

THE MALTESE PRESENCE IN NORTH AMERICA



E-NEWSLETTER

Issue 35

FEBRUARY 2022



**Hon. Evarist Bartolo and Richard Cumbo
in the Room in which Napoleon Bonaparte Slept while in Malta
in the Present Palazzo Parisio, Merchants Street, Valletta**

See page 6.

**The Maltese Presence
in North America**

Issue No. 35 February 2022

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EDITORIAL COMMENT

What a difference a month makes! In the last issue we had a plethora of accounts of activities taking place at the various clubs, such as children's Christmas parties and dinners. Members were looking forward to New Year's Eve dinners and dances...and then the Omicron variant struck and spread like wildfire.

New Year's Eve dinners and dances were cancelled at the last minute, as were most of the activities planned for much of January.

As the month of January drew to a close and the tide of daily COVID cases began to recede, the clubs started to cautiously reopen early in February.

The Malta Band Club reopened on Friday, February 4th, with a dinner. (See pages 31-32). The next evening, the Malta United Society of Windsor hosted a ravioli dinner. On

Sunday, February 6th, the Maltese Centre: Astoria began its Maltese Language Program for children ages 5-12 and hosted an information session led by the Consular Services of Malta's Permanent Representation in New York.

The Melita Soccer Club is planning a Superbowl get together on Sunday February 13th.

That same day will be one of mixed emotions at St. Paul the Apostle Church Complex in The Junction, Toronto. Dr. Raymond Xerri, who has been the Consul General of the Republic of Malta for more than two-and-a-half years, will be stepping down at the end of this month, owing to health issues. (See page 18.) His contribution to the Maltese community throughout Canada and beyond while in this country will be recognized during the 10:30 Mass and afterwards in the parish hall. Those in attendance will also have an opportunity to meet and greet his successor.

On a personal note, I can't say enough about the debt owed to Raymond these nearly three years. He has been a great friend and contributor of material to this newsletter. It is owing to Raymond that hundreds, nay thousands, of readers have been receiving this newsletter each month.

I fondly liken Raymond to the Tasmanian Devil in the old Bugs Bunny cartoons. While stationed in Canada, he has been like a whirlwind being here, there and everywhere. Twice he was able to make it to London to join some of us at a restaurant, COVID-19 notwithstanding. And we no longer have a club!

Our readers will recall that, in many of his monthly messages during this pandemic, Raymond reminded us to "contact that lonely relative or friend near or far to check if they are fine."

Here, Raymond led by example. After a telephone call to an elderly woman who had no one to do her shopping, our Consul General did it for her and delivered her groceries right to her door!

May God bless you, Raymond, and keep you safe!

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**GLEANINGS FROM THE SUNDAY BULLETIN
PASTOR'S THOUGHTS...**

Fr. Mario Micallef, MSSP

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.

Wise Men Still Seek Him

Perhaps a question I can ask myself today is what am I looking for in life? Where do I seek to attain happiness? And what do I use to guide me to get there?

The wise men allowed themselves to be guided by God's own light. (Matt. 2:1-12) They allowed themselves to be surprised by God, and they did not regret it.

The Same Dynamics Are Present

The same dynamics that were present at Jesus' baptism (Lk. 3:21-22) are present in our own baptism.

The one-ness between us and God, which had been destroyed by Adam's sin, is restored. The same Spirit that descended upon Jesus is given to us too, to guide us and move us in our mission. And, like Jesus, we are proclaimed sons and daughters of God, in whom He is well-pleased. Nothing can change this reality. Irrespective of what we do in life, we remain children who are loved by the Father.

Make the Best Possible Use of What We Have

Wine is often used in the bible as a symbol of joy, God's grace and fullness of life. Sometimes it happens to us too that we run out of wine. We lose the joy of living; life seems to be just dragging on; we start doubting the validity of our vocation; it looks as if we have fallen out of God's grace! I've seen this happening quite often during this prolonged time of pandemic! Here Mary comes to our rescue with these simple yet powerful words? "Do whatever He tells you." (Jn. 2:5) During this coming year, we are being invited to listen to His words. Whatever He tells us might surprise us....

Very often Jesus does not ask us to do extraordinary things. All He asks from us is to take a good look inside ourselves, see what we have and make the best possible use of it. If it's only water you have,

He told those people, use it and fill the jars to the brim. He asks us to give our all of what we have, even if it might seem insignificant. Remember the story when his disciples only had some fish and a few loaves of bread? Even there, they were asked to give all they had, and with that He did the unthinkable.

During this coming year there will certainly be moments of difficulty or problems in our lives. The best thing to do in these moments is to heed Mary's advice: to listen to His words and do whatever He tells us. At the moment it might seem difficult to comprehend or even illogical, but history teaches us that it's always the safest thing to do.

Faith Implies Listening to God's Word

I know, your life might not be an exact example of the perfect Christian. You have your weaknesses and have made your fair share of mistakes. All this does not take away from the fact that you love God. It only says that you are not always able to express this love as you would probably like to. And Luke is here to help you. (Lk. 1:1-4)

The word "gospel" literally means "good news", and this is what St. Luke intends to impart. He knows that we go through down-times in our lives. We go through moments of difficulties or crises. We have moments when we are disheartened and tempted to give up....

Throughout history God has never abandoned those who love Him. In the Old Testament He sent prophets, like Ezra...to encourage and give hope to His people when they were discouraged. For the people, listening to Ezra's words was not like simply hearing someone tell a story. It was a living experience of true listening which made them cry and then rejoice. It was something that touched their hearts and transformed their lives. (Neh. 8:2-10) This is what happens to anyone who truly listens to God's Word. St. Paul is a typical example of this reality....he heard God's voice on the road to Damascus. There, Paul listened. "What do you want me to do, Lord," he asked while he was still on the ground. (Acts 9:3-7) Through that act of listening, Paul allowed God's Word to transform his life. From then on, he became a bearer of good news to the whole world.

Sometimes people think that faith or religion simply means having to obey a certain number of rules and commandments. The truth is that true faith implies listening to God's Word, which is a word of love and mercy, and allowing oneself to be transformed by it, just like St. Paul.

**ANTHONY VASSALLO NAMED
NEW WOMEN'S SOCCER HEAD COACH
AT FANSHAWE COLLEGE**

Dan Brock

It was announced on Monday, January 10th, by Nathan McFadden, Director of Athletics at Fanshawe College in London, Ontario, that Anthony Vassallo had been selected as the new head coach for the three-time defending OCAA champion Fanshawe Falcons women's soccer program.

"I am grateful for this opportunity and very excited to get started. Fanshawe has a great sporting tradition and history, and it is an honour to be part of the Falcons organization. I am looking forward to leading this team into the next chapter and building on the incredible success of the program," Head Coach Vassallo has stated.



At the time, he was assistant technical director of the Whitecaps FC, in London, Ontario, as well as its high-performance manager and was successful in coaching the Whitecaps U17 girls and U17 boys

OPDL teams. The London Whitecaps are an official affiliate of the Vancouver Whitecaps FC. Prior to joining the Ottawa South United Soccer Club in September 2019, Anthony served as head coach of the Vancouver Whitecaps Academy Centre in Kelowna, British Columbia.



In 2001, at the age of 14, he became the youngest player ever to debut in the Canadian Professional Soccer League. In 2001 and 2002 he was the top scorer in the under-17 indoor London and District Youth Soccer League.

While in England in 2002, he played for Grimsby Town and was one of seven players that the English First Division side was monitoring for a possible scholarship. A native of London, Ontario, he was attending Regina Mundi College there at the time.

Anthony, the son of Cam and Debbie Vassallo of London, has played professionally with Birkirkara and Marsa FC in the Maltese Premier League. He has also played with the U18, U19 and U21 Maltese National Team.

As a student-athlete at Jamestown College in the United States, he was named Player of the Year in 2007.

Anthony graduated in the Arts Program at the University of Western Ontario, London in 2013, having majored in Health and Wellness Studies in the Arts Program.

He holds a National B license, Technical Director diploma and is currently taking his Youth license.

MALTESE CHRISTMAS LIVES UP TO ITS NAME

Sarah Carabott

Editor's note: This article appeared in The Times of Malta, January 3, 2022, page 5 and is reprinted here with the permission of The Times of Malta and Sarah Carabott.

When Richard Cumbo returned to Malta for Christmas for the first time in 70 years, he was pleasantly surprised to come across nativity scenes across all parts of the island and he hopes cribs are not replaced by festive trees as happened in Canada, the place he calls home.

Born in Malta to Mary and Joseph, Cumbo left for Canada in 1951 when he was nearly four years old.

Despite visiting Malta several times since then, the closest he had ever come to a Maltese Christmas were the stories his relatives recounted in between sips of *imbuljuta*, a tradition that has been kept alive by emigrants in Toronto.

“Celebrating Christmas here made me think of my family back then and how they must have come together to celebrate this important event.

“Over the years, I had often heard how elaborately decorated the churches, streets, people’s homes and shops are,” the curator of a Maltese-Canadian museum in Toronto told *Times of Malta* during a trip to his “home away from home”.

“Well, I sure found out that it is true, the islands are really beautiful during this time of the year. What I like the most is that the religious aspect of Christmas is kept alive through nativity scenes seen across the islands.

