



# THE MALTESE PRESENCE IN NORTH AMERICA



## E-NEWSLETTER

Issue 10 JANUARY 2020



**THE MALTESE AMERICAN COMMUNITY CLUB OF DEARBORN HOSTED  
A SMALL BUSINESS CRAFT SHOW ON SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 30<sup>TH</sup>  
MISS MALTA 2020, BREANNA CABAN, HAS HER OWN BUSINESS  
KNOWN AS NADURIN FAMILY CONNECTION**

Lisa Buttigieg-LiGreci

(See more on page 10)

## EDITORIAL COMMENT



**Dan Brock**

Well, it has been one year since this journal was launched. It started out as a bi-monthly e-journal. After the May-June 2019 issue and at the suggestion of several readers, it became a monthly. It was supposed to have been half the size of the bi-monthly issues, but its increased popularity and the time-sensitive materials submitted led to it matching and often exceeding the size of the bi-monthly issues.

Owing to the vast amount of time-sensitive material in each issue, I've determined it deserves to be called a newsletter rather than the previous concept of it becoming a journal.

Gradually, more of the organizations and individuals are coming forward to make this newsletter truly a voice for the Maltese throughout North America and, in turn, making that voice heard around the world.

This newsletter is now being distributed virtually worldwide. More than 8,100 copies alone are being printed and distributed monthly from the free electronic copies in the Greater Toronto Area alone.

Since October, thanks to Dennis and Evelyn Simmons of San Francisco, the current and past issues of the newsletter are available on the web page of the Maltese-American Social Club of San Francisco at <http://maltese-americanscsf.org/home.aspx>.

I can't say enough of my gratitude to Mona Vella-Nicholas of the Bay Area who, right from the start, has been the proofreader for the newsletter. I would

be remiss if, in the same breath, I didn't thank Claudia Caruana of New York City who pointed me in Mona's direction.

Words can't express all the help I've received from the new Consul General of the Republic of Malta for Canada, Dr. Raymond Xerri, who has done so much to see that the newsletter gets disseminated throughout Canada and, indeed, the world. Moreover, the content of each issue relating to the GTA would be far less were it not for Dr. Xerri Facebook page.

Beyond North America, I'm grateful to Dr. Charles Farrugia for the ongoing use of documents from the National Archives of Malta. Likewise, were it not for individuals such as Mark Caruana and Charles Said-Vassallo of Metropolitan Sydney, NSW, Australia this newsletter would be the poorer. Much is owed to these gentlemen for the contributions they make to this newsletter by generously sharing their own databases and research.

Turning to this issue, for those wishing to learn about what is happening or has taken place within the various associations throughout North America, you are referred to "an Omission and Errors Corrected" (page 10), "Activities within the Maltese Communities" (pages 10-15), "Inħarsu Lejn I-2020 Bħala I-Bibu Ġdid Għall-Komiunita' Maltija-Kanadiża/Year 2020 – A New Beginning for the Maltese-Canadian Community (pages 22-23) and "Christmas Gatherings 2019" (page 32).

Both "Is Your Family from Gozo?" (page 21) and "Larry Zahra: 1929-2019" (pages 26-27) can also be considered as "timely" articles.

"Sr. Paulina M. Xuereb, R.S.C.J. (pages 6-7), "Not So Desirable a Class of Immigrants: The Case of Gio Batta Farrugia" (pages 7-9) and "Passage to America" (pages 17-21) are featured in this particular issue as a significant event in all three articles occurred in the month of January.

Both "An Examination of Data from Maltese Bills of Health and Passport Applications Held at the National Archives of Malta Part III" (pages 4-6) and "Good Conduct Checks Prior to Emigra-

tion" (pages 23-24) are intended as signposts for those researching their Maltese ancestry.

I wish to thank the following for their contributions to this issue: Fred Aquilina, Sarah Carabott, Mark Caruana, Richard Cumbo, Carol (Farrugie) Cunningham, Rachael Darin, the late Frank Gatt, John Grima, Lisa LiGreci, Fr. Mario Micallef, Daryl Muscat, Mary Ann Piscopo, Evelyn Simmons, George Xuereb, Rena Xuereb and Dr. Raymond Xerri. Above all, I must thank my dear wife, Loretta, for her patience in putting up with all this!

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## GLEANINGS FROM THE SUNDAY BULLETIN

### PASTOR'S THOUGHTS...



*Fr. Mario Micallef, M SSP, 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.*

#### God Is Always Present to Us

Often in our lives we, too, feel flooded with a lot of things. Whether it is work or worries, we feel suffocated and overwhelmed, very much like those people engulfed in the waters of the Flood....

Yes, the son of God did become human in history two thousand years ago. But he is also present in our everyday life, in our moment of history. The Emmanuel is always present if we only let Him be...The God born in Bethlehem two thousand years ago would love to become present in our lives, in our homes, and in our families.

#### Prepare the Way for the Lord

...He [John the Baptist] tells his people that he is baptizing them with water, a symbol of their repentance and their desire of a better life. Soon there was one to come another one, obviously referring to Jesus, who would baptize them with the Holy Spirit....

This is the Spirit you and I have received in our baptism....let us, too prepare the way for the Lord to really come into our lives. Let us ask the Holy Spirit to show us what needs to be changed or improved in our lives, and to give us the strength to do it.

#### John the Baptist Confused as to Whether Jesus Is Really the Messiah

Maybe we too, like John the Baptist, are prone to judge and condemn all who do evil, all who are not as good as we make ourselves to be. We may find it hard to be like Jesus, who was quite comfortable to eat with sinners, to forgive those who hurt him, to give a second chance to those who were so obviously leading a sinful

life. This is the good news that Jesus is all about...it is good to remember that Jesus' message is not about punishment, fire and brimstone. It is about life, love, forgiveness and peace.

...let us start focusing on the good news that Jesus came to bring to the world. Let us never forget that, no matter what our past has been, he is always there wanting to love us, ready to embrace us in his merciful arms. It is only when we manage to fully accept this message that we, then, can love and forgive others in return.

#### Do Not Be Afraid

...God knows that fear paralyzes us. Moved by fear, we cannot do any good. Do not be afraid, not by being naïve or not taking into account the consequences or dangers of one's actions. It is rather an invitation to trust God. If God wants something from you, He is going to help you to see it through....

In times of difficulty we too, like St. Joseph, might feel tempted to let everything go. In those moments let us allow these words of the angel to echo in our hearts: do not be afraid.

**Fr. Mario Micallef, M SSP**  
**St. Paul the Apostle Church,**  
**3224 Dundas St. W. Toronto, ON M6**  
**1-416-767-7054**

**Maltese-Canadian Museum Archives**  
**and Visitors Centre**  
**St. Paul the Apostle Church Complex**  
**3224 Dundas St. W.,**  
**Toronto, ON, M6P 2A3**  
**1-416-767-705**

**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.**

## AN EXAMINATION OF DATA FROM MALTESE BILLS OF HEALTH AND PASSPORT APPLICATIONS HELD AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF MALTA

### PART III

**Mark Caruana**  
**Sydney, Australia**



*Editor's note: In Part I, Mark gave an overview of his work in building up a database on the existing bills of health and the passport applications to the end of 1937. He then presented the need for such a database, the fields selected and an introduction to the bills of health. Part II introduced us to the evolution of the passport applications from 1870 until at least 1937. Part III reveals the structure of the database Mark*

*developed. He then sheds some light on the usefulness of this database and makes some general observations.*

#### Structure of the Database

The information on the passport application form was transcribed to a database that contains data on 13 fields or columns, as follows:

**Column 1** *Running Passport Number.* If an error is made and the same running number is written twice, a letter is added after the running number (e.g. 7434 a).

**Column 2** *Date of issue.* This includes the day, month, and year. The same date of issue means that a number of passports were issued on that same day. The date of processing of the passport applications and the day the form was filled in are not always the same.

**Column 3** *Surname.* In the database, the surname is recorded first. When the compiler was doubtful of the correct spelling, or whether the surname is a variant, the current surname as used in Malta at present is recorded first, while the surname written on the passport form is recorded in brackets [e.g., Arcicovich (Arzecovich)]. The surnames listed in the book of Mario Cassar's work (*The Surnames of the Maltese Islands: An Etymological Dictionary*. Malta: Book Distributors Ltd. 2003) as well as Malta census data were consulted when in doubt.

**Column 4** *Given name.* The first name of the applicant is recorded. If the applicant were a priest or a religious, the abbreviation "Fr" or "Rev" is recorded after the name; if a medical doctor or advocate, the abbreviation "Dr" is entered as well as the letters after one's name, such as "LLD," "The Hon" and so forth.

**Column 5** *Relationship.* The ledger has provision only for "son of." If the applicant were a female, the words "son of" is often stroked out (see fig. 1) and often replaced with "wife of," "widow of" or "daughter of." If the

father of the applicant is deceased, the words "of the late" were added.

**Column 6** *Occupation.* For the years 1870-72, the occupation was not always recorded and is recorded as not stated. If the occupation was hard to decipher, this is marked by three dots ... . The terminology for the classification of the occupation used in the compilation of the database is arbitrary and not based on any standard nomenclature, but consistency in the use of the same terminology was applied. For example, with the passport applications of the clergy, where the words "friar," "monk," etc. were used, the generic word "religious" was applied, and this was followed by the religious order, for example, "religious Dominican," "religious Franciscan." Often their religious status was added, such as "chierico", "provincial," and so forth.

**Column 7** *Date of Birth.* Care needs to be exercised as to the accuracy of the date of birth as earlier passports were in fact baptismal certificates. The day of birth and the day of baptism may vary by a day or two, or more in cases of Maltese born in the diaspora because of distance from the nearest church of Maltese living abroad.

**Column 8** *Age.* If the letter "m" is added after the age, this stands for a baby's age in months (e.g., 13m for 13 months). If the age is not stated on the application form, it is left blank.

**Column 9** *Place of Birth.* The towns of Rabat and Zebbug apply only to Malta. Applicants from Gozo are listed as "Gozo, Rabat" or "Gozo, Zebbug."

In some towns with more than one parish, the name of the parish is included if stated (e.g., Valletta, Portus Salutis (St. Dominic's), or Valletta St. Paul). Applicants from Gozo are recorded under Gozo followed by the name of the village.

Applicants born in the Maltese diaspora are recorded with the country written first, followed by the province or town of birth, e.g. "Greece, Corfu," "Turkey, Constantinople."

**Column 10** *Residence.* In early passports, only the town or village where the applicant resided and not the full address was given. When the place of birth and the residence were the same, this was recorded by "&" the symbol for "and."

**Column 11** *Literacy.* For want of a better name, I have used the name "Literacy" to refer only to the applicant's ability to sign his or her name (entered as YES) or needing to make a cross (entered as No), which is the generally accepted measure used by scholars.

**Column 12** *Destination.* The name of the country precedes the city or town, (e.g., "USA, New York," "Algeria, Philippeville." Where the name of the country has since changed, the current name is used (e.g., "Sri Lanka" for former Ceylon).

**Column 13 Remarks.** All additional information is recorded in this column. If the applicant applied to renew his or her passport, the number and date of previous passport is recorded in the remarks column, e.g. "4856 of 1871." In the majority of entries, the remarks column contained primarily the name and age of the wife and her maiden name, child, or children, or a relative accompanying the applicant.

After the database structure had been established, I undertook a data-entry project to transfer details from the digitized Malta passports to a Microsoft Access database.

No one had undertaken such a task before, therefore, it was pioneering data-entry on my part. I entered the basic important information to a maximum of 13 fields, at the rate of some 100 entries a day. This data entry took 10 years to complete.

