

THE MALTESE PRESENCE IN NORTH AMERICA



E-NEWSLETTER

Issue 15 JUNE 2020

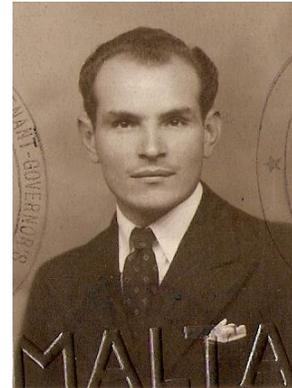
PASSPORT PHOTOS OF MALTESE IMMIGRANTS TO LONDON, ONTARIO, 1948-1953



Yvonne (Grixti) Gatt



Henry, John, Stella, Walt and Marg Leeks



John Pavia



Joseph Mary Grech



Frank Pace



George Porter



Roger Harmsworth



Emanuel "Lee" Pavia



Jane (Farrugia) Porter

The Maltese Presence in North America

Issue No. 15 June 2020

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EDITORIAL COMMENT

With the May issue you were invited to state what you would like to see in the newsletter. Joan Mizzi-Fry of Orillia, Ontario, replied: "I was wondering if the Maltese newsletter could add a small section on Maltese cooking, true authentic meals, it would be a way of continuing the tradition and passing along our culture."

I then forwarded this proposal to the readership with a couple parameters. Within 24 hours, there were several positive responses and two recipes, accompanied with background stories. (See pages 4, 20-20)

Rene Xuereb of Michigan shares her grandmother's recipe for *imqarrun fil-form* and relates how she taught this to her children as they went off to university. (See page 4.) Charles J. Vella of California takes the recipe for

pastizzi, handed down for generations in his family and then explains some modifications followed by innovative ways of adapting this staple to the tastes of third-generation Maltese-Americans. (See pages 20-21.)

Fred Aquilina of California has suggested featuring Maltese war heroes who were honoured for their heroic actions and perhaps seeing donations from the readership "to enhance their grave sites with appropriate language/memorials heralding their Maltese heritage, etc." The September and October 2019 issues of this newsletter featured the Maltese American Civil War hero Orlando E. Caruana. Do others come to mind?

The article on the Borg family in the last issue (pages 17-21, 28) has led to that of the Gaffan family in this one. (See pages 13-16) The complicated background of the head of the family, Alfred Paul Gaffan, aka Alfredo Gafà, aka Robert Gaffan, has necessitated leaving the latter part of the story for the June issue.

Owing to unforeseen circumstances, the second part of Gabrielle Cutair Caldwell's article on Alphonso F. Cutaiar, Jr. has been postponed to the July issue. The second part of Richard S. Cumbo's account of the Maltese radio program from Toronto in the 1970s and 1980s is to be found on page 4. Richard has also contributed the article on the celebration of Cultural Diversity Day in Toronto 20 years ago. (See page 16.)

Last month Charles J. Vella gave us a history of Maltese Immigration to the San Francisco area prior to World War II. (See pages 10-13). This becomes the backdrop for his personal account in this issue of growing up Maltese in that same area in the 1950s and 1960s. (See pages 16-19.)

Earlier issues generally featured photos of activities with the Maltese communities on the front and back cover. This novel coronavirus pandemic has temporarily put a damper on this. Hence, this issue features the passport photos on the front cover of

some of those who came to London, Ontario during the first decade after the Second World War while the back cover contains an article on how a Maltese immigrant to Detroit was identified based on a few bits of family information.

Among other articles is Dr. Raymond Xerri's monthly message, Paul V. Azzopardi's article on two paintings in St. Paul the Apostle Church, Toronto the Gozitans as having a distinct identity and a nephew who came out to assist Louis Shickluna as a ship carpenter.

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GLEANINGS FROM THE SUNDAY BULLETIN

PASTOR'S THOUGHTS...



*Fr. Mario Micalef, M SSP,
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.*

Listen to the Voice of Our Good Shepherd

If we look at our lives, we might find that we, too, are like those sheep who are enclosed in an enclosure, thinking that we are safe but in actual fact longing for some freedom and real food. It is, indeed, a false sense of security. This enclosure which enslaves us and robs us from our freedom could be, for example, our bad image of God. "Bad shepherds" might have instilled this in us, keeping us enslaved by the idea of an unjust, revengeful God. The Good Shepherd on the other hand, came to show us a God who is love and rich in mercy. Other forms of enclosure which rob us from our freedom could be our bad habits or idols we create and to which we give too much importance such as money, success, and the idea other people might have of us. The Good Shepherd came to free us from all of this. Then again, we could still be enslaved by anger or a sense of revenge (sometimes under the guise of justice) or our own past mistakes. By listening to the voice of the Good Shepherd we will realize that it is possible to be freed from all this and find the freedom to love both our neighbour and ourselves.

As we continue our Easter journey this year, let us take the opportunity of having more time on our hands to create some space in our lives where we can listen to the voice of our Good Shepherd. Perhaps today we could ask ourselves, "What voice do I listen to when I make certain decisions in my life?" Let us make him our one and only Shepherd, the only one who can lead us to where there is life.

"Do Not Let Your Hearts Be Troubled"

Given the circumstances we are living in, if there is a message that we really need to hear it is precisely this: do not let your heart be troubled....The message of the resurrection is not a denial of the loss, of the reality of death and the pain that comes with it. What the resurrection of Jesus tells us is that there is more beyond all this – not merely a return to the previous life, but an entrance into a new kind of life, not after death, but in the here and now.

....[Jesus] knows our pain, our doubts, our many questions, our fears and anxieties. This is how he knows us, and this is how he loves us. And this is how he wants to help us live through this, take something out of this experience, and give us a fuller life.

"Do not let your hearts be troubled." In moments of fear or anxiety let us put ourselves in his loving arms, and trust that, as a good shepherd, he will lead us beside quiet waters, in green pastures, where our souls can be restored.

Help Is Just a Prayer Away

As we continue on our Easter journey, we start preparing ourselves for the Feast of Pentecost, the celebration of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Perhaps it would be a good idea if, during this week, we find some quiet time to look a bit at our lives and see how we are living our lives as followers of Christ. Am I loving everybody as Jesus loves them? Have I truly forgiven those who wronged me in any way? Most probably I am going to find that I am not 100% there yet. I need help. And help is just a prayer away. The Easter message tells us that He is stronger than any of our weaknesses. It is a message that gives us what we need to keep going on our journey.

We Are Invited to Complete the Work

There is a story that says that once, Leonardo da Vinci had started to work on a large canvas in his studio. For a while he worked at it – choosing the subject, planning the perspective, sketching the outline, applying the colours, with his own inimitable genius. Then suddenly he stopped working on it. Calling one of his talented students, the master invited him to complete the work. The horrified student protested that he was both unworthy and unable to complete the great painting which his master had begun. But da Vinci silenced him. "Will not what I have done inspire you to do your best?"

This story always comes to my mind as I reflect on today's liturgy. Jesus goes up to Heaven, where he had come from. In a way, his mission is accomplished. He has done what he had come to do. And yet, simultaneously, the mission of Jesus goes on. It is still a work in progress. The only difference is that it is now up to us to continue what he had started. In the way, the end becomes, really, a new beginning.

Like Leonardo's student, a number of questions and doubt may come to mind. Am I worthy? Probably not. Have I got what it takes? On my own, definitely not? But unlike the above-mentioned case, what makes it possible in my case is not simply the inspiration coming from what the master has already done. It is rather, the knowledge that my master is there: leading me, guiding me, actually working through me. The work still remains His, and I become a mere instrument.

MULTILINGUAL AIRWAVES MEANS PERSONAL DEDICATION FOR MALTESE PRODUCERS*

Richard S. Cumbo, O.S.J.

Editor's note: This is a continuation of the article which appeared in the May issue and gives an account of the Maltese radio program, which began on April 17, 1971 on CHIN Multilingual Radio from Toronto, Ontario.

[Joe] Micallef and [Joe] Zammit decided to dedicate their endeavours solely to the continuation of the radio program. Financing was (and still is [in 1981]) a problem. Many times, they had to dig into their own pockets to help cover expenses. The commercials heard on the air cover the air time only. The bilingual commercials are created by Joe Micallef at no cost to the advertisers. To produce the half hour show takes many hours of researching, editing and programming and when a special is being held, such as Holy Day occasions, much more is involved. "Wirt Malti," (Maltese Culture) is aired every Thursday at 10:30 p.m. on CHIN's station 100.7 F.M. The program is comprised of news from Malta, events of Ontario's Maltese communities, culture and serials. The show receives information assistance from Malta's Rediffusion Network.



Wirt Malti producers, Joe Zammit, left, and Joe Micallef, right, receive the support of multiculturalist, M.P.P. Yuri Shymko, centre.
Photo by Joe Camilleri.

Joe Zammit, his wife Rose and their two boys live on Durie Street[, in Toronto]; Joe Micallef and his wife Margaret, have two boys and two girls. Soon they will become young grandparents. These two gentlemen, who are also Knights of Malta in the Priory of Canada, spend many hours of their free time producing this

community service for the Maltese communities, are thankful to their advertisers and look for the continued support of all Maltese-Canadians so that the ancient language of Malta can be heard over the air waves in Ontario. They are also looking for any individuals who are interested in broadcasting and who are willing to volunteer their time so that the Maltese Program on CHIN will continue for many more years.

**This is reprinted, with minor changes, from the May 1981 issue of The Villager, Bloor West, Toronto, page A13.*

NANNA'S IMQARRUN FIL-FORN (Lit. - macaroni baked in the oven)

Rena Xuereb, Michigan

I see this recipe revised so many ways, adding this and that but my mom stuck to her original way. It only contains seven ingredients and is so easy. I taught all five of my children this recipe when they were off to various universities.