“In Toronto, the only place you would see a nativity scene is inside and, in some cases, outside Roman Catholic churches. What you do see on some people’s front gardens are signs reading ‘Keep Christ in Christmas’.”

And while he believes that his first Maltese – and sunny - Christmas in 70 years is quite faithful to the accounts he has heard over the years, there is one addition he noticed that did not feature much in Christmases of the past: the festive tree.

He truly hopes that, over the years, it does not replace the nativity scene in Maltese homes.



Five-year-old Richard Cumbo along with his parents Joseph and Mary (right), his grandmother Marianne Zarb and sisters Josephine and Veronica (front) in 1953.

Courtesy of Brian Cumbo



Richard and his wife Madlene in Christmas of 1977.

Courtesy of David Cumbo



Richard Cumbo
 at St Joseph Parish Church, Msida.
 Courtesy of Madlene Cumbo



Richard Cumbo and Hon. Evarist Bartolo
 (See also photo on page 1.)
 Photos courtesy of the
 Ministry for European & Foreign Affairs

COURTESY VISITS WHILE IN MALTA

Dan Brock

Richard Cumbo and his wife Madlene of Toronto are currently in Malta. For Richard, this is the first time he has been there for Christmas and New Year's Day since his family immigrated to Canada in 1951. More than seventy years ago!

On Wednesday, January 5th, Richard paid a courtesy visit to the Hon. Evarist Bartolo, Malta's Minister for European & Foreign Affairs at his office in the Palazzo Parisio, on Merchants Street, in Valletta.

They spoke on many topics, including the Maltese Canadian community in Toronto and mutual friends. The Minister is also well aware of this e-newsletter.

He mentioned that, one day, he hopes to visit the Maltese in Canada. When in the United States last year, Hon. Bartolo had planned to visit Canada "but then circumstances changed and he didn't have the opportunity."

Richard found the Minister "very down to earth and likeable."

As a surprise, Hon. Bartolo said, "Come, let me show you Napoleon Bonaparte's bedroom." (See photo on page 1.) During the occupation of Malta by the French (1798-1800), Bonaparte had lived in this building from June 12th to June 18th, 1798. The Minister also showed Richard an original oil painting by Mattia Preti (1613-1689) and many other treasures in the Palace.

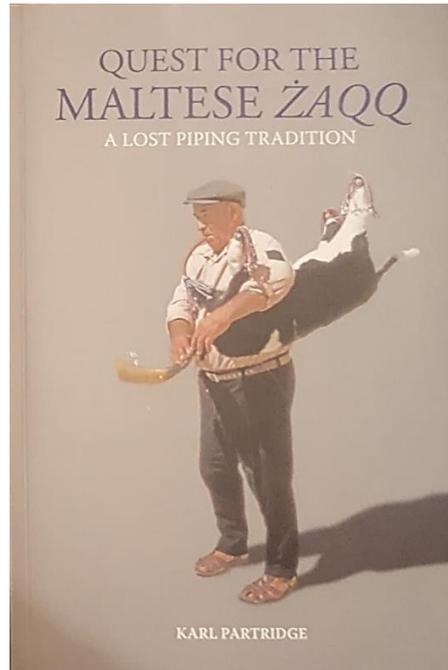
The following day, Thursday, January 6th, Richard went to the National Archives of Malta in Rabat and paid a call on Dr. Charles Farrugia, its director.

While there, Richard presented Dr. Farrugia with materials for the National Archives and the Director in turn gave Richard, as Curator, two books—*Images of Empire*, edited by Dr. Farrugia, and *Quest for the Maltese Żaqq: A Lost Piping Tradition* by Karl Partridg—for the library of the Maltese-Canadian Museum Archives and Visitors Centre in Toronto.

Dr. Farrugia also extended his greetings to the Museum Chairperson, Father Mario Micallef, MSSP, and to the volunteers.

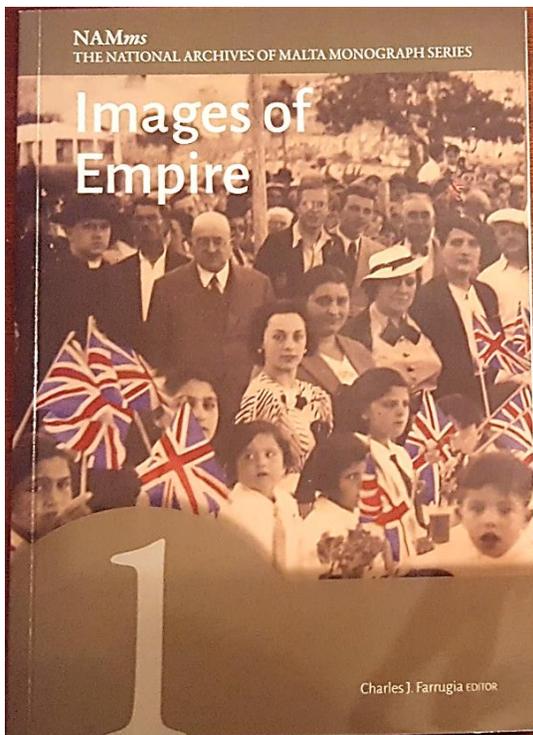


Dr. Charles Farrugia and Richard Cumbo
Photo by Leonard Callus



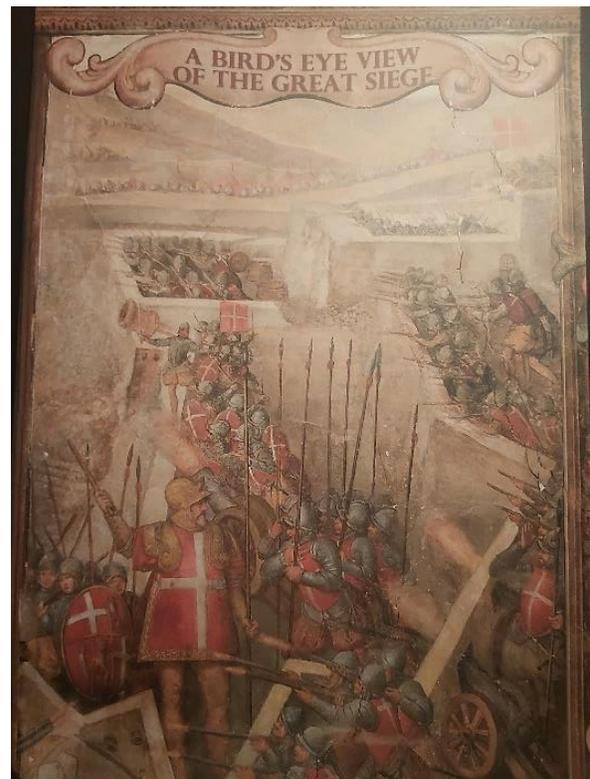
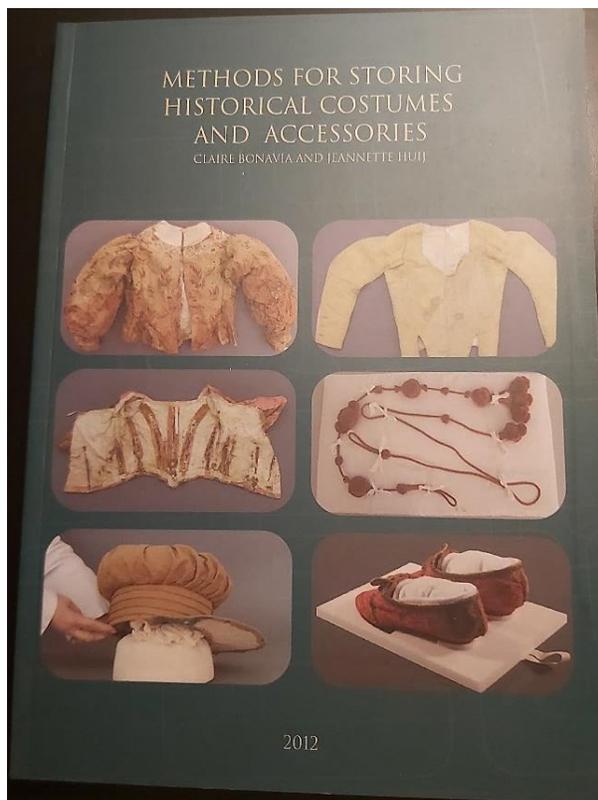
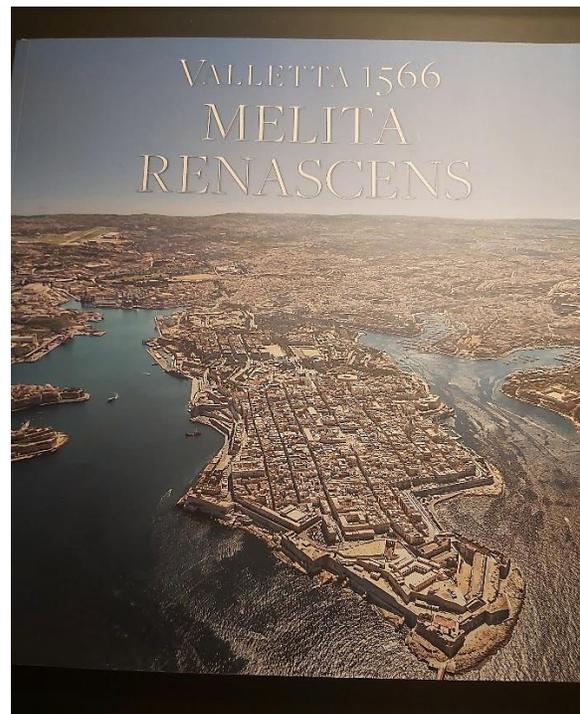
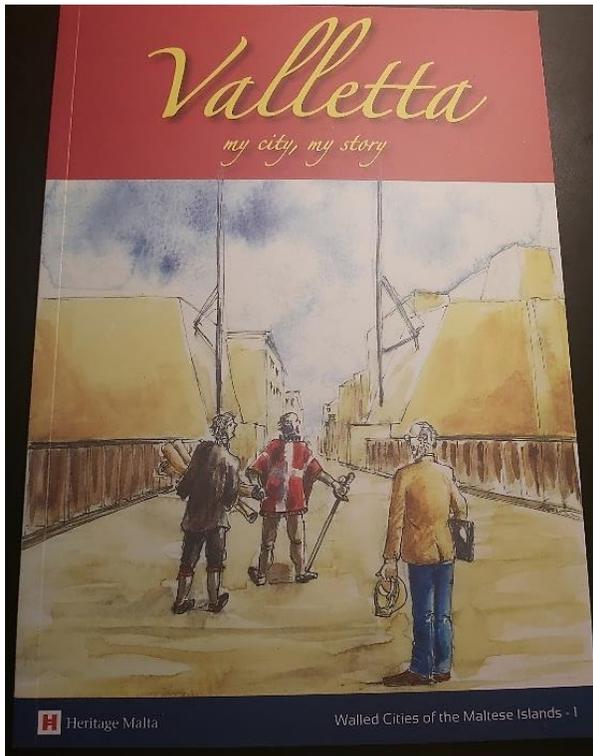
**ADDITIONAL BOOKS DONATED TO THE
MALTESE CANADIAN LIBRARIES**

