

# THE MALTESE PRESENCE IN NORTH AMERICA



E-NEWSLETTER

Issue 9

DECEMBER 2019



**Dr. Raymond Xerri,  
Consul General of the Republic of Malta in Canada,  
with the Executive Committee of the  
Maltese-Canadian Association of the City of Hamilton (MCACH),  
Friday, November 8, 2019**

## EDITORIAL COMMENT



**Dan Brock**

This journal continues to evolve and expand. More material is being received. More individuals are coming forth to be put on the e-mail list and more copies are being printed and distributed in the GTA.

Autumn has been and continues to be a busy time within the Maltese communities throughout North America. Some of the events which have taken place are as follows:

The Maltese-American community associations in the Bay Area took part in the Italian Heritage Parade on Columbus Day, Sunday, October 13<sup>th</sup>. (page 32)

Later that month, the High Commissioner of Malta, Keith Azzopardi, spent a few days in Toronto. (pages 21-22)

*Leħen Malti* held its annual gala dinner on Saturday, October 26<sup>th</sup>. (pages 10-11)

Halloween events were held at the Malta Band Club, Maltese American Benevolent Society and the Maltese Center, NYC. (pages 11, 16, 17-18)

Dr. Raymond Xerri met with the executive of the Maltese Canadian Association of the City of Hamilton on Friday, November 8<sup>th</sup>. (pages 1,9)

The next day, the Maltese American Benevolent Society held its 40<sup>th</sup> annual Miss Malta Pageant & Gala Dinner Dance. (pages 16-17)

Memorial services or Masses were held for the souls of the faithful departed at Assumption Catholic Cemetery and the Malta Band Club, Mississauga, the Maltese Centre, NYC, Melita Soccer Club, Toronto, St. Dunstan's Church, Millbrae and St. Peter's Cemetery, London. (pages 9, 11-12, 13-14, 15, 18)

Remembrance Day was observed by members of the Maltese communities in London and in Toronto (pages 9, 15)

The Gozo Club held its Festa Calypso 2019 on Saturday, November 16<sup>th</sup>. (page 13)

My thanks to Jason Allan, Lisa Buttigieg-LiGreci, Mark Caruana, the late Fr. Henry Cassano, Richard Cumbo, Albino Ellul, Tony Galea, the late Frank Gatt, John Grima, Fr. Mario Micallef, the National Archives of Malta, Joe Sherri, the late Albert Vella and his wife, Thérèse, Dr. Raymond Xerri and Rena Xuereb for their contributions towards the content of this issue.

In November we loss a friend and benefactor of the Maltese communities throughout North America with the passing of Albert E. Vella. (pages 18-20)

A special thanks goes to Mona Vella-Nicholas who has been the proofreader for this journal from its inception. I'm most grateful for all the work she has done to catch my spelling and other errors and, in short, to make this journal more readable.

Back issues of this journal may be accessed by going to the Maltese-American Social Club of San Francisco's website: <http://maltese-americanscsf.org/home.aspx>.

In the last issue, it was mentioned that *The Journal of the Maltese Diaspora*, published in Australia, is also on this website. I'm very pleased to note that another of my inspirations and spurs for the publication of a journal centering on the Maltese in North America, namely *The Voice of the Maltese*, also published in Australia, will soon appear on the Maltese-American Social Club's website as well.

Again, you are encouraged to pass *The Maltese Presence in North America* along to others to whom it might be of interest.

You can reach me at [dbrock40@worldline.ca](mailto:dbrock40@worldline.ca) and, I can provide you with my address and telephone number if needed

## READER COMMENTS: NOVEMBER ISSUE

Another successful edition! Still going through it, however, very impressed with the amount of information and activity currently happening within the Maltese community in the GTA. Wish we lived closer to attend these activities.

Joan Mizzi-Fry, Orillia, ON

...once again very nice newsletter, so informative.

Rena Xuereb, MI

Thanks for sending us your e-newsletter, *The Maltese Presence in North America*. Congratulations and may you continue to improve in disseminating information. You were needed at that part of the world.

Lawrence Dimech, editor,  
*The Voice of the Maltese*, Australia

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## **GLEANINGS FROM THE SUNDAY BULLETIN**

### **PASTOR'S THOUGHTS...**



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

#### **"God, Be Merciful to Me, a Sinner"**

The tax-collector's prayer is praised by Jesus. Eventually it became one of the most famous and used prayers throughout the centuries. The monastic Desert Fathers and Desert Mothers used it as early as the fifth century, invoking, Jesus' mercy by repeating in the form of a litany phrases like, "Lord Jesus, have mercy on me a sinner." ....

As we continue to journey with Jesus throughout the gospel of Luke, it would be a good...to listen to the way we pray. How do I come into God's presence? Where is the focus of my thoughts during my prayer-time? Am I concerned to prove how good I am, or do I express my need of God's continuous mercy in my life? Where do I see myself more in the picture painted to us by Jesus in...[His] parable: close to the pharisee or at the back of the Temple with the tax-collector, humbly asking God's mercy?

#### **Are We Like Zaccheus?**

In a way, Zaccheus' story can be the story of each and every one of us. Who of us can say that we have not been hindered at some stage of our lives by our smallness in our journey with the Lord? We are painfully aware of our smallness, of our unworthiness, of our not being up to standard. Somehow, the truth of what we pray before communion, "Lord, I am not worthy," becomes an obstacle rather than a spring-board to thrust ourselves into God's merciful arms.

Then there is the crowd. When following Jesus implies

having to go against the current, we immediately feel that we have to conform, to join, to not be different. The fear that we might be ridiculed or having to stand out is very real....

Unlike the other "good" people who started grumbling against Jesus for going to the sinner, Jesus is not scandalized by our unworthiness. Just accept Jesus' invitation to come and visit you, and allow the rest to happen.

#### **Our God Is God of Persons**

Our God is not a generic god, or a God of some theory or ideology. He is God of persons, of real human beings. the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, the God of Jesus Christ is the God of Jane and Peter and Mary and Paul. God is God to of each one of us. He longs to enter into a personal relationship with each one of us. And this, my friends, in the source of our joys and our hopes. This is where eternal life comes from.

#### **We Are Being Carried in Safe Hands**

....There had been people who tried to "predict" the end of the world. Jesus warned that there will even be many more who will try to do the same. Even in our own times, in fact, we know that there are people who will still try to do this. Some sects have been predicting the end of time over and over again. and we all remember how terrified many people were as the year 2000 approached! Jesus tells us not to worry about all this. There will be wars and natural disasters, but that will not be the end. It is not up to us to know when the end will come. What really matters for us is to live as best we can the life which we have here.

This will not be always easy. As happened to Jesus, there will be times when we will have to suffer in order to do the right thing. Today like in Jesus' time, his message is not welcomed by everyone. Here Jesus encourages us by letting us know that, in all this, we will be well taken care of by God. He is Lord of Time, of history, of our lives. What really matters for us is that we make the most of our time here on earth, persevering in times of trial, knowing that we are being carried in safe hands.

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website: [www.saint-paul-maltese.co](http://www.saint-paul-maltese.co)**

## MISS MALTA PAGEANT EXHIBIT

Richard S. Cumbo

This striking exhibit of the Maltese-Canadian Society of Toronto (M.C.S.T.) "Miss Malta Pageant" was arranged by Rose Cassar, Carmen Galea, Rita Kennie and Mani Mifsud, dedicated volunteers at the Maltese-Canadian Museum/Archives at St. Paul the Apostle Church Complex, Toronto, where this exhibit is housed.



**Miss Malta Pageant Display,  
Maltese Canadian Museum/Archives**  
(Mani Mifsud)

The red cape trimmed with authentic ermine and the scepter were donated by Chev. Nicholas Pulis in 1967. The silver-plated annual trophy was donated by Mr. Joseph Vassallo, the son of one of the Society founders and former owner of Magneto Electrical Company. Sadly, that trophy has gone missing when the M.C.S.T. closed.

The Pageant was an event started by M.C.S.T. President Frank Savona, O.S.J. as part of the Maltese community's celebration of Canada's Centennial 1867-1967.

Initially, the Pageant was called "Miss Malta of Toronto", then in later years the committee of the M.C.S.T. changed the name to the "Miss Malta of Canada Pageant." The name "Miss Malta Pageant" was registered owing to the Miss Malta contest of Malta, established in 1963 by the late George and Deggie Gatt Mangion as GM Productions.

The Miss Malta of Canada Pageant was such a popular event that it was held annually by the Society for the next 40 years. The Pageant always took place in November, so that the new Miss Malta could start her reign in time for the Christmas events that were held at the Society. In latter years the M.C.S.T.'s Miss Malta was often invited to attend events of other Maltese organizations for example the then Federation of Maltese Organizations (now Maltese-Canadian Fed-

ration) annual seniors Christmas Dinner at St. Paul's Church Hall.

From 1971 until about 1975, I used to have to walk each contestant down the runway, at times I was more nervous than the contestants. It was always my job to select the three judges; their names were kept in strict confidence until the day of the pageant.

The selection of Miss Malta was based on poise, intellect and knowledge of Malta's culture and history. Most Maltese businesses donated gifts to be used as prizes, first prize was a trip to Malta donated by Melita Travel Service.