- 1.) Boil a 1-lb. box of penne noodles, not too soft, in one tbsp of salt. Drain and set aside.
- 2.) Brown one lb. of ground beef along with a half a medium onion diced, add salt and pepper to taste, drain any liquid.
- 3.) Add 1/2 can of tomato paste, 3 oz or so, plus a half cup of warm water, mix into beef and onion mixture.
- 4.) Mix 5 beaten eggs, add to beef mixture, mix well.
- 5.) Add this mixture to the penne noodles, again mix well.
- 6.) Add 1 cup grated Parmesan cheese, fresh is always better. Incorporate all ingredients with the penne noodles.
- 7.) Prepare a lightly greased Dutch oven. Pour mixture into pan and top with a half cup of grated Parmesan cheese. Blend slightly to top portion of mixture. Cover.
- 8.) Place in a 350-degree oven. Cook half hour covered, another 40 minutes uncovered until nicely browned on top. Ovens may vary, keep an eye on your oven.



**THE PAINTINGS OF OUR LADY OF MELLIEHA
AND OUR LADY OF TA' PINU
AT ST. PAUL THE APOSTLE CHURCH
IN THE MALTESE COMMUNITY OF TORONTO**

Paul V. Azzopardi



**Paul is a Financial Advisor,
Stockbroker, Portfolio Manager,
Author and Artist**

In the April 2020 issue of this newsletter, "Painting of Our Lady of Ta' Pinu," page 10, Dan Brock noted how a painting of Our Lady of Ta' Pinu meant for St. Paul the Apostle Church on Dundas Street in Toronto was donated to St. Pius X Church on Bloor Street West in 1988.

In 2016, Our Lady of Ta' Pinu returned to St. Paul's, however, in the form of a new painting by Paul Debono, accompanied by another painting of the holy icon of Our Lady of Mellieha painted by myself. These paintings were commissioned by Fr. Manuel Parnis MSSP while he was pastor of St. Paul's between 2015 and 2019.

Along with the two paintings, Fr. Parnis also commissioned Joe and Antonia Portelli to decorate the chapel for the Ta' Pinu painting next to the altar. This chapel is a replica of the one in Gozo. Joe and Antonia also took care to frame the Our Lady of Mellieha painting to hang in the Prayers Chapel next to the main entrance of the Church and also created the devotional area dedicated to St. Gorg Preca at the centre of the right wall.

According to Paul Debono, "The painting was done in May of 2016 when Joe Portelli and his wife Antonia approached me to see if I was interested in taking on this piece of work. I was very delighted to take it on as it is a replica of the miraculous one in the Maltese islands. The painting is oil on canvas and the same size as the original."

Joe worked with Antonia on preparing the chapel. "When drawing up the plans we had to make everything fit the small side chapel and using the old altar communion rail from the original basement church built by the Maltese immigrants, in the 1930s. This old altar rail was used to make the altar table. A new base was made as well as the upper part of the altar. The chapel room was painted, lighting was installed, flower arrangements made and everything was installed just in time for the June 24, 2016 celebration and blessing of the chapel."



The Blessing of the Ta' Pinu Painting



**Paul & Charmaine Debono.
Joe & Antonia Portelli and Their Children
with the Ta' Pinu Painting in Background.**

Later that same year, on October 30, 2016, the Our Lady of Mellieha painted by me was blessed by Fr. Parnis and Fr. Domenic Cachia MSSP.

I was in Malta on business when Fr. Parnis called me and asked me to go to Ta' Pinu Church in Gozo and get as big a picture as I could of the painting of Our Lady. I went to Ta' Pinu with my mother and the sister at the shop was kind enough to go down to the basement to get me a big poster because she only had small ones in the shop. On my return to Toronto Fr. Parnis informed me that he was having a painting of the Ta' Pinu painting made based on the poster. He then asked me 'What are we going to do about the icon of Our Lady of Mellieha?' I took the hint and since the Mellieha icon is very much to my family's heart I offered to paint it. Fr. Domenic gave me a picture of the icon which had just been restored.

I took a marine plywood base which I first covered with layers of sand I happened to have in my studio and which I had collected from Ghadira. This made the background look like a cave wall. On this background I painted in oil colours using hog bristle brushes. I simplified some of the shapes and modernized the painting a bit but kept to the same spirit of the icon and as much as possible to the same colours.

After the painting was blessed, and a frame fitted, it was hung in the Prayers Chapel where regular prayers are held.



The Finished Painting



Image of the *Madonna tal-Mellieha* in the Magazine Given to Me by Father Dominic

READER COMMENTS RELATING TO THE MAY ISSUE

Just always amazed at the information you put together in each newsletter.

Jason Mercieca, Toronto

I was wondering if the Maltese newsletter could add a small section on Maltese cooking, true authentic meals. It would be a way of continuing the tradition and passing along our culture. Any thoughts on this?

Joan Madigan, London, ON

We have been enjoying reading your articles on Malta over the past months.

I would like to add a little info on your latest article regarding The Vulcania arriving in Canada. My father (Michael Portelli) was also on this ship. Ed Scicluna was his close friend in Malta as well as in Brantford.

Paul Chetcuti was also a close acquaintance as well as relative via a marriage.

Keep up the great work. I forward all the articles to my siblings and kids.

Charlie Portelli, Brantford, ON

As usual, I enjoy reading every article of your newsletter "The Maltese Presence in North America". I also make sure to 'forward' to some of my friends too. So much information!!

Carmen Galea, Toronto

Great effort, a terrific read...thanks for all your work on behalf of our community. Very interesting articles, both history and people are well worth an examination.

Nathan Pardi

MONTHLY MESSAGE FROM THE CONSUL GENERAL OF THE REPUBLIC OF MALTA TO CANADA

**Inkomplu nuru kemm aħna l-Maltin u l-Għawdxin
solidari u għandna QALB kbira**



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

Il-poplu Malti u Għawdxin huwa rinomat għal kemm hu solidari, ġeneruż u kemm jinpurtah minn ħaddieħor. Dawn l-valuri u l-attributi jispikkaw aktar fiż-żminijiet diffiċli u ta' krizi. L-aħħar tlett xhur għaddejna u għadna għaddejnin minn stat ta' gwerra, minħabba għadu nvizibbli li ma' nafux kollox dwaru. L-imxija COVID19 baqgħet magħna sew fil-Kanada kif ukoll f'Malta, minkejja li l-każijiet naqsu.

Nixtieq niringrazzja lil dawk kollha li għamlu u qed jagħmlu sforzi kbar biex jgħinu b'diversi modi, lil numru mhux żgħir ta' membri tal-komunita' tagħna li jew huma anzjani jew mhux possibbli għalihom li joħorġu mid-djar tagħhom. Hemm ukoll min qiegħed iħit maskri sabiex jingħataw lill-isptarijiet u lill-anzjani fil-komunita' tagħna. Din hi s-solidarjeta' u l-qalb kbira tal-poplu Malti u Għawdxin.

Avviżi Importanti

Għal min m'għandux il-Facebook, qed ninformakom li bħala Konsulat Generali ppostjajna diversi avviżi mportanti fl-aħħar xahar. L-imxija tal-COVID19 ikkawżat problemi f'diversi fronti:-

- (1) Il-Posta lejn Malta mhix tasal. Il-Canada Post informatna li minħabba li l-Ajruport Internazzjonali ta' Malta magħluq, għalissa s-servizz postali lejn Malta huwa temporanjament sospiż;
- (2) Il-Posta minn Malta lejn il-Kanada qiegħda tasal, iżda' hemm ħafna dewmien, bejn xahar u xahar u nofs biex tasal ittra jew pakkett;
- (3) Minħabba li t-800 penzjonant li jircievi xi forma ta' pensjoni minn Malta rrċieva l-Life Certificates ta' kull sena u numru minnkom laħqu bagħtu l-formola mimlija lid-Dipartiment tas-Sigurta' Soċjali f'Malta, ta' min waslet u ta' min le;

Let us continue to show the world that we know what is Solidarity and have a big Maltese and Gozitan HEART

Maltese are renowned for their solidarity, generosity and how much we care for each other. These values and attributes are turned into full gear in difficult situations and in times of crisis. The last three months we have been and still are in a state of war against an invisible enemy about whom we do not know all. The COVID-19 pandemic has remained with us in Canada and in Malta, despite lesser cases and a gradual easing of restrictions.

I would like to thank all those who have made sacrifices and big efforts to assist in diverse ways. A sizeable number in our Maltese-Canadian community, have assisted our elderly or those who could not leave their home. There are others who have been and are sewing cloth masks to be given to frontline workers, hospital staff and to the elderly in our community. This is the true and sincere solidarity and the big heart of our people.

Important Announcements

For those who are not on Facebook, please read the following information since, COVID-19 caused a load of problems in different areas:-

- (1) Mail to Malta is not arriving. Canada Post has informed us that for now postal service has been temporarily suspended.



**Sample of a Letter to Malta
Being Returned to Sender**

- (2) Mail from Malta to Canada is operating with long delays, a period ranging from one month to a month and a half for a letter or package to arrive.

