, June 6, 1868, in Sannat, Gozo, the son of M'Angelo "ta' l-Imghierat" Bajada. He was living at 243 Sda, Reale, Hamrun, at the time a passport was issued to him on May 26, 1913. Originally, he was planning to accompany his son Carmelo to the United States but for some reason he didn't.

No passenger list showing the elder Salvatore's arrival in the United States has been found. On the 1930 US census, however, he declared that he had arrived in 1917.

Meanwhile, Salvatore the younger had moved to 1737 La Salle Avenue, San Francisco and was joined during the summer of 1916, by his wife, Carmela, the daughter of Lorenzo Bugeja, and the elder Salvatore's daughter Maria.

Sometime between 1914 and 1920, the Debrincat family had also migrated from Baltimore, Ohio to San Francisco. They were living at 1744 Newcombe Avenue, by the time of the 1920 US Federal Census and had taken in at least two boarders to supplement the wage Joseph earned as a laborer at a sugar refinery.

While neither Salvatore the elder "Saverio" nor his son, Carmelo "Charles" can be found on this census, Saverio's second son, Antonio, came out to San Francisco on his own in September of 1920, but gave no contact person there. Meanwhile, his mother's address was given as 36 Sda Vittorio, Hamrun.

In 1926, however, Saverio Bajada was living at 1737 La Salle Avenue, in San Francisco, when his wife, the former Carmela Genuis, and their two youngest children arrived that July. This address is the same one

given by his presumed cousin, Salvatore the younger "Sam" Bajada.

With four of their children now in San Francisco, this left but one known child, Giuseppa Bajada, still in Malta.

Giuseppa, born January 9, 1889, had married Francisco Spiteri some time prior to 1919. Francisco was born on March 31, 1893. Like his father-in-law Saverio Bajada, Francisco was born in Sannat, Gozo.

Francisco and Giuseppa Spiteri's eldest child, Charles, who was born on April 15, 1919, arrived in the United States on July 29, 1937, en route for San Francisco to join his maternal grandparents, Saverio and Carmela Bajada, at 1124 Phelps Avenue.



**Gravestone of Saverio and Carmela Bajada**

In 1947, Charles Spiteri was joined by three of his brothers: Joseph, Savior and Gajanto. They, in turn, were joined, in San Francisco, by their widowed mother, Giuseppa "Josephine" (Bajada) Spiteri and five of their siblings—Frank, Mary, Paul, Spiridione "Spiro" and Margaret—in March 1948. The last of their siblings, Anthony, joined them in 1950.

On November 24, 1946, the third eldest of the Spiteri siblings, Joseph, had married Carmela Spiteri, also a native of Hamrun. Carmela was the daughter of Gorgio Spiteri and his wife, the former Gajtana Spiteri. Joseph and Carmela arrived at New York Harbor, via the *America*, on January 13, 1947, en route to San Francisco to join other family members.

Joseph and Carmela Spiteri would become the grandparents of the snowboarder Jenise Spiteri, the daughter of their son George Frank Spiteri and his wife Jacki Hanson.

### **Following the Clues: The Case of the Photos in the Two Stone Picture Frames**

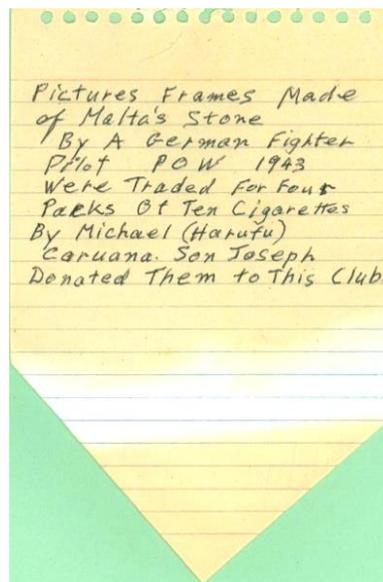
**Dan Brock**

In the trophy case upstairs in the television room of the

now defunct Maltese Canadian Club of London were two stone picture frames.