No. 3445  
Date 14/5

**A**  
**DECLARATION TO BE MADE BY APPLICANT FOR PASSPORT.**

I, the Undersigned, (a) Maria Anna Muscat 1920  
at present residing at Murda Via Congressu Fucumbia, hereby declare that I am

(c) FOR A MARRIED WOMAN OR WIDOW (to be struck out in other cases). Particulars of HUSBAND'S birth to follow.  
the wife of Giovanni Muscat and that my husband is deceased  
widow late husband was

a (d) British born subject having been born at Murda on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of September 1873

FOR PERSONS BORN ABROAD, who derive British nationality from a father or paternal grandfather born within His Majesty's Dominions. (To be struck out in other cases).  
my (father) having been born within His Majesty's Dominions at  
paternal grandfather on the     day of    

and not having lost the status of British Subject thus acquired, and I hereby apply for a Passport for the purpose of travelling to Toronto Canada

(e) (accompanied by my wife (and children under the age of 16), as indicated in the margin, who do not possess separate Passports).

I further declare that I have no Passport already in my possession (f) (other than those which I annex hereto for cancellation).

(g) Signed Marianna Muscat

**AND I**, the Undersigned, (h) Giuseppe Mallia  
of Murda hereby declare that to the best of my personal knowledge and belief the above made Declaration of the said Maria Anna Muscat is true, and that I can from my personal knowledge of her vouch her as a fit and proper person to receive a Passport.

Signed Giuseppe Mallia

**CAUTION.**  
The attention of persons who are asked to sign this declaration is specially called to the fact that such declaration can only be made from personal knowledge of the applicant, and not from information obtained from other persons.

**IMPORTANT.**  
Applicants, and persons recommending them, are warned that should any of the statements contained in their respective declarations prove to be untrue, they will render themselves liable to prosecution.

Date of presentation 14 MAY 1920  
Description of APPLICANT.  
Age 34 years 4 months  
Profession housewife  
Maiden name and place and date of birth of widow or married woman travelling singly  
Maria Anna Muscat born at Murda on 10<sup>th</sup> September 1873  
Height     feet     inches  
Forehead      
Eyes      
Nose      
Mouth      
Chin      
Colour of Hair      
Complexion      
Face      
Any special peculiarities    

DESCRIPTION OF WIFE OF APPLICANT IF TO BE INCLUDED ON THE PASSPORT.  
Names in full Maria Anna Muscat  
Age 34 years  
Profession      
Place and date of birth Naxos 9<sup>th</sup> June 1882  
Maiden name Selous  
Height 5 feet 8 inches  
Forehead low  
Eyes Blue Brown  
Nose straight  
Mouth Normal  
Chin Round  
Colour of Hair Black  
Complexion Fair  
Face Round  
Any special peculiarities mole on upper lip  
Signature Marianna Muscat  
Names, ages, and sex of children under the age 16 if to be included on the Passport.  
Salvatore Muscat born on 19<sup>th</sup> May 1908  
Carmelo Muscat born on 17<sup>th</sup> September 1913

Pass - subject to medical & conduct certificates - copy annexed HC

14/5

**Fig. 1. Passport Application of Maria Anna Muscat and Her Children Whose Husband, Giovanni, Had Immigrated to Toronto in March 1917.**

**Note, the Passport Was Subject to the Presentation of Medical and Conduct Certificates.**

**Maria Anna and the Two Children Sailed from Cherbourg, France on June 25, 1920 on Board the *Olympic* and Arrived in New York Harbor, en Route to Toronto, on July 2<sup>nd</sup>.**

**Note Also the Rust Stains from the Pin which Attached the Photo to the Document.**

Courtesy of National Archives of Malta

### Use of the database

The main usefulness of this database is as a research tool on migration studies.

It also has direct practicality for Maltese living in the diaspora to search and confirm their Maltese ancestral identity, in order to be able to obtain dual citizenship. This dual citizenship means much to them in terms of their Maltese heritage and ability to travel within the European Union (EU).

Many second and subsequent generations of Maltese in the diaspora are aware of their Maltese ancestry, passed on from one generation to another, but cannot obtain a baptismal certificate from Malta as they do not know which parish and in which town or village their ancestor was born. Which parish are they to contact? They need documentary evidence to prove their Maltese ancestry to consular authorities.

Some towns, as Valletta and Rabat, Gozo have more than one parish and luckily the database specifies the parish, e.g. "Valletta St. Dominic" and "Valletta St. Paul."

As already noted, the earliest Maltese passports used a baptismal certificate and not an official application form.

The resultant difficulty in confirming one's Maltese ancestral birthplace was brought up as a recommendation for action at a Convention of Maltese Abroad particularly by members of the Maltese community of Egypt where all they could obtain from their parishes in Alexandria, Cairo, and Port Said, among others, was that their ancestor was born in Malta.

The database is useful also to those who are compiling their family tree, and to genealogists who are trying to fill in missing links.

I have helped many Maltese in Australia, New Zealand and the United States whose ancestry goes back to the 1840s by searching and finding their names in the database.

An advantage of this database is that the online search takes only a few minutes and one can search by name, destination, and so forth.

The database therefore serves as an index, which when the information is found, the enquirer can contact the National Archives of Malta (NAM) to request a digital copy, for a fee. Over time, this fee can become a small fund-raiser for the NAM if the availability of this research is better known.

For passports after 1915, when the passport application for the first time required a photo to be attached, it has assisted some enquirers who never had a photo of what their ancestor looked like.

This has had a strong emotional impact in their search. Some told me they had lost all their photos in a fire, or during the war, and had no photos of what their grandfather looked like. "Now we have one and it has been well-preserved in reasonably good condition too!"

### Conclusion

This article describes the development of an electronic resource that allows the examination of data from a large set of passport applications from the collection at NAM. Similar resources and on different scales are also being developed in other countries. The size of the collection of passport applications in the case of Malta allowed me as a single

researcher to formulate a digital database. This project is an unconventional example of the work of a private individual being applied in the cultural heritage domain. My interest in migration history and my intention to facilitate and further research were major motivation factors in initiating the project. In my case I designed my own data collection tool, a Microsoft Access Database.

The passport applications discussed in this article were filled in by hand, in different handwriting, and sometimes the documents are damaged and difficult to read. This required some experience deciphering historical handwritings and texts.

The main difficulty in the endeavor discussed in this article was in inputting the records, which was a voluminous task undertaken within a 10-year period by me. The process, however, was rewarding because it allowed making interesting observations with some examples presented in this article. The real potential for this database, however, is to be achieved in the future as it continues to be used more widely by historians interested in the migrations of the Maltese or in social history and in genealogical queries.

### Acknowledgments

Again, I would like to express my gratitude for the support and feedback of Dr. Charles J. Farrugia (National Archivist & CEO of NAM), Joseph Amodio (Assistant Archivist of NAM), Martin Hampton (Secretary, Friends of the National Archives of Malta) and Charles Said-Vassallo (maltagenealogy.com).

### SR. PAULINA M. XUEREB, R.S.C.J.

Dan Brock

January 11<sup>th</sup> will mark the 16<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of Sr. Paulina Xuereb.



Gravestone for Sr. Paulina Xuereb,  
on the Oakwood Grounds, Atherton, CA

Sr. Paulina Xuereb came to the United States on board the *Roma* and disembarked in New York Harbor on August 23, 1933. With her were five other sisters of the Society to the Sacred Heart, all en route for the Convent of the Sacred Heart, Chicago, IL, then at 62 Sheridan Street.



**Sr. Paolina Xuereb Passport Application Photo  
June 26, 1933**

Courtesy of National Archives of Malta

Last July, I received a copy of her obituary from George Xuereb, president of the Melita Soccer Club of Toronto. George is also on the executive of the Festa San Gorg Association of Toronto.

The clipping had appeared in the *San Francisco Chronicle* on Wednesday, January 14, 2004. and reads as follows:

**Sister Xuereb –  
beloved member of Sacred Heart**

**CHRONICLE STAFF REPORT**

*A funeral mass will be celebrated Saturday for Sister Paulina Xuereb, a nun who served the Society of the Sacred Heart for 71 years in San Francisco, Seattle and elsewhere.*

*Sister Xuereb died Sunday of congestive heart failure at Oakwood Convent of the Sacred Heart in Atherton. She was 97.*

*She was a native of Malta and entered the Society there in 1930, later taking her vows in Illinois.*

*During her years of service, Sister Xuereb cared for the sick and aging sisters in San Francisco and Menlo Park and taught grade school at Duchense Academy in Houston. Her longest periods of service though were at Forest Ridge School of the Sacred Heart in Seattle, where she served as "refectorian" providing food and welcome for students and visitors from 1939 to 1963 and as "community house keeper" in San Francisco from 1972 to 1982, in charge of hospitality at the province house.*

*"She was our 'Sister Welcome' who took care of the house, took care of all of us," said Sister Mary B. Flaherty of Seattle who shared a house with Sister Xuereb for 15 years. "Everyone knew everyone and everyone loved her. She was one of the humblest, happiest people you can imagine. Her chocolate chip cookies were legendary."*

*Sister Xuereb moved to Oakwood, a retirement center for her order in 1982.*

*A funeral Mass will be celebrated Saturday and she will be buried in the cemetery on the Oakwood grounds.*

*Memorial contributions may be made to Religious of the Sacred Heart, Oakwood, 140 Valcamiso Ave., Atherton, CA 94027.*

**NOT SO DESIRABLE A CLASS OF IMMIGRANTS:  
THE CASE OF GIO BATTÀ FARRUGIA**

**Dan Brock**

The late Fr. Lawrence E. Attard, in his book *The Great Exodus (1918-1939)*, gave examples of several Maltese emigrants whose entry into Canada was blocked by the Canadian government, through its agent in New York City. (pages 69-71)

While the Canadian government might officially state that "conditions of labour in Canada were difficult and unemployment was serious" (page 70) by late 1919, although rarely openly stated, "To Canadian eyes the immigrants from the Mediterranean island of Malta were positively alien in race, culture and religion." (page 65)

Now one of the Maltese emigrants deported at this time, according to Attard, was "G.B. Farrugia" who was returning to Brentford [Brantford, Ontario]. His deportation, in Attard's words, was particularly "pathetic."

G.B. Farrugia was of particular interest to me as, while living in Brantford as a teenager in the Fifties, I had gone to high school with his granddaughter, Carol Farrugie, and a few years later came to know Carol's father, Gus, and paternal grandmother Carmela.



**Agostino Farrugia (later Gus Farrugie) c. 1920.**

Giovanni Battista Farrugia was born in Valletta on October 18, 1879, the son of Augustin and Pauline Farrugia. Like many other men, he was forced to seek employment outside Malta and in December 1901 had been issued a passport for Tunisia, Tunis.

After returning to Malta from Tunisia, he had married the diminutive Maria Carmela Saliba, who had been born in Valletta on May 19, 1880 and stood only 4' 5" (134.6 cm) in height. By 1913, the Farrugia family had four children: three daughters and a son.

Gio Battista, who was illiterate, worked in Malta as a driver after his marriage.

Again, like hundreds of other Maltese men, both married and single, he decided to come to Canada in 1913 to seek a better life than could then be found in Malta. By the time the *Polonia* left the Austro-Hungarian seaport of Trieste on the Adriatic Sea, Gio Batta was on board. On June 29<sup>th</sup>, the ship arrived at Quebec City. From there, like more than 100 other Maltese emigrants that year, he found work in Brantford, Ontario.

With the outbreak of war in Europe and in his mid-30s with a wife and four children, he is said to have volunteered to go to the Front. To date, however, no record of this has been found among the Attestation Papers for Canada.