- (4) Il-Konsulat Ġenerali tkellem mad-Dipartiment tas-Sigurta' Soċjali f'Malta u wara li ngħatat estenzjoni mill-aħħar ta' Marzu għall-aħħar ta' Mejju, din issa għet estiża sat-30 t'Ottubru 2020.
- (5) Numru ta' pensjonanti li ma jirċevux il-pensjoni fil-kontijiet tal-bank fil-Kanada minn Malta, u s-soltu jirċievu ċ-ċekk bil-posta setgħu esperjenzaw xi dewmien, pero' issa kullhadd suppost li rċeviha.
- (6) Tlabnikom ma ċċemplux lill-Konsulat Ġenerali dwar il-Life Certificates għaliex spjegajna li dawn ser jiġu pprocessati aktar tard matul is-sena meta jekk Alla jrid l-affarijiet ikunu aħjar;
- (7) Appell ieħor li sar hu sabiex ħadd ma' jmur jipprova jirċievi xi servizz mill-Konsulat Ġenerali jekk mhux għal xi raġuni urġenti. L-ewwelnett, il-Konsulat Ġenerali bħala ufficiċju jinsab magħluq u qegħdin noperaw mid-djar tagħna rispettivi. Il-membri tas-sigurta' tal-binja fejn hemm il-Konsulat Ġenerali huma nformati sabiex javzaw lin-nies li l-Konsulat Ġenerali magħluq u li ħadd ma' jista' jitle' bl-elevator fl-għaxar sular mingħajr card apposta. Meta jkun iż-żmien opportun li l-Konsulat Ġenerali jinfetaħ, aħna navzawkom.
- (8) Dawk il-Maltin u Għawdxin li kienu jinsabu fil-Kanada meta faqqet l-imxija tal-COVID19 u ddeċidew minħabba raġuni jew oħra li jibqgħu fil-Kanada, jridu jkunu jafu li:-
- (a) Jekk int student u qed tistudja fil-Kanada u għandek ittra li f'Settembru li ġej l-istituzzjoni aċċettatek, trid tappli ka għall-estensjoni tal-visa tiegħek;
- (b) Jekk int ġejt fuq viża ta' turist jiġifieri suppost għal massimu ta' 90 ġurnata u ovjament issa ser jddum aktar fil-Kanada, trid tapplika għall-estensjoni tal-visa tiegħek;
- (c) Jekk inti wieħed mill-Maltin u Għawdxin li emigraw lejn il-Kanada riċentement taħt xi programm jew skema, trid tagħmel kuntatt mad-Dipartiment tal-Immigrazzjoni Kanadiża u tavzahom bl-intenzjonijiet tiegħek; eJekk inti ħaddiem b'viża fil-Kanada għal perjodu definit, trid tagħmel kuntatt mad-Dipartiment tal-Immigrazzjoni
- (3) There are 800 Maltese-Canadian pensioners who receive a pension(s) from Malta and have recently received their Life Certificate form as usually received each year. Some filled, signed and sent back this form to Malta. Many have had them returned, however, since there is no postal service from Canada to Malta.
- (4) The Consulate General came to an agreement with the Department of Social Security in Malta that the extension for submission is not the end of May but October 30, 2020. So, please for now do not send the forms to Malta.
- (5) A small number of pensioners did not receive their pensions from Malta into their usual Canadian bank accounts which now were all sorted, some did not receive their pension cheque in the post or experienced late arrivals, but now all should have received it.
- (6) We ask you not to call the Consulate General Office about Life Certificates since as agreed they will be processed later on in the year when hopefully the COVID-19 situation is better.
- (7) Another appeal is being made to those who still come to the Consulate Office for some form of service. Firstly, we are closed and the Administrative Officers and I are working from our homes. Secondly, the building security have been informed to inform people that the Consulate General Office is closed. Thirdly, unlike in the past, access to the 10th Floor is protected by a card access, so nobody can come to that floor. We will inform all when the Consulate General Office reopens.
- (8) Those Maltese and Gozitans who happened to be in Canada when the COVID-19 outbreak started and decided to weather this pandemic here in Canada for one reason or another need to know that:-
- (a) If you are a student studying in Canada and you have received the acceptance letter from the institution you will be attending and commence your studies this coming September, you must apply for the extension of your student visa;
- (b) If you arrived on a tourist visa, that is, allowed to stay in Canada for a maximum of 90 days and you have stayed over

- Kanadiża sabiex tkun tista' jggedded il-visa tiegħek.
- (d) Min għandu dubju fuq xi haġa għandu jidhol fil-websajt tal-Gvern Kanadiż fuq: <https://www.canada.ca/en/services.html>
- (9) Minhabba l-imxija tal-COVID19, il-Consul-on-the-Move li kellu jsir fil-Belt ta' Vancouver, fil-Provinċja ta' British Columbia u fil-bliet ta' Calgary u Edmondton fil-Provinċja ta' Alberta ġew postposti għal xi żmien fil-futur meta jkun adegwat.
- (10) Il-Kalendarju Malti-Kanadiż tal-Attivitajiet għall-Ġunju 2020 wkoll mhux ser jiġi ppubblikat minhabba li l-Istat ta' Emerġenza fil-Provinċji fejn hemm l-attivitajiet tal-Komunitajiet Maltin għadu effettiv u għalhekk l-attivitajiet kollha tal-massa ġew ikkanċellati.

Ejiew ma' ninsewx l-unika Parroċċa Maltija fil-Kanada

Il-Kappillan Dun Mario u Dun Ivano qegħdin joffru servizz pastorali fuq mezzi soċjali u qegħdin jilqgħu l-offerti tagħkom fil-kaxxa postali tagħhom. Il-parroċċa dejjem fil-bżonn anke meta ma jistax ikun hemm quddies u attivitajiet b'mod tradizzjonali tal-massa. Kunu ġenerużi ma l-unika parroċċa tagħna fil-Kanada.

Nibdew bis-Sette Giugno u nispiċċaw Ġunju bl-Imnarja



**Sette Giugno Monument,
St. George (Palace) Square, Valletta**

- that time, you need to apply for an extension of your visa;
- (c) If you are one of the Maltese and Gozitans who recently migrated to Canada under any program or scheme, you must contact the Department of Immigration to inform it of your intentions;
- (d) If you are in Canada on a worker's visa for a definite period, you also need to contact the Department of Immigration to renew your visa; and,
- (e) Whoever has doubts what needs to be done to be compliant, please consult the Canadian Government website: <https://www.canada.ca/en/services.html>
- (1) Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Consul-on-the-Move sessions that were scheduled to be organised in Vancouver in British Columbia and in the cities of Calgary and Edmonton in Alberta have been postponed to future dates once the situation becomes clearer and safer; and,
- (2) The June 2020 Maltese-Canadian Calendar of Events will once again not be published owing to the cancellation of all community events in all provinces since the state of emergency is still in effect.

Let us not forget our only Maltese Canadian Parish here in Canada

Our Maltese Canadian priests, Fr Mario and Fr Ivano, are offering their pastoral services on social media and welcoming all your donations and offerings in their letterbox adjacent to the St Paul The Apostle Church on Dundas Street. A parish is always in need even though masses are not performed as usual. The bills still roll in. Be generous with our only Maltese Canadian Parish in all Canada.

The month commences with Sette Giugno and ends with L-Imnarja

The month of June in Malta commences with the national holiday called Sette Giugno (June 7th) when Malta and Gozo commemorates when both rose in riots against the British owing to a huge hike in bread and other food prices. This happened in 1919, exactly 101 years ago.

And on the 30th of this month we celebrate *l-Imnarja*, a very popular *fešta* on the Maltese Islands. Another *fešta* we have to miss this year which was scheduled to be celebrated on June 27th but, because of the COVID-19

Ix-xahar ta' Ġunju f'Malta jibda bil-festa nazzjonali tas-Sette Ġugno meta' Malta tfakkar il-Maltin u l-Għawdxin meta qamu kontra l-ħakma Inġliża b'irvellijiet minħabba l-prezzijiet għoljin ħafna tal-ikel. Din is-sena ser tkun l-101 mill-avvenimenti tal-1919.

U fit-30 tax-xahar tiġi ċelebrata l-Imnarja, l-festa tant popolari fil-Gżejjer tagħna. Festa li din is-sena konna ser niċcelebrawha bil-kbir fis-27 ta' Ġunju. Però minħabba il-COVID19 din giet ikkancellata.



L-Imnarja Procession in Front of the Basilica of Saints Peter and Paul, Nadur, Gozo

L-istess jista' jingħad għal-logħba tal-futbol tradizzjonali bejn il-Melita Soccer Club tal-Kanada u il-Maltese Dolphins New York Soccer li din is-sena kien imiss li tintlagħab hawn fil-Kanada. Però din tħassret ukoll.

SOME APPRECIATION OF “A DIVERSE AND EVOLVING GOZITAN IDENTITY”

Dan Brock

Last October, I got to meet Dr. Raymond C. Xerri, the current Consul General of the Republic of Malta for Canada. In the course of our meeting one of the books he gave me was a copy of his book *Gozitan Crossings (2005)*. It is an outgrowth of the Ph.D. thesis he completed in 2002 at Victoria University in Melbourne, Australia. Essentially, it's a study of Gozitans migrating to Australia, particularly to the western suburbs of Melbourne, as well as those who have returned to Malta and the impact all this has had, not only on Australia but especially on Gozo itself, and also on the country of Malta.

My intent, however, is to draw attention to those parts of Raymond's work which have particular relevance to those of Maltese birth and blood living in North America. Xerri likens the Gozitans to the *nassi tas-sajd* (fisher-

pandemic, it has been cancelled.



L-Imnarja Activities, Rabat, Malta

The same can be said about the traditional soccer game between our Melita Soccer Club team here in Canada against the Maltese Dolphins New York Soccer team which this year was scheduled to be played here in Canada, but also have been cancelled.

I am here at your service

As your Consul General, despite being thousands of miles from my family and our country, I am here, amongst you, working from home as is the rest of the staff of the Consulate, we can be contacted in case of an emergency at maltaconsulate.toronto@gov.mt or call on the usual numbers: 416 207 0922 or 416 207 0989 otherwise on 416 832 4607.