The Pageant was always held under the distinguished patronage of a noted individual. Among many "masters/mistresses of ceremony" over the years were Gina Hili with comedian Johnny Catania, singer Enzo Gusman and producer Tony Parnis.

The colourful event became a major attraction within the community, usually drawing an attendance of 350 to 500 individuals. A dinner/dance took place after the Pageant and the pastor of St. Paul's was present to say grace.

At some of these pageants a few contestants found their future spouses. Many life-long friendships were made and the contestants always supported each other. It was a fun-filled and exciting event.

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

### PART II

**Mark Caruana  
Marayong, 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 introduces us to the evolution of the passport applications from 1870 until at least 1937.*

### Development and Use of the Database

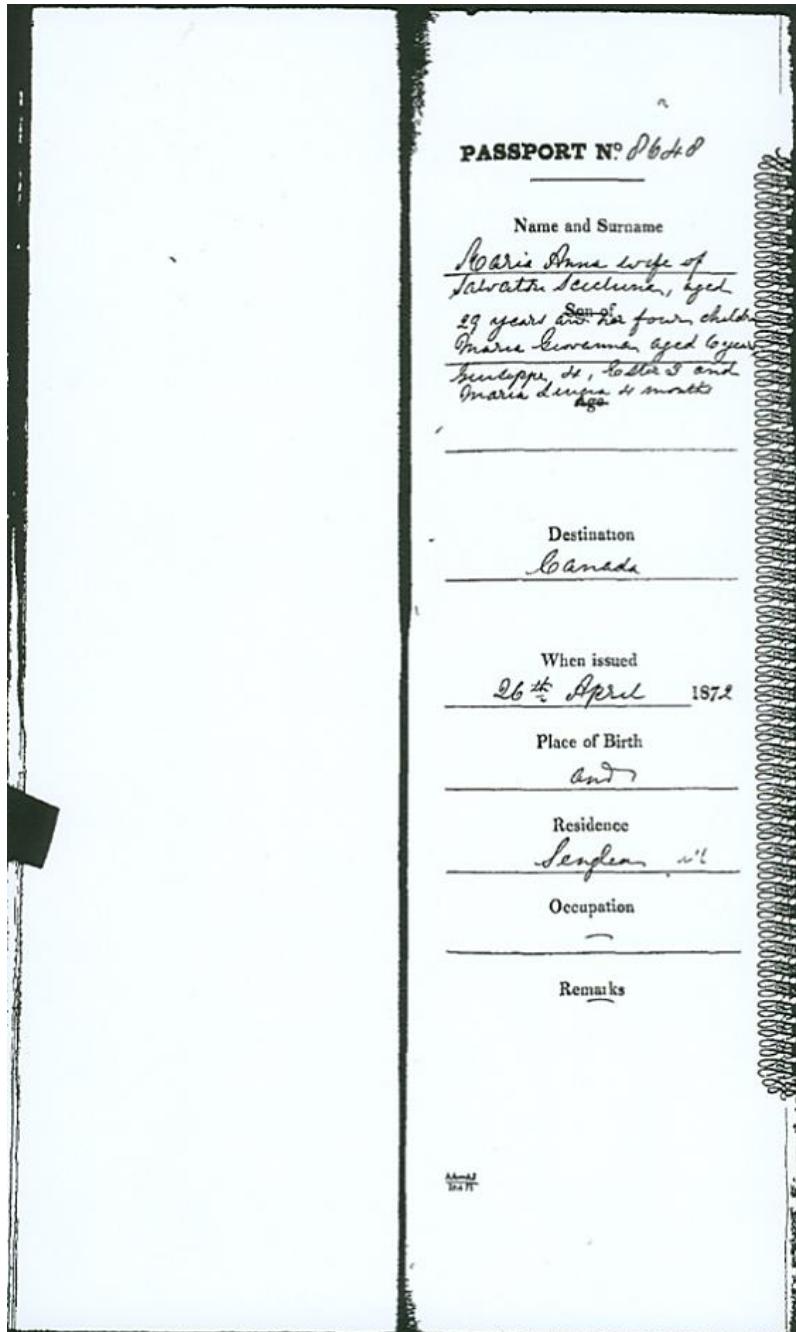
As already mentioned, the primary sources that were used to generate information for the database included bills of health and passport applications.

The earliest passport applications and renewals date from 1870.

Over the years, the format of the passport changed a few times. The 1870-72 passport applications are in the

form of a bound ledger. The information includes name and surname, the son/daughter/wife of, age, destination,

when issued, place of birth, residence, occupation, and remarks. (see fig. 1)

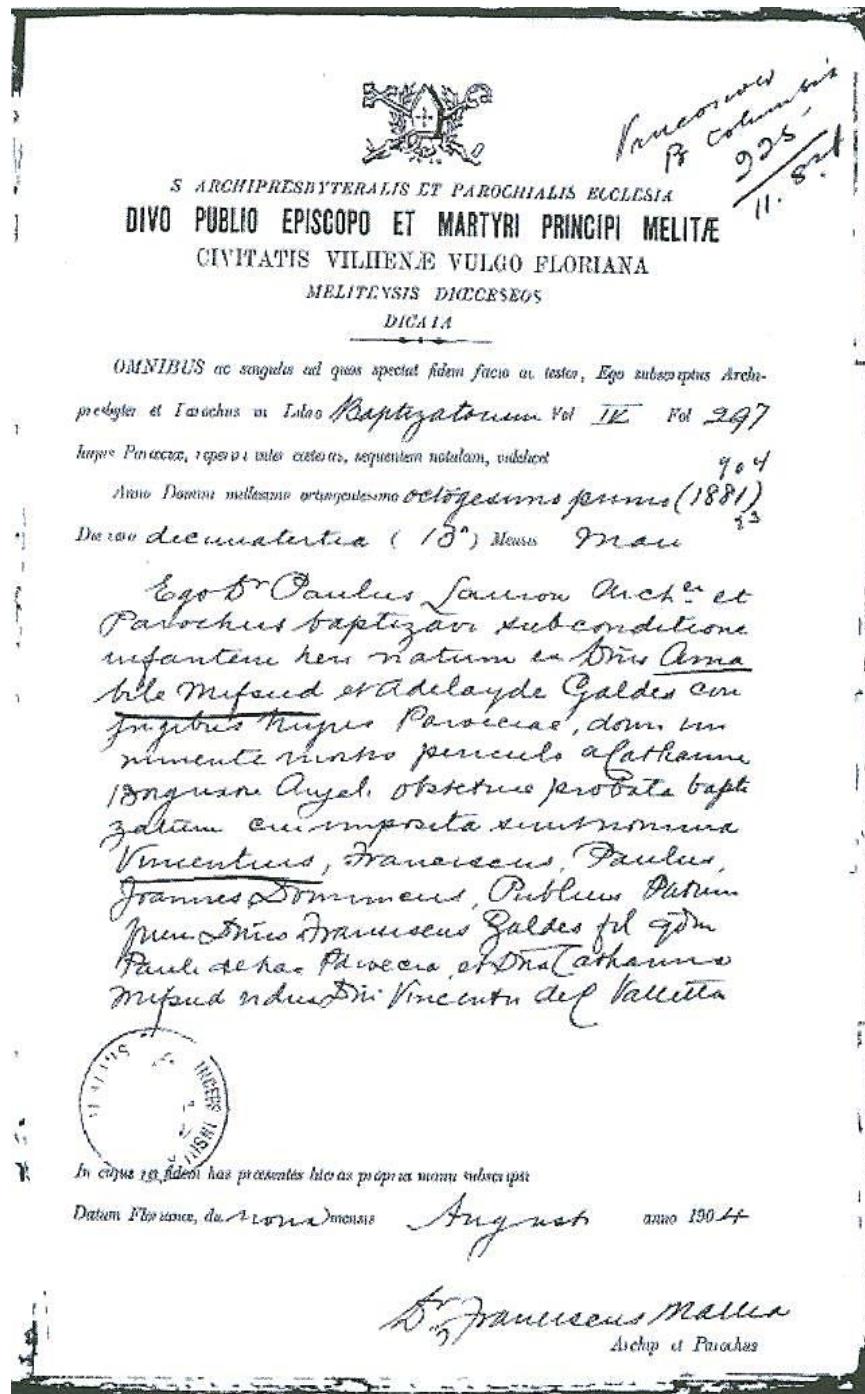


**Fig. 1. Passport application from the years (1870-72)  
This Particular One Is for the Wife and Children of Salvatore Scicluna/Shickluna,  
a Nephew of the Ship Builder Louis Scicluna/Shickluna of St. Catharines, ON.**

As noted in Part I, the 1872-86 passport applications are presumed lost or destroyed.

The 1886-1905 passports were baptismal certificates with handwritten brief information added, such as name

and surname, the son of, age, destination, when issued, place of birth, residence, occupation, and remarks (see fig 2).



**Fig. 2 Passport Application from the Years (1886)-1905**  
**This One for Vincenzo "Vincent" Mifsud, Who Lived to Be 100 Years Old, Contains Only His Destination, Passport Number and Day and Month Issued.**

Passports from 1906 to June 1915 were a one-page departmental form. (see fig. 3)

PASSPORT NO. 526 DATED 9/16/15

DECLARATION TO BE MADE BY APPLICANT FOR PASSPORT.