It was probably in 1919 that Giovanni returned to Malta "to be at the bedside of his dying mother." (page. 69) While in Malta Giovanni arranged for his wife and children to follow him to Canada.

He appears to have left Malta on December 19, 1919, in company with 29-year-old Emmanuel Xuereb. Like his older friend, Emmanuel was married and described himself as a labourer, although he would later state that he was a telegraphist and a photographer.

Some weeks later, both men embarked on the Italian ship the *Regina d'Italia* for New York. The ship arrived in New York Harbor on January 19, 1920.

Emmanuel had previously served in the Royal Malta Artillery and Giovanni was returning to Brantford on a Canadian passport, but this did not stop the Canadian representative at Ellis Island from rejecting both of them, "and the American authorities had to deport them back to Malta."

Five others on board the *Regina d'Italia* and destined for Canada suffered the same fate. Father Attard goes into detail concerning Farrugia, Xuereb, Giuseppe Galea, Victor Attard and his adopted mother Maria Cauchi, as well as Spiridione Degiorgio, who had arrived on board the *Pesaro* on December 30, 1919.

As for Giovanni Farrugia, he was sent back to Malta just two days before his family arrived at Ellis Island on January 29, 1920, on board the *Dante Alighieri*.

One of his granddaughters, Carol (Farrugie) Cunningham, states that her father, Agostino Farrugia/Gus Farrugie "always claimed that when he and his family came to N.Y. they passed (unknowingly) my grandfather going back to Malta."

While Father Attard states that, "The wife and four children were allowed to enter Canada and settle in Brentford [*sic.*] once they got medical clearance," Carol writes that it wasn't

that easy. "After staying on Ellis Island for 2 weeks, they were sent back to Malta and stayed there another year before coming to Brantford via Quebec and travelled by train from Quebec City to Brantford." My colleague, Mark Caruana of Australia, and I, however, have found no record of the wife and children being rejected and deported on arriving at Ellis Island in January 1920.



**Carmela (Saliba) Farrugia and Her Youngest Child, Anna "Annie", c. 1920.**

Photos courtesy of Carol (Farrugie) Cunningham

Carol also mentions that Giovanni and his wife Carmela spoke both Italian and English, as well as Maltese. Moreover, unlike her husband, Carmela was literate and had been a teacher in Malta. Both served as translators for the Italian emigrants while at Ellis Island and when they finally arrived in Brantford.

As for Giovanni or John Farrugia, he arrived back at Ellis Island, on board the *Royal George*, on May 14, 1920.

He and seven other individuals, including Xuereb, Degiorgio, Attard and Galea, later "made their statements about their forced return home." The Governor General of Malta, Field Marshall Lord Plumer "felt that those statements revealed an unusually harsh attitude for the Canadian officials towards those emigrants from Malta."

On June 11, 1920, the Canadian agent on Ellis Island sent a reply to Lord Plumer justifying his actions.

In the case of Farrugia, the agent stated that Farrugia "had presented no evidence to prove that he had left Canada for the purpose of a visit, nor had he expressed his intention of returning to Brentford [*sic.*] with his family."



No. 33366 Date 22/xii

**DECLARATION TO BE MADE BY APPLICANT FOR PASSPORT.**

I, the Undersigned, (a) Maria Carmela Farrugia <sup>18<sup>th</sup> December 1919</sup>  
 at present residing at Malta, Misidja, Dock Street 24 hereby declare that I am  
 (c) <sup>FOR A MARRIED WOMAN OR WIDOW (to be struck out in other cases). Particulars of HUSBAND'S birth to follow.</sup>  
 the wife of Giovanni Battista Farrugia and that my husband is  
 (d) British subject having been born  
 at Malta, Valletta on the 18<sup>th</sup> day of October 1879.  
 (For a MARRIED WOMAN OR WIDOW who derives British nationality from a father or paternal grandfather born within His Majesty's Dominion (To be struck out in other cases).  
 I further declare that I have no Passport already in my possession (f) which I annex hereto for cancellation.  
 (g) Signed Maria Carmela Farrugia

AND I, the Undersigned, (h) F. J. Mallia <sup>Attorney</sup>  
 of Malta hereby declare that to the best  
 of my personal knowledge and belief the above made Declaration of the said Mrs. Carmela Farrugia  
 is true, and that I can from my personal knowledge of her  
 vouch her as a fit and proper person to receive a Passport.  
 Signed F. J. Mallia <sup>Attorney</sup>

**NOTE.**—Duplicate small unmounted photographs of the Applicant (and wife if to be included) must be produced, one of which must be certified on the back by the recommender.

**CAUTION**  
 The attention of persons who are asked to sign this declaration is specially called to the fact that such declaration can only be made from personal knowledge of the applicant, and not from information obtained from other persons.

**IMPORTANT.**  
 Applicants, and persons recommending them, are warned that should any of the statements contained in their respective declarations prove to be untrue, they will render themselves liable to prosecution.

Date of presentation 22/xii


**DESCRIPTION OF APPLICANT.**

Age 40 yrs  
 Profession housewife  
 Maiden name and place and date of birth of widow or married woman travelling singly  
M. Carmela Faliba, born Valletta 12 May 1880  
 Height 4 feet 5 inches  
 Forehead normal low  
 Eyes hazel  
 Nose normal straight  
 Mouth normal  
 Chin pointed short  
 Colour of Hair black  
 Complexion dark sallow  
 Face oval  
 Any special peculiarities nil


**DESCRIPTION OF WIFE OF APPLICANT IF TO BE INCLUDED ON THE PASSPORT.**

Names in full \_\_\_\_\_  
 Age \_\_\_\_\_  
 Profession \_\_\_\_\_  
 Place and date of birth \_\_\_\_\_  
 Maiden name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Height \_\_\_\_\_ feet \_\_\_\_\_ inches  
 Forehead \_\_\_\_\_  
 Eyes \_\_\_\_\_  
 Nose \_\_\_\_\_  
 Mouth \_\_\_\_\_  
 Chin \_\_\_\_\_  
 Colour of Hair \_\_\_\_\_  
 Complexion \_\_\_\_\_  
 Face \_\_\_\_\_  
 Any special peculiarities \_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Names, ages, and sex of children under the age 16 if to be included on the Passport.  
Antonia, girl, 13 yrs  
Agatino, boy, 11 yrs  
M. Stella, girl, 9 1/2 yrs.  
Anna, girl, 8 yrs.



*Calli Farrugia*  
21.12.19.



**Passport Application of Maria Carmela Farrugia, December 18, 1919**

In the words of Father Attard, "From the report sent to Lord Plumer by the Canadian Agent on Ellis Island it was possible to deduce that in 1920 the Maltese authorities were not fully familiar with the stringent conditions governing the entry of foreigners into Canadian territory. Much pain could have been avoided if the men in the Emigration Department knew not only the rules but also their mode of application. If the Maltese had a representative in New York he could have handled all cases not only of those immigrants who sought entry into the U.S.A. but also those who intended to go further north to Canada. Such a representative could have himself lodged appeals on behalf of the Maltese and made sure that their requests were formally accepted in writing."

On April 29<sup>th</sup> of the same year, the Canadian secretary of the Department of Immigration and Colonization had stated: "I think the present attitude of the Department towards immigration from Malta should not be changed."

Owing to conditions in Canada and the class of labour supplied by Malta, it is not advisable to encourage immigration from that Colony. Malta supplies practically nothing but skilled common labour. We can never hope to get any amount of agricultural labour from Malta. The immigrants to Canada from Malta of the past decade have settled almost entirely in our cities."

The screws were to be tightened even further on Maltese immigration to Canada. With the exception of 1923, in which 148 Maltese emigrants were admitted, the annual numbers ranged from 22 to 57 between 1921 and 1930, according to the *Canada Year Book*. The 1930s were even worse! Only 28 emigrants were accepted in total during that decade, with none being admitted during four of those years!

*This article is mainly based on "Not So Desirable a Class of Immigrants: The Case of Gio Batta Farrugia," The Maltese Canadian Club of London Newsletter, Issue 47 (September/October 2013), 6-8.*

## AN OMISSION AND ERRORS CORRECTED

**Dan Brock**

It was brought to my attention that in the article on the High Commissioner of Malta's visit to Toronto in late October I had inadvertently neglected to note that, on the afternoon of Sunday, October 27<sup>th</sup>, both Keith Azzopardi and Dr. Raymond Xerri also paid a visit to the Melita Soccer Club on Dundas Street West. My apologies for this omission in the December issue.

In the 296<sup>th</sup> issue (December 2019) of the *Journal of the Maltese Diaspora*, page 14, is an article entitled "Maltese Canadian." It's by the late George Bonavia and updated by Celine Cooper.

Based on years of research by both Mark Caruana of Sydney, Australia and myself, the statement, "Although waves of immigration occurred in 1840, around 1907, and between 1918 and 1920, there were few Maltese in Canada until after the Second World War (WWII)" is much in need of revision.

There were "less than 30 persons of Maltese blood" who immigrated to Canada before 1902, as noted in my article, "The Distribution of the Maltese in Canada up to the Eve of the Second World War," and found on the website *MaltaMigration.com*.

In fact, only two Maltese had arrived by 1838 and the third didn't appear until the 1850s. So much for a wave of Maltese immigrants to present-day Canada in 1840!

While Canada received 153 emigrants from Malta during the years 1902-1912, only six arrived in 1907. Hardly a "wave"!

The first real "wave" didn't begin until about 1910. Twelve, 40 and 82 Maltese immigrants have been documented for the years, 1910, 1911 and 1912 respectively. An amazing 893 arrived in 1913 and 358 during the years 1916-1917.

As only nine arrived in 1918, I would submit that only the years 1919-1920 be considered as the next "wave."

### ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE MALTESE COMMUNITIES

**Dan Brock**

#### **The Bay Area, California**

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

The Women's Social Committee Christmas Dinner took place at the Basque Cultural Center, South San Francisco, on Wednesday, December 4<sup>th</sup>.

The Children's Christmas Party was held at the Club on Saturday, December 14<sup>th</sup>. There were activities for the children, participation in a nativity pageant, food and, of course, a visit from Santa and Mrs. Claus. The

parents and grandparents seemed to enjoy themselves as much as the children.



**The Children's Christmas Pageant  
Is About to Begin**



**Christmas Dinner at the Basque Cultural Center**

Courtesy of Evelyn Simmons

The Club will be holding a New Year's Eve dinner/dance.

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

An Open Day was held at the Office from 12:00 p.m. until 3:00 p.m. on Thursday, December 12<sup>th</sup>. Those invited were encouraged to bring along their families and friends.

##### **Malta Band Club**

The Club held its Kids Xmas Party on Sunday, December 8<sup>th</sup>.

The Members Christmas Dinner & Dance, which took place on Saturday, December 14<sup>th</sup>, was very well attended. Among the guests present was Dr. Raymond Xerri, the Consul General of Malta.



**Some of Those in Attendance**

The evening's entertainment was provided by Enzo Gusman, one of Malta's most renowned singers.



**Enzo Gusman on Stage**

The Club will be holding a New Years Eve Dinner and Dance on Tuesday, December 31<sup>st</sup>.

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

The Association held a Networking Event at the Clubhouse Eventspace in Etobicoke on Thursday, November 21<sup>st</sup>.

Dr. Raymond Xerri, Consul General of the Republic of Malta for Canada, addressed the members, representing some 80 businesses, in the absence of the High Commissioner of the Republic of Malta to Canada. H.E. Keith Azzopardi was unable to be present owing to problems at the airport in Washington, DC.

The very well attended event consisted of a dinner, networking sessions, the honours of successful Maltese Canadian businesses, the exchanging of business cards and plans to produce a Maltese Canadian business directory for all of Canada.