My family and I wholeheartedly wish all fathers, a Happy Father's Day on June 21st. Also, a Happy *St Jean Baptiste Day* (June 24th) in the province of Quebec and National Indigenous Peoples Day (June 21st) celebrated in the Northwest Territories.

O Lord, always bless Malta and Canada and liberate us from this pandemic.

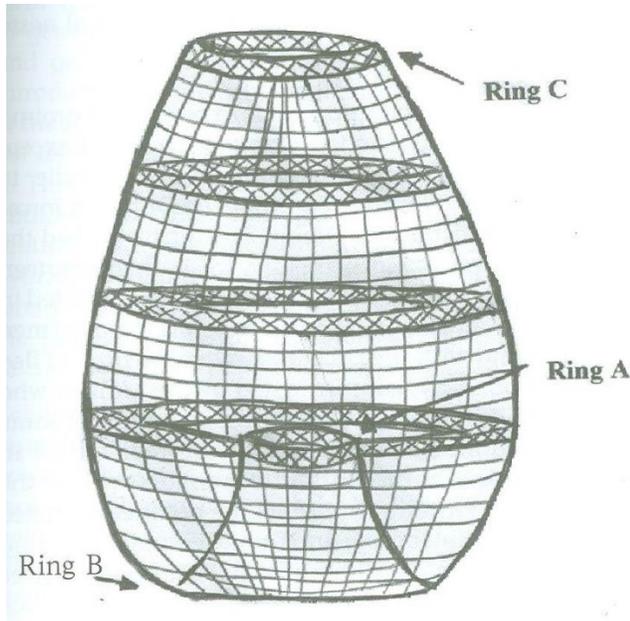
men's pots) of Gozo. (See illustration on next page.)

Ring A represents the 80 to 100 families who survived on Gozo or went there following the Great Siege of 1565.

Ring B represents the introduction of new blood and genes from the island of Malta to the original Gozitan population, ending in the early decades of the seventeenth century.

Ring C represents the intermarriages over four centuries—22 generations—between the families represented in Rings A and B making virtually all the Gozitans blood-related to a far greater extent than on the island of Malta “where every colonial power ruling the island left a remaining population that contributed to a hybrid Maltese gene pool.” Thus, while Malta has over 1,500 surnames, Gozo has just over 100.

This for Xerri is “an important starting point from which Gozitans are able to define themselves as distinct from the Maltese....”



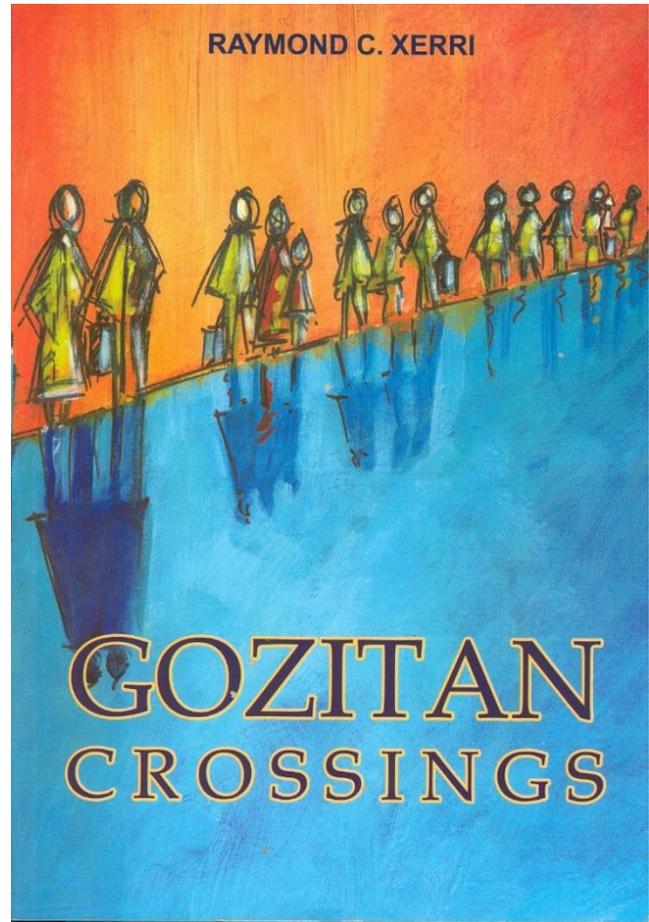
**Nassa tas-Sajd Ghawdxija
(Gozitan Fisherman's Pot)**

Then there is the daily ferry crossing for the Gozitans who work or study on the island of Malta. This in itself “starkly reinforces the unity of Gozo and its apparent difference from Malta....After all, the Maltese do not need to wake-up early, catch boats, worry about time, spend two hours on bus trips, face the danger of rough seas, verbal abuse, discrimination and a lack of understanding.” In these daily routines, “Gozitans rise early in the morning and use the village dialect at home while preparing for the journey to Malta and in the presence of their villagers. Later they shift to ‘standard Gozitan’, a softer version of their village dialect, while speaking to other villagers in Gozo and on the ferry leading to Malta. Upon arrival in Malta they shift to the Maltese language.”

Yes, as Central Canadians have tended to regard the inhabitants of Newfoundland, who were often referred to as “Newfies” or Northerners in the United States of the people of Appalachia, whom they referred to as “Hillbillies,” so the residents of the island of Malta have tended to regard the Gozitans. Like Newfoundlanders and Appalachians, “Gozitans have long been the subject of negative perceptions as ‘backward’, ‘rural’ or ‘underdeveloped’,” and there are jokes and stories about them just as there are of the people of Newfoundland and Appalachia.

As for the Gozitans, according to Xerri, they “like to see themselves as more environmentally responsible than

the Maltese.” Also, in contrast with the Maltese, Xerri states that, “In general, Gozitans, though kind-hearted and hospitable, are rather abrupt in their manners.”



Cover of Dr. Raymond Xerri's Book

Xerri also points out that the Gozitans “look to an idealized work ethic as a means of emphasising their difference from the Maltese....work creates an ethic, a level of discipline and an ability to deal with sacrifice and the hard times in life.”

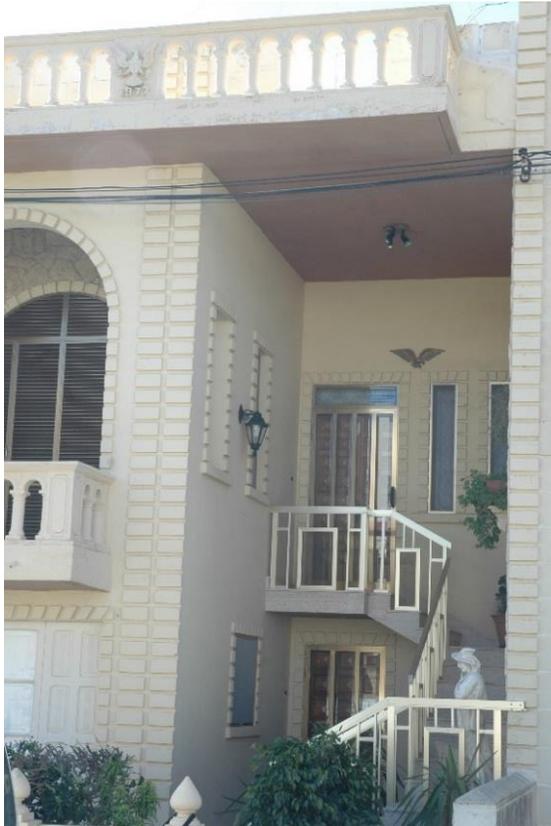
Another important characteristic of the Gozitans is their use of financial resources which the Maltese describe as *xħaħ*, i.e. acquisitive and close-fisted. A higher value is placed on recycling and the reuse of resources by the Gozitans than by the Maltese.

Xerri also notes that, “Within the Gozitan community a good reputation is considered an essential attribute for a good Gozitan.”

Apart from the distinct “standard Gozitan” and village dialects, the Gozitans tend to reject the Maltese tendency “to mix spoken Maltese with English and/or Italian.” Moreover, while all villagers in Gozo speak their village dialect only a small proportion of the Maltese still

speak a village dialect.

Some of those Gozitans who have returned from abroad since the 1980s from such countries as Canada and the United States have built “big homes that depart from the traditional local architecture and house structure” and have projected “images of the countries they came from, such as naming their house... ‘Maple Leaf’ or ‘Stars & Stripes’, flying the flag or placing the coat-of arms of the country they migrated to on their home façade.” Or the exterior of the house may depict an American bald eagle or maple leaf.



**“Sunshine,” the Camilleri House, Qala,
Note the American Bald Eagle in the Background**

Photo by Michael Camilleri

Those returning from the United States and Canada “tend to drink Budweiser beer and eat hotdogs with ketchup and mustard,” unlike the stay-at-home Gozitans or returnees from other parts of the world.

In 2004, Gozitans spoke with a stronger and more determined voice than their counterparts on the island of Malta in favour of the country of Malta becoming a member of the European Union.

In fact, Xerri sees Gozo, to a large extent, providing “the leadership and ideas for the governance of the country.”



**Staircase of “Maple Leaf,” the Vella House
Built in 1881, Triq Wied Biljun, Qala**

Photo by Michael Camilleri

While I have “cherry picked” items from Dr. Xerri’s book which I thought would resonate and have relevance to the Maltese in North America, I believe I have selected enough examples to show that the Gozitans have a distinct identity, that this identity is evolving, thanks to Gozitans returning from abroad and that it is these returning Gozitans who are the engines for that change not only in Gozo but throughout the entire country.

Dr. Raymond Xerri continues to take note of the distinct identity of the Gozitans. You will observe that when he speaks of the people of the country of Malta in his messages in this newsletter, he doesn’t refer to them as “Maltese” but rather “Maltese and Gozitans.”