Dan Brock



The following works, published by Heritage Malta, were donated in December 2021 to various Maltese Canadian libraries through the Consul General of Malta





Courtesy of Dr. Raymond Xerri

MEMORIES OF THOMAS AND MICHELINA VELLA BY THEIR CHILD, GRANDCHILDREN AND GRANDNIECE

Joanne (Zammit) Prince

In the December 2021 issue of this newsletter, I wrote about my maternal grandparents, Thomas and Michelina “Kelina” Vella, who immigrated to Canada and settled in Toronto during the second decade of the 20th century.

In all, they were to have six children—Carmela (Vella) Vella, Annie (Vella) Carwana, Mary (Vella) Zammit, Jean (Vella) Camilleri, Audrey and John—three of whom—Annie, Mary, and Joe—are still with us.

What follows are memories of my grandparents by my mother, siblings, cousins and myself.



Thomas and Michelina Vella, 1956

Thomas Vella (1888-1958)

By Granddaughter: Mary (Vella) Mazzariol, (Ontario, Canada), daughter of Carmela (Vella) Vella

Nannu didn't distinguish between the value of coins [during the years 1942 and 1943 five-cent pieces were made of tombac, a bronze alloy with a high copper content and zinc and somewhat resembled pennies, because nickel was used for arms making] so when he gave Paul, Joan [my siblings], and me coins to go to the candy store. We felt like we'd struck it rich with more money than he probably thought he'd given us.

If I was visiting Nanna, he was very kind to me. When he ate his meals, he would do so alone at the counter. When he returned from work, he would look through the window in the front door to see who was there and if there was anyone over (Nanna had many friends), he would turn around and go for a walk around the block.

By Granddaughter: Michelina (Vella) DiCarlo (Ontario, Canada), daughter of Carmela (Vella) Vella

I only remember my grandfather pacing up and down the stone path in the backyard at their home, saying the rosary.

By Grandson: John Caruana (Michigan, U.S.A.) Deceased 2021, son of Annie (Vella) Carwana

I remember that he was hit by a motorcycle when he stepped off the sidewalk and his health started going downhill after that. He had an injury to his head 'rasu' and a broken arm.

By Daughter: Mary (Vella) Zammit (Ontario, Canada)

He was a great painter because he was so fast. He even painted the convent on Annette Street (at Law St.). In the late 1930's he also painted my in-laws' [Mary (Zammit) & Charlie Galea] store at Dufferin and [273] Van Horne [later called Dupont] from red to green. He wasn't scared of heights on ladders. We saved his faux painting tools for a long time. He was good at making designs out of paper (cut on glass) and using them for border painting at the ceiling line. When he walked me down the aisle on my wedding day, he was happy and proud.

Although at that time it was common for parents to

hit or scold their children in the way of correction he never did. If any of us were sick, he would buy cream buns from the bakery for us. We always had food on the table.

By Granddaughter: Joanne (Zammit) Prince, (Ontario, Canada), daughter of Mary (Vella) Zammit

As I was only eight years old when he passed away, I don't remember much. When I was at their house, he used to tell me made-up stories when we sat on the day-bed sofa in the anteroom between the bedroom and the kitchen. He always seemed mysterious to me.

By Granddaughter: Teresa Zammit, (Ontario, Canada), daughter of Mary (Vella) Zammit

My mother was pregnant with me when he passed away February 1958 and I was born in June so I never got to meet him.

By Grandson: Frank Camilleri, (Ontario, Canada), son of Jean (Vella) Camilleri

I don't remember my nannu very much but I'm sure he was a wonderful person.

By Grandniece: Carmela (Pisani) Surowiec, (Michigan, U.S.A.) daughter of Andreana (Audrey) Pisani, granddaughter of Luke Debono [brother of Michelina]

Nannu Mosu, as we called him, even though he was my great uncle through marriage, visited us in Detroit with Nanna Kelina quite often. He always said the rosary to himself as he kept his beads in his pocket. My father, Charlie Pisani, had him do some painting in our home on Junction [Avenue] to keep him busy and not pester Nanna Kelina and my mom, who would be sewing. He loved going to the Eastern Market on Saturdays with my dad and me when I was very little. He didn't say much and kept to himself. I remember that we received a call from Toronto from one of his children to tell us that he passed away. It was my 12th birthday and I had a party with a few of my friends that day; February 8, 1958.

Michelina (Debono) Vella (1893-1982)

By Granddaughter Mary (Vella) Mazzariol, (Ontario, Canada), daughter of Carmela (Vella) Vella

I was the first grandchild and spent many days and

weekends with my grandfather, Thomas Vella, and Aunts: Annie, Mary, Jean and Audrey and Uncle Joe as I was growing up.

Nanna taught me to knit and crochet. On Wednesdays she took me with her to St. Patrick's Church on McCaul Street for Mass and Novena. We would walk to visit her friend, Karmena Buhagiar, on St. Patrick Street. Later, we continued our walk to Eaton's Annex for lunch and shopped for wool and fabric to sew clothes for us grandchildren. During the war years she made dozens of pairs of knitted socks to send overseas to the soldiers via St. Paul's Church packages. She made the altar cloths with crocheted edging for the three altars for the opening of the new church building in 1956.

Nanna took me away many times by train to Detroit to visit Aunt Annie and many of her Maltese friends who settled there. Nanna was very deep in her Catholic faith. She attended Mass daily at St. Paul's Church across from her home on Dundas Street. She loved people and had many friends who loved her too. After Mass she would invite them over for tea and always had fresh baked goods. She was never critical or gossipy. Paula Vella from 165 Maria Street and her mother, Infattuwa, came over often. Other friends were: Carmena Calleja (married to Mike) Anglu tal-Għaddis (161 Maria St.), Fortunata, and Gianna Borg (155 Maria St.). She wasn't close to Nannu's two sisters, Josephine and Theresa, even though they lived close by because they weren't very respectful to her (although they depended on her for many things including medical advice).



Nanna was present at all our family occasions. Christmas and Easter traditions were to make

pastizzi with my mother for as many as 30 or 40 people. After I was married, she visited my home with my four children and they really enjoyed each other's company. She taught them a few Maltese words. My mother, Carmela, predeceased her in 1976. She really missed her, but continued to join us.



Front row: Maureen, Nanna, Jean and Rosemarie

Back row: Mary, Carmela (my mother) and Carmela (Nanna's daughter-in-law)

By Granddaughter: Joan (Vella) Gallina, (Ontario, Canada), daughter of Carmela (Vella) Vella

When I was about six years old, I remember going to Nannu and Nanna's house one day a week with my mother and my siblings. Nanna always made a Maltese dinner for us, which was delicious. She was a very kind lady who always looked at the good in everyone. I still have the crocheted dresser and sofa sets that she made for me, I will pass them on to my children. I also have beautiful memories of later years after Italo and I were married and had children, we would bring her to our home for dinner and we all enjoyed our time together.

By Granddaughter: Michelina (Vella) DiCarlo, (Ontario, Canada), daughter of Carmela (Vella) Vella

After church on Sundays, we always visited Nanna. She always had cookies and tea for us. We loved going there and sitting on her rocking chair on the front porch. Many times, we sat with her while she crocheted mindlessly and so beautifully while she

watched soap operas—*All My Children*, *The Secret Storm* and *The Edge of Night*. Her house was small but always full of people and we just knew she loved us so much. My mother always told me I was named after her because when I was born in August, 1950, she just had an operation and was seriously ill. She regained her health and lived for many years after that.