**MCBNA Executive**

(l to r) Jason Mercieca, Robert Dimech, Lisa Fenech, Joe Sherri, Carl Azzopardi and Giselle Sherri-Migliore



**A View of Some of Those Present**

**Maltese Canadian Federation**

The Federation held its Annual Seniors Christmas Dinner on in Depiro Hall, St. Paul the Apostle Church, on Sunday, December 15<sup>th</sup>.



**Some of the Senior Members of the Maltese Canadian Community Present**

For the past 40 years the Federation has organized a free lunch for the seniors of the Maltese Community community.

Federation president Joe Sherri gave an introductory speech which was followed by messages from Fr. Mario Micallef, pastor of St. Paul the Apostle Parish, and Dr. Raymond Xerri, Consul General of Malta to Canada.

The Malta Band and Maltese Canadian singer Enzo Gusman provided the entertainment.

The usual volunteers and the St. Paul the Apostle Youth Group prepared, cooked and served the meal.

**Melita Soccer Club**

Its Christmas Dinner Dance was held at the Rizzo Hall on Saturday, December 7<sup>th</sup>.



**Some of Those in Attendance**

The Club's Annual General Meeting took place on Sunday, December 8<sup>th</sup>. The Committee for 2020-21 is as follows:

- |                       |                         |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>President</b>      | <b>George Xuereb</b>    |
| <b>Vice-President</b> | <b>Arthur Xerri</b>     |
| <b>Treasurer</b>      | <b>Charles Micallef</b> |
| <b>Secretary</b>      | <b>Mary Ann Piscopo</b> |
| <b>Directors</b>      | <b>Joseph Cassar</b>    |
|                       | <b>Jesmond Galea</b>    |
|                       | <b>Charles Grixti</b>   |

The Kids Christmas Party was held on Sunday, December 15<sup>th</sup> with 57 children in attendance. There was a balloon maker and a salsa dancer in addition to Santa. Unfortunately, the face painter wasn't able to attend.



**Two of the Children in Attendance**

Photos courtesy of the Consulate General of the Republic of Malta in Canada

The New Year's Eve Dinner Dance will be held at the Club.

Family Day will be celebrated on Saturday, February 15, 2020.

The Carnival Ball will be held on Saturday, February 22<sup>nd</sup>.

**St. Paul the Apostle Parish**

The Children's Christmas Party was held on the afternoon of Sunday December 1<sup>st</sup> and included a play, the making of crafts and a visit from Santa.

A New Year's Eve Parish Dinner Dance will be held.



**The Children Are Listening Attentively to Santa**

On Thursday, December 5<sup>th</sup>, the Parish hosted a meeting of the West Toronto Junction Historical Society (WTJHS). The President, Chris Sears, welcomed the more than 50 members present, of whom four were Maltese, and introduced the guest speaker, Richard Cumbo, curator of the Maltese-Canadian Museum

Archives and Visitors Centre. Richard gave a presentation entitled "Little Malta in the Junction."



**The Audience Listens to Richard Cumbo's Presentation**

photo courtesy of Lance Gleich

This was followed by an open question and answer session.

During a break the audience toured the various exhibits and became better acquainted with the Maltese Islands and Toronto's Maltese Canadian community. Three Museum/Archives volunteers, Rose Cassar, Carmen Galean and Manuel Mifsud, were available to show people the exhibits and answer questions.

Father Mario Micallef, MSSP, chairperson of the Museum/Archives was unable to be present owing to a prior commitment.

The Annual Christmas Concert took place on the evening of Friday, December 13<sup>th</sup> under the leadership of Fathers Mario Micallef and Ivano Burdian. It was coordinated by the the St. Paul the Apostle Youth Group, led by Youth Ambassador Jason Borg and his team.

Among those participating in the concert were the malta Band, under the direction of Maestro Nic. Arrigo, Karen Polidano Zahra and the St. Cecilia's Choir. This choir is composed of very young children who learned a number of Christmas carols for this occasion.

The highlight of the evening was the children's nativity pageant, a centuries-old Maltese tradition.



**Many of the Groups Who Participated**

The Festival of Lights was held the next day at 5:00 p.m. This truly moving and spiritual event was complimented by the angelic voice of renowned Maltese singer Louise Debono



**Part of the Nativity Scene**

**London, Ontario**

Some 65 individuals attended the luncheon on Thursday, November 28<sup>th</sup> at the Marconi Club on Clarke Road.



**Some of Those Present**

**LOOKING BACK**

*The now defunct*

*Maltese – Canadian Social Club Guelph Inc. held a New Years Eve Party on December 31, 1980 at the U.E. Hall, Silvercreek Parkway, Guelph*

A Christmas evening get together dinner and dance was held at the Marconi Club on Thursday, December 19<sup>th</sup>. Nearly 60 participated.

**Malta United Society of Windsor, Ontario**

The Children's Christmas Party was held at 4:00 p.m. on Sunday, December 1<sup>st</sup>.



**Santa and Mrs. Claus Get to Meet the Children**

photos courtesy of Daryl Muscat

The Members Christmas Party took place on Saturday, December 21<sup>st</sup>.



**Some of the Women in Attendance**

**Herbert Galea**

*Born in Valletta, on June 12, 1877, he immigrated to the United States in 1911 and appears on the Canada census for that year at 309 George Street, Toronto. He was listed as an architect and surveyor. Galea may very well have been the first person of Maltese birth and blood in that city. He married there in 1917.*



**Enjoying a Great Meal**

photos by Anna White

**Metropolitan Detroit**

**Larry J. Zahra**, Honorary Consul of Malta in Detroit, passed away on Monday, December 16<sup>th</sup> at the age of 90. (See page 27 for an overview of his life.)

**Maltese American Community Club of Dearborn**

The MACC hosted a Small Business Craft Show on Saturday, November 30<sup>th</sup>. There were local crafters and artisans selling their wares, many of which were Maltese items.



**The Malta Gift Shop**

**Owner Rena Xuereb**

**with Her Grandchildren, Natalia and Nicholas**

*Fr. Peter Paul Zarb (1862-1942), son of Angelo Zarb and Grace De Bons of Malta, and pastor of the parish of Floresville, Wilson County, Texas, tried to set up a Maltese colony there in 1910*



**Graceful Stained Glass  
Owner Grace Muscat-Harris**

A Christmas Party, with children’s crafts and games, a bounteous buffet-style dinner and a visit from Santa and his elf, was held on Saturday, December 14<sup>th</sup>.



**Three Generations of the Formosa Family**  
photos courtesy of Lisa Buttigieg-LiGreci

On Tuesday, December 24<sup>th</sup>, a potluck dinner took place. This was followed, at 9:00 p.m. by a Christmas Eve Mass celebrated by Fr. Linus Kinyua of St. Alphonsus Church, Dearborn.

**Maltese Canadian Association (Gozo)**

In mid-December, Christmas dinners were held at the St. Joseph Band Club, Għanjsielem, Gozo, for both members and the children.



**Plenty of Crafts and Games for the Children**



**Members' Christmas Dinner**



**Santa and His Elf (Jerry & Rita Dachs)**



**Bon Appetito**

photos by Emamuel Tabone

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

A bingo was held in the Lower Hall on Sunday, December 8<sup>th</sup>.

An appreciation Christmas party for members in good standing and their spouses/partners took place in the Lower Hall on Saturday, December 14<sup>th</sup>. There was a buffet meak, Music was by DJ Chuck

Bruch with Santa was held in the Lower Hall on the afternoon of Sunday, December 15<sup>th</sup>. There were fun and games for the children, as well as pancakes, waffles, fresh fruit and ice cream.

Its New Years Eve Gala Dinner Dance will take place in the Empire Hall of the Astoria World Manor. There will be a 20-item buffet dinner. DJ Chuck will be MC and provide the entertainment.

## **EUGENE MIZZI OF DETROIT**

### **Dan Brock**

In 2000, the late Larry Zahra, then of Dearborn Heights, observed that James Robinson of Detroit, had been a native of Cospicua, Malta, was in the American Navy during the Spanish-America War of 1896, had gone back to Malta, about 1906, to visit his mother and had returned to the United States the following year, accompanied by Eugene Mizzi and some other friends.

Nothing definitive has been found on the James Robinson in question, but in 1907, Eugenio Mizzi gave the name of a Joseph Robertson then living on Centre Street in Schenectady, NY. This would appear to have been James Joseph Robertson who was born in New York, in 1874, of a Scottish father and a mother of Irish parentage. James was an iron moulder in Schenectady by 1900 and in 1918 was working there for the General Electric Company.

Like the American Locomotive Company (ALCO), General Electric was an industrial powerhouse in Schenectady at the time and may explain why the Maltese, particularly skilled workers, were attracted to this city by 1906.

As for Eugenio or Eugene Mizzi, he was born in Senglea on November 24, 1886 to Carmelo and Antonia (Said) Mizzi.

A mechanic back in Malta, he sailed on the *Lazio* from Naples on June 11, 1907 and arrived in New York Harbor on June 27<sup>th</sup>. He then made his way to Schenectady where, by 1908, he was boarding at 482 South Centre Street and was employed as a machinist.

Eugenio was living at 543 Centre Street when he was joined by his father, a labourer, in February 1910. Carmelo had sailed from Naples on the *Principe di Piemonte*.

In September 1912, the Mizzis were joined by other family members, including Carmelo's wife, Antonia, their children, Emanuele, Lorenzo and Giovanna, Emanuele's wife, Maria, and Antonia's older, maiden sister Carmela.

It would appear that the Mizzis migrated to Detroit the following year, as the first child of Emanuele and Maria Mizzi, Mary Antoinette, was born there on November 27, 1913.

The Mizzis were living at 44 Baker Street at the time of Emanuele's death on September 13, 1918, following an appendix operaton.

Meanwhile, Eugene had joined the US Army on May 28, 1918, become a private in the 5<sup>th</sup> Company Development Branch and was stationed at Camp Wheeler, near Macon, GA by August 9<sup>th</sup> when he applied to become a naturalized citizen.

At the time of the US Federal census of 1920, Eugene was living at 167 Elizabeth Street East, Detroit, with his parents, his brother Lorenzo and Lorenzo's wife, Mary Frances, his widowed sister-in-law, the former Maria Danza of Floriana, Malta, Maria's four children, and Eugene's maternal aunt, Carmela Said. Eugene, his father and brother were working as machinists at an auto factory at this time.

By 1930, Eugene was the only child at home with his parents at 541 Elizabeth Street East. The parents took in male lodgers while Eugene continued to work as a machinist at an auto factory.

Eugene was a punch press operator at an automobile factory, by 1940. Living with him at 833 Plum Street, was William Pace, also from Malta, who had been a lodger at the Mizzi household in 1930.

It is stated on Eugene's World War II draft registration card in April 1942 that he worked at Chrysler's Dodge Main Plant on Joseph Campau Street.

He was still living at 833 Plum Street when he appears to have returned to Malta, by way of Naples, for a first-time visit. His length of stay was indefinite when he left New York Harbor, on board the *Saturnia*, on June 19, 1952. In any case, Eugene, arrived back in New York Harbor, again by way of Naples and again on board the *Saturnia*, on September 27<sup>th</sup> of the same year.

He never married and died in Detroit on March 18, 1974. Like his brother Emanuele, Euguene was interred in Mount Olivet Cemetery.

It would appear that, over the years, Larry Zahra had become acquainted with Eugene Mizzi, one of Detroit's early Maltese residents.

Two earlier, Detroit residents from Malta were Angelo De Rosa (1868-1933) and Achilles or Cony Sapienza (1883-1951) who appear on the US Federal census for 1910. They too worked in an automobile factory.