In one was an old photo, presumably taken in Malta, of a mother, father and their six children. Behind this photo was another, in colour, of a teenaged boy, and presumably taken in the early 1960s.

Behind this photo was a note which stated that the picture frames were carved out of Maltese stone by a German fighter pilot who was a prisoner of war in Malta in 1943. It also related that a person by the name of Michael (*Harufu*) Caruana had acquired them in exchange for four 10-packs of cigarettes and that his son, Joseph, had donated the frames to the Club.



**Note Found in One of the Picture Frames**

In the other frame was a cropped photo-card (i.e. a photograph on the back of a postcard), presumably taken in Malta of a boy who had made his First Communion. In the same frame was a copy of this photo, dated April 1958, apparently the month and year the copy was made.

On the back of one stone, in pencil was a "J" in a circle. On the other there was an "L."



**Front of Stone "J" and Back of Stone "L"**

While nothing further was learned of the German fighter pilot, I followed up on the lead that Michael Caruana was known by his nickname *Harufu* (a male lamb). By way of analogy, a gentle, easy-going person in Malta may be referred to as a *ħaruf* (lamb). Perhaps Michael or one of his male ancestors was such a person.

Could the father in the old family photo be Michael *Harufu* Caruana?

Long-time members of the Club were rather vague about who this Michael Caruana might be but seemed to agree that he was connected with the late Leno Caruana who was on the Club's Committee at one time and was noted for making and selling pastizzi and other Maltese pastries.

Joe Condorato, a Club member, suggested that Leno had a close relative in St. Thomas who made artificial legs and that Henry and Maria Grech, also Club members, would know who he was. A telephone call to Henry and Maria ultimately led me to that gentleman!

The person in question, living in St. Thomas, some 24 km (15 miles) south of London, turned out to be Tony Caruana, who was a nephew of Leno Caruana, a son of Michael Caruana. The fact that Tony's grandmother, Michael's wife, used to call her grandson *Harufu* convinced me that I had the right family.

With the names Tony provided me of his paternal grandparents and some of their children, I was able to find Michael, his wife Lorenza "Laura," nee Abela, and their children: Francis "Frank," Joseph, Emanuel "Leno," Mary, Carmela, Edith and three-year old John immigrating to Canada in 1950 and disembarking from the *Neptunia*, in New York Harbor, on May 19<sup>th</sup>.

As Edith, the sixth child, was five years old when the family left Malta, I was fairly certain that the photo of the husband, wife and six children was of the Michael Caruana family and taken in Malta about 1945, baby Edith being in her father's arms. Tony Caruana later confirmed this. The family lived in Tarxien, Malta.

As for the old photo-card in the other stone frame, Tony was able to confirm that this was of his uncle Joseph Caruana. This is the same Joseph Caruana who had donated the stone photo frames and the Caruana family photos to the Club!

The coloured photo of the teenager, hidden behind the family group photo in the first stone frame turned out to be that of John Caruana, the seventh and youngest child, who was born in 1946.

The evening of Sunday, February 28, 2016, saw 12 members and friends of the Caruana family arrive at the Club on Charterhouse Crescent in London to see the family photographs, taste some Maltese food and sample a can of Kinnie.

One of the group was Ingeborg Caruana, widow of Frank, the eldest of the Caruana children. A few of the club members remembered Frank as a dance instructor



**The Old Photo of the Caruana Family in One of the Stone Frames, Taken About 1945  
Lorenza (mother), Francis, Joseph,  
Emanuel, Mary and Carmela,  
with Michael (father) Holding baby Edith**



**The Cropped Photo-Card of Joseph Caruana  
Having Made His First Communion, about 1943**

at singles dances and, like Leno, a former Club member. Two of Frank's siblings were also present:

Carmen, the youngest of the children standing in the



**John Caruana, about 1962**



**Ingeborg Caruana, Carmen Caruana, John Caruana and Ken & Elaine Meloche**

1945 photo with their parents, and John, the young man in the coloured photo. Then, there was Elaine, a daughter of Joseph Caruana who had donated the stone frames and family photos, and her husband, Ken Meloche.