By Grandson: John Caruana, (Michigan, U.S.A.), son of Annie (Vella) Carwana

I remember on July 7, 1973, the day Joanne and Burt Prince got married, that Brian (Marie and Paul's son) fell off the verandah (at her house) and broke his arm. Nanna Kelina shook his arm and pronounced that it wasn't broken. Paul took him to the hospital and because he was dressed in a black suit (because he'd brought his Buick Riviera to drive Joanne to the church) it was assumed he was a doctor. They gave Brian full attention quickly and casted his broken arm without charging him. Paul didn't bother setting them straight. I also remember Nanna baking pastizzi and pies (my favourite was raisin). I also remember seeing the Iceman coming to the house. My mother told me that as a young married woman she would roller skate in her basement.

By Daughter: Mary (Vella) Zammit (Ontario, Canada)

Mom's house was the social hub for many people. If someone went for a walk down the Junction, they would invariably stop at Kelina's house for something sweet to eat. She would always have some fresh baked pies or desserts. The Debonos would always come for a visit from Detroit, Michigan. They would stay with Kelina and then take her to visit all the other relatives. The Pisani children would often stay at our house and that's how Carmen and Mary became such good friends with Rita and Joanne, my girls.

We would go to Port Dalhousie (on the ferry), Humber River and Hanlon's Point (on the Toronto islands) for get-togethers with our siblings and their children and we would bring a picnic lunch to enjoy.

When I was 10 to 12 years old, I remember sitting on the floor next to my mother sewing on her Singer machine. I would pick up the scraps of fabric from the floor and make dolls' clothes from them. When the ice cream truck came by, she would always buy one for each of us but never for herself to save the money.

On December 28, 1939 Kelina received a letter from her sister in Malta, Karmni (Carmela), telling her that her mother had passed away; I still have the letter.

I remember going to the Novena's at St. Patrick's with her before I was married; something she did once a week.

Once I was married, I spoke to my mother on the phone every day and visited her often. Sometimes she'd be sitting on the front porch and we'd take her for a walk up the Junction.

When she was elderly, each of us children took her to our houses for alternating weekends because she was not well. These were difficult times as her pain was not easily soothed. She'd get up often at night and I would be frightened that she might fall down the stairs.

As adult children we always tried to celebrate her birthday at the end of October together as a family. My husband, Joe Zammit, died on her birthday October 28, 1997.



**Nanna with Her Children,
Audrey, Mary, Joe and Jean, 1962**

**By: Granddaughter: Rita (Zammit) Foxe,
(Ontario, Canada), daughter of Mary (Vella)
Zammit**

I spent a lot of time with Nanna in my younger years. She taught me to crochet, as she always had a project on the go. Mom and Dad always did her grocery shopping for her and I would help take it over and unpack it. I stayed overnight often and enjoyed watching TV with her and Aunt Carmela (recently deceased in 2021) and Uncle Joe when they were newly married and living upstairs to her. Our favourite show was *Perry Mason* (lawyer). I

especially enjoyed all the visitors she had either after church or family visiting from Detroit. It was wonderful living so close to her that we could visit anytime. I am grateful to have known and loved her.

**By Granddaughter: Joanne (Zammit) Prince
(Ontario, Canada), daughter of Mary (Vella)
Zammit**

My second name is after her since she was ill when I was born. My first memory of Nanna was in 1954 (I was three years old) just before my brother Tom was born. I was left at her house while my mom went to the doctor for a check-up. In those days they talked about babies being 'ordered' and brought by the stork. I wasn't happy that my mom would leave me for this reason and so I had a temper tantrum under her kitchen table announcing that I didn't want a baby brother and for them to cancel the order by rubbing it out. Cousin Mary (Vella) Mazzariol was visiting at the time and the two of them discussed how babyish I was being and that I should be ashamed of myself.

She was a loving woman who made doll clothes for me; I especially remember a green satin dress with lace around the neckline for my Peggy doll. I probably got my interest in sewing from her. She crocheted dresser sets for all her granddaughters before she died. I remember picking and eating blackberries in her yard.

As a young teenager, I used to go to her house to dust her bedroom and living room for her on Saturdays. I enjoyed listening to the musical jewelry box (with the ballerina twirling) while I worked. She had a liquor dispenser on her coffee table with shot glasses and I remember imagining how it would be serving drinks from it. I also remember a purple ceramic donkey with a man and sombrero that someone must have brought her from Mexico; my sister Cathy has it now. I had terrible allergies and when I couldn't stop sneezing, she made me put alcohol up my nose which probably wasn't the best thing to do and didn't solve the problem. She was at our house a lot and vice versa. We would often walk over in the evening just to sit with her on the porch. I often went to morning Mass during Lent and would go and sit with her (she was always near the front).

I was happy to have her at my wedding (July 7, 1973); she looked so nice all dressed up with her beautiful black and white print dress and jacket.

She was a regal lady, always well-dressed, including a proper and stylish hat. She was a pious woman who went to Mass every day. I know my

mother missed her very much but she did have a long, not always healthy, life when she died at 88 years old.



By Granddaughter: Teresa Zammit, (Ontario, Canada), daughter of Mary (Vella) Zammit

My memory of Nanna is cutting her grass. On Saturday mornings my dad would say "Nanna's grass needs cutting," so I would put the electrical cord over my shoulder and the lawn mower and walk down Maria Street to Gilmour Avenue, then across Dundas Street to her house. When I was cutting the back lawn, it was very bumpy and difficult to cut but I would love to see Nanna and she would give me some ginger ale. She would then get out her wallet to pay me and I would say "No, I just came over to help," but she would insist. Much to my surprise she would give me five cents. I would then save it to go to the Canadian National Exhibition, "The Ex."

By Grandson: Joe Camilleri, (Alberta, Canada), son of Jean (Vella) Camilleri

I remember going to Nanna's and Nannu's house on Sunday for treats and eating wine grapes from the vine in the back yard.

By Grandson: Frank Camilleri, (Ontario, Canada), son of Jean (Vella) Camilleri

What I remember best about my nanna was having breakfast with her after I served, as an altar boy, a funeral or wedding at St Paul's Church across the road from her house. She used to dip her toast in her tea. I thought that was very gross. Believe it or not I tried it myself and it wasn't all that bad.



By Grandniece: Carmela (Pisani) Surowiec, Michigan, U.S.A., daughter of Audrey (Debono) Pisani [granddaughter of Luke, in Mellieha, Malta, Kelina's brother]

I have many, many fond memories of my great aunt, as we used to visit her in Toronto at least once a year or she would come to Detroit and stay with us for long stays at least every other year.



**Nanna with Audrey Pisani
and Tony, a Friend, 1962**

I still have the beautiful doilies that she made me for my future living room and a set for my bedroom. I was 12 when she made them for me on one of her vacations with us. We walked down to the Five & Dime and picked out my ecru yarn. She worked on the 20 pieces all the while she was with us. I stored them away until I was married. I still have them all and a few are under my lamps in my home and I cherish every one. She was also the one to teach me how to crochet, which led to my love for knitting as well.

“Nanna Kelina,” as we fondly called her because she was the closest thing to a grandparent that we had and not “Tia” or “Auntie,” was a favourite of mine, a great mentor and one who gave me sage advice on life. My father would try to stop me from asking her all kinds of questions that she loved answering. He thought I was pestering her, but she would tell him that the only way that I was going to learn about life is to ask questions.

I spent a part of a two-week vacation with her when I was about 15 and we would go to Mass every day, walk to the Junction to shop, and stop and visit friends along the way. She taught me how to make rhubarb pie that we picked fresh from her yard. I have beautiful memories of her and of what she taught me. She treated me with the utmost respect, no matter how old I was at the time. I loved her and miss her very much.

READERS' COMMENTS FOLLOWING THE JANUARY ISSUE

I thank you for sending to me the latest issue of *News Letter for January 2022*.

Yet again, it is so full of reporting from Christmas activities that were organized by Maltese for the Maltese, in faraway North America. Traditions of old have been finding their country of adoption and many stay alive till this very day. Well done to all fellow Maltese who never tire to bring back that feeling of a *Milied Malti offshore*.

And to add to the taste, many Maltese dishes and recipes have also been served at parties and lunches /dinner. From the photos, I could observe good attendance for every event. The organizers are to be commended for their hard work and dedication.

George Stagno Navarra, President, ALPS, Malta

Amazing! I enjoyed reading every sentence and spying on every detail of the photos! What a marvelous community! Hurray to the Maltese community in North America! Hurray to Dan for the amazingly interesting and captivating newsletter! Excellent!....

Keep up your precious work! I love every word in this newsletter! You spike the urge in my heart to visit this sparkling community. An enormous thank you for this masterpiece! I just love it!

Maria Pia Gauci, Malta

Your last photo in the Newsletter is titled 'another full house'. So apt: one could say the same about this newsletter: bursting with information and so much seasonal good cheer.

Godfrey Baldacchino, L-Università ta' Malta

I must tell you how impressed I am with your publication. It is a thoughtful and comprehensive inventory that captures exceptionally well the activities of the Maltese community abroad.