## PASSAGE TO AMERICA

### CDR Fred Aquilina USNR (Ret)

It strains my memory to recount the events of 1947, some 72 years ago. I know, however, that on January 11, 1947, my mother, Philippa, her youngest daughter, Victoria "Vicky", her second youngest son, Ronald, and myself, Fred, her youngest son, embarked on a journey that was to change the fate of our family of 10 children, two in-laws and four grandchildren forever. My memory evokes not a continuous narrative of events, but rather snippets of events that impressed me as a five-year-old.



**Fred, Gzira, Malta, July 1944**

Malta in 1946 was still recovering from the devastation of the War. Our family owned a home in Gzira with part of the first floor converted to a small neighborhood grocery store, a boon during wartime when food supplies were almost impossible to obtain. One of those snippets comes to mind. Owing to the food shortage, and despite owning the store, I remember Mom tasking the younger children with harvesting garden snails from the empty field behind our nearby parish church, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel. She would give us empty pots and we would bring them back filled with snails so she could feed the family.

Since we lived within a mile or two of the main targets, the dockyards, our family was constantly heeding the

air raid sirens and we seemed to be always running to the basement of our church. As we little ones slowed down the rest of the family, my mother used to take potato or flour sacks, and the older brothers would put us in them, feet first, and haul us to the air raid shelter at the church to wait out the bombings. The all clear did not come soon enough as the crowded, noisy, smelly shelter was an uncomfortable environment.

As my parents were not happy with this arrangement, my father, Michael, and my older brothers Charlie and Manuel, dug an air raid shelter under the floor of the store which became our shelter for the duration of the War.

Having been born in January of 1941, at the time the Luftwaffe had joined the Italians in the campaign to destroy and occupy Malta, the air raids were incessant. They were more so at the time because the HMS *Illustrious*, a British aircraft carrier, was undergoing repairs at French Creek within a mile and a half of our home.

On January 9 the carrier, as part of Operation Excess, was on convoy duty from Alexandria, Egypt to Malta and when she was northwest of her destination, the Luftwaffe went after her with a vengeance. Forty Junkers bombers and Stukas viciously dive-bombed and wounded the *Illustrious*. That attack was shortly followed by a second attack by even more Ju-88 bombers. Severely damaged, with her steering gear out of commission and with 126 of her crew killed, she managed to limp into the Grand Harbour.

I was born at home during a horrendous air raid with older sisters Mary, Pauline, Stella and Jane acting as mid wives and comforting my mother. She never forgot that day and used to say that it was one of the most horrific and frightening days of her life.

As a youngster, I recall about a dozen neighborhood children congregating in front of our store, and a couple of older boys would form us up like a small army. Then we would parade down Reid Street toward Manoel Island bridge. We marched and sang Maltese songs denouncing Hitler and Mussolini while the two older boys dangled effigies of the two enemies from broomsticks. It was like a scene out of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*.

Once we arrived at the middle of Manoel Bridge, the two boys took out matches and ignited the effigies of the hated Axis leaders. We all cheered as they burned, and when the fire was close to their hands, the boys heaved the burning remains into the water. It was an unforgettable experience for a youngster.

Although I attended Stella Maris College for boys in Gzira, the only memory that comes to mind of school days is playing in the schoolyard rubble where we used to dart between the rocks and mounds of dirt with sticks in hand mimicking a rifle while shooting at an imaginary

enemy. Another memory of that period is that we would line up and take some sort of medication (cod-liver oil?) or tablets to ward off illness.

After the War, my mother made one of the most important decisions of her life. Although our family consisted of 10 children, only nine of us went through the bombings in Malta. The oldest son, Joe, in 1939, at the age of 22, embarked on the SS *Queen Mary* and immigrated to San Francisco. As we had cousins there, he had been corresponding with them quite frequently. They wrote about how great America was and sent him postcards displaying the beauties of the United States.

One in particular, taken of Mt. Tallac in Lake Tahoe, not only created a life-long memory, but inspired him, as an amateur artist, to paint the scene of the alpine mountain. Mt. Tallac is unique because in early summer, when most of the snow has melted, there remains a huge snow-filled crevasse on the side of the mountain which forms a Christian cross laying on its side. These images of the beauty of America hooked him on moving to the States.

In the U.S., he learned to be an upholsterer while working for his cousin, Tom Fenech, who owned a furniture store and whose wife, Jeanne, was my dad's niece. All was going well until the War broke out with the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941. The following year, although still not a citizen of the U.S., he was drafted into the Army and shipped to the Aleutian Islands.

A young man, who had spent most of his life in the warmer climes of the Mediterranean, had been sent to the desolate, cold, windy and wet Arctic Aleutians. One day while on patrol there, Joe found himself in a blinding snow storm and blacked out from the cold. He was found laying unconscious in the snow, rescued and taken back to the base by native Aleuts. Shipped back to California for medical treatment, he was in a coma for quite a few months.

In October of 1946, while Joe was still in hospital recuperating and undergoing therapy, Mom had undergone enough worrying and heartache and told Dad of her plans to go visit him in the States. She would take the three youngest children with her while the rest of the family would continue running the store till her return. That's what she said. But that would change once she experienced life in the States.

That day of departure in January 1947 was a sad day for my father and the remaining four daughters and two brothers. My sister Jane recalls weeping incessantly and kept asking why Mom was not taking her to America. Mom replied that her father needed Jane to help the older sisters assist Dad with all the chores that would be required.



***Citta di Tunis***

We boarded the Italian ferry *Citta di Tunis* at Valletta on that cold, breezy, winter evening and settled down for the first leg of our trip, the sea voyage to Toulon, France. As the lights of Valletta disappeared on the horizon, Mom explained to my brother and sister that they had to help her keep an eye on me. And they did until by morning the effects of the choppy sea and the undulation of the ship got to my brother. He was so seasick he could no longer keep me company.

Of course, I got bored as I had no one to play with. I did not get seasick and, in fact, I actually enjoyed riding through the swells, so much so that I wandered to the main deck of the ship to see the action outside. I don't know how I slipped my Mother's watchful eye, but I did.

Once there, I looked around and could see the cargo on the deck and even a couple of trucks lashed down. I meandered to the forecabin enjoying the motion of the rising and fall of the ship and noticed an oval opening in the starboard bow. It was a couple feet high and a couple feet wide. Although I did not know it at the time, I had discovered the hawsehole (in the Navy, we knew it as the hawsepipes) the hole through which the anchor chain passes as it is released and falls into the sea. A perfect spot to enjoy riding the swells for a boy, a couple weeks short of his sixth birthday.

I made my way there, then I laid prone on the cold deck and stuck my head and chest out the hole. And I had the ride of a lifetime. As the bow cut through the waves, my jutting head would go down towards the foaming sea. My small head seemed to be kissing the waves, then the ship would rise up again. The cold, misty ocean spray jolted me at first but the thrill of the ride overcame the cold spray.

I don't know how long I "rode the waves" as I was oblivious to anything but enjoying the moment. Up and down. Up and down. The fun and enjoyment were abruptly interrupted by a deck hand pulling my prone body out of the hawsepipes.

Although he tried to put on a stern face, I could see a slight smile on it. He was glad to have found me, but probably thought, "what kids will do". He took me by the hand and escorted me back to the main cabin. A crowd of passengers and crewmen were gathered around my mother and siblings. Apparently, the ship had gone to "general quarters" in the search for me. Heads were shaking, there were dour faces and smiles of relief and astonishment. Although I don't remember being scolded for my escapade, I imagine I received plenty of admonishment and an ear full from my mother along with some slaps to my backside. I do remember that the deck hand who found me came by later, and he presented me with a dozen metal soldier toys in various battle poses. I suppose he did that with the hope that I would play with them and not go wandering off again.

As we approached the port of Toulon a day or so later, many passengers were leaning over the rails to view the spectacle that was unfolding before us. All the strange shapes that they had seen from a distance jutting out of the water were now identifiable. Everywhere in the harbor were masts of sunken ships. Smoke stacks aimed like missiles at the sky. Half-submerged huge battleships with some of their almost visible naval guns being lapped by the sea. Debris littered the harbor. I never forgot this astonishing and memorable sight of massive destruction.

Two or three tugs nestled up to the *Citta di Tunis* and gingerly herded the ferry into the port.

The port of Toulon by the 1940s was France's most important naval base and home to the majority of her fleet. In November of 1942, it was under the control of the Vichy government. Germany feared that the French fleet would either fall to the Allies, or that the French ship captains would defect to the Allies, so they decided to invade the port to control the fleet. The Vichy government, however, ordered the French captains to scuttle and destroy the fleet to thwart the Germans. They consequently scuttled 77 vessels which included three battleships, two cruisers, and many destroyers, submarines, torpedo and patrol boats, various auxiliaries and tugs. Most of these submerged hulks remained in the harbor and were still being removed when we sailed into Toulon.

From Toulon we traveled the 70-some miles by train to Cherbourg, the port on the northwestern coast of France. This port was reminiscent of Toulon as it too was littered with sunken vessels and obstacles. Besides these obstructions, the port area was congested with jeeps, trucks, heavy equipment and various war materiel that was being returned to the U.S. My brother Ron remembers that, when we were exploring around the port, he uncovered a bag full of coins. We ran excitedly to Mom to show off our find. She identified the booty as American coins and told us

she would hold on to them so when we got to America, we could use them to buy candy.

The ferry trip from Cherbourg to Portsmouth, England lasted a few hours and was uneventful as was the 75-mile train trip from Portsmouth to London. We spent the night in London and the next day we headed to the airport to board our flight to the States.

This was the era of the beginning of mass migration by air from Europe. Airlines were few and commercial airplanes were still in their infancy.

In 1946 there were only 16 commercial flights to the U.S. with some Maltese passengers. Our flight was the second in 1947 carrying Maltese emigrants. But a minuscule amount compared to those arriving by ship. The reasons were twofold. The cost was expensive, and probably more of a factor was the fear of flying.

The aircraft we flew in was originally a C-69 military transport, a four-engine aircraft designed and built by Howard Hughes. With the end of the War, the U.S. government cancelled the Hughes contract, so he converted the C-69s to commercial airliners, changed the designation to L0-49 Constellation and sold them to the airlines. One buyer was American Export Airlines (AEA), owned by American Export Lines, the passenger ship company with trans-Atlantic routes. Congress disapproved the sale owing to concerns that the shipping line would have too big a stake in the passenger traffic between the U.S. and Europe. So AEA Airlines cut its ties with the shipping industry and became American Overseas Airlines which eventually merged with the trans-Atlantic division of American Airlines. The company called their airliners "Flagships" and named them after cities or counties. Coincidentally, the Constellation we flew in was called *Flagship America*.



**L0-49 Constellation *Flagship America***

What I recall about the flight was that we boarded the

“Connie” in the afternoon. My mother set me down in a window seat over the front of the port wing; she took the aisle seat and put Ron and Vicky in the two seats behind ours. Although I was elated and excited to be on the plane, I must have been worn out from all the excitement as I slept shortly after take off. I don't remember flying during daylight. What I will never forget, however, is the noise of the four Wright R3350 engines. Nor, will I forget, as I gazed out the window into the dark, cold, winter night over the Atlantic, the even more memorable sight of the exhaust flames shooting out the manifolds from behind the whirling propellers. Awesome.

Upon landing at Laguardia airport in New York in the early hours of January 18<sup>th</sup>, there was snow falling as we taxied towards the wooden, two-story terminal. Needless to say, I had no idea what was falling from the sky. It was strange, white, powdery and beautiful and was settling on the wing. The other 10 Maltese on our flight were probably just as mystified.