I, the Undersigned, (d) Francis Pace,  
residing at St. San Sebastian & St. Valletta, hereby declare that I am

(a) Malta 1st June 1915  
 (b) the wife of John Pace and that my late husband was  
 a (d) British Born Subject having been born  
at Malta on the 30<sup>th</sup> day of August 1897

(c) For Persons 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 John Pace was born at the 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 (e) America, San Francisco,  
1901

I further declare that I have no Passport already in my possession other than  
that which I never handed for cancellation(s)

(f) Signed Francis Pace

AND I, the Undersigned, (h) Francis Pace 1901,  
British subject residing at Same address as previously, hereby declare that to the best  
of my knowledge and belief the above made Declaration of the said \_\_\_\_\_

is true, and that he she is a fit and proper person to receive a Passport  
1901 Signed Francis Pace

(i) True name of Husband  
 (j) Other Name and Surname of the applicant in full, present address  
 (k) In the case of a Married Woman, whether her certificate of birth regards her of her HUSBAND OR LATE HUSBAND—  
not of the applicant herself  
 (l) Name whether a Recruit or Subject of His Majesty's Dominions in this case NATURALIZED BRITISH SUBJECT;  
EXCLUDED OF BIRTH NOT SUBJECT  
 (m) Name whether Protestant, Roman Catholic or Jewish (unless they hold separate property, e.g., unoccupied by  
the Christian Church)  
In the case of persons proceeding to India, the ages of children should be stated, and the religion of the applicant will be  
mentioned in the prospectus on production of a Birth-Certificate which satisfies the evidence  
 (n) This will be witnessed to be true and witnessed where the applicant has no stamp paper in his possession  
 (o) Where the applicant is unable to write, a mark should be placed on the application in the presence of the person verifying the Declaration  
 (p) Name and Qualification of person verifying the Declaration viz:  
Magistrate, Notary Public, Clergyman, Doctor, Sheriff of Religious, Advocate, Legal Practitioner, or Notary, as the  
case may be, giving professional or business address  
Recommendations from Banking Firm should bear the printed stamp of the Bank

REMARKS  
 a. at least a student - applicant  
 b. to be accompanied by  
M.

Fig. 3 Passport Application from the Years 1906-1915  
It's Possible that Francis Pace Never immigrated to the United States as He Can't Be Found in Ancestry

From June 1915 to at least 1937 the application form changed to a landscape format with a photo added and

additional information such as colour of hair, eyes, height, and so forth (see fig. 4).

The photographs that had been included in passport applications after 1915 are a valuable resource for diverse observations. They reveal details on the class structure prevailing in Malta at that time. One can pinpoint working-class applicants not only from the clothes they were wearing but also from their expressions. They seemed uncomfortable taking a photo, probably for the first time. When a group of migrants went to the studio for a photo, some of them were so poor that they

had to borrow a tie and a polka (a golden chain with a watch) from the photographer. In one instance, a group of nine applicants wore the same loaned clothes. When the same applicant applied for a renewal of his passport some years later after a period of living abroad, one could notice a different set of better-looking clothes. Also, the occupation of the applicant could have changed, for example, from a field laborer to a farmer or miner.

No.	3090	
Date	21/VI	
a) Insert name of Place and Date, b) Christian Names and Surname of the applicant in full and present address. c) In the case of a MARRIED WOMAN OR WIDOW, the particulars of birth required are those of her HUSBAND OR LATE HUSBAND—not  Subject or a be included if state passports, other cases, in Asia must be struck out and the applicant has possession. Declaration ana paid to be in the office of Magistrate, Banker, Minister of Religion, Physician, Surgeon, &c.		
a) Name and Qualification of person verifying the Declaration (see Rule 4 at back), viz.— <b>P. Muscat</b> <b>Chaplain R.M.A.</b> 3090/19		
DECLARATION TO BE MADE BY APPLICANT FOR PASSPORT. I, the Undersigned, (b) <u>Elena Formosa d/o Angelo</u> at present residing at <u>22 Aida Cardinal Salazar</u> , hereby declare that I am a (d) <u>British Subject</u> at <u>Senglea Malta</u> on the <u>20</u> day of <u>April 1902</u> <small>For Persons born Abroad, who derive British nationality from a father or paternal grandfather, born in the Colony's dominions, to be struck out in other cases.</small> and not having lost the status of British Subject thus acquired, and I hereby apply for a Passport for the purpose of travelling to <u>Canada</u> (e) <u>Accompanied by my wife and children under the age of 16, as indicated in the margin, who          do not possess separate Passports.</u> I further declare that I have no Passport already in my possession (f) <u>(whether          issued          or          not)</u> And I, the Undersigned, (h) <u>P. Muscat Chaplain R.M.A.</u> hereby declare that to the best personal knowledge and belief the above made Declaration of the said <u>Mrs. Elena Formosa</u> Miss <u>Elena Formosa</u> is true, and that I can from my personal knowledge of her as a fit and proper person to receive a Passport. Signed <u>P. Muscat Chaplain R.M.A.</u>		
Date of presentation <u>20/7/11</u> DESCRIPTION OF APPLICANT. Age <u>17</u> Profession <u>Wife</u> <small>Maiden name and place and date of birth of widow or married woman travelling singly</small> Height <u>5</u> feet <u>inches</u> Forehead <u>High</u> Eyes <u>Brown</u> Nose <u>straight</u> Mouth <u>normal</u> Chin <u>round</u> Colour of Hair <u>chestnut</u> Complexion <u>Fair</u> Face <u>oval</u> Any special peculiarities <u></u> 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 _____ <small>Names, ages, and sex of children under the age 16 if to be included on the Passport.</small>		

**Fig. 4. Passport Application from the Years 1915-(37)**  
**Elena Formosa Never Left Malta Until June 3, 1921 and by that Time She was Married to Joseph Edward Doublet. The Couple that Decided to Immigrate to Detroit, Rather than Canada, by This Time but Instead Settled in New York City**

Documents courtesy of National Archives of Malta

The passport applications of families also provide interesting material for the researchers. In most cases the wife would be added to the application of her husband. There are instances of separate photo-graphs, but also of family photographs attached to the applications. These types of data are of particular interest to social historians, genealogists and anyone else interested in the population and migration aspects related to Maltese history.

This was the biggest motivator to start the project on entering and providing the data from the passport applications to anyone interested, as the limitations in the human resources within the National Archives of Malta did not allow this task to be tackled internally. (To be continued.)

## ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE MALTESE COMMUNITIES

Dan Brock

### The Bay Area, California

See page 32.

### Maltese Cross Foundation of California

The Foundation held its annual "Remembering Our Loved Ones" Mass at St. Dunstan's Church in Millbrae.

### British Columbia

Joseph Camilleri, who was featured in the November issue of this journal, is currently ranked 46<sup>th</sup> in the top 50 marathon runners in the world for males in the 65-69 age category.

### Ontario

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

This Association has represented over 7,000 Maltese Canadians in the greater Hamilton area since 2004.

On the evening of Friday, November 8<sup>th</sup>, Dr. Raymond Xerri attended a meeting and dinner with members of its executive.



#### Dinner with the Executive

(l to r) Pauline Citino (vice president), Gary Greck (treasurer), Joe Brincat (president), Dr. Raymond Xerri (Consul General), Agnes Brincat (assistant secretary), Jackie Barklie (public relations), Jason Allan (member at large), Gemma Allan (assistant treasurer)

### The Greater Toronto Area, Ontario

On Monday, November 11<sup>th</sup> a wreath was placed at Queens Park by Dr. Raymond Xerri.



### The Maltese Canadian Federation Will Be Holding The Annual Seniors Christmas Dinner

On Sunday, 15th December 2019

At 1:30 PM - the Depiro Hall

St Paul The Apostle Church.

Tickets Are \$10.00 Each



Joe Sherri

416-571-3944

Malta Band Club

905-890-8507

Paul Portelli

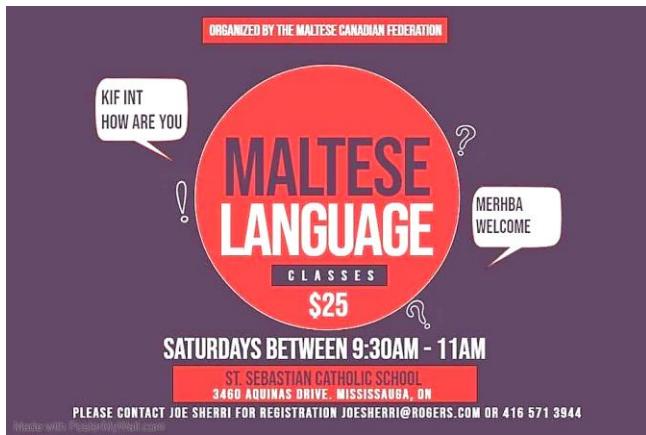
416-830-0198

St. Paul The Apostle Church

416-767-7054



Thanks to the efforts and initiatives of Joe Sherri, president of the Maltese Canadian Federation, and his team, Maltese language classes have been re-established. The cost is \$25 per semester and extends to the end of grade 8.