Victor M. Tanti, Honorary Consul of Malta
with Jurisdiction over the Province of Alberta

Thank you so much for another wonderful issue. Very much appreciated.

Marion Atkinson, Australia

I do appreciate your dedication to publish this newsletter and I wish you success and good luck.

Sam Camilleri, Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario

**A VISIT TO
OLD FASHIONED RESTORATION***

Dan Brock

In his ongoing efforts to promote and network with Maltese Canadian businesses, Dr. Raymond Xerri, Consul General of the Republic of Malta to Canada, recently visited Old Fashioned Restoration at 3068 Dundas Street West in Toronto's Malta Village in The Junction.

Since its establishment in 1982, the business has been Maltese Canadian owned and managed. Its current proprietor is Emanuel Calleja, who restores, buys and sells fine antique furniture and decorative arts from the 18th century to the 1940s Art Deco period. Emanuel acquired his skills in repairing, restoring and French polishing fine antique furniture in Europe. He also provides upholstery services.



**THE CONSUL GENERAL
OF THE REPUBLIC OF MALTA TO CANADA
IS ALSO
THE AUTHOR OF CHILDREN'S BOOKS**

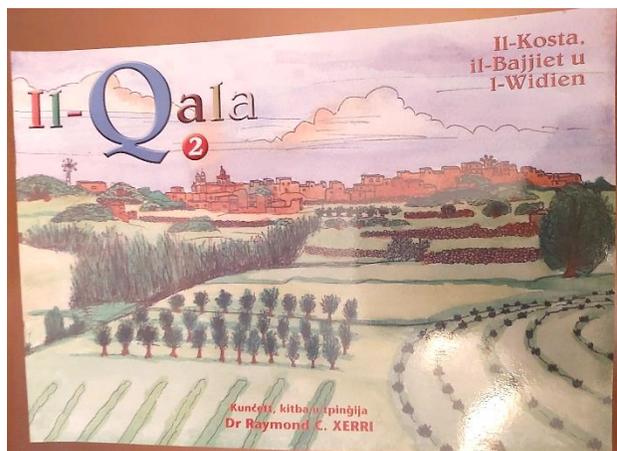
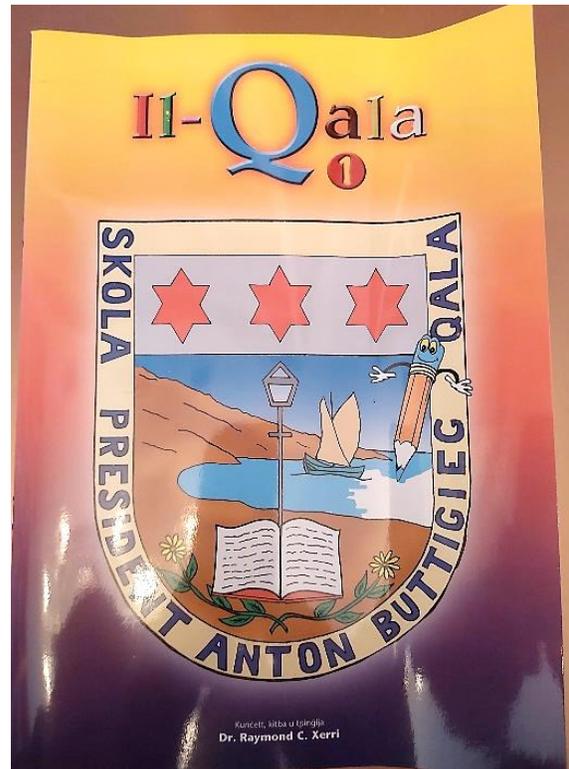
Dan Brock

Dr. Raymond Xerri is the author of five books on villages in Gozo and one on the seaside town of Marsaskala, Malta which are geared to children.

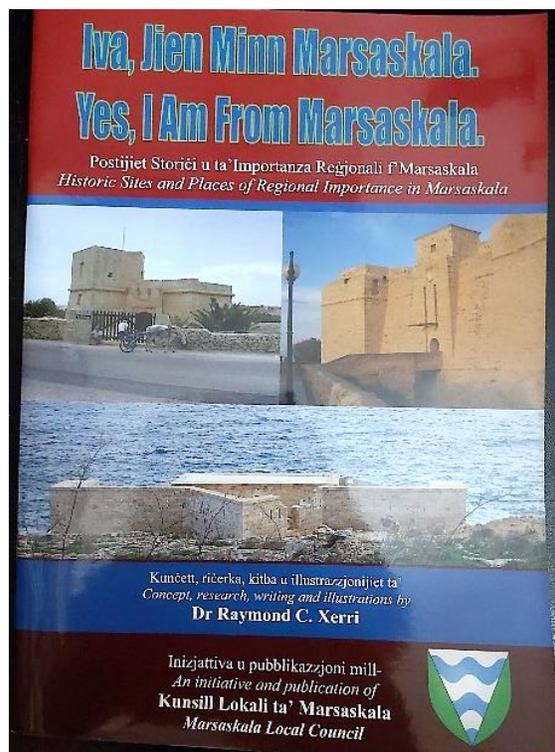
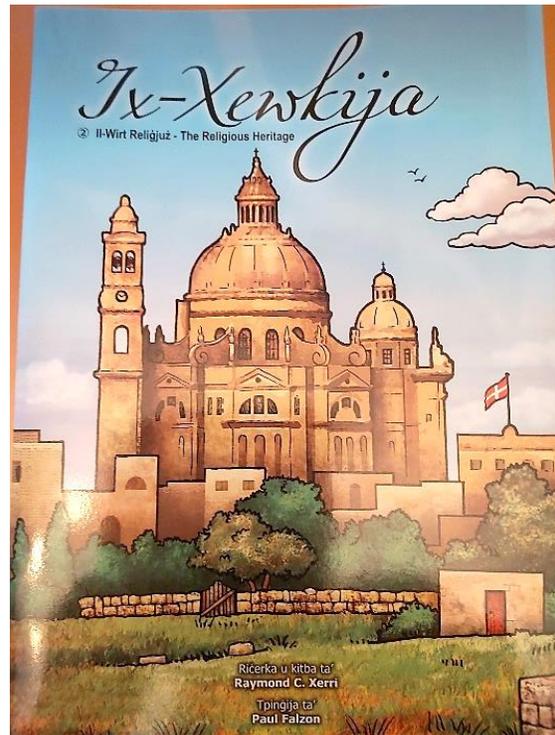


** I wish to thank Dr. Xerri for providing much of the information and most of the photos for this article.*

As of January 9, 2022, there have been 4,044 hits—92 since December 7th—on the webpage of the Maltese-American Social Club of San Francisco pertaining to *The Maltese Presence in North America* e-newsletter.



These are part of the more than 200 educational materials from various institutions around the Maltese Islands which Dr. Xerri has seen that are deposited in the libraries of the Malta Band Club, the Melita Soccer Club and at the Consulate General Office itself in the Greater Toronto Area.



It is hoped that in the near future, copies of these publications will be provided to the library of the Malta United Society of Windsor and the Runnymede Long-Term Care Facility Library in The Junction, Toronto.

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

**Dr. Raymond Xerri,
Consul General**



What an honour and privilege it was!

For nearly three years, I have had the honour and privilege to serve you as your Consul General. This was a sizeable responsibility when one considers that the Maltese Canadian family counts 147,000 from coast to coast to coast and hundreds of Maltese Canadians living in Malta, Gozo and around the globe. This has been an awesome experience for my family and me, as were my previous postings in the Commonwealth of Australia, New Zealand and The Philippines (1995-1998) and the United Kingdom and Ireland (2001-2005).

Owing to my health situation, I have requested the Ministry for Foreign & European Affairs to end my posting as soon as a replacement is found. This request has been accepted and a replacement has been found and will be announced soon. Therefore, I will be ending my term and leaving Canada sometime in March. As we say, health comes first, and for once in my life, I am putting my health before work.

I would like to thank all Maltese Canadians, the St Paul the Apostle Maltese Canadian Parish, the Maltese Canadian Federation, The Melita S.C., The Malta Band Club and this newsletter, *The Maltese Presence in North America*.

I understand that very few have had the privilege I had to serve, live, study and work in all the major countries that host the overwhelming majority of our great Maltese and Gozitan diaspora worldwide, which I like to call, Global Malta. I can comfortably say that serving in all these countries and our diaspora in many cities is one of my lifetime highlights and awesome experiences that will remain in my heart and mind. I have made many acquaintances and friends in all these countries and I did the same here in Canada.

An apology goes to anyone to whom I might have not

given my 100 percent or might have hurt along this journey. Because of the COVID19 situation, I never made it to visit the Maltese in Windsor and in other provinces around Canada.

I must thank all those who worked closely with me, the members of the Consulate General staff, my head of mission, H.E. Keith Azzopardi, Malta's High Commissioner to Canada, the Honorary Consuls in the provinces, my diplomatic and consular colleagues at the Ministry for Foreign & European Affairs in Malta and my Consular colleagues here in Toronto. I would like to thank your two Representatives on the Council of the Maltese Living Abroad – Brandon Azzopardi (in Toronto) and Sue Schembri (in British Columbia). I must wholeheartedly thank my colleague that will be replacing me for taking up the challenge to fill in for me. I wish you all the very best.