As we made our way off the Connie, we must have been the last four passengers as Mom was struggling with the bags, and corralling her three children. A uniformed crew member and a stewardess came to her aid. The man lifted me up and carried me into the terminal, the stewardess escorted my mother, another crew member took my brother and sister by the hand and led them into the warm terminal. My first impression of Americans was a joyful one of thoughtful, caring people going out of their way to be helpful. That impression has lasted a lifetime as Americans are still one of the most generous people on the planet.

I think my Mom breathed a sigh of relief once in the warm terminal. We were finally in America. The country where so many Maltese aspired to immigrate and one that held out so much hope, so many freedoms and so much bounty. The country that had played such a pivotal role in the battle of Malta. From the USS *Wasp* transporting Spitfires to the Island, to the American tanker SS *Ohio* delivering its precious fuel which prevented Malta from capitulating to the Axis.

Our long train trip from New York to California must have been beautiful at that time of the year. Don't remember much about that trip, but I do remember the train station in Chicago. The station was a scene of pandemonium. People were rushing around to catch trains or meet someone and the noise was almost unbearable as it echoed through the station.

Through all that chaos there was an elderly Chinese fellow getting some shut eye. He was sprawled across a bench. His legs were spread, his body slouched, and his hat covered his eyes.

Remember that bag of coins we found in Cherbourg? Well, we did buy that candy. My brother and I were eating some of it, and had accumulated a hand full of

empty wrappers. When I was done eating the candy, I approached the sleeping man from behind the bench and carefully deposited the handful of candy wrappers on his tilted hat. I then exited the scene and joined my brother who couldn't help but laugh at what I had done.

We waited and watched. After some time, the man awoke and began to stir. All the candy wrappers rained down on his lap but as he was half asleep, he had no clue as to what had happened. He looked around for a perpetrator, then shook his head, fixed his hat and walked away.

My brother and I were still laughing when my mother returned from taking my sister to the bathroom. I'm not sure if my mother found out what I had done as I don't recall any consequences for my mischievous behavior. Had she seen what I had done, she probably would have shook her head and tried to hide a laugh.

When the train finally pulled in to Oakland, California, I imagine Mom felt like a huge weight had been lifted off her shoulders. The passage was nearing the end. One last ferry boat board and then sail across San Francisco bay. She took in the magnificence of the San Francisco skyline, the Bay Bridge and finally the Ferry building, with huge letters emblazoned across it announcing "Port of San Francisco". We were met by our cousins and my brother, Joe. It was a typical Maltese welcoming - loud, joyful crying, hugging, and quite boisterous. My mother would not stop hugging and kissing her oldest son. It had been so many years. So much worry and anguish.

Though my mother had told Dad and the family that she would return to Malta, it did not take her long to fall in love with America and change her plans. She began making arrangements for bringing the entire family to her new homeland. Within a year and a half, Dad, my sisters Pauline, Stella and Jane, along with my brothers Manuel and Charlie and his wife Maggie all sailed on the Polish ship SS *Sobieski* to New York. They then made their way to San Francisco. An interesting sideline to that trip was the fact that when the Polish ship was off New York in U.S. territorial waters, Charlie's wife, Maggie, gave birth to their son, Austin. As he was born on a Polish ship, of Maltese parents, in U.S. territorial waters, he was entitled to citizenship from three different countries.

Since the remaining oldest sister, Mary, was married with three children, she remained in Malta and finally joined the rest of the family in 1950. My Mom's dream had finally been realized as she had united the entire family in America.

As I reflect on that passage to America, I am still grateful, amazed and in wonderment of my mother's adventure. At the ripe age of a month shy of 50, with a fourth grade education, and a rudimentary knowledge of English, bravely and without trepidation, for the first

time in her life, took three of her youngest children in hand, and set off for the new world and temporarily left the rest of her family.

Traveling thousands of miles, she boarded ocean ferries, rode multiple trains, and even took a flight on a fledgling airline on an almost new airplane to reunite with her oldest son and to better the lives of all her family.

Further, meditating on the past, I am astonished that my father at the age of 58, when most are looking towards retirement, without an education, unable to speak English, nor able to read or write, having never driven an automobile, for the love of his wife and family, uprooted his life. He followed the love of his life and joined her in a strange foreign country. That takes fortitude, faith and love.

For their sacrifices I will always be indebted and grateful. And I wonder what life would have been like to have remained in Malta. Many years have passed since their death. The family has grown and prospered by leaps and bounds all owing to those two courageous immigrants. Thanks, Mom & Dad.

## IS YOUR FAMILY FROM GOZO?

**Dan Brock**

On November 29, 2019, Justyne Caruana, Minister for Gozo, launched an online version of the *Ġuljana Masini* in a short ceremony at the National Archives Gozo (NAG). This required years of hard work and a sizable budget.

The *Ġuljana Masini* consists of 88 manuscript volumes of various sizes and lists all the births, marriages and deaths which took place in Gozo between 1554 and 1934.

It was in 1554 that the Matrice, the present Cathedral of Gozo, started keeping such records. This *Ġuljana* also registers the births of Gozitans in Malta and, sometimes, even abroad.

The compilation of the *Ġuljana* was begun by Notary Felice Attard (1802-1874) and continued by his son Pietro "Tal-Ispettur" Attard (1836-1916). After his death, an unknown person proceeded to keep the records. It was eventually acquired by the lawyer Francesco Masini (1894-1962) from the heirs of the late Pietro Attard.

In July 2011, the collection was donated by Francesco's son, Franco Masini, and his wife Manola to the government of Malta to be deposited at the NAG.

Since this time, hundreds of people from Gozo and Malta, Australia, Canada, France, England and many more countries have consulted this valuable resource.

In addition to making the tracing of one's ancestry or compiling one's family tree a whole lot easier, there are

three other added features of the *Ġuljana*. First, it contains a considerable number of family trees that Notary Attard compiled for clients. Secondly, there are many references to contracts, donations and other issues related to land property owned by his clients. Thirdly, there are references to such properties by their original toponym, that is their place or regional name.

The compilations itself required the examination of all the parish records in Gozo and the collation of the names in alphabetical order in different volumes according to births, marriages and deaths. The *Ġuljana* can be accessed online from the webpages of both the National Archives of Malta and its Gozo section – [nag.gov.mt](http://nag.gov.mt).

## MALTA, MONTANA

**Dan Brock**

Although its population was only 1,997 at the time of the 2010 census, this county seat of Phillips County in the northeast part of Montana, is denoted as a city.

The place evolved from rail siding number 54 along the St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Manitoba Railway, built in 1887, across the state's "High Line."

The Malta post office was established there in 1890, the same year the Great Northern Railway had purchased the St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Manitoba Railway from James Hill and his partners.

The name is reported to have been selected by a spin of the globe by a Great Northern official whose finger came to rest on the island of Malta. The name of nearby Saco is said to have been similarly selected and named after Saco, Maine.

The Roman Catholic Diocese of Great Falls was established in the eastern part of Montana in 1904 and its first bishop, Mathias Clement Lenihan (1854-1943), sought to increase the number of Catholics in his diocese by encouraging emigration from Malta.

In 1907, General Sir Harry Barron (1847-1921), commander of the Royal Artillery in Malta (1904-1908) had set up the Malta Emigration Committee.

One of the active members of this Committee was Professor Lawrence Manchè (1846-1921), "one of the leading authorities on ophthalmology in Europe" and a native of Floriana. He thought that Montana would be a good place for Maltese immigration as it had this small town of some 800 people named Malta, which was near a railway line.

According to the late Fr. Lawrence E. Attard, however, "Manchè somewhat naively envisaged Montana's Malta as the beginning of a greater Malta on the American continent." Needless to say, this scheme by the Emigration Committee "eventually came to nothing."

## INHARSU LEJN L-2020 BĦALA L-BIBU ĠDID GHALL-KOMUNITA' MALTJA-KANADIŻA



Nispera u nawguralkom li bdejtu s-sena 2020 bit-tajjeb u kif xtaqtu! Waqt li nkompnu niċcelebraw, ikun tajjeb ukoll li nirriflettu fuq kif nistgħu nagħtu daqqa t'id bħala persuni, bħala familji, bħala komunita' Maltja-Kanadiża li tgħix hawn fil-Kanada, matul din is-sena l-ġdida.

L-2020 ser tkun sena impenjattiva immens, b'ħafna attivitajiet u avvenimenti kbar li ta' min ifakkar ftit minnhom:-

- (1) Matul din is-sena ser titfakkar il-110-il sena minn meta tradizzjonalment inqisu li waslu l-ewwel emigranti Maltin u Għawdxin bil-massa ġewwa l-Kanada mill-Gżejjer Maltin;
- (2) il-Parroċċa Maltja-Kanadiża ta' San Pawl Appostlu f'Toronto ser tagħlaq id-90 sena mit-twaqqif tagħha;
- (3) Diversi għaqdiet Maltin-Kanadiži ser jiċċelbraw ukoll l-anniversarji tagħhom minn meta ġew imwaqqfa;
- (4) Il-Gvern Malti ser jorganizza l-V Konvenzjoni għall-Maltin li Jgħixu Barra minn Malta bejn is-6-7 t'Ottubru 2020 (min ikun interessat li jattendi jikkuntattja lill-Uffiċċju tal-Konsulat Ġenerali);
- (5) Il-Konsolat Ġenerali ta' Malta fil-Kanada ser iniedi diversi inizjattivi ġodda għall-ġid tal-Komunita' Maltja-Kanadiża, fosthom l-ewwel Kalendarju ta' l-Attivitajiet kollha li ser isiru mill-Komunita' Maltja madwar il-Kanada kollha matul 2020;
- (6) u attivitajiet oħra.

Jiena nappella lil kull min għandu għal qalbu l-identita' Maltja u l-komunita' Maltja-Kanadiża sabiex jara kemm jista' jiddedika ħin ta' volontarjat u j/tagħti sehmu/ha fil-ħidma fost il-komunita' Maltja fil-Kanada. Ninkoraġġixxi lit-tfal u ż-żgħażaġh tagħna sabiex huma ukoll jipparteċipaw u jagħtu sehemhom għaliex jekk ma ngħaddux il-wirt li ħallewlna missirijietna lill-generazzjonijiet futuri, il-ħtija tkun tagħna biss u ta'

## YEAR 2020 – A NEW BEGINNING FOR THE MALTESE-CANADIAN COMMUNITY

I hope and wish you all had a good start to 2020! While we are celebrating, it would be appropriate to reflect on what we would like to do during this new year, as individuals, families, and as a Maltese-Canadian community here in Canada.

From the looks of it, 2020 is going to be a very full year, with many events, big and small, mentioning a few:-

- (1) We as Maltese-Canadians will be celebrating the 110th year since we traditionally believe that mass migration from the Maltese Islands to Canada commenced;
- (2) We will be marking the 90th Anniversary from when the Maltese-Canadian Parish dedicated to St. Paul The Apostle was established on Dundas Street in Toronto;
- (3) A number of Maltese-Canadian organisations will be celebrating their anniversaries since being established;
- (4) The Maltese Government will be organising the V Convention for the Maltese Living Abroad between 6-7 October 2020 (whoever is interested to participate please contact the Consulate General of Malta to Canada);
- (5) The Consulate General of Malta to Canada will initiate a number of initiatives for the benefit of the Maltese-Canadian Community, amongst them a full calendar of events of the Maltese-Canadian Community everywhere during 2020;
- (6) And this is just the 'tip of the iceberg.'