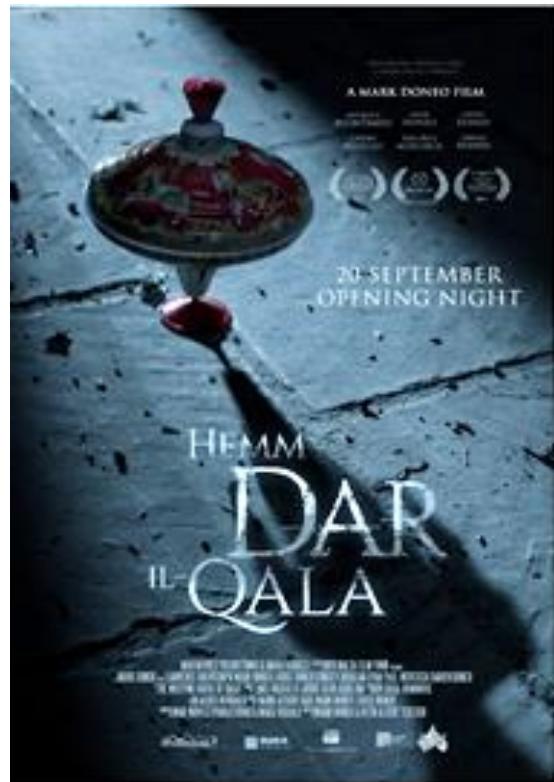
*Hemm Dar il-Qala (The Weeping House of Qala)*, a Maltese-language movie with English subtitles was shown at the European Union Film Festival at the Royal Cinema in Toronto on the evening of Tuesday, November 19<sup>th</sup>.

There was a “near-full capacity audience” to watch the premier Canadian showing of this 2018 drama, horror, mystery film. Set in the village of Qala, Gozo, the plot centres around Emily Edevane and her three little children who were abandoned by the husband and father. Four decades later, a Maltese documentary crew agree to spend a day at this now desolate and decaying house to find out why nobody seems to have heard of the Edevane family since.

This film was produced and directed by Mark Doneo, one of Malta's renowned film makers.



Some Stood in Line for over Two Hours



### Leħen Malti

Its annual gala dinner was held at Le Tréport Wedding and Convention Centre, Mississauga, on the evening of Saturday, October 26<sup>th</sup>.

H.E. Keith Azzopardi, Malta's High Commissioner to Canada, was the guest of honour.



Keith Azzopardi (centre)  
with Mary Rose Aquilina and Joe Xerri



**Songs Were Performed by the Well-Known  
Maltese Singer, Musician, Composer,  
Songwriter and Actor Mark Tonna**



**There Was the Haunted House, Trick or Treating  
and a Costume Parade**



**In True Maltese Tradition,  
Children of All Ages Were Welcomed**



**Even the Adults Enjoyed the Afternoon**

A Halloween special breakfast was held on Thursday October 31<sup>st</sup>.

A Memorial Service and Bake Sale was held at the Club on Sunday, November 17<sup>th</sup>. A wreath was placed in front of the altar by Club President Tony Vella.



**Fr. Mario Micallef, Accompanied by  
Fr. Ivano Burdian, Led the Memorial Service.**

#### **Maltese Canadian Business Network Association**

The MCBNA held a Networking Event at the Clubhouse Eventspace in Etobicoke on Thursday, November 21<sup>st</sup>. The honoured guests included the High Commissioner to Canada Keith Azzopardi and the Consul General Dr. Raymond Xerri.

#### **Malta Band Club**

The Kids Hallowe'en Costume Party was held on the afternoon of Sunday, October 27<sup>th</sup>.

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



### There Was a Large Turnout for the Service

The Band's Christmas Candlelight Concert, under the direction of mro Nick Arrigo, was held on Sunday, November 24<sup>th</sup>. Its next performance is the St. Paul's Christmas Concert on Tuesday, December 17<sup>th</sup>.

A trip to Casino Fallsview took place on Saturday, November 30<sup>th</sup>.

The Kids Xmas Party will be held on December 8<sup>th</sup>.

The Members Christmas Dinner & Dance will take place on Saturday, December 14<sup>th</sup>



The New Years Eve Dinner and Dance will be held on Tuesday, December 31<sup>st</sup>. (See poster in next column.)



### Melita Soccer Club

On the evening of Friday November 15<sup>th</sup>, the Club held a Memorial Service for the deceased members' relatives and friends.



### Fr. Mario Micallef Leads the Memorial Service

A bus trip to Casino Rama in Orillia was held on Saturday, November 23<sup>rd</sup>.

The Christmas Dinner Dance will be held on Saturday, December 7<sup>th</sup> at the Rizzo Hall on Albion Road in Etobicoke. Tickets are \$55 each for members and \$60 for non members. There will be an open bar. (See poster on next page.)

May Everyone Have A  
**MERRY CHRISTMAS**

**ALL THE BEST IN  
THE  
NEW YEAR**



Doors open at 6:30 p.m.

#### RIZZO Banquet Halls

1941 Albion Road, Etobicoke  
*(3 blocks west of Highway 27)*

- Cocktails • Dinner • Dancing • Open Bar •
- Music by DJ Connection

MEMBERS \$ 55.00

GUESTS \$ 60.00

For tickets and information  
 please call 416-763-5317

Email: [msc@melitasoccerclub.com](mailto:msc@melitasoccerclub.com)

Tickets must be picked up by 30<sup>th</sup> November 2019



#### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



**Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> December 2019**

**2:00 p.m.**

**Upper Hall**

- Review financial statements.
- Discuss other Club business.
- Election of the Committee.

The Kids Christmas Party will take place at the Club on Sunday, December 15<sup>th</sup>.

The New Year's Eve Dinner Dance will be held at the Melita Soccer Club, 3336 Dundas Street West, on Tuesday December 31<sup>st</sup>. Tickets are \$45 each. Cash bar. For tickets or further details, call 416-763-5317 or email [msc@melitasoccerclub.com](mailto:msc@melitasoccerclub.com).

#### Gozo Club

The Club has celebrated Lejla Calypso every year since March 1999.

Festa Calypso 2019 was held on Saturday, November 16<sup>th</sup> at the Malta Band Club. Enzo Gusman provided live entertainment.



Dr. Raymond Xerri and Fathers Mario Micallef and Ivano Burdian Enjoying Festa Calypso

#### 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.

#### St. Paul the Apostle Parish

On the afternoon of Sunday, November 3<sup>rd</sup>, the Annual Mass was celebrated in the chapel of Our Lady of Fatima Mausoleum, Assumption Catholic Cemetery,

Mississauga for members of the Maltese Canadian community in the GTA.

A large number were in attendance, including the Consul General Dr. Raymond Xerri.



**Fr. Mario Micallef (at the altar)  
and Fr. Ivano Burdian**

Following Mass, prayers were held in the Maltese section of the Cemetery. The Malta Band Club, Melita Soccer Club, The Maltese Canadian Federation and Festa San Gorg Association of Toronto were represented by their respective banners.



**The Representative Club/Associations Pay Their Respects in the Maltese Section of the Cemetery**

Individuals later visited and prayed at the graves of their loved ones.

A Mass for those whose funerals were celebrated in the parish during the past year was conducted at the church in the evening of Friday, November 8<sup>th</sup>.

The Consul General of Malta, Dr. Raymond Xerri, held a question and answer session in the Lower Hall on the afternoon of Saturday, November 30<sup>th</sup>.

The Children's Christmas Party will be held at 3:00 p.m. on Sunday December 1<sup>st</sup>. It will begin with a play presented by the children of the parish.

The Annual Christmas Concert will be held at 7:00 p.m. on Friday, December 13<sup>th</sup>. (see poster in next column)

**GET INTO THE CHRISTMAS SPIRIT!**

**COME JOIN US AT ST. PAUL THE APOSTLE PARISH FOR OUR ANNUAL CHRISTMAS CONCERT**

**HOSTED BY THE ST. PAUL'S YOUTH GROUP**

**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 13<sup>th</sup>, 2019 at 7:00pm**

**FEATURING**  
**THE MALTA BAND, ST. CECILIA'S CHOIR**  
**AND OTHER PERFORMERS**

**BRING YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS**  
**FOR A NIGHT FILLED WITH MUSIC TO GET US ALL INTO THE CHRISTMAS SPIRIT!**

Email: stpaulyouthgroup@hotmail.com  
f St. Paul The Apostle Youth Group  
i st.paul\_youthgroup\_

The Festival of Lights will take place on Saturday, December 14<sup>th</sup>, at 5:00 p.m.

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

#### **London, Ontario**

A monthly luncheon was held at the Marconi Club on October 31<sup>st</sup>. Seventy-five members of the local Maltese community and their friends were in attendance.



**Most of Those Present for the Luncheon**

Dr. Raymond Xerri, the Consul General of Malta for Canada was the guest of honour. After the buffet meal he paid tribute to both Tony Vella and Dan Brock for the work they have done or are doing within the Maltese community in London and area and beyond and presented each with gifts on behalf of the Consulate General.

The opportunity was used, both before and after the meal, for the Consul General to meet with many of the individuals present and to deal with their many queries and concerns. The general impression was that people were very pleased with Dr. Xerri's responses.



#### **Dr. Raymond Xerri Meets with Charles Micallef**

(Photos by Dan Brock)

The Annual Memorial Mass for the Maltese Canadian Community of the London Area was held at Holy Family Mausoleum in St. Peter's Cemetery on the afternoon of Tuesday, November 5th.



**More Than 30 Attended**

Prior to the Mass, the Rosary was recited.