We in Canada have witnessed something similar in relation to our tenth province, comprised of the island of Newfoundland and the mainland portion known as Labrador, much larger in area but much smaller in population. Elsewhere in Canada, until recently, we have referred to this province simply as “Newfoundland” but, as of December 2001, this province has been officially designated as “Newfoundland and Labrador.”

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 GAFFAN FAMILY: FIRST MALTESE TO SETTLE IN KINGSVILLE, ONTARIO – PART I

Dan Brock

Among Frank Borg's fellow passengers on board the *Marine Perch* in May 1948 was Paulo (aka Robert) Gaffan. (See May 2020 issue, page 19)

Paulo, then better known as Robert, was a barber but also listed himself as a carpenter and electrician. He was born, on April 28, 1913, in Zonguldak, Turkey, the capital city of Zonguldak Province in the Black Sea region and given the name Alfredo Paulo Gaffan. This is important to remember, as his given name and even his surname changed over the decades.



Ottoman Era Postcard View of
Zonguldak's Port and Breakwater

Paulo was a son of Giacomo "James" Gaffan and his Greek wife Vasilea or Basilica Gaetano. Giacomo was born on December 16, 1880, in Valletta, Malta. Basilica was born in Smyrna (now Izmir), Turkey, in 1888 and was of Greek ancestry.

Giacomo's father, Michele Gaffan, had brought the family from Malta to Constantinople (Istanbul), Turkey in 1881, where on October 1st of that year Giacomo's brother, Emmanuele, was born.

While the surname **Gaffan** appears to no longer exist in Malta, it has been traced back to at least 1815 to one Vincenzo Gaffan. **Gafan** is an old local form of the present **Gafà**, according to Mario Cassar—*The Surnames of the Maltese Islands*, pages 163-64).

Meanwhile, Giacomo Gaffan left his pregnant wife and son Paulo in Zonguldak, Turkey in 1914 and went to England. The Ottoman Empire, which included Turkey, had joined the Central Powers (Germany and Austria-Hungary) in August to form the Triple Alliance but did not formally enter World War I until late October.

On August 24th of 1914, Giacomo Gaffan was admitted into the Lower Clapton, Workhouse in London England, probably to get a dinner as he appears to have been discharged after dinner the same day.

Over the next few years, we find him sailing on various ships as a merchant seaman. For example, he is listed as a greaser on the S.S. *Anglo Australian* which sailed from Avonmouth, England and arrived in New Orleans on August 30, 1915.

Giacomo was awarded various medals, after the War, for his service. His Mercantile Marine Medal was auctioned off in London, England on May 6, 1998.

Meanwhile, his daughter, Helen, was born in Zonguldak in 1915 and died there in 1918.

From 1914 on, there was a fear among the Turks that Christians and various ethnic minorities, such as the Armenians and Greeks would welcome liberation by the Ottoman Empire's enemies. There was also a belief in this era of nationalism that it was necessary to purge the Turkish territories of all minorities who could threaten the integrity of an ethnically-based Turkish nation.

Vasilea Gaffan and her young son faced persecution and feared for their lives. Giacomo was probably able to help to make arrangements for his wife and seven-year-old son to seek asylum in Malta by virtue of the fact that he was British subject and native of the Island. As British subjects they could have chosen any of the British possessions in which to seek refuge but selected Malta as it was Giacomo's native land and perhaps relatives of his could still be found there.

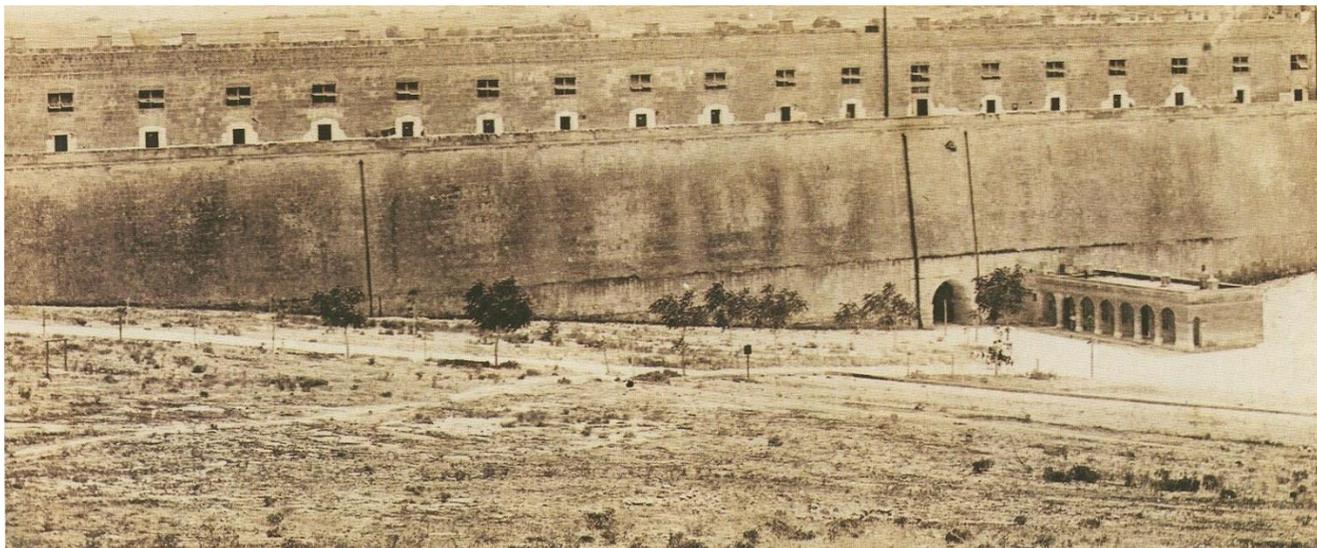


Passport Photo of Alfredo Galà, Age 7,
and His Mother Vasilea, about 1920

Courtesy of Kay and Helen Gaffan

No relatives of Giacomo were found in Malta and it would appear that Vasilea and young Alfred as the boy was known, lived for the next several years in St. Nicholas Refugee Camp at the Polverista Barracks, Cospicua. This was part of Polverista or St. Nicholas Curtain, a casemated rampart with a continuous

walkway, in Cospicua and forming part of the Cottonera Lines. During the First World War, this was a prisoner of war camp for women and children. Just after the War it was used to intern Turkish dissidents and alleged war criminals.



Polverista Barracks, Part of the Cottonera Lines Forming the Outer Defenses of the Three Cities

Courtesy of the National Archives of Malta

Meanwhile, Giacomo died in Liverpool, England on April 20, 1923.

At the age of 14, his son, Alfred, became an apprentice barber. The barber under whom Alfred trained thought he had said his name was "Albert" and started calling him "Bert." This soon morphed into "Robert," and that became the name by which Alfred or Paul became known by those outside the family for the rest of his life. Alfred and his mother, who referred to her son as "Freddie," appear to have gone to Cyprus in 1929, probably to join members of Vasilea's family. Alfred is said to have also gone to Tripoli, now in Libya. It is interesting to note that on Alfred's 1929 passport application the surname was spelt as "Gafà" rather than "Gaffan." (See passport application on next page.) Whether this spelling was dictated to Vasilea and her son by British authorities in Malta or whether she deliberately sought out the more common form then used in Malta is not presently known. In any case, the Galà version of the surname appears on some of the baptismal records of Alfred's children and Gaffan on others.

Alfred (aka Robert) was married at St. Lawrence Church in Vittoriosa on May 1, 1932, to Maria Zammit. Maria was born in that city in February 1908, to Giuseppe Zammit and his wife Giuseppa. Over the next

several years in Malta, Robert, also known as "Bob," and Maria were to have 11 children, including one who died two days old and the other at the age of seven months.



Wedding Photo of Maria Zammit and Alfred "Robert" Gaffan

Courtesy of Kay and Helen Gaffan

THIS FORM MUST BE RETURNED TO THE PASSPORT OFFICE AT LEAST THREE CLEAR DAYS BEFORE THE PASSPORT IS REQUIRED.

* Surname of applicant to be written in Block Capitals and UNDERLINED.

(B.)

No. 4240

Date 11 SEP. 1929

Date of presentation 10 SEP 1929

GOVERNOR'S OFFICE
10 SEP 1929
-MALTA-

(a) Insert name of place and date.

(b) Christian names and surname of Parent or Guardian of child, occupation, and present address.

(c) Christian names and surname of child, age and present address.

State whether Parent or Guardian.

State exact national status, e.g.:
British Subject by birth,
British Subject by Naturalization,
British-Protected person, etc.

In the case of a British Subject by Naturalization the certificate of Naturalization must be produced.

The words in brackets to be struck out in cases where the child does not already possess a passport.
The child must sign his or her name to the space below marked (c).

(c) or has not previously held a passport.

(d) See para. 4 of Regulations overleaf.

3d. Stamp

Received of the Passport Office
Passport No. 4240

Signature of Recipient } Alfredo Gafa

knowledge of the applicant and not from information obtained from other persons.

FOR CHILDREN BORN ABROAD, who derive British nationality from a father or paternal grandfather born with His Majesty's Dominions. (To be struck out in other cases).

his (her) father having been born within His Majesty's Dominions at Malta on the 2 day of ?

and not having lost the status thus acquired, I hereby request that a Passport may be issued to him for travelling to Cyprus B/P-free for the purpose of business

I declare that he has no Passport already in his possession (f) other than those which I annex hereto for cancellation and that no other application for a passport has been made since the last passport was issued to him (g)

Signed (h) Vasilia Gafa

† AND I, the Undersigned, (i) D. M. Zeller hereby declare that to the best of my personal knowledge and belief the above-made Declaration of the said Vasilia Gafa is true.