As your Consul General my appeal goes to those who cherish and have at heart the Maltese identity and a sense of Maltese-Canadian Community to dedicate whatever time one can towards the good and betterment of the all, the Maltese-Canadian Community. Encourage your children to get involved, to learn and be part of something bigger than just oneself or your family. This way, what we inherited from our forefathers can be transmitted to future generations, obviously adapted to time and place. If our young ones do not pass on our heritage and good values, there will be no one to blame to this other than ourselves. If anyone says, 'but what is there to do in the community?' just call the Office of the Consul General or contact one of the organisations and you will be directed to what your time can be best spent on.

ħadd iżjed. Jekk xi ħadd ma jafx fejn jista' jistaqsi, jigi u jkellimni fl-Uffiċċju tal-Konsulat Ġenerali.

Għalxejn ingergru li l-affarijiet fil-komunita' qed jonqsu jew li xi avvenimenti m'għadhomx isiru. Staqsi lilek innifsek, 'il-ħtija ta' min hi?' Ħares fil-mera u tara lil dak li għandu parti mit-tort. Irridu nistaqsu lilna nfusna, 'Jien x'nista' nagħmel biex ngħin u ntejjeb il-qagħda tal-Maltin-Kanadiži?' B'hekk biss jista' jibqa' jkollna komunita' Maltija-Kandiža ħajja, kburiya bl-identita' u l-valuri li wirtet minn Malta u missirijetna.

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

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## GOOD CONDUCT CHECKS PRIOR TO EMIGRATION

### Dan Brock

In the course of my research, I've come across two different examples of good conduct checks. The first would be the one issued by the local archpriest (parish priest). It would then be presented to the emigration

It is useless that we complain about lesser events being organised in the community. Just ask yourself, 'who is there to blame.' Just look in the mirror and you can see who has part of the blame. We must ask ourselves, 'What can I do to give my share and improve the Maltese-Canadian Community?' Then act and don't look back. This is the only way we can keep our Maltese-Canadian identity alive and pass on our values inherited from our ancestors back in Malta.

My God bless both Canada and Malta.

Regards,

Raymond

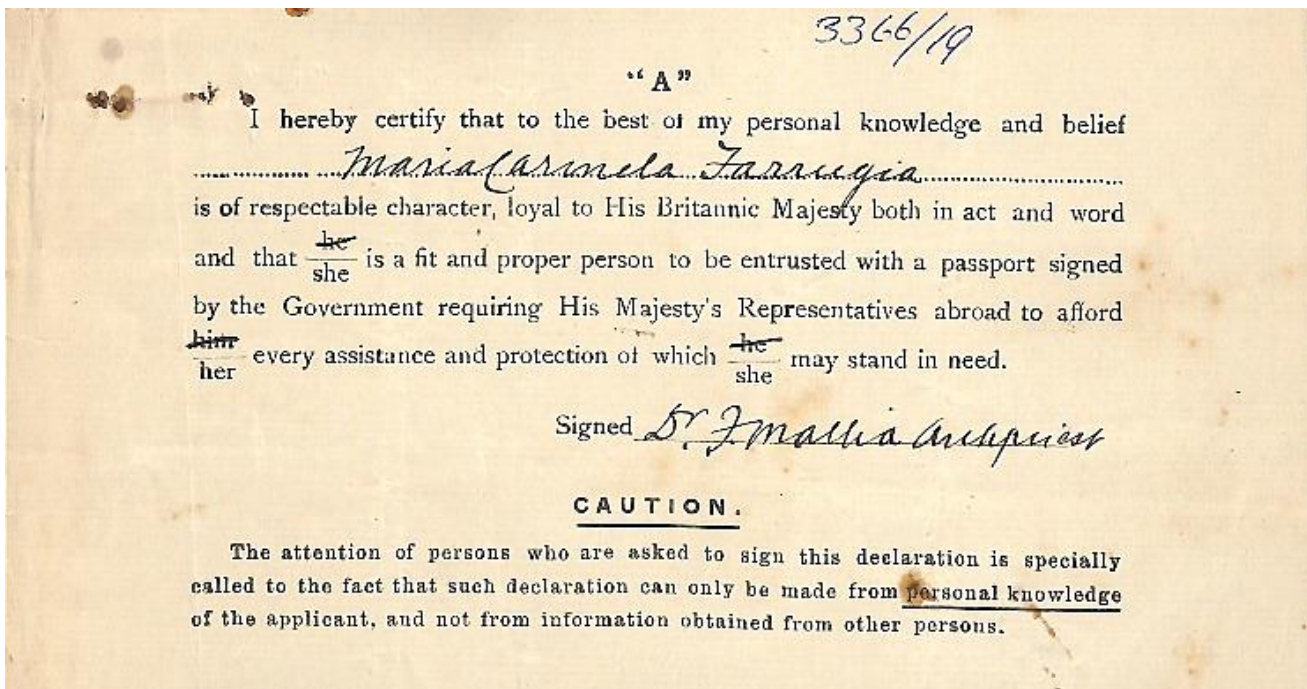
Dr Raymond C. Xerri

Il-Konslu Ġenerali / Consul General

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authorities and would be pinned on to the individual's passport application.

The example below was issued to Maria Carmela Farrugia who, accompanied by her four children, was about to leave in December 1919, to join her husband who was intending to return to Brantford, Ontario, where he had lived since 1913.



Courtesy of the National Archives of Malta

Later, applicants had to undergo a police check. The one below was issued to Francis Gatt who was also

planning to immigrate to Canada.  
Frank was one of the men who came out on the

*Vulcania* in June 1948 and disembarked at Halifax,  
Nova Scotia.

Form C.

No. **32801**



**MALTA POLICE**

**CERTIFICATE OF CONDUCT**

This is to certify that, from the Registers of the Police Criminal Record Office, it appears that *Mr. Francis Gatt* son of *George Shema* aged *21* years, born in *Shema* and residing at *No. 8 Viani Street Shema* has never been convicted of an offence.

POLICE OFFICE,  
VALLETTA, *3<sup>rd</sup> May* 19*48*

Fee paid 1/-  
*Stamp duty 14*  
(Date and initials)  
*3-5-48*  
*M*

*[Signature]*  
Commissioner of Police.

N.B.—Prosecutions before any Court beyond the territorial jurisdiction of the Island of Malta and its Dependencies, are not registered in the Criminal Record Office.



## PETITE PATRIOTS AND ÉLISE PELLEGRIN

Dan Brock

Occasionally, as I went to the Facebook site for the Maltese American Community Club of Dearborn, I would come across a reference to Petit Patriots and came to realize that it was some sort of small business run by someone associated with the Club.

Then, in looking at the photographs taken at by Lisa Buttigieg-LiGreci at the Small Business Craft Show held at the end of November, I saw that Petite Patriots dealt with wearing apparel with a clearly Maltese emblem stitched onto them.

Through Lisa, I learned that the business was the brain child of Rachael (Cini) Darin. In exchanging emails with Rachael, I learned that she also assists with the Club's online newsletter.



**Rachael Darin beside Her Table at the Club's  
Small Business Craft Show**



**A Closeup of Some of the Apparel Being Sold**  
Photos courtesy of Lisa Buttigieg-LiGreci

Rachael is of German and Maltese ancestry. Her paternal grandparents, Philip Cini and Rita Attard, immigrated to Detroit in 1948 and 1950 respectively and were married in April 1950. While Rachael's passion for her Maltese roots runs deep, she says that while she could find "everything under the sun German," such was not the case for Maltese items.

Finding an obvious under representation of small countries and a lack of ease in finding products from these countries on line was, in part, one of the reasons for her establishing Petite Patriots.

As for the name of the business, Rachael relates that: I was brainstorming a few names, that were more exclusive to the Maltese culture, but wanted to be a bit more encompassing and general - I was trying to think of a clever play on words and had a few other ones that were in the running, but this one just stuck the best.

According to Rachael, the business concept came to her "somewhat by accident." Shortly after the Winter Olympics, held in PyeongChang, South Korea, in February 2018, she saw a picture of Élise Pellegrin, Malta's sole athlete at the games.

Élise was wearing "a beautiful white headband with a red [Maltese] cross." Rachael then got in touch with Élise and purchased a few of these headbands from her. This was Rachael's first venture into purchasing apparel with the Maltese Cross and anything else representative of Malta.

After wearing the headband to the Club, Rachael found others wishing to purchase one. This led to the purchase of even more items from Élise.



**Élise Pellegrin Wearing a Hat Similar to the  
Headband which First Caught Rachael Darin's Eye**

As for this Alpine skier, she born in Blois, France, in 1991, but was eligible to compete for Malta by virtue of the fact that one of her great-grandfathers had immigrated to France from Malta.

Élise had represented Malta in Sochi in 2014, where she was Malta's first Olympic Winter Games athlete and its flag bearer.

Elise is responsible for obtaining her sponsors and financing her way to the Olympics. She is looking for additional sponsorships.

Through the founding of Petite Patriots, Rachael is able to help Élise somewhat as part of the proceeds of her sales go to Élise.

The website for Petite Patriots is:

<https://www.etsy.com/shop/petitepatriots>.

## MALTESE-CANADIAN SOCIETY OF TORONTO FORCED TO CLOSE\*

**Sarah Carabott**



A journalist with *The Times of Malta* since 2011, Ms. Carabott was a finalist for the EU Health Prize for Journalists in April 2014.

### *Society played integral role in lives of Maltese migrants settling in Canada*

It was once in charge of relief for the besieged Maltese during World War II and its float for Toronto's centennial parade won first prize. But nearly a century since its foundation, the Maltese-Canadian Society of Toronto has had to close down as the Maltese community in the 'junction' neighbourhood continues to shrink.

Richard Cumbo, a life member of the society and curator of a Maltese-Canadian museum, told *Times of Malta* that its building in the junction had been sold.



**The Former Maltese-Canadian Society of Toronto Building. Inset: Richard Cumbo.**

Photos by Richard Cumbo

The 97-year-old society was founded in 1922 to promote the establishment of a Maltese Roman Catholic church.

Its goal was achieved during the economic depression with the building of the first St Paul the Apostle church in 1930.

According to Mr Cumbo, the society played an integral role in the lives of Maltese migrants settling in Canada and it was the main voice of the Maltese in Toronto for decades until more clubs were founded in the 1960s.

During World War II, the society's president, Angelo Cutajar, and its committee looked after the Malta Relief Fund.

When a new and larger church was required by the community, the founders and members chipped in. A new church was built in 1956 and the society kept financially supporting it until the late 1960s.

It was during this time that other Maltese associations took root in the neighbourhood. But while these clubs could purchase their own buildings it took many years for the Maltese-Canadian Society of Toronto to do so since it had been investing its money in St Paul's.

As the years rolled by it became increasingly difficult to find volunteers to serve the club as the Maltese community aged and shrunk and no new migrants moved there from Malta.

Mr Cumbo, who served on the executive committee for over 35 years, noted that another club that suffered the same fate was the Maltese Canadian Club of London, Ontario. It closed down in December last year.

Despite all this, the Maltese still get together for various events, organised by other clubs such as the Gozo Club of Toronto, the Maltese Canadian Federation, the Malta Band Club in Mississauga and the Melita Soccer Club.

According to Mr Cumbo, the heart of the community in the 'junction' remains St Paul the Apostle's Maltese parish, which is administered by the Missionary Society of St Paul since 1999. Previously, the parish had been run by the Franciscan Fathers of the Malta Province.

The church's complex also hosts a Maltese-Canadian museum, curated by Mr Cumbo himself, where information about the Maltese-Canadian community has been preserved for posterity and will, hopefully, outlive the clubs.