The Mass was celebrated by Fr. Peter Wojakiewicz, pastor of St. Mary's Church. He was assisted by Deacon Joe Viveiros.

Charles Micallef read out the names of family and friends who had died since this time last year. If members of the family were present, someone came up, received a lit candle and stood near the altar. Father then bestowed a blessing on those family members



**Father Peter Blesses Family Members  
of the Deceased**

Photos by Dan Brock

On Monday, November 11<sup>th</sup>, a wreath was laid at the Cenotaph in Victoria Park by members of the Maltese Community of London. (See next page.)



**(l to r) Ted & Barbara Gauci, Tony Galea  
and Dan Brock (back row)**

courtesy of Tony Galea

Twelve of us attended the Funeral Mass for Albert E. Vella, held at St. Thomas More, Church, Scarborough, on Saturday, November 16<sup>th</sup>.

On Thursday, November 28<sup>th</sup> another luncheon was held at the Marconi Club.

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

A ravioli dinner was held on Saturday, November 2<sup>nd</sup>. This was followed by a ross il-forn dinner on Saturday, November 16<sup>th</sup>.



**Having Just Finished Dinner**

The General Membership Meeting was held on Saturday, November 23<sup>rd</sup>.

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

### **Metropolitan Detroit Maltese American Benevolent Society**



### **Maltese American Community Club of Dearborn**

The Club held its Halloween costume party on the evening of Saturday, October 26<sup>th</sup>. There was a meal, music and the judging of costumes.



**Some of the Children in Costume  
Decorating Pumpkins**



**A Good Time Was Had by All**

The Club held its 40<sup>th</sup> annual Miss Malta Pageant & Gala Dinner Dance on Saturday, November 9<sup>th</sup>. Joseph Spiteri was the emcee and Thomas Sunday DJ for the evening.



**Table 7 About to Enjoy the Dinner**



**Honorary Consul for Malta in Detroit, Larry Zahra  
(seated with cap)  
Michigan Supreme Court Justice and Larry's Son,  
Brian Zahra standing (centre)**

The pageant was held after the dinner.



**Brian Vella, MACC President, with the Contestants**



**Breanna Caban, Miss Malta 2020**  
Photos courtesy of Lisa Buttigieg-LiGreci



SAT, DEC 14 AT 5:30 PM - 11 PM

### **Christmas Party**

Maltese American Community Club · Dearborn, MI

Please join us for our Christmas party! Childrens' craft and games from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. Dinner at 7:00 followed by a visit from Santa and his elf passing presents to children 12 and under. Parents, please bring a gift for your child. Tickets are \$15 for adults and children 12 and under are free. We will have music and dancing! Tickets are on sale, please call Paul Axiak at 313 561 0522.

### **New York City**

#### **Maltese Center NYC**

In bidding farewell to His Excellency Carmelo Inguanez, the Ambassador of Malta to the United Nations, on the morning of Sunday, October 20<sup>th</sup>, the Centre honored him for the support he has shown the local Maltese community over the years, with a commemoration plaque and framed Maltese Center log. He, in turn, gave the Centre one of his own original paintings.

The annual four-mile walk for Pink October (breast cancer awareness) which also took place at Central Park on Sunday, October 20<sup>th</sup>, raised over \$3,500 in donations which were to go directly to the American Cancer Society toward breast cancer research.

A Maltese Halloween Party was held at the Center on the evening of Saturday, October 26<sup>th</sup>.

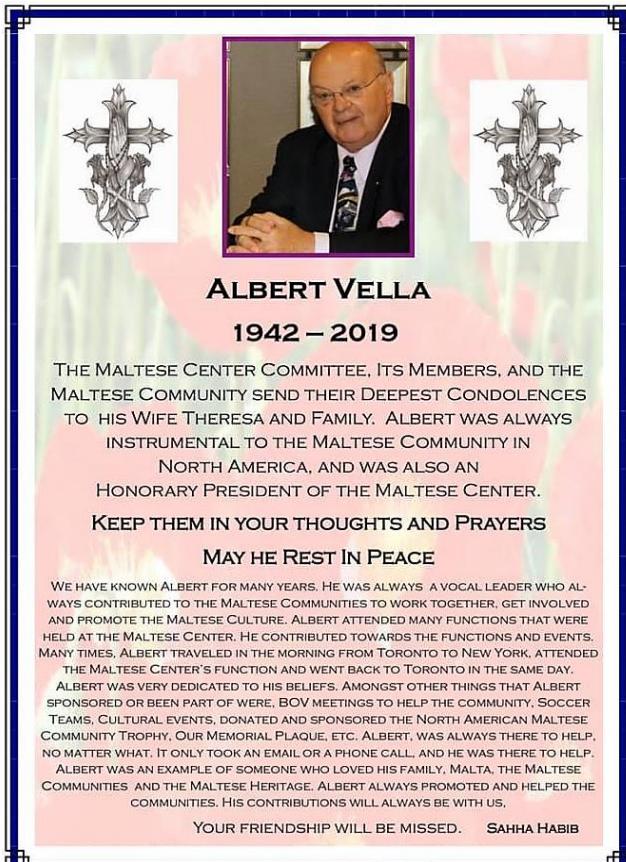


The Children's Halloween Party was held at the Center the next day.

The All Souls Memorial Mass was celebrated at the Centre by Fr. Anthony Saliba, the Centre's chaplain, in the evening on Friday, November 8<sup>th</sup>.

A bingo was held in the Lower Hall on Sunday, November 10<sup>th</sup>. The next Sunday Bingo is scheduled for December 8<sup>th</sup>.

Tribute is paid to the late Albert E. Vella of the Greater Toronto Area, a great friend and benefactor.



## ALBERT EDWARD VELLA, 1942-2019 PERSONAL REMINISCENCES

Dan Brock

I first got to know Albert at about the time he was retiring as chief representative and senior vice-president of the Bank of Valletta in Canada.

He and his gracious wife, Thérèse, often attended the dinner/dances of The Maltese Canadian Club of London and Albert never failed to bring a gift to be one of the prizes drawn later in the evening.

As an honorary member of our club, he received our newsletters and through them became aware of my interest in Maltese immigration to Canada, or at least

the London and Brantford, Ontario areas at the time.

About the autumn of 2010, Albert put me in touch with Dr. Maurice Cauchi of Australia, and Dr. Cauchi in turn introduced me to Mark Caruana, also of Australia. It was Mark who suggested I cast my net wider and consider the study of all the Maltese who immigrated to Canada. Eventually, I agreed and, a few years later, broaden my horizons to include all of North America.

Meanwhile, in October 2010, Albert invited me to Toronto to be interviewed for one of the Lehen Malti programs. The subject was my work with Mark Caruana in documenting all the Maltese immigrants to Canada.

At the same time Albert put me in touch with Mons. Phillip Calleja who was in the process of setting up the Migration Museum in Valletta. This, in turn led to me sending digital copies of the many immigrant photographs and other items I had in my possession and ultimately most of the newsletters issued by the London club.



**Albert Vella (centre) Presents the Gift He Had Donated to the Club to Jason De Felice while Ted Gauci Looks on as the Club Celebrates the 25 Anniversary of the Opening of Its Facilities with a Dinner and Its ABAMANIA Show, Saturday, April 20, 2013**

Albert also introduced me to Claudia Caruana, the editor of the newsletter then produced by the Federation of Maltese Living Abroad (FMLA). This, in turn led to the submission of an article comparing the Maltese Canadian communities in Brantford to that of London, Ontario.

As the London club was winding up its affairs, in the latter months of 2018, Albert was one of those who encouraged my aspirations of putting out a free e-journal centering on the Maltese of all North America. In fact, he was the one who suggested and offered to do a running "Table of Contents" for *The Maltese Presence in North America*.

Albert and I last communicated by email on September 27<sup>th</sup>, when I was working on the October issue of this

journal and, knowing that his health had further declined, had written that I was familiar enough with his style for the "Table of Contents" and that I would take on the work of updating it. Albert's last words to me were:

*Dear Dan*

*I am afraid I am in the hospital and will be unable to help this month.*

*Best regards*

*Albert*

The last time I saw Albert was at the Maltese community picnic for London and area, held in July 2019.

Some will recall the police drama series the *Naked City*, set in New York City, which was shown on television between 1958 and 1963. Each episode ended with the narrator intoning: "There are eight million stories in the naked city. This has been one of them." So too, this has been but one of the countless stories which could be told of Albert's benevolence and impact on communities and individuals throughout North America and beyond.

Below are the tributes to Albert which I received.

#### **Tributes Received**

His loss will be felt across our community. Hopefully, his example of 'doing the right' thing will resonate with current and future generations.

Joan Mizzi-Fry, Orillia, ON

...such a patriotic and professional gentleman. I'm missing him already! May he rest in peace.

Carmen Galea, Toronto, ON

Sad for our Maltese community.

Jesmond Tabone, Windsor, ON

I remember him. He was at the Dearborn Club for an event years ago and we talked to him about financing a home in Malta. He was very informative, gave us his business card and said to get in touch should we have any other questions. I still have his business card. Very nice man

Rena Xuereb, Metropolitan Detroit, MI

So sorry to hear this sad news. He was a very nice, generous man who often attended dinner parties at the MASC San Francisco.

Evelyn Simmons, San Francisco, CA

Thank you for this information; he'll be missed.