Once again we are open for urgent services only

COVID19, Omicron and now BA.2 continue to dominate our lives. In following with the Government of Canada working remotely and offering critical services order issued in November 2021, the Consulate General of Malta to Canada staff is working from home and attending to urgent needs only. This measure will remain in effect at least until the second week of February.

A significant change in policy of recognition of Canadian public documents

All non-EU documents (birth, marriage and death certifications) made outside Malta or the EU must be apostilled or legalised. This change of policy for the recognition of foreign public documents by the Public Registry Unit of Malta was published on January 3, 2022. This change is in terms of Article 244 of the Civil Code (Chapter 16 of the Laws of Malta), the Marriage Act (Chapter 255 of the Laws of Malta) and Article 33 of the Marriage Act (Chapter of the Laws of Malta). Obviously, this process is not needed if your certificates have already been registered at the Public Registry in Malta or Gozo.

Briefly, this process means that following obtaining one's Maltese citizenship, one must register their Canadian (or Foreign) birth and their marriage (if a person is married) with the Public Registry. Documents submitted from EU and non-EU countries (like Canada) may be either original or certified true copies. In the case of certified true copies, these must be issued from the same competent authority or Court that has issued the

original document. Non-EU original or certified true copies (Canadian birth and marriage certificate) of public documents need to be either apostilled or fully legalised at 222 Jarvis Street, Toronto and then authenticated at the Consulate General of Malta. Without completing this process, one cannot apply for their Maltese Passport. All original documents are retained and indefinitely preserved in the archives of the Public Registry.

Public documents issued not in the English language need to be translated into Maltese or English. The Identity Malta Agency 'Translators' List is accessible from <https://www.identitymalta.com/services/translators-list/>. Translations of all non-EU public documents done in Malta by a person registered on the Identity Malta Agency 'Translators' List do not require to be apostilled or legalised. Translations of all non-EU public documents made by persons registered by the Malta Ministry for Foreign and European Affairs that are not on the Identity Malta Agency 'Translators' List, however, must be apostilled or legalised. The Register provided by the Legalisation Unit within the Malta Ministry for Foreign and European Affairs may be searched through the portal <https://signatories-legalisation.gov.mt/>

Translations of all non-EU public documents done in a European Union member state by a translator that can be verified on the EU portal https://e-justice.europa.eu/content_public_documents-551-en.do are accepted by the Public Registry and need not be apostilled or legalised.

Translations of all non-EU public documents done in a European Union member state by translators that cannot be verified on the EU portal https://e-justice.europa.eu/content_public_documents-551-en.do must be apostilled or legalised.

Once these requisites have been satisfied, the respective act is registered and given civil effects as if it had been registered in Malta.

Many messages of thanks are very much appreciated

Many of you appreciated the publications – historic, children’s stories, Maltese and Gozitan legends – that have continued to be made available in the indicated libraries for all Maltese Canadians to consult. Not surprisingly the interest in these publications is gradually increasing amongst parents, children and the elderly alike. Now that such publications are available to all, children and students can easily use them for doing their homework assignments about different aspects of

Maltese life in their ancestral country, reading sessions and/or bedtime reading.

A heartfelt thanks to all Maltese Canadians

For the last two years and eight months, my family and I have had the esteemed honour and privilege to represent the Government of Malta and to be your Consul General here in Canada. My message, remains the same message as I made in my very first speech in Canada, “Remain a united community and never stop being proud of your Maltese Canadian heritage.”

Finally, from the bottom of our hearts, my wife Marlene, our children Armando Antonio and Felicity Ann, and I wish all Maltese Canadians all the very best and if you are in Gozo please do not hesitate to contact us to meet up and renew friendships. Please keep in touch on social media, or my email on raymond.c.xerri@gmail.com and above all please do keep me in your prayers.



O Lord, always bless Malta and Canada.



In Canada’s Federal Election held on September 9, 2021, Conservative candidate **Larry Brock**, was elected the Member of Parliament for the riding of Brantford-Brant.

Larry’s maternal grandfather, Joe Gatt, a carpenter, came to Brantford, Ontario from Malta, on board the *Marine Perch* in May 1948. Larry’s grandmother (Nina), mother (Mary) and aunt (Antonia) followed, on board the *Vulcania* in June 1949.

**ACTIVITIES WITHIN
THE MALTESE COMMUNITIES**

Dan Brock

MICHIGAN

Maltese American Community Club of Dearborn

A dinner was held at the Club on Friday, January 7th. On the menu was fish n' chips, *ħobż biż-zeit*, ravioli and pastizzi. Fr. Joe celebrated Mass at 7:00 p.m.

Trivia Night took place on Monday, February 7th.

Saturday, February 19th, is the date set for the **St. Paul's Feast/Rabbit Dinner**.

The **General Membership Meeting** will take place on Sunday, March 13th.

The **Drag Queen Bingo** will be held on Saturday, March 26th.

NEW YORK CITY

Maltese Center: Astoria

Owing to the rapid spread of the Omicron variant, the **New Year's Eve Dinner Party** had to be cancelled.

The Centre is offering a **Maltese Language Program** for children ages 5-12. The first class began on Sunday, February 6th, with a morning and afternoon session being offered. Each session is limited to eight students and each session is completely filled.



On Sunday February 6th at 1:00 p.m., the Maltese Center hosted an **information session** led by the Consular Services of Malta's Permanent Representation in New York. Topics covered were passports, citizenship, visas, oaths, etc.



ONTARIO

**Greater Toronto Area
Malta Band Club**

Owing to the rise in the cases of variants of COVID-19 and new regulations imposed by the Government of Ontario, the **New Year's Eve Celebration**, planned for Friday, December 31st was cancelled.

Longtime former musician in the Malta Band, **Charlie "Carmnu" Vella**, passed away on Tuesday, January 4th. He was 85 years old.



This reopening was held and a **dinner** was served. See pages 31-32.

LEHEN MALTI
(Maltese Voice)

OMNI 1 - Ontario
Saturdays 8:30 a.m.
Tuesdays 11:30 a.m.
Thursdays 8:30 a.m.

OMNI BC
Saturdays 2:00 p.m.

OMNI Alberta
Saturdays 2:00 p.m.

St. Paul the Apostle Parish

February 10th being the **feast of the Shipwreck of St. Paul** and the principal feast of the parish, this feast will be celebrated during the weekend Masses of February 12th-13th.

During the 10:30 Mass, on Sunday, February 13th, the opportunity will be taken to thank and bid farewell to **Dr. Raymond Xerri**, who will be ending his term as Consul General soon after.

Windsor

Malta United Society of Windsor, Ontario

As of Saturday, February 5th, the Society was once again open for business and a **ravioli dinner** was served. There was 50 percent capacity limit and admission was on a first come first served basis until that capacity was reached. Games such as bingo (tombla) were played.

The **General Membership Meeting** is to be held on the evening of Saturday, March 5th. A complimentary **penne dinner** will be served beforehand. This will be an opportunity for members to meet their committee and voice their opinions.

Melita Soccer Club

As with the Malta Band Club, the **New Year's Eve Dinner Party** planned for Friday, December 31st was cancelled.

The **Annual Meeting and Election** scheduled for Sunday, January 16th, was postponed owing to pandemic restrictions. No new date has yet been established.

A **Superbowl get together** is planned for Sunday, February 13th.

SNOWBOARDER JENISE SPITERI
THE ONLY ATHLETE
REPRESENTING MALTA IN THE
2022 OLYMPIC WINTER GAMES

Dan Brock

In the February 2020 issue of this newsletter, we learned of how Jenise Spiteri's goal of competing for Malta at the 2018 Winter Olympics in South Korea was dashed when, with only 24 women getting to compete in the Olympic Half Pipe event, she was number 25. The fact that she completely tore her anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) and partially her meniscus just six months before the Olympics didn't help either.

After the Olympics, however, the Olympic Committee sent Jenise the opening ceremonies outfit that she would have worn, together with a letter stating: "We know how hard you worked for this, and that you really tried, and we want you to have this piece because we know how bad you want it."

The March issue of this newsletter told of Jenise's paternal grandparents, Joseph and Carmela Spiteri, who had immigrated to San Francisco, California, from Hamrun, Malta in 1947.

A seasoned cobbler, Joseph Spiteri, soon heard of



At 11:30 a.m., Sunday, February 20th, the Club will be bidding **farewell** to **Dr. Raymond Xerri**, the current Consul General of Malta to Canada and welcoming his **successor Ms Denise Demicoli**.

A **Carnival** is planned for Saturday, February 26th. There will be a **costume competition**. Contestants must be at least 18 years old. The **meal** will consist of pasta, roast beef and gravy, potatoes and other vegetables, with cake for dessert. **Tickets** are \$25 per person and can be obtained by calling Mary Ann at 647-290-4856 by February 20th.

The Maltese Presence in North America

February 2022

Joe Galdes, also from Malta, who owned a shoe shop and was partners with Louis Harlick. That same year, Harlick was approached by some ice dancers who were in need of skates.

In 1948, the shop decided to branch into making skating boots. Joseph quickly adapted the production of skating boots and soon became the company's head skate designer.