Also, in the party were Tony Caruana, son of the late Frank Caruana, his wife Linda, their daughter Olivia, Tony's brother-in-law, Murray Taylor and Michael Caruana, the son of Yvonne, Tony's eldest sister.



**Olivia Caruana (front left), Natalie (Olivia's friend), Murray Taylor, Michael Caruana, Pat & Bill (Murray and Yvonne's friends) and Linda & Tony Caruana**

With the sale of the Club's facilities in 2018, the stone frames and photos were given to the Caruana family.

## **MALTESE ORGANIZATIONS IN NORTH AMERICA**

### **Festa San Gejtanu Association**

c/o 5745 Coopers Avenue, Mississauga, ON  
L4Z 1R9  
647-232-8845

### **Festa San Gorg Association of Toronto**

c/o 36 Sequoia Road, Vaughan, ON L4H 1W6  
905-216-8432/416-277-2291

### **Gozo Club Toronto**

c/o 1205 Royal York Road, Toronto, ON M9A 4B5  
416-231-9710  
[gozoclub@gmail.com](mailto:gozoclub@gmail.com)

### **Inanna on Stage**

[www.joannedancer.com](http://www.joannedancer.com)  
c/o 356 Pacific Avenue, Toronto, ON M6P 2R1  
416-707-2355  
[desertdancer001@yahoo.ca](mailto:desertdancer001@yahoo.ca)

### **Knights of Columbus - Canada – Council # 12782**

c/o St Patrick's Church, 921 Flagship Drive,  
Mississauga, ON, N4Y 2J6  
905-270-2301 (Church)  
[stpatricksmi@archtoronto.org](mailto:stpatricksmi@archtoronto.org)  
Grand Knight Amadeo Cuschieri

### **Lehen Malti**

<https://www.omnitv.ca> > shows > [lehen-malti](https://www.omnitv.ca/shows/lehen-malti)  
c/o 2387 Chilsworthy Avenue., Mississauga, ON  
L5B 2R4

### **Malta Band Club**

5745 Coopers Ave., Mississauga, ON L4Z 1K9  
905-890-8507  
[www.maltabandclub.com](http://www.maltabandclub.com)  
[maltabandclub@bellnet.ca](mailto:maltabandclub@bellnet.ca)

### **Malta United Society of Windsor, Ontario**

2520 Seminole St., Windsor, ON N8Y1X4  
519-974-6719  
[maltaunitedsociety.windsor@gmail.com](mailto:maltaunitedsociety.windsor@gmail.com)  
Opening hours: Saturday 6:30 p.m.-12:00 a.m.

### **Maltese American Benevolent Society**

1832 Michigan Ave. Detroit, MI 48216  
313-961-8393  
<http://detroitmaltese.com>  
Opening hours:  
Thursday & Friday 5:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.  
Saturday 12:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.  
Sunday 12:00 p.m. -9:00 p.m.

**Maltese American Community Club of Dearborn**

5221 Oakman Blvd, Dearborn, MI 48126  
 313-846-7077  
[info@malteseamericanclub.org](mailto:info@malteseamericanclub.org)  
 Opening hours: Monday, Wednesday & Friday  
 10:00 am. – 1:00 p.m.  
 Dinners served: Friday evenings 6:00 p.m. – 10:00  
 p.m.  
 Before and after 7:00 p.m. first Friday  
 Mass

**Maltese-American Social Club of San Francisco**

924 El Camino Real South, San Francisco, CA 94080  
 650-871-4611  
[contact-us@Maltese-AmericanSCSF.org](mailto:contact-us@Maltese-AmericanSCSF.org)  
 Opening hours: Tuesday 5:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.  
 (every 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month only)  
 Thursday 5: p.m. – 10:00 p.m.  
 Friday 5:00 – 1:00 a.m.  
 Sunday 9:00 am.- 5:00 p.m.