Richard S. Cumbo, Msida, Malta

I am so sorry to hear about Albert. Such a scion of the Malta diaspora in CA . . .

Godfrey Baldacchino, Senglea, Malta

It was sad to hear about the demise of Mr Albert Vella. When we think of Albert we think of a real gentleman. Albert used to make it a point to visit 'Dar l-Emigrant' when he used to visit his homeland. It was through his endeavour that the visit of H.G. Archbishop Cremona, in 2012, was a success. Albert always made his best to give exposure to 'Malta Emigrants' Commission' (MEC's) work in favour of our Maltese compatriots who had to leave their homeland and settle elsewhere, example in Canada.

Albert will always remain alive in our hearts and especially in our prayers. We ask the Lord to grant him eternal rest, and condolences to his family, especially his wife.

Mons. Fr. Alfred Vella, Director,  
Dar l-Emigrant, Valletta, Malta

So sad. I knew Albert when I first met him in Malta for the Conference of Maltese Living Abroad.

Mark Caruana, Marayong, NSW

#### **MALTESE-CANADIAN COMMUNITY LEADER ALBERT EDWARD VELLA: AN APPRECIATION**

**Dr Raymond Xerri,  
Consul General  
of the  
Republic of Malta  
to Canada**



I recall meeting Albert Vella for the first time over 25 years ago during his short visit in Malta. I had just joined the Maltese Diplomatic Corps in 1994 and was about to depart to Australia to assume my first diplomatic post as First Secretary and Deputy High Commissioner of Malta to the Commonwealths of Australia and New Zealand and to The Philippines.

We had a long chat about Australia and the Maltese Diaspora. He offered his views on how best to deal with, work for and assist the Maltese community there. As a diplomat, I welcomed Albert's many words of wisdom, kept them with me ever since and treasure them all my life.

For those who do not appreciate how important Albert was, not just for Maltese-Canadians but also for all Maltese around the world, which I call Global Malta, here is most of the work he did.

After concluding his studies at St. Aloysius College in Birkirkara, Malta, he was employed at the National Bank for 10 years. In 1969, he joined the Central Bank of Malta (CBM) and as Deputy Principal played a key role in the currency conversion to and implementation

of the Maltese Lira. He was appointed as the CBM's court expert in banking matters in a major fraud trial, which led to a successful prosecution.

In 1977, Albert immigrated to Canada, with a young family, and was employed in the financial services field, as Chief Auditor for Fidelity Trust Company, Vice President Accounting Control with Central Guaranty Trust Co. and with Sun Life Trust as Director Accounting Operations.

In 1990, he also set up AEV Consulting, a Management Consulting Company evaluating systems and accounting control issues. He served on the Ontario Securities Commission Roster for the Ministry of Financial Institutions assignment. In 1993, he was appointed Overseas Honorary Representative of the Malta Federation of Industry in Ontario, targeting business opportunities between Canadian and Maltese companies.

After immigrating to Canada in 1977, Albert occupied senior posts in the banking and financial industry. In 1993, he was instrumental in setting up the Bank of Valletta's Canada Representative Office. As the Chief Representative and Senior Vice President, he had the responsibility for banking compliance and regulatory extensive contacts in Malta and was instrumental in attracting companies to do business in Malta or companies that are now using Malta as a bridge to Europe and North Africa.

Albert was instrumental in organising trade missions from Malta to Canada and the United States. In 2002 he organised a seminar that focused on "Doing Business in Malta." The speakers included the Maltese Minister of Finance and the Governor General of the Malta Financial Services Authority. Albert actively participated in other trade missions that visited the United States in 2002 was the key speaker at the symposium "Canada Days in Malta" organised in Malta by the Canadian Embassy.

He retired in 2005 after 46 years in the financial services industry.

#### Albert Vella was one of the main pillars of the Maltese-Canadian Community for over four decades

Albert has been active in the Maltese community and was to the end, an Honourary President of the Maltese Canadian Association (Gozo), Honourary President of the Maltese Center in New York, Honorary Member of the Gozo Club, the Maltese American Community Club of Dearborn, the Maltese American Social Club of San Francisco, The Maltese Canadian Club of London, the *Għaqda Mużikali L-Isle Adam* of ir-Rabat and the *Socjetà Filarmonika Nicolò Isouard* of il-Mosta. He was also the Founder, Past President and Honourary Life Member of the Maltese Canadian Professional and Business Association.

Albert was very active in fund raising activities for Dar tal-Providenza, Arka Foundation, Eden Foundation Gozo and St. Paul's Church in Toronto.

Specifically, at the Annual Bank of Valletta Concert the donations raised reached over \$105,000 (CAN.). For the Bank of Valletta Concerts, the Nicolò Isouard Band of il-Mosta was invited to Canada and the United States. The concerts were held under the patronage of distinguished guests, including the Prime Minister of Malta. Albert played a key role in fundraising for the Madonna Ta' Pinu project – a project spearheaded by Msgr Benedict Camilleri. In conjunction with Prof. John Portelli, Albert was instrumental in launching the chair lift fundraising drive for St. Paul The Apostle Church Hall.

In 2006, he was awarded *Id-Dar tal-Providenza's Premju Monsinjur Azzopardi*, and in May 2010 co-ordinated the pastoral visit of Archbishop Paul Cremona O.P. to Canada and the United States.

Albert attended the III<sup>rd</sup> Convention for Maltese Living Abroad in the year 2000 and was a keynote speaker at the 2010 IV<sup>th</sup> Convention. He was the production editor of the Federation of Maltese Living Abroad (FMLA)'s newsletter *Maltese Link*, for its 15 issues, and Secretary of the FMLA for two years. He also led the FMLA as President.



**Albert Vella, His wife Thérèse and Their Three Children**

Courtesy of Thérèse Vella

Until the very end of his life, Albert was still active in the Maltese community including an interview segment (*Albert Vella Jitkellem ma...*) on the weekly Maltese national TV program, *Leħen Malti*. Having had to cut back, because of his failing health, he still held the post of Financial Administrator of the *Leħen Malti* Group.

It's always difficult to bid farewell a friend, a community leader and a giant who gave so much to the Community that was so dear to his heart. I pray, however, that what I wrote about him and Albert's departing, will spark the

much needed energy, vocation and vision that will enlighten more present and subsequent young leaders to lead Global Malta into the future.  
Rest in Peace, dear friend.

## THE HIGH COMMISSIONER OF MALTA TO CANADA PAYS A VISIT TO TORONTO

Dan Brock

H.E. Keith Azzopardi, High Commissioner of Malta to Canada was in Toronto in the latter part of October.

While at the Consulate General's office, he was interviewed by Joe Scerri for the weekly, half-hour, Maltese-language, television program *Leħen Malti*.



**Being Interviewed for Leħen Malti by Joe Scerri**

Mr. Azzopardi also got an opportunity to meet with the executive of the Maltese-Canadian Federation and members of the Maltese-Canadian Business Network Association on Tuesday, October 24<sup>th</sup>.



**Meeting with Members of the Maltese-Canadian Business Network Association**  
(l to r) Carl Azzopardi, Gisell Sherri, Joe Sherri,  
H.E. Keith Azzopardi, Dr. Raymond Xerri,  
Lisa Fenech and Jason Mercieca



**Meeting with the Executive of the Maltese-Canadian Federation**

On the evening of Saturday, October 26<sup>th</sup>, he was the guest of honour at the Annual Leħen Malti Gala Dinner.



**Being Presented with a Toronto Raptors Shirt at the Leħen Malti Gala Dinner, Saturday, October 26<sup>th</sup>, with Mary Rose Aquilina, Joe Sherri, Dr. Raymond Xerri and Jason Borg (youth ambassador 2019-20)**

After attending the 10:30 a.m. Mass at St. Paul the Apostle Church on Sunday, October 27<sup>th</sup>, the High

Commissioner of Malta to Canada was welcomed with a reception in the Hall.



**Cutting the Cake While Fr. Mario Micallef and Dr. Raymond Xerri Look On**

He was also taken on a tour of the Maltese-Canadian Museum/Archives, also in the Church Complex.



**Looking at One of the Exhibits with Fr. Mario Micallef, MSSP, Rose Cassar, Carmen Galea and Mannie Mifsud**

From there, it was off to lunch at the nearby Malta Bake Shop where he had an opportunity to meet the owners, Charlie and Antoinette Buttigieg, and the many patrons and to admire the artifacts and photos of famous Maltese who had visited the Shop over the past 36 years.



**Admiring the Photos of Famous Maltese Who Had Visited the Malta Bake Shop**

After leaving The Malta Bake Shop, H.E. Keith Azzopardi and Dr. Raymond Xerri visited Malta's finest Pastizzi and Joe's Pastizzi Plus, but both were closed.

They then went to the Malta Band Club in Mississauga and were greeted and given a tour by the President and Vice-President of the Club. The Club was holding its Halloween Party at the time. Both the High Commissioner and Consul General were given a cap and hand band by Adrian D'Agostino. Each bore the Maltese Cross. Mr. Azzopardi was also given a shirt and Canadian flag.