In the 1950s, Harlick bought out his partner Galdes and went into partnership with Jack Henderson. Meanwhile, Joseph Spiteri continued to hone "his skills in pattern design and customizing boots to fit customer specifications."

Louis Harlick was diagnosed with cancer in 1960 and decided to sell his partnership in Harlick Skate Company to Jack Henderson and his brother Bob who then owned 80 percent of the company with Joseph Spiteri owning the remaining 20 percent.

In 1962, Joseph sold his share in the Company to the Hendersons and in August 1963, launched his own business. Thinking that "Spiteri" would be too difficult for people to remember, he decided to go with "SP-Teri," the brand name still used by the company he founded.



George Spiteri, Jenise's Father

Janise Spiteri's mother, Jackie, is also of Maltese descent. She was a nationally ranked American figure skater and then skated in a professional ice show.

Janise, a native of Redwood City, California, who has been figure skating all her life, began snowboarding during the winter of 2010-11. Being of Maltese descent, she was able to change her National Olympic Committee from the USA to Malta in the spring of 2015.



Joseph Spiteri (1923-2010)

Joseph was joined by his son, George, in 1972.



Snowboarding has taken Jenise to Japan, China, South Korea, New Zealand, Switzerland, Spain, England and across the United States, in professional level half-pipe competitions.

As Malta's first snowboarder to represent Malta at the Winter Olympics and that country's only athlete in the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics, Jenise got to be Malta's flag bearer at the opening ceremony on Friday, February 4th.

On the way into the National Stadium, also known as the Bird's Nest, she was eating a banana. The Maltese flag was handed to her and she had nowhere to toss the peel so she stuffed it inside her jacket. Three hours later, on the train back to where she was staying, she wondered why her shirt was moist. Jenise then remembered the peel and finally threw it away.



Jenise Spiteri Was Eating this Banana when Handed Malta's Flag

In addition to skateboarding, Jenise enjoys surfing and exploring the outdoors. She also acts in many television and streaming platform shows.

While failing to qualify for the halfpipe finals on Wednesday, February 9th, the dumpling-eating skateboarder "has certainly become an internet star at this year's Winter Olympics."

FATHER JOHN S. BONNICI TO BE CONSECRATED AUXILIARY BISHOP

Dan Brock

On January 25, 2022, Pope Francis appointed Fr. John Samuel Bonnici as one of two new auxiliary bishops for the archdiocese of New York. The other priest is Fr. Joseph A. Espallat.

Bishop-designate Bonnici has been assigned the titular see of Arindela. Arindela was a town in the late Roman province of Palaestina Salutaria, also known as Palaestina Tertia, and was once a Catholic bishopric. The town now corresponds to modern Gharandal, in the region of Tafilah, south Jordan. The previous bishop assigned to the titular see of Arindela was an auxiliary bishop of Caracas, Venezuela. He died on October 25, 2021.



Bishop-designate Bonnici

Fr. Bonnici is a Maltese American. He was born in New York City on February 17, 1965. In 1983, he graduated from Cathedral Preparatory Seminary High School in Manhattan.

He earned his bachelor's degree in biology and philosophy at St. John's University, Queens, NYC, in 1987. Fr. Bonnici was ordained a priest on June 22, 1991 by Cardinal John O'Connor of the archdiocese of New York.

Fr. Bonnici then obtained a licentiate in theology from the John Paul II Pontifical Theological Institute for Marriage and Family Sciences in Rome in 1992 and then his doctorate from the same institute in Washington, D.C., in 1995.

He was parish vicar of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish (1992-94) in Elmsford, Westchester County,

New York, adjunct professor of theology at Saint Joseph's Seminary & College (1995) in Dunwoodie, Yonkers, deputy director (1995-96) and then director (1996-99) of the FamilyLife/Respect Life Office.

From 2002 until 2008, Fr. Bonnici was pastor of Saint Philip Neri Parish in the Bronx. In April 2002, New York's Governor, George Pataki, appointed Fr. Bonnici to a six-year term on the Board of Trustees of the City University of New York. His appointment was criticized for his lack of higher education expertise and, needless to say, his political positions on gay rights and abortion.

He was later pastor of Saint Columba Parish (2008-21) in Chester, Orange County and administrator of Saint Mary Parish (2020-21) in Washingtonville, in the same county. His last appointment (2021) was pastor of Saint Augustine Parish and Saints John and Paul Parish in Larchmont, Westchester County.

Bishops-designate Bonnici and Espaillat will be ordained to the episcopacy on March 1st at St. Patrick's Cathedral in Manhattan.



FATHER ALBERT VELLA

Dan Brock

Father John Albert Vella, OFM was born in Malta on February 25, 1924.

He immigrated to Canada in September 1953 and joined his friend Fr. Lawrence Bonavia, OFM, the pastor of St. Paul the Apostle Maltese Canadian Parish in The Junction in Toronto. There he was joined by yet another friend, Fr. Emidio Cremona, OFM.

The three priests ministered to some 2,000 people in the then church basement. When new Maltese immigrants arrived in Toronto, it was not unusual for one of the three priests "to go and visit, welcome them and help them get work."

In 1956, it was Fr. Vella who oversaw the construction of a new church building next to the original site. Four years later, the priests were given permission to build a rectory and a new hall above the old church.

Fr. Vella left the Parish in 1961 and joined the Canadian Armed Forces as a chaplain. He was posted in Germany and across Canada. Near the end of his career, he worked at the Canadian Forces Headquarters in Ottawa and attained the rank of lieutenant-colonel.

After retiring in 1980, he helped to build Holy Martyrs of Japan Church in Bradford, north of Toronto.

In 1991, Fr. Vella became an assistant to Auxiliary Bishop Robert Clune, who was responsible for all the parishes in the northern pastoral region of the Archdiocese of Toronto, comprising the York Region and Simcoe County.

Fr. Vella died at the Credit Valley Hospital in Mississauga on January 12, 2001, of lung cancer. His Funeral Mass was held at St. Martin of Tours Church in Mississauga and his body was buried in Assumption Cemetery in Mississauga. His brother, Anthony, was also a priest and served in Mississauga at the time.



A PHOTO FROM THE PAST

Richard S. Cumbo



George Bonavia, Richard Cumbo and Dennis Agius, February 1980, Taken at Robarts Library, University of Toronto

**HAM AND PEA SOUP
WITH CORNED BEEF PATTIES
(SOPPA TAL-PERŻUT U PIŻELLI
BIL-PULPETTI TAL-BULUBIF)**

Mary Rose Aquilina



Mary Rose is Associate Producer for Lehen Malti, the Maltese television program on Omni 1 in Canada. She has been contributing recipes for this newsletter since August 2021.

One of the reasons I enjoy cooking Maltese dishes, other than the fact they remind me of my mother, and the three years I spent in Malta in the 70's before getting married, is the fact that Maltese cuisine has the capacity to stretch a meal to feed a big family.

Moreover, it can take any leftovers from a meal (if any were left) and turn them into a completely different and hearty dish. One would never dream of throwing away leftovers. So oftentimes they would take a somewhat expensive cut of meat and creatively prepare two different meals out of it. Such is the case of a ham on the bone. Of course, the ham would be served perhaps for a Sunday family meal and the leftover bone and meat would be turned into another dish.

Of course, a whole ham leg would still be too expensive to purchase today for most families. But we can easily find smoked "picnic" shoulders that are less costly but still capable of producing two different meals. They are readily found in our supermarkets along with the more lean, smoked turkey leg or thigh. Either cut of meat is delicious and affordable. For this recipe, I am using the turkey leg because it's for two of us, but one can easily produce a larger quantity if you wish to use the leftovers and bone from a smoked shoulder.

So, the combination of the smoked turkey bone, with the Holy Trinity of vegetables (chopped onion, carrots and celery if desired) along with reconstituted dried split peas, herbs and simple vegetable stock/water, can create a hearty and satisfying soup.

I like to also prepare some corned beef patties to serve on the side with fresh crusty bread. Sometimes I will even spread the patties over the bread with a little HP sauce over it and turn it into a sandwich. So, I have given you the recipe for those as well.

L-ikla t-tajba!

HAM AND PEA SOUP

INGREDIENTS:

- 1½ cups dried split peas (green or yellow)
- 2 small onions chopped
- 2 ribs celery chopped
- 3-4 carrots chopped
- 1 ham bone (with some meat left on it) or a smoked turkey leg or thigh
- 4 slices bacon
- 6-8 cups water or vegetable stock (enough to cover the bone well.)



METHOD

- The night before making the soup, soak the dried peas by covering well with water. (The peas will absorb the water overnight so be sure to cover the peas with double their volume in water - any excess water left can be drained before continuing... or not.)
- The next day, drain the peas and start making the soup.



- In a deep pot, start by frying the chopped bacon, then add the onions, carrots and celery until they are softened a bit for about 8 minutes on medium to high heat.



- Lower the heat and allow the soup to simmer until the vegetables are tender and that the peas have broken down in texture.
- Remove the ham bone or turkey leg from the soup. Take off all the meat from around the bone, chop roughly and return to the soup.



- Serve the soup loose and chunky, or smooth and thick by mashing it with a hand blender or in a food processor to the texture you like.