Signed D. M. Zeller

Note—Duplicate small unmounted photographs of the child must be produced, one of which must be certified on the back by the recommender. (See para. 6 of Regulations overleaf.)

DESCRIPTION OF CHILD.

Age 16

Domicile or ordinary place of residence St. Nicholas R.

Height 5 feet 2 inches

Colour of eyes Brown

Colour of hair Dark

Viable denture } Nil
gouging marks }

IMPORTANT.

Applicants, and persons recommending them, are warned that should any of the statements contained in their respective declarations prove to be untrue the consequences to them may be serious.

Observation on page 5 of passport: Not passport was reported as such as Paul Alfred Saffran

Passport Number 4240 Issued to Alfredo Galà, September 11, 1929

Courtesy of National Archives of Malta

The couple lived in Vittoriosa where all 11 children, with the exception of Gloria, were born. Robert operated his own barber shop both before and after the Second World War. He also worked at the dockyards, probably as a carpenter and electrician, as those are the trades, along with barber, he noted on migrating to Canada. And yes, for three years during the war, an air raid shelter was often the family's "home" and Robert served in the home defense.

After the War, and unlike most wives at the time, it was Maria and not her husband who desired to emigrate and had her heart set on Canada. Thus, when the opportunity availed itself in the spring of 1948, Maria urged "Freddie" to apply.

"Freddie" or "Robert" boarded the *Marine Perch* and was officially registered Paulo Gaffan. After arriving in Halifax, Nova Scotia, he too, like Frank Borg, took the special train to London, Ontario and on the afternoon of

Friday, May 21st was transported by an Army truck to the former World War II, Royal Canadian Air Force bombing and gunnery station at Fingal, a few miles southwest of nearby St. Thomas.

Robert first got a job in southwestern Ontario at a lumber yard in Port Stanley, some 7½ miles southeast of Fingal and about the same distance south of St. Thomas. Later, he found work as a barber in Windsor and moved there.

He then tried looking for a place for his wife and nine children. Even when he said he had half that number he was turned down. He was on the point of giving up and returning to Malta when he met Ted Miner and his wife Josephine.

William Edward "Ted" Miner was a son of the late Jack Miner who, in 1932, had established the Jack Miner Migratory Bird Foundation to support the bird sanctuary he had established on his farm on the Third Concession

of Essex County's Gosfield Township, north of the town of Kingsville.

The Miner homestead had not been used in years and was badly in need of repairs. The Miners were willing to rent the old house to Robert "Bob" Gaffan, even after the original four children he said he had back in Malta grew to nine. A deal was worked out whereby Robert and his friends would supply the labour and Ted Miner the materials to fix up the place. In the end "the house was practically rebuilt."

Now, it was time to arrange for the arrival of Robert's family.

(To be continued in July issue.)

CULTURAL DIVERISTY DAY CELEBRATED 20 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

**Richard S. Cumbo, Curator,
Maltese-Canadian Museum Archives
and Visitors Centre**

The Royal Bank of Canada (RBC), one of Canada's largest banking institutions, organized a cultural diversity day on June 23, 2000, at their head office at 315 Front Street West in downtown Toronto. Joanne Bugeya a RCB employee and Maltese-Canadian Society of Toronto (M.C.S.T.) member had asked the executive of the M.C.S.T. for assistance in organizing the exhibit.

During the day-long event hundreds viewed the rich culture of Malta, learned about the Maltese community of the "Junction" and sampled Maltese cuisine donated by Julius and Angela Zammit of Malta's Finest Pastries.

Consul General Milo Vassallo, along with Melita Travel Service provided brochures on the Maltese Islands. Also present was the president of the Maltese-Canadian Society of Toronto Charles Gixti and Henry Formosa, president of the Maltese-Canadian Federation (M-C F). The event was covered by Alfred Fenech, producer and host of the television program *Lehen Malti*.

The highlight of the Maltese exhibit, however, was a recital performed by Malta's popular singing duo and comedians Veronica and Joe Farrugia popularly known as *id-Dulli*. The Farrugias' visit to Toronto had been sponsored by the Canada Branch of HSBC [Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation], and through the M-C F for the then upcoming *Imnarja* celebrations. Owing to its overwhelming success it was felt that this might become an annual event.

The *faldetta/ghonnella* and fisherman's outfit seen in the photograph in the next column were made by Joanne Bugeya.



**Front row: Teresa "Tessie" Bugeya and
Joanne Bugeya (in *faldetta/ghonnella*)
Back row: Richard Cumbo (in his Knight of Malta
cape), Natalie Stewart (Miss Malta of Canada –
2000) and Tim Hannan (as a Maltese fisherman)**

MEMORIES OF BEING MALTESE IN SAN FRANCISCO IN THE 1950s AND 1960s

Charles J. Vella, PhD*



**Charlie's article "A History
of
Maltese Immigration to the
Bay Area Prior to the Second
World War" appeared in last
month's issue.**

I was born in Naxxar, Malta and was baptized Carmel Joseph Aloysius Vella on December 28, 1944, at the Church of the Nativity of Mary in that town. Mom told the story that, I was such a beautiful baby, a woman gave her a flower for people to look at instead of me, because being looked at so much was not good for a baby. She also related that they used to pad my head with cotton because I was always running into things. I spoke fluent Maltese until I came to the United States but managed not to hold on to it as an adult.

My family emigrated from Malta on the liner *SS Brasil*, which left on June 4, 1950 from Valletta, Malta. My brother Lou and I were carried up the gang plank of the ship by two sailors.



**Me and My Brother Lou Being Carried up the
Gangplank of the *Brasil***

Times of Malta, June 4, 1950

Our ship stopped at Halifax, Canada on June 14th to unload passengers and then continued on to New York, where we got off on June 16th. We travelled by train to San Francisco where we arrived a few days later. Our emigration was sponsored by my uncle Frank Vella with whom we lived in the flat on Mendel Street for our first few months in the US. I grew up having my father's brothers—Frank, Joe, and Manuel—and their families nearby. There were lots of cousins around.

We grew up as kids in the Bayview district or neighborhood of San Francisco, which in the 1950s, was the Maltese-Italian area of San Francisco. There were occasional ethnic tensions; being called a "Mali" was the equivalent of insulting Italians as "Wops". I attended Burnett Elementary School in Bayview from kindergarten (September 1950) through the third grade (June 1954). The school district changed my first name from Carmello to Charles. With many other Maltese children, I then attended St. Boniface Catholic School in Downtown San Francisco from the third through the seventh grade, after which I went to high school. I had to repeat the third grade for three months, because of previously having had "too few religious classes."

Life in Bayview centered around St. Paul of the Shipwreck Church, at 1515 Oakdale Avenue, with its daily mass, marriages, baptisms and funerals. Built in 1874 and remodeled in 1922-23 as a combined church and social hall by members of the area's Maltese population, the church building is still used as a church, although in the late 1950s the Maltese congregation sold their old church and built a new St. Paul of the Shipwreck in the Bret Harte neighborhood near the old Candlestick Baseball Park.



St. Paul of the Shipwreck Church

St. Paul was the Maltese National Catholic church in Bayview, where Father Theophilus Cachia OFM and then Father Benny Bavaro OFM, were the pastors. The fact that they were both Franciscan priests influenced my later vocation to the Catholic Franciscan religious order.



A Wedding at St. Paul of the Shipwreck Church, 1961

Catholic boys at that time were expected to be altar boys, serving the priest at Mass. For years, I attended Saturday morning catechism class and then the altar

boy meeting, followed by the regular baseball game across the street at Burnett Elementary School. Dad would give my two brothers, Lou and Tony, and I our 5 cents weekly allowance before Saturday classes and we would spend it immediately at the corner store on candy. My family regularly attended Sunday Mass, as well as Easter and Christmas celebrations at St. Paul. I was a regular altar boy from age eight through my seminary days. I once calculated that I attended daily Mass from the time I was 10 to the age of 24 (1953 to 1968), including doing marriages on weekends and funeral Masses during the week (which gave me several hours out of school, but being occasionally stressful as, more than once, an emotionally distraught wife tried to open her husband's coffin and had to be restrained). We altar boys obviously would occasionally finish off the altar wine in the cruets used at Mass.

Fr. Theophilus would sometimes have us in the rectory breakfast nook for coffee (served in bowls) and cookies. My friend Mona Vella reminisced: "Regarding our attending Mass, I remember attending daily Mass every summer morning, as a lot of us Maltese kids did. After Mass, we all met in the little garden outside of the sacristy and first Fr. Theophilus and later Fr. Benny would give all of us hot chocolate and donuts.



I, for one, really looked forward to that treat." Her brother Eligio Vella clarified some details for me about Mass at St. Paul's on Saturdays in the summer. Like me, he was also an altar boy. He said that it was not coffee which was served to the altar boys after Mass, but hot cocoa, made and served by Cookie, Fr. Theophilus' brother, who was also the priests' housekeeper and the church organist. Fr. Benny would give Eligio money to

go down to Ruby Bakery at the corner and buy donuts for the altar boys after Mass to go along with the hot cocoa, because after they ate there would be an altar boy meeting. Eligio would save some donuts for his sisters Lorna and Mona when they walked home.

Eligio also remembered that Fr. Benvenute Calleja was in charge of the bingo and the soccer club at the church. Bingo was a weekly event in the church hall and Eligio's father Abraham Vella was the caller. It was always well-attended by the parish families and helped to raise money for the parish, money which was eventually used to help purchase the property on 3rd and Jamestown, upon which the new St. Paul's parish church was built. There was also a soccer team, of which Eligio was a member, for the boys of the parish. They would play against teams from other parishes or Catholic schools. The parents of the players, as well as other parishioners, would attend the games to see the St. Paul's team play.