**With Lelli Grech, Tony Vella, Virginia Church, Fred Portelli and Dr. Raymond Xerri**

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

## MALTESE CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS REMEMBERED, CARRIED ON OR ALTERED IN LONDON, ONTARIO\*

Dan Brock

*\*This article is largely based on "Maltese Traditions at Christmas Time" The Maltese Canadian Club of London Newsletter, Issue 48 (November/December 2013), 16-18*

Houses in Malta are often decorated with *presepji* (cribs) and *pasturi* (small plastic or clay images representing such figures as shepherds and angels). Large figures of *Il-Bambin Gesù* (the Baby Jesus) are sometimes placed in front of windows or on balconies and are lit up at night. Houses are also decorated with Christmas wreaths, candles and all sorts of other decorations. Every household also has a Christmas tree decorated with light bulbs, tinsel and Christmas decorations.

Cribs were first introduced into Malta from Italy by rich noblemen. They were not popular at first and most were burnt. The first true Maltese crib is believed to have been made in Malta in 1617 and was displayed in the Dominican Friars Church in Rabat.

By the early to mid-20th century, cribs were thought of as old fashioned and not very popular anymore. To stop the decline of Christmas, in 1907, Father, now Saint, George Preca founded a children's charity and society called MUSEUM. In 1921 he started a tradition of having a Christmas Eve procession with a life size figure of the Baby Jesus being carried at the head of the procession.

The Maltese crib was influenced by its Sicilian counterpart where inexpensive figures (*pasturi*), made of Maltese clay, were mass produced. These *pasturi* came to show definite Maltese characteristics which were to single out the traditional Maltese crib from others.

What distinguished the traditional Maltese cribs themselves from others was that they were made in the form of caves from paper-mâché. The most popular material used, both before and after the Second World War, was a type of paper recycled from cement bags, brown paper, newspaper or any other type of discarded paper.

One of those born in Malta who has carried on this tradition of constructing a *presepju* and decorating it with *pasturi* is Albino Ellul of the London suburb of Byron.



**The Presepju of Albino Ellul as Set Up in 2012**

Lately, however, Albino has vastly expanded and altered this Maltese tradition.



**Albino's "Presepju in 2019"**

It is a Maltese tradition to sow *għlbiena* (vetch, canary seed known as *skalora*, alfalfa, wheat or other grain) on cotton beds in flat pans a few weeks before Christmas. These are left in dark corners in the house until the seeds produce white grass-like shoots. The pans with the fully-grown shoots are then used to decorate the crib or the statue of the Baby Jesus (*il-Bambin Gesù*).

The late Fr. Henry Cassano of London recalled that when he was young, "We used to plant it on December 8<sup>th</sup>—the feast of the Immaculate Conception—and keep it in a dark place. It was watered every third or fourth day, until Christmas when it was put around the nativity scene. It stayed white....

The late Frank Gatt remembered cotton and seeds being placed in shoe polish tins, water being added periodically and the tins being kept in the dark under the stairs.

Joe Martinelli says that November 25<sup>th</sup>, the feast of St. Catherine of Alexandria, was the date selected when he was a boy.

Albino Ellul grows his *gulbiena* from *skalora*. Instead of shoe polish tins, he uses hospital pans and starts the process on December 1<sup>st</sup>.



**Albino Ellul Has Carefully Placed *Il-Gulbiena* Around *Il-Bambin Gesù*: Christmas 2012.**  
(Photos courtesy of Albino Ellul)

Here in North America there is the tradition of decorating the exterior of one's home. The Maltese who settled in London were soon to adopt this tradition as well.



**Tony & Lynda Galea's House in 2008-09.**  
(Tony Galea)

Some use the skills learned back in Malta. Joe Bugeja carved and painted his own decorations as seen in the photo below.



**Nine Reindeer and Santa Claus Grace the Front Lawn of the Bugeja Home, Christmas of 2009.**  
(Joe Bugeja)

Then, there are those who really go overboard!



**Frank & Yvonne Gatt's House, 2006-07.**  
(Frank Gatt)

For years, the late Frank Gatt used to add "something new to his Christmas lights each year." Hundreds, if not thousands would drive by his house in East London at Christmas time "to witness the spectacle of the moving lights." Some even stopped "to take a picture or two." Over the years, the exterior of Frank and Yvonne Gatt's home had been featured in the local newspapers and on radio and television.

There are many other Maltese traditions of old, such as the *Priedka tat-Tifel* (the preaching of the child) which could be elaborated upon and which was adapted in one of his parishes in the London Diocese by the late Fr. Henry Cassano, but these will be left for another year.

## A MESSAGE FROM THE CONSUL GENERAL OF THE REPUBLIC OF MALTA TO CANADA

**F'Għaqda shiha flimkien nawgura lill-Maltin  
fil-Kanada  
l-isbaħ xewqat**



Merbħa. Din hi l-ewwel darba li qiegħed nikteb messaġġ fuq dan il-fuljett, msejjah: 'The Maltese Presence in North America', wara li lgħajjiet l-istidina li kien għamilli l-editur, is-Sur Dan Brock, Kanadiz mizzewweġ Maltija. Minn hawn nifraħlu minn qalbi tax-xogħol indispensabbli li qiegħed jagħmel b'risq il-Maltin u l-Ġħawdexin li jgħixu fl-Amerika ta' Fuq – jiġifieri fil-Kanada u fl-Istati Uniti tal-Amerika.

Kien fl-1 ta' Lulju, Jum il-Kanada ta' ħames xħur ilu, li ngħatajt l-kariga, li fdali l-Ministeru għall-Affarijiet Barranin u għall-Promozzjoni tal-Kummerċ, ta' Konslu Generali tagħkom il-Maltin u l-Ġħawdexin fil-Kanada. Hassejtni onorat li ser inservi lill-poplu li għandu tant affarijiet komuni miegħi u mal-familja tiegħi. Jien ukoll ġej minn familja Ĝħawdexija li kienet l-Istati Uniti, u bħal eluf oħra twelidt f'art barranija. Fil-każ tiegħi, jien twelidt u għexx tħafna snin minn ħajti fl-Istati Uniti tal-Amerika, u għalhekk jien Malti-Amerikan ta' l-ewwel ġenerazzjoni bħal ħafna oħrajn. O xi privileġġ u unur għalij!

Il-missjoni tiegħi, li naqdi l-Komunita' Maltija-Kanadiża kemm jista' jkun mill-qrib u fost in-nies, hija ispirata mill-messaġġ inawgurali tal-President tar-Republika ta' Malta, Dr George W. Vella fejn sejjah għall-għaqda nazzjonali. Nemmen bis-shiħ li ċ-ċavetta tal-bieb tas-suċċess hija l-ġhaqda, s-solidarjeta' bejnietna u l-imħabba lejn pajjiżna (Malta) u l-pajjiż addottiv tagħna (il-Kanada).

Għandna nitgħallmu napprezzaw il-fatt li lkoll ġejjin minn pajjiż żgħir, sabiħ u li tana l-valuri nsara; filwaqt li issa ninsabu fpajjiż enormi u meravaljuż, li b'ħiliet missirijietna, u illum bil-ħila tagħna sawwarni f'wieħed mill-aqwa pajjiż fid-dinja.

Il-Milied huwa żmien sabiħ li jdañha fl-ispirit u ferħ, għaqda u tiġid fil-fidi tagħna, bħala pajjiż u poplu li fil-maġgoranza tiegħi huwa Kattoliku. Nixtieq minn qalbi nawgura lillkom, lill-familjari, lill-qraba u l-ħbieb tagħkom, Milied ħieni u sena ġiddi 2020 mimilja risq, barka u sliem. O Mulej, bierek lill-Kanada u lil Malta tagħna!

**In Unity,  
my best Wishes to all Maltese-Canadians**

Welcome. Answering the invitation of the editor, Dan Brock, here is my first message in this newsletter, *The Maltese Presence in North America*. Dan is a Canadian married to a Maltese woman who has taken it upon himself to research, compile and publish this indispensable newsletter about and for the Maltese and Gozitan communities in North America, namely those living in Canada and the United States of America.

Precisely on July 1, on Canada Day, five months ago, I was entrusted by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs & Trade Promotion to serve as Consul General of the Republic of Malta to the Commonwealth of Canada. I feel very honoured that I would be able to serve a community, with which I have so much in common. Being the son of a Gozitan family which had migrated to the United States in the 1960s and, as are thousands of others, I was born outside the Maltese Islands. In my case, having been born and living for many years in the United States, qualifies me as a first-generation Maltese-American. Oh, what a privilege and honour. My mission is to serve Maltese-Canadians to the best of my ability and, besides remaining close and amongst the community, I am very much inspired by the inaugural speech of the President of the Republic of Malta, Dr George W. Vella, where he called for national unity. I wholeheartedly believe that the key to our success as Global Malta is community unity, upholding the principle of solidarity and the love for both our countries—Malta the ancestral and Canada the adaptive.

We should appreciate the fact that our origins lead us to a tiny archipelago from where we inherited Christian values and moved to an enormous and marvelous country, where our forefathers diligently worked and our present contribution has moulded Canada to become one of the best countries in world.

Christmas is a time to be merry, to be united with family and friends and to reflect on the Christian values we inherited from a country which even today remains, essentially, Catholic. Sincere wishes from my family to yours, and to your friends a holy Christmas and a prosperous, blessed and peaceful 2020. May God bless Malta and Canada!