**Maltese Canadian Association of the City of Hamilton (MCACH)**

c/o 381 Fairview Drive, Brantford ON N3R 2X7  
[mcach1964@gmail.com](mailto:mcach1964@gmail.com)

**Maltese Canadian Association (Gozo)****Maltese Canadian Business & Networking Association (MCBNA), (Toronto)**

c/o 2387 Chilsworthy Avenue, Mississauga, ON  
 L5B 2R4  
 416-980-1975  
[mcbna2018@gmail.com](mailto:mcbna2018@gmail.com)

**Maltese-Canadian Cruisers**

c/o 5745 Coopers Avenue, Mississauga, ON  
 L4Z 1R9  
 416-524-2573  
 att: Gianni Borg

**Maltese-Canadian Cultural Association (Est. 2018)**

c/o 2387 Chilsworth Avenue, Mississauga, ON  
 L5B 2R4  
 416-571-3944  
[joesherry@rogers.com](mailto:joesherry@rogers.com)

**Maltese Canadian Federation, The (Toronto)**

c/o 2387 Chilsworth Avenue, Mississauga, ON  
 L5B 2R4  
 416-571-3944  
[joesherry@rogers.com](mailto:joesherry@rogers.com)

**Maltese-Canadian Museum Archives and Visitors Centre**

St. Paul the Apostle Church Complex  
 3224 Dundas St. W., Toronto, ON M6P 2A3  
 416-767-7054

**Maltese Canucks**

c/o 3336 Dundas Street West, Toronto, ON,  
 M6P 2A4  
 416-909-7357/414-670-2662  
[carl@isgtransport.com/b\\_azzo18@yahoo.com](mailto:carl@isgtransport.com/b_azzo18@yahoo.com)

**Maltese Center, NYC**

27-20 Hoyt Ave. S. Astoria, NY 11102  
 718-728-9893  
[info@maltesecenter.com](mailto:info@maltesecenter.com)  
 Opening hours:  
 Wednesday and Friday 5:00 p.m. – 11:00 p.m.  
 Saturday and Sunday 8:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.

**Maltese Cross Foundation of California**

PO Box 698, San Carlos, CA 94070

**Maltese Culture Club of Durham**

c/o 124 Ribblesdale Drive, Whitby, ON L1N 7C8  
 289-939-8377  
[mmmpastizzi@gmail.com](mailto:mmmpastizzi@gmail.com)

**Maltese Heritage Association San Francisco Bay Area**

[maltesheritageassociation@gmail.com](mailto:maltesheritageassociation@gmail.com)

**Maltese Heritage Program (Toronto)**

c/o 59A Terry Drive, Toronto, ON, M6N 4Y8  
 Coordinator: Carmen Galea  
 416-766-5830  
[gormija@sympatico.ca](mailto:gormija@sympatico.ca)

**Maltese Historical Society (San Francisco)****Melita Soccer Club Inc.**

3336 Dundas St. W., Toronto, ON M6P 2A4  
 416-763-5317  
[msc@melitasoccerclub.com](mailto:msc@melitasoccerclub.com)

## Opening hours:

Monday-Thursday 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.  
 Friday 6:00 p.m.-1:00 a.m.  
 Saturday 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.  
 Sunday 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

**St. Paul the Apostle Parish**

3224 Dundas St. W. Toronto, ON M6P 2A3  
 416-767-7054  
[stpaulmssp@gmail.com](mailto:stpaulmssp@gmail.com)  
[www.saint-paul-maltese.com](http://www.saint-paul-maltese.com)

**St. Paul the Apostle Parish Mission Group**

c/o 281 Gilmour Ave., Toronto, ON M6P 3B6  
 416-708-8627  
[giovanvel@sympatico.ca](mailto:giovanvel@sympatico.ca)  
[www.facebook.com/john.vella.1044186](http://www.facebook.com/john.vella.1044186)

**St. Paul the Apostle Youth Group (Toronto)**

3224 Dundas Street West, Toronto, ON M6P 2A3  
 647-524-1115  
[jason.borg@hotmail.ca/sborg@rogers.com](mailto:jason.borg@hotmail.ca/sborg@rogers.com)

**NEW YEAR'S EVE CELEBRATIONS AT THE MELITA SOCCER CLUB, TORONTO, ONTARIO**