Every summer Fr. Benny would take all the altar boys for a day at the Marin swimming pool resort. Fr. Benny eventually had St. Paul of the Shipwreck Catholic Elementary School built (with teaching nuns from Malta) and would often drive the school bus. They originally started with only the first few grades and kept adding grades for several years. I was always one grade ahead and so never attended it; but my brothers did. The Maltese nuns were as tough as the Dominican nuns at St. Boniface. In this latter group, Sister Theodora drilled holes in the yard stick so that it went faster. If you misbehaved, they sent you to the first-grade class and whacked your lower calves for punishment.

Family events included watching the Maltese soccer group play in Golden Gate Park, picnics at beaches down the peninsula from San Francisco, movies at the Bayview movie theater (which still gave out dinner plates as prizes), ice cream at Garret's on Alemany Boulevard by Balboa High School & Mitchell's, fishing on the piers, playing sports at various playgrounds, and buying used comic books on Mission Street. Halloween always involved trick or treating for hours in the neighborhood. One night a 1000 lb. bull escaped from the nearby butcher town section and brazenly walked down our street, to be killed by policemen in front of our home and trucked back to the slaughterhouse. What excitement for a 10-year-old! Our family was connected to other Maltese families including Vellas, Callejas, Pisanis, Muscats, Deguaras, Vassallos, etc.

The other core Maltese institution in San Francisco was the Maltese American Social Club on Oakdale Street with its annual children's Christmas party and summer Maltese picnic. The Club had routine social events, having a bar and poker tables, as well as pastizzi being available. There were always several groups of older men playing poker.

During that time, only men were allowed to be members of the Club so, unlike now, one would not find women there at all. The only time women were present was at the dinner-dances, when the whole family was invited, including children. Children were even allowed on the dance floor as long as they were dancing and not running around. We all learned the social graces at those events. At Christmas they always had a Santa Claus handing out presents to all of us kids. The annual Maltese Picnic has lasted for more than 70 years at parks down the peninsula. My Vella family has also had an annual summer picnic for the last 60 years.

My family lived in the Bayview district of San Francisco, first, from 1951, on Kirkwood Street and then from 1956 on Quint Street, then finally moving across the Bay to San Leandro in 1962, where my parents lived for more than 50 years. When we lived on Kirkwood Street my Uncle Frank lived nearby, as did my childhood friends Eligio, Lorna, and Mona Vella. St. Paul's was only five blocks away.

Bayview had its share of Maltese and Italian businesses. There was Solari's, which was Italian-owned, and very close to where we lived, and then there was another Italian-owned grocery further up 3rd Street, close to Palou. Because few people had cars and parking was impossible anyway, the one close to Palou would pack your groceries in a box or boxes and deliver them to your house later in the day. The only Maltese-owned stores were Muscat Market on San Bruno Avenue and the Calleja furniture store on Revere Avenue.

My cousin Mary Vella Rummelhart reminisced: "I always felt that what was strong in the Bayview was the feeling of Maltese community not only in our own family but with every other Maltese. You never walked down 3rd Street going to this shop or that without knowing everyone you passed. Even if you didn't quite know them personally, you greeted them. Although all the Maltese are now spread out, I think this is still somewhat present within our ethnicity." By the mid-1960s, most of the Maltese had moved out to the suburbs and Bayview became primarily African American.

At the age of 12, I became a naturalized citizen of the United States (on December 4, 1956 with my father), and remember, with raised hand, telling the judge that I would not try to overthrow the government of the United States! I experienced the San Francisco earthquake of 1957 (recalling the ceiling cracking in my classroom while the class heard a vocation to the priesthood talk; and the boy who had gone to the toilet coming back and saying, "I didn't do it"). During elementary school, I delivered newspapers for the *Call Bulletin* for years, at the Civic Center (where secretaries saved postal stamps for my stamp collection) and near my home.

My father, Angelo, bred rabbits and chickens in the

back yard of our Kirkwood home. I recall one partially headless chicken running around the basement squirting blood until the end. Dad would also do our haircuts. He worked for a variety of metal shops and was a jack of all trades, helping out many neighbors on their projects. He loved his occasional poker game at the Club. In San Leandro he ran the Church of the Assumption Monday night bingo game for 25 years, bringing in thousands of dollars for the parish's elementary school. My mother, Josephine, worked as a foreman at a plastics company for a number of years. For many years she made the best pastizzi and could produce an Irish knit sweater, sized by eyesight, in four days as well as complete knit baby outfits.

At Father Benny's urging, I accepted "a calling to the Franciscan religious life" at the end of the seventh grade. The Catholic Church then frequently selected the brightest boys in their schools and urged them to become priests. I attended St. Anthony's Seminary in Santa Barbara for four years of high school (1958-1962; a classical education with Latin, Greek, Spanish, etc.), San Luis Rey College from 1962 to 1967 with a BA in Philosophy, novitiate at Mission San Miguel (1964-1965), where I first wore the Franciscan brown robe, and took the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, and one year of theology at Mission Santa Barbara (where I ran an adolescent support group, which got me thinking about being a psychologist). I worked for two summers at St. Paul of the Shipwreck Elementary School in 1960 and 1961 (sanding and varnishing desks; teaching summer school). In 1962 I made my one and only film acting debut in a Franciscan vocational film. I taught catechism at Camp Pendleton Marine Base during my senior year of college. While I am no longer a Catholic, I do need to thank Fr. Benny for granting me a classical education.

I served as a conscientious objector to the Vietnam War for two years at Conard House, a psychiatric halfway house. I worked at the University of San Francisco's Counseling Center for three years. I received a PhD in Counseling Psychology at the University of Berkeley in 1977. I then worked for the Department of Psychiatry at Kaiser Hospital in San Francisco for 35 years as a clinical psychologist, chief psychologist, and as the founder of the Neuropsychology Service. I have been married for 48 years to my wife Marilyn and am the proud father of Dr. Lea Vella, PhD, a psychologist, and Dr. Maya Vella, MD, a radiologist. I am a proud Maltese American who has many recollections.

** I wish to thank Mona Vella-Nicholas and Eligio Vella for their help.*

**ACTIVITIES WITHIN
THE MALTESE COMMUNITIES**

Dan Brock

**The Greater Toronto Area, Ontario
Consulate General of the Republic of Malta**



#Together

_Happy_Europe_Day



The Consul Generals in Toronto Holding Their #Together Signs Honoring Europe Day, Saturday, May 9th, Celebrating Peace and Unity in Europe by the European Union



Dr. Raymond Xerri

Leĥen Malti

Through this Maltese television program’s Mother’s Day initiative, \$1,000 raised was donated to St. Paul the Apostle Parish.

Maltese Canadian Cruisers



St. Paul the Apostle Parish

As of May 10th, Mass is streamed live each Sunday at 9:30 a.m. through the St. Paul the Apostle Maltese-Canadian Parish Facebook page.

PASTIZZI BY THE VELLAS

Charles J. Vella

Editor’s note: In his article “Memories of Being Maltese in San Francisco in the 1950s and 1960s,” pages 11-14, Charlie mentions that for many years his mother “made the best pastizzi....”

Maltese pastizzi are the Maltese version of an empanada, hot pocket, calzone, etc.—you get the picture—dough on the outside and a filling of your choice on the inside. The most popular fillings are ricotta cheese (called *pastizzi tal-irkotta*), curried ground beef with peas, or curried peas (called *pastizzi tal-pizelli*).

My mom, Josephine Vella, now 94 and in a retirement home, was known in our family for her Irish knit sweaters and her pastizzi skills. It was a tradition in her family and she learned it from her mother, Girolama Schembri, who learned it from her mother. Josie usually made the ricotta pastizzi, but would occasionally make a hamburger pie with pastizzi dough. We have a video of her making pastizzi in 1993, at age 68. About a year ago, I decided to give it a try and it turns out I have the mitochondrial genetic gift for making pastizzi. I now bring pastizzi to my mom and to the rest of our family.

The following is our recipe and our process for making ricotta filled pastizzi.

Pastizzi Dough Recipe:**Ingredients:**

2½ lbs. (5 cups) of white flour
 ½ to 1 teaspoon of salt
 1½ to 2 cups of cold water

How to make the dough:

Mix all the ingredients. Keep gradually adding the water. It should ultimately feel elastic but not wet. You can add a little water if too dry.

Knead it for 10-15 minutes. (This is really important!). Then put the dough in a bowl rubbed with Crisco and rub the top of the dough with Crisco. Cover the bowl with a wet towel. Leave it out at room temperature (do not refrigerate), for at least 5-6 hrs. or leave it out overnight.

When you are ready to go, cut off a quarter of the dough. I rub my tile counter top with Crisco (or you can use vegetable oil). Roll the quarter of the dough out with a rolling pin into a long, thin, rectangular piece (1½ feet long by 1 foot wide); don't worry if there are holes. Liberally rub the top with Crisco (although recently I have been using butter). Pull half of it over the other half, then roll it out very thinly again with the rolling pin; cover again with Crisco or butter. Then roll the rectangle up (start at a corner edge and start folding it very tightly into a thin roll; roll into a long snake or cigar. This is what gives the dough its flakiness. Finally cover with saran wrap. I fold the snake into a circled coil.

(One alternative method is to take a second quarter of dough, do all of the above to get the final rectangle, and then put the first snake on top of this rectangle, and fold it into another snake. This way you get more internal layers and more flakiness.)

At this point you can use the dough immediately or freeze it (will last for months). Do the above for each of other three quarters of dough. You will end up with four "snakes" (or two fatter snakes if you do the alternative method).

If cooking immediately, leave dough sitting out for 1 hour.