*\*This article appeared in The Times of Malta, December 11, 2019. Printed with permission of The Times of Malta.*

## LARRY ZAHRA: 1929-2019

**Rena Xuereb**

Larry J. Zahra, of Henry Ford Village, Dearborn, MI, died at the age of 90, on Monday, December 16<sup>th</sup>.

Emanuel John Zahra was born in Valletta, Malta on December 10, 1929, the son of Augustine Zahra and Carmen Micallef.

At the age of 11, during World War II, on one occasion when Manuel or Leli did not make it to the shelter during an unexpected air raid, he survived under a pile of rubble. He had hidden under steps, where only his legs were partially exposed allowing his father to find him and dig him out.

Leli's mother died from a lack of diabetes medication during the War.

Later, Leli acquired a degree in journalism from the University of Malta and even interviewed Queen Elizabeth II while she resided in Malta as the Princess with her husband Phillip.

Meanwhile Leli's older brother, Dominic was one of over 300 men who came to Canada June 1948. Dominick arrived at Halifax, NS on board the *Vulcania* and eventually end up in Windsor, ON where he worked as a spot welder. His 19-year-old wife, Antoinette (nee Zammit) came out on the *Radnik* and arrived in New York Harbor in October 1948 and then travelled by train to join her husband in Canada.

Dominic, Antionette or Nina and their 20-month-old daughter Marie migrated across the Detroit River to the Motor City in August 1950. There, Dominic had cousins, Spiridone and Jennie (Micallef) Zerafa.

Dominc and his famiy were living on 14<sup>th</sup> Street, Detroit when Leli joined them in 1951. Leli arrived at Halifax, on board the *Argentina*, on August 21<sup>st</sup> and two days later was at his brother's place in Detroit.

Not finding work as a journalist, and with a foreign accent, Leli went to work at Arthur Murray Dance Studio as a dance instructor. During the day he attended the University of Michigan working towards an economics degree. He went on to acquire his Master's degree from the University of Wisconsin. As people tended to confused "Leli" with "Larry," Leli officially changed his name to Larry.

Meanwhile, Dominic and Larry were joined by their widowed father, Augustine, and younger brother Paul, who arrived on the *Nea Hellas* in March 1952.

Larry met his future wife Vickie Grech at a wedding in Detroit. Vickie was the daughter of George and Carrie (Mifsud) Grech and had immigrated to the United States with her father, on board the *Nea Hellas* in March 1951.

Larry and Vickie were married in September of 1958 and were to have four children: Brian, Kevin, Jodi Ann and Kathleen.

By this time, Larry was hired as vice-president at the City of Detroit National Bank in Downtown Detroit.

He was appointed Honorary Consul of Malta in Detroit and assisted hundreds of Maltese over the years.

Larry, along with his wife Vickie, started a travel agency. They organized chartered groups to our homeland of Malta allowing Maltese people to take the opportunity to travel back home with fellow Maltese.

Larry would later preside as President of the Maltese American Benevolent Society of Detroit, for several years, as well as President of the Maltese American Community Club of Dearborn.



**Larry Zahra: 1929-2019**

In early 2000, he attended the Convention of Leaders of Associations of Maltese Abroad and of Maltese Origin which was held in Valletta, Malta. There, he delivered a paper entitled "Present Situation in the United States of America" which presented an overview of the Maltese in the United States and in Detroit and the border city of Windsor in particular.

With the establishment of the Council for Maltese Living Abroad, by the Government of Malta in 2012, Larry was appointed one of the representatives from the United States.

In addition to his four children, Brian, Kevin, Jodi Ann and Kathleen, Larry is survived by his grandchildren: Kevin, Claire, Andrew, Kyle, Joanna, Abbey, Peter, Vincent, Blaze, Alexis and Julia.

Larry was predeceased by his beloved wife, Vickie, who passed away just six months earlier on June 17, 2019, their grandsons Gerard and Joseph. his brothers Dominic and Paul and his parents Augustine and Carmen. Vickie's mother, Carrie (Mifsud) Grech, died at the age of 105 on March 23, 2019.

*Editor's note: Further information on the men who came out to Canada in May and in June of 1948 may be found in "The Beginnings of a New Wave of Maltese Immigration to Canada" in Issue 3 (May/June 2019). For an account of the women and children who sailed on the Radnik see "the Arrival of the Women and Children on Board the Radinik, October 1948," in Issue 7 (October 2019). An account of Carrie (Mifsud) Grech is planned for the March 2020 issue.*

## **MALTESE CANADIAN ASSOCIATION (GOZO)**

**Dan Brock**

It was only recently that I learn of the Maltese Canadian Association (Gozo) and quickly came to the conclusion that while it exists thousands of kilometres (miles) from North America, it is, to all intents and purposes, a part of the Maltese experience on this continent.

The Association is made up of Maltese Canadian expatriates, mainly on the island of Gozo, who are proud of their Canadian traditions. The members meet and discuss various local and Canadian issues pertaining to themselves and their children and organize various functions throughout the year. One of main functions is the celebration of Canada Day (July 1<sup>st</sup>). Then there are the Christmas parties for children and members. (see pages 14-15)

The origins of the Association date back to 1995 when Alfred and Lily Camilleri hosted a Canada Day BBQ at their farmhouse, *Ir-Razzett*, near *Ta' Kola*, the windmill in Xaghra, Gozo. Alfred had returned to his native island of Gozo, having spent 30 years working for Canada Post in Toronto.

The poolside party attracted nearly 100 people and was a wonderful evening with music and lots of food. Those present showed an interest in forming some kind of club for the emigrants who had return to Gozo from Canada in particular. While there was already such an association on the island of Malta, there was a strong feeling that the returning Gozitan emigrants were a distinct entity and should have an association of their own.

This led to the establishment, in 1996, of the Maltese Canadian Association (Gozo). Soon, with the support of the Bank of Valletta Toronto representative office, it began publishing a quarterly newsletter. The Association in turn honored the Bank's chief representative and senior vice president, the late Albert Vella, by making him an honorary president. (see Issue 9, page 20)

Then, in April 2002, with the financial support of the late Charles Puglisevich (see Issue 1, page 11), a monument was unveiled at Mgarr to pay tribute to all who left their homeland to go to Canada, Australia, the United States and elsewhere.

The Maltese inscription, on the marble plaque, affixed to the rough-hewn, Gozo quarried rock, is roughly

translated as follows: "In memory of all those Gozitans who departed the land of their birth, so that with their courage, strength and ability they were able to seek out a better life within the country that welcomed them."



**The Emigrants Memorial, Mgarr, Malta**

Each Canada Day, the Association performs the flag raising ceremony of the Canadian and Maltese flags at the Emigrants Memorial. In the evening, there is the playing of the national anthems of each country, the raising of both flags, a meal and entertainment.

As well as the Christmas parties, already noted, the members meet socially on different occasions and organize summer BBQs.

The Association's Facebook page is Maltese Canadian Association (Gozo)

**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: [maltaconsulate.toronto@gov.mt](mailto:maltaconsulate.toronto@gov.mt)**

## JOHN GRIMA: A DREAM COME TRUE\*

Dan Brock

*\*This is the second of a two-part article on the Maltese Canadian actor John Grima. Again, I would like to acknowledge Mr. Grima's cooperation and assistance in the writing of this article.*

After making his professional acting debut, in Shakespeare's *King Lear*, at the Crest Theatre in Toronto in 1957, John Grima performed on stage at such Toronto venues as the Royal York Hotel, Eaton Centre Theatre, Royal Alexandra Theatre, Actors Theatre and Colonade Theatre.



**As Jaffar the Evil Magician  
in *Aladdin* at the Children's Theatre  
Held at the Eaton Centre Theatre, Toronto**

Grima's "inimitable charm and his perfect English accent" also won him an audition with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) in 1957.



**As Albin in the CBC TV Episode  
*Wrong Number*, December 1957**

John's first television debut was at the CBC in *The Price of Silence* in which he co-starred with the British actor Barry Morse.

Among his television appearances in 1958, was a guest starring in the US TV series *The Adventures of Tugboat Annie*.

Other TV series in which Grima has appeared are: *First Performance* (1957), *On Camera* (1957), *Folio* (1958), *The Unforeseen* (1958-59), *R.C.M.P.* (1960), *Encounter* (1960), *Playdate* (1962), *Great Performances* (1971), *The Great Detective* (1980) and *The War of the Worlds* (1989).

John has also appeared in such TV movies as *Bethune* (1977) and *Scandalous Me: The Jacqueline Susann Story* (1998).

During his career, John has worked with such actors, directors and playwrights as Melvin Douglas, Gratian Gélinas, Olivia Hussey, Charles Jarrott, Celia Johnson, Michelle Lee, Leslie Nielson, Jack Palance, Nehemiah Persoff, Anthony Quayle, William Shatner, Donald Sutherland and Toby Tarnow, in addition to Barry Morse.



**Publicity Photo**

In summary, John has performed in 12 stage productions, five radio drama productions and over 60 TV and film productions.

Throughout it all, he has maintained his Maltese roots. John was to play the role of Caitan, Don Juan de Medina in the classic screen, Hollywood production, the *Great Siege of Malta 1565*, which, unfortunately, was never completed. He was also to take part in a Maltese film production, script-written by Marie Angelique Caruana.

Locally, he was "dedicated member and staunch supporter" of the now-defunct Maltese-Canadian Society of Toronto. In 1971, John met Richard Cumbo of Toronto and they became "great friends." Richard later sponsored John in joining The Sovereign Order of

St. John of Jerusalem, Knights of Malta. John became a prior, grand commander and is now a grand cross.



**His Excellency John Grima, Grand Cross  
of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem,  
Knights of Malta**

photos courtesy of John Grima

John is also a member of the Order of George Washington and the Order of the Holy Cross of Jerusalem, in both in the United States.

## READER COMMENTS: DECEMBER ISSUE

*It is so nice, so informative and so interesting, to know what is going on with Maltese societies in this part of the world.*

*I enjoyed reading every article.*

John Grima, Toronto, ON

*What an outstanding publication.*

Rachael Darin, Metropolitan Detroit

*Thank you for your work!*

Margaret Purdy, Metropolitan Detroit

*Many thanks for all you do!!*

*The newsletter is pure awesome and important!*

Jason Mercieca, GTA

*Have a lovely holiday season and God bless you for all you do for the Maltese community.*

Sue Barnes, London, ON

*I know I speak for many when I tell you how appreciative I am for your dedication to keeping so many informed of their Maltese heritage...*

Mabel Higgins, Sarnia, ON

*Thank you for continuing to produce an informative and enlightening newsletter.*

Joan Mizzi-Fry, Orillia, ON

*Keep up the good work.*

Fr. Mario Micallef, MSSP, Toronto

## 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**

[www.festasangorg.ca](http://www.festasangorg.ca)  
c/o 36 Sequoia Road, Vaughan, ON L4H 1W6  
905-216-8432/416-277-2291  
[philip@jallabell.com](mailto:philip@jallabell.com)

### **Festa San Gejtanu Association**

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

### **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)

### **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****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 Chilsworthy Avenue, Mississauga, ON  
 L5B 2R4  
 416-571-3944  
[joeshherri@rogers.com](mailto:joeshherri@rogers.com)

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

c/o 2387 Chilsworthy Avenue, Mississauga, ON  
 L5B 2R4  
 416-571-3944  
[joeshherri@rogers.com](mailto:joeshherri@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 Historical Society (San Francisco)****Melita Soccer Club**

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 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)

### CHRISTMAS GATHERINGS 2019



**Malta Band Club**



**Maltese Canadian Federation**



**Maltese American Community Club of Dearborn**



**Melita Soccer Club**



**Maltese Canadian Association (Gozo)**



**Malta United Society of Windsor**