Regards,

Raymond

Dr Raymond C. Xerri  
Il-Konslu Generali / Consul General

## JOHN GRIMA: A MALTESE EMIGRANT WITH A DREAM\*

Dan Brock

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

The United States may lay claim to the Maltese actor, Joseph Calleja, who was born in Rabat in 1897, but Canada can be equally proud of John Grima.

John Mary Grima was born in Rabat, on February 26, 1933, to Vincenzo Grima and Maria A. Debono, a block away from where Calleja was born. John Grima's ancestry can be traced back directly to about 1162 to one Ginaldo Grimaldi.

Young John was educated at the Mdina Boys' School and then attended the Hamrun Technical School. While at the latter, he was a member of the air scouts.



**John Grima's Passport Photo, Age 18, 1951**

From before the age of seven, the young lad was "bitten by the acting bug." He was fascinated by theatre plays which used to take place at the St. Paul's Society-Count Roger Band, on Main Street, in Rabat. After first performing for the neighbourhood refugee children in his hometown during the Second World War John played "a couple of small parts" in school productions. As a teenager, he did his first stage performance at the Astoria Theatre in Rabat and later at the Radio City Opera House in Hamrun.



**Radio City Opera House, Hamrun**

Obsessed with movies, he "practically lived at the Adelphi Cinema in Rabat. "California and Hollywood" became his ultimate goals.

John had a maternal great-uncle, John Maina, living in San Francisco and started to correspond with him. Maina, who had emigrated from Malta in 1921 as Giacomo Giordmaina, eventually agreed to sponsor his niece's son but, for young John, there was the question of finding the money for the passage to California.

In the meantime, as money started coming from "here and there" an opportunity arose to immigrate to Canada, a place John knew nothing about except it was closer to California than Malta. As the destination of the Maltese migrating to Canada seemed to be Toronto, 18-year-old Grima was determined to follow the herd.

His father had given his consent and on May 24, 1951, John sailed out of the Grand Harbour on board the Greek ship *Nea Hellas*. After disembarking from the ship on Friday, June 8<sup>th</sup>, he and his fellow Maltese emigrants destined for Canada, were met by Maltese Americans living in New York City and taken to the Maltese Centre in South Astoria to be entertained for the day. Later that night, they returned to Jersey City, NJ to catch their train and arrived in Toronto the following day.

John was supposed to have been met at Union Station by Mannie Mifsud, but his friend from Malta got the day mixed up. Instead, John, like others, having nowhere to go, went by truck to the former World War II camp in Ajax. There he spent the weekend.

Eventually, he and Mannie met up and John later became acquainted with the half-brothers Freddie Attard and Joseph Gatt. Unbeknownst to John, he and

Freddie had come over on the same ship in June!

Joseph had arrived later that month. The four young men then rented a big room near Queen Street and Spadina Avenue.

John was able to pick up a few jobs as he waited for his sponsorship papers from his great-uncle in San Francisco.

Meanwhile, one Sunday evening, a few months later, an English acquaintance of one of John friends came over and "had a wallet full of photos of Canadian girls." The other three were looking at the photos but when John went to look the visitor took him aside and told him that he had a particular photo of a girl who would be the one for him.

Before he knew it, John was making a date to meet this young woman whose name was Edith Porteous, a native Torontonian. John soon fell in love with her, ignored the sponsorship papers when they finally arrived and, on September 1953, he and Edith were married. The young couple settled in Toronto's east end.

Previously, John had met Vincent Baldacchino and boarded with him in a rented room on Wellesley Avenue, near Church Street. Meanwhile, he worked for a year for the moving company of M. Rawlinson Limited. To somewhat satisfy his passion for acting and Hollywood, John ushered at a local theatre in his after hours.

After marrying, he moved farther east, to around the Broadview area, and worked for the City of Toronto Parks Department.

John also attended a vocational school for six months and a commercial arts evening school, but the "acting bug" continued to grow stronger and stronger and he was not content with the jobs he had been working at in Toronto.

He decided, in 1956, to visit his great-uncle in San Francisco for a few weeks. While in California he went to Hollywood but soon realized he did not have "any experience or training" for acting in the movies. Nor did he have an opportunity to meet his fellow countryman, Joseph Calleja, while there.

Although he now had a wife and two sons, Johnny and Victor, John was determined to attend an acting school on his return to Toronto.

He enrolled at the Jack Medhurst Acting School for a four-year course. His tutor, Jack Medhurst, realized John's potential and he was immediately cast in main roles in the plays performed at the academy. These included Romeo in *Romeo and Juliet*, Macbeth in *Macbeth*, Hamon in *Antigone* and the father in *Beauty and the Beast*.

In the course of his studies he received two scholarships.

John made his professional acting debut in 1957 at the

Crest Theatre in Toronto in Shakespeare's *King Lear*.

Next month's segment will focus on John's professional acting career.

## THE MALTESE CANADIAN DISPLAY CASE AT THE MIGRATIONS MUSEUM

**Dan Brock**

Some years ago, Richard S. Cumbo of Toronto was asked by Emigrants Commission Director Father (now Monsignor) Alfred Vella to raise funds for a Maltese Canadian monitor and display case at The Migration Museum housed in Dar I-Emigrant, Castille Palace, Valletta.

Recently, Richard Cumbo had the nameplate (seen below) engraved for the display case.



As it turned out, the entire sum for the display case was donated by Joseph Giordmaine and his wife Mary of Princeton, NJ.

Joe Giordmaine, before his retirement, was a physicist who studied lasers, optoelectronics, optical physics and nonlinear optics.

He was born in Toronto, ON in 1933 and earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Toronto in 1955 and a master's degree and a doctorate from Columbia University in 1957 and 1960 respectively.

The Gordmaines donated the display case in memory of Joe's father Johnny Giordmaine.

Born in St. Paul's Bay, Malta, John Nicholas Giordmaina was trained in electrical engineering and had immigrated to Toronto in 1919 where he pursued this trade.

His primary interest, however, was magic and in 1930 he set himself up as a professional entertainer. It was also at this time that he slightly modified his surname from Giordmaina to Giordmaine, thereby rendering it easier for English-speaking people to pronounce.

Known as the Little Leger Demoniac, the Diminutive Dynamic of Deception, the Gay Magician and the Maltese Houdini, he entertained prime ministers, governors and presidents' wives and appeared many times on *The Ed Sullivan Show*, but his special love was entertaining children.



**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 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  
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[jason.borg@hotmail.ca](mailto:jason.borg@hotmail.ca)/[sborg@rogers.com](mailto:sborg@rogers.com)

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Fax: 001 (780) 425 6646  
Email: [maltaconsul.edmonton@gov.mt](mailto:maltaconsul.edmonton@gov.mt)



### NEWFOUNDLAND

*with jurisdiction over the provinces of Newfoundland and Labrador, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick*

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### VANCOUVER

*with jurisdiction over the provinces of British Columbia, the Yukon and Northwest Territories*

**Mr STEPHEN DOUGLAS HOLMES**, Hon Consul  
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925 West Georgia Street, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada V6C 3L2  
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## **SERVICES OFFERED BY THE OFFICE OF THE CONSUL GENERAL OF MALTA IN CANADA**

Assistance is offered for the following services:

- Applying for Maltese Citizenship;
- Applying for a Maltese Passport;
- Obtaining Maltese Birth/Marriage/Death Certificates;
- How transport human remains to the Maltese Islands;
- Information of when and where Consul-on-the-Move will take place in Canada;
- Filling and submitting *Form D – Voluntary Registration of Maltese Citizens Living and/or Travelling Abroad*;
- Filling and submitting *Form P – Voluntary Registration of Prominent Maltese Citizens Living Abroad*;
- Filling and submitting *Form O – Voluntary Registration of Maltese Diaspora Organisations*;
- Authentication of Documents;
- Legalisation of Documents;
- Certified True Copies;
- Registration of Certificates;
- Oaths;
- Witness of signatures of Power of Attorneys;
- Apply for a Maltese Pension;
- Pension Life Certificates;
- How to deposit a will /obtain a copy of a will in the Maltese Islands;
- General Information about the Maltese Islands;
- Maps of the Maltese Islands;
- Tourism Information about the Maltese Islands;
- Local, Regional and International events organised in the Maltese Islands;
- Getting married in the Maltese Islands;

- Starting a Business in the Maltese Islands;
- Trade Promotion in the Maltese Islands;
- Finance in the Maltese Islands;
- Commerce in the Maltese Islands;
- Investing in the Maltese Islands;
- Insurance Services in the Maltese Islands;
- Legal Services in the Maltese Islands;
- Medical Services in the Maltese Islands;
- Registration of Ships/Boats/Yachts in Malta
- Registration of Aircraft/helicopters in Malta
- Filming in the Maltese Islands;
- Malta Government Gazette/Press Releases;
- Residency Schemes;
- Studying in the Maltese Islands;
- Conduct Research at the National Libraries/Archives;
- International Investment Programme (IIP)
- Compiling your family tree in Malta and Gozo;
- Discovering your family heraldry;
- Obtain Maltese Diaspora Newsletters; and,
- We will try to answer all your other questions...

Follow our Facebook webpage, ‘Consul General of Malta to Canada,’ by pressing LIKE and FOLLOW, on Twitter and Instagram.

Regards,

Raymond

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**Maltese-American  
Community Organizations  
of the San Francisco Bay Area in the  
Italian Heritage Parade on Columbus Day  
Sunday, October 13<sup>th</sup>**