If freezing, put it in a freezer bag. You can freeze it for up to four months.

Making the Filling:**Ingredients:****for ricotta pastizzi:**

1 lb. package of ricotta
 2 large eggs
 1 teaspoon of salt
 Mix it all thoroughly.

This will make 14 pastizzi (or double the recipe for 30)

for meat pastizzi pie:

1 lb. of partially cooked hamburger
 1 fried onion
 1 handful of grated Monterey jack cheese
 2 eggs.

I make a pastizzi pie where I roll out half of one coil for the pie bottom and half for the pie top; fill with these ingredients.

Making Ricotta Pastizzi:

Uncoil your dough coil and cut into 1-inch pieces. Grease one large baking pan (or two if making 30). Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

Grease your counter top.

Take an inch dough piece, roll it out with your rolling pin into a 5" x 5" round, and fill it with 1½ tablespoons of ricotta filling. Pull 1 flap of dough over the ricotta, then the opposite flap over the first, then twist the ends; keep reoiling the counter top, after each pastizzi is finished.

Place each finished pastizzi in the baking pan, 4 in a row, 3 rows; 12-14 in a pan.

At this point you have two options. Bake and eat now or freeze them for later.

If you choose to bake and eat now, place baking pan(s) in the oven; 25 minutes on bottom rack, 15 minutes on top rack; 40 minutes total. You can rotate two at the same time. I would check to see how browned and flaky they look after 25 minutes.

If you choose to freeze, place cookie sheet in freezer until the pastizzi are frozen thoroughly and then put them in a freezer bag. You can bake them later.

Dessert pastizzi:

Because I am baking treats for my grandkids, Noelle and Toby, I have begun creating dessert versions of pastizzi. You can be creative with the sweet filling. I have tried the following.

Banana pastizzi: standard filling without salt; add 1 mashed banana and ½ cup of sugar.

Chocolate pastizzi: ½ cup ricotta, ¼ cup sugar, 1 egg, ½ cup mini chocolate chips.

Pastizzi dough is a universal flaky pastry shell. The filling totally depends on your imagination. Give it a try. Your imagination is the limit! Your family will love you.



**JOSEPH SHICKLUNA (1828-1899),
 NEPHEW OF LOUIS SHICKLUNA**

Dan Brock

Joseph John Michael Angelo Phillip Anthony Scicluna was born in Senglea, Malta to John Marie and Joanna Theodora Maria Anna (Scicluna) Scicluna on August 14, 1828 and baptized the next day. His mother was an older sister of Louis Scicluna/Shickluna who had immigrated to North America about 1824 and in 1838 had taken over the shipyard at St.

Catharines, Upper Canada (now southern Ontario) in the Niagara Peninsula.

Louis's nephew, Joseph, joined his uncle at St. Catharines sometime between 1852 and 1860 but was soon looking after Louis Shickluna's operations at Port Colborne, on Lake Erie, the southern terminus of the Welland Canal.

By the spring of 1861 Joseph had married Margaret "Maggie" Kingston who was 14 years his junior. The Kingston family, all natives of Ireland, had immigrated to British North America in 1847. At the time of the 1861 census, Joseph and Margaret were living with her parents, Paul and Jane Kingston, and the rest of the family in Port Colborne, but were having a house built for themselves. Like his uncle at the northern end of the Welland Canal at St. Catharines on Lake Ontario, Joseph was a shipwright or ship carpenter and also spelt his surname as "Shickluna" (although it was written as "Chickluna" on the 1861 census).

Joseph and Maggie were to have seven children: Robert Louis, John, Joseph, Jr., Henry, David Salvator, George and Mary, all still living at home at the time of the 1881 census. The family, except for Maggie who was Church of England, were Roman Catholics.

Robert, the eldest child, had married Cora Green on February 28, 1888, but his siblings were still living with the parents at the time of the 1891 census in April.

Joseph died of heart disease, in Port Colborne on June 12, 1899. By the time of the 1901 census, Joseph, Jr. had also left home and was lodging next door to the home of his brother Robert in Port Colborne.

Joseph's widow, "Maggie" (aka Mary) was living at 9 West Street with four of her children at the time of the 1911 Census. She died about April 1, 1921.

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

Inanna on Stage

www.joannedancer.com
c/o 356 Pacific Avenue, Toronto, ON M6P 2R1
416-707-2355
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
Grand Knight Amadeo Cuschieri

Lehen Malti

<https://www.omnityv.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
maltabandclub@bellnet.ca

Malta United Society of Windsor, Ontario

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

Malta Village Association (Est. 1995)

c/o 3256 Dundas Street West, Toronto M6P 2A3
Tel: 416-769-2174
Fax: 416-769-2174
maltabakeshopltd@gmail.com
att: Antonia Buttigieg

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
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

Opening hours: Tuesday 5:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
(every 2nd 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

Maltese Canadian Association (Gozo)

c/o Trillium, Sqaq Nru 1, Triq it-Tigrija, ix-Xagħra
Tel: 011 356 21560656

mcagozo@hotmail.com

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

c/o 2387 Chilsworthy Avenue, Mississauga, ON
L5B 2R4

416-980-1975

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

Maltese Canadian Federation, The (Toronto)

c/o 2387 Chilsworth Avenue, Mississauga, ON
L5B 2R4

416-571-3944

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

Maltese Center, NYC

27-20 Hoyt Ave. S. Astoria, NY 11102
718-728-9893

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

mmpastizzi@gmail.com

Maltese Heritage Association San Francisco Bay Area

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

Maltese Historical Society (San Francisco)

c/o leprofess@aol.com

Melita Soccer Club Inc.

3336 Dundas St. W., Toronto, ON M6P 2A4

416-763-5317

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

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

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

DISCOVERING THE IDENTITY OF THE BORG UNCLE WHO WENT TO DETROIT

Dan Brock

The purpose of this article is show how, using a couple of clues from family reminiscences, it is possible in some cases to learn the identity of the person in question.

When Mary Camilleri and I first began working on an article based on her family coming to Canada after the Second World War and settling in southwestern Ontario, (see May issue, pages 17-19, 28) she mentioned that her dad had an uncle on the Borg side of the family who settled in Detroit, that he had worked for a Maltese club there and that there was a photo of him on the wall of the club. Joe, an older brother of Mary, recalled visiting this great-uncle, who died in the early 1950s, with his father but doesn't recall his name. Frank Borg, Mary's father, never mentioned this uncle by name and none of Mary's four other older brothers could recall their great-uncle's name either. One of them, however, mentioned that a picture of this great-uncle "is displayed in the Maltese club in Detroit."

Eventually, I introduced Mary to Mark Caruana who doesn't live all that far from her in New South Wales, Australia.

Mark was able to provide Mary with passport application data on both her father Frank Borg and Frank's father Bartholommeo "Albert" Borg. I asked Mary if he would forward me the same information.

On receiving the data from Mark, I learned that Albert Borg was born in Qormi in 1882 and that his father's name was Francesco Borg.

I then asked Mark to check his database for a male Borg, born about 1880, give or take 10 years, in Qormi, whose father's name was Francesco and who immigrated to the United States.

Mark replied that the only Borg who came close to this was Giorgio Borg, born in Qormi on February 4, 1884 and whose father was the late Francesco Borg. The only hitch was that the passport issued to Giorgio on May 29, 1913, indicated that he was going to British Columbia in Canada.

I then consulted Ancestry and learned that this Giorgio Borg had sailed from Le Havre, France—there were no direct passages between Malta and North America at the time—on June 14, 1913, on board the *Chicago*, and disembarked at New York on June 24th. Although illiterate, he gave his occupation as merchant and his destination as Victoria, BC. Francisca Borg, his presumed mother as he was single, was given as his nearest relative in Malta.

He is next found applying to go to Seattle, Washington in September 1914. Giorgio mentioned that he was born in Qormi, came out on the *Chicago* in June 1913, was a labourer living in Victoria, BC and had a brother

Giuseppe Borg living in Mosta, Malta. Beside Giorgio's name is the word "Debarred." Apparently, he was unable to go to Seattle at this time.

The US Federal Census for 1940 for Detroit lists a George Borg, single, age 57 and born in Malta as a lodger for \$10 a month at 844 Michigan Avenue and that he was a caretaker at a "Foreign language Club." This seemed to be the great-uncle Borg of whom Mary Camilleri spoke and the age would appear to "fit" with the person issued a passport in 1913 and who went to Victoria, BC that same year.

George Borg's World War II Draft Registration Card convinced me I had the right person! His age was given as 58, his date of birth in Malta as February 15, 1884 and that he worked and lived at the Maltese American Social Club at 844 Michigan Avenue in Detroit.

Thanks to Gerry Abela, it was learned that the present Maltese American Benevolent Society existed on the same site as the Maltese American Social Club prior to moving to its present quarters at 1832 Michigan Avenue in 1963.



**Maltese American Benevolent Society, Inc.
Membership Card of Emanuel Abela, 1952**

(Courtesy of his son Gerry Abela)

It is therefore assumed that sometime between 1940 and 1952 the Maltese American Social Club was incorporated as the Maltese American Benevolent Society. As 2020 is regarded as the 80th anniversary of the Maltese American Benevolent Society, it would appear that its predecessor, the Maltese American Social Club was founded in 1940 and George Borg may very well have been its first custodian.

Presently, the COVID-19 pandemic prevents any confirmation as to whether a photo of George Borg hangs on the wall of the Maltese American Benevolent Society. Likewise, the lack of an obituary or any other record of Borg's death via Ancestry precludes any verification of his death in the 1950s.

What we do know, however, is that Giorgio "George" Borg was indeed the paternal uncle of Frank Borg who settled in Detroit and worked for a Maltese club—the Maltese American Social Club—there.