- Add the water and vegetable stock, and marjoram if you are using any. Season with salt and pepper to taste (remember the smoked meat will be salty so take note)

Tip: You can serve the soup with a touch of curry and/or curried dumplings in it. Dumplings recipe below.

For the dumplings:

- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- ½ tsp baking powder
- Salt & Pepper to taste
- Touch of curry powder to your taste
- Water to bind

Method

- In a bowl, mix all the dry ingredients and add just enough water to form a slightly elastic dough.
- Tear off pieces of dough the size of about 1 inch round (it will expand).
- Roll with floured hands to form a ball. Toss into the bubbling soup until cooked.... for the last 5-10 minutes of cooking. It will expand as it remains in the hot soup.



- Add the ham/turkey bone and bring to a boil.

CORNED BEEF PATTIES

INGREDIENTS:

- 3 medium potatoes, boiled and mashed
- 1 x 370g can corned beef
- 1 egg
- 2-3 cloves garlic minced or grated
- Optional: cooked and mashed carrots or sweet potatoes
- Fresh or dried parsley (to your taste)
- Salt and pepper to taste (watch the salt because of the saltiness in the corned beef)
- Fine bread crumbs seasoned by your favourite dried herbs (basil, oregano, paprika & chili flakes) to your taste



METHOD

- In a good-sized bowl, mix the mashed potatoes, mashed carrots and diced corned beef until mixed evenly.
- Add the egg, garlic, and parsley.
- Add salt and pepper to taste
- If you find the mixture too wet, add some of the fine breadcrumbs to tighten it.



- Once the ingredients are well mixed, take a handful of the mixture (or use a large ice cream scoop) about a heaped $\frac{1}{2}$ cup and form into a patty (should be about $\frac{3}{4}$ inch thick and 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ - 3 inches round).



- Once shaped, cover the patty with the seasoned breadcrumbs.
- When you finish shaping the patties, heat a shallow frying pan and coat with a thin layer of olive or vegetable oil and heat till it starts to sizzle.
- Place the patties in the hot oil and cook until the underside is golden brown. Gently flip over to the other side and fry for another 2-3 minutes until golden.



- **Remember:** All the ingredients are pre-cooked, and you just want to be able to bind the mixture and heat it through.
- When done, gently lift and place on a paper towel to absorb any excess oil.
- Serve alongside the ham and pea soup accompanied with fresh crusty bread.



**A CONNECTION WITH A GERMAN POW
DURING WORLD WAR II**

Dan Brock

In the trophy case, in the upstairs lounge of the former Maltese Canadian Club of London were two stone photo holders. On the back of one stone, in pencil was a "J" in a circle. On the other was an "L."



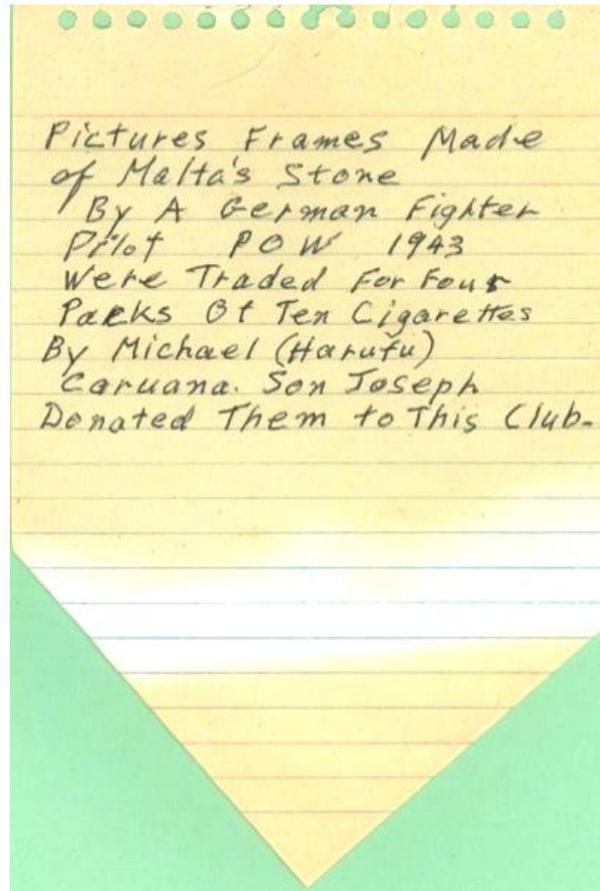
Front of Stone "J" and Back of Stone "L"

There was a note sticking out of one of them which stated that the photo holders were carved out of Maltese stone by a German fighter pilot who was a prisoner of war in Malta in 1943. It also related that a Maltese citizen by the name of Michael Caruana acquired them in exchange for four 10-packs of cigarettes.

While nothing more is known of the German fighter pilot, further investigation revealed that Michael Caruana was known by his nickname *Harufu* (a male lamb). By way of analogy, a gentle, easy-going person in Malta may be referred to as a *haruf* (lamb). Perhaps Michael or one of his male ancestors was such a person.

In one of the frames was an old photo, presumably taken in Malta, of a mother, father and their six children. Could this be the family of Michael Caruana? And who was this Michael Caruana?

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



Note Attached to One of the Picture Frames

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

It turned out that Tony Caruana of St. Thomas was a nephew of Leno Caruana and a grandson of the Michael Caruana in question. The fact that Tony's grandmother, Michael's wife, used to call her grandson *Harufu* convinced me that I had the right family.

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



**The Caruana Family, About 1945
Lorenza, Francis, Joseph, Emanuel, Mary
and Carmela, with Michael Holding baby Edith**

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

In the other photo frame was a photo taken in Malta of a boy who had made his First Communion. In the same frame was a copy of this photo dated April 1958. Again, Tony was able to confirm that this was of his uncle Joseph Caruana, the same Joseph who had donated the photo frames and the Caruana family photos to the Club.

Hidden behind the first stone frame was a coloured photo, taken about 1962, of a young man. This proved to be the seventh and youngest child, John Caruana, who was born in 1946.



A Cropped Photo-Card (i.e. a photograph on the back of a postcard) of Joseph Caruana Having Made His First Communion, about 1943



John Caruana, about 1962

The evening of Sunday, February 28, 2016, saw 12 members and friends of the Caruana family arrive at the Club on Charterhouse Crescent in London to see

the family photographs, taste some Maltese food and sample a can of Kinnie. frames were returned to the Caruana family.

Within the group was Ingeborg Caruana, widow of Francis, the eldest of the Caruana children. A few of the Club members remembered “Frank” as a dance instructor at singles dances and, like Leno, a former Club member. Two of Frank’s siblings were also present: Carmen, the youngest of the children standing in the photo with their parentson the left column on the previous page, and John, the young man in the coloured photo in the right column on the previous page.. Then, there was Elaine, a daughter of Joseph Caruana who had donated the stone frames and family photos, and her husband, Ken Meloche.

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

We visited in the upper room, adjacent to the lounge, and I used the opportunity to capture this memorable occasion in a couple of photos.

At a later date the photos and the stone photo



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

** This is a revised and updated version of the article which appeared in March/April 2016 issue of The Maltese Canadian Club of London’s newsletter.*



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

The Maltese Presence in North America

February 2022

**DINNER AT THE REOPENING OF THE
MALTA BAND CLUB TO THE PUBLIC,
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 4TH**

Dr. Raymond Xerri



Rita Zarb with Dr. Raymond Xerri



Tony Vella, President of the Malta Band Club,
Alfred Cini and Dr. Raymond Xerri



The Consul General and Alfred Cini





FATHER LAWRENCE BONAVIA, OFM

Dan Brock

Fr. Lawrence Bonavia was born, April 27, 1919, in Sliema, Malta, a son of Hector and Alice Bonavia. After attending De La Salle College and the Lyceum, he studied with the Franciscans and was ordained a priest at St. John's Co-Cathedral, Valletta, on April 6, 1946.

In 1946-47, he represented the Franciscan order on the island of Rhodes. He was appointed by the Maltese Government to serve as chaplain to his fellow countrymen who were immigrating to Canada and sailed with those who came out on the Vulcania in June 1948.

That same year, Cardinal James McGuigan, Archbishop of Toronto, appointed Fr. Bonavia as associate pastor of St. Agnes Parish on Dundas

Street. He was appointed pastor of St. Paul the Apostle Maltese Canadian Parish, Dundas Street West, Toronto, in 1951. On November 27, 1955, assisted by Fathers Albert Vella and Emidio Cremona, Fr. Bonavia blessed the cornerstone for the new St. Paul the Apostle Church,

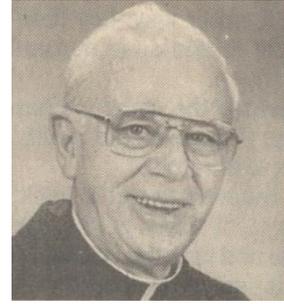
In 1970, Archbishop Philip Pocock, Cardinal McGuigan's successor, appointed Fr. Bonavia as chaplain at St. Joseph's Hospital, Toronto. His next posting was as associate pastor of Our Lady of Fatima Church in Scarborough.

Archbishop Pocock's successor, Archbishop G. Emmet Carter, appointed Fr. Bonavia as Pastor of Sts. Martha and Mary Parish, Mississauga, in 1978. In 1983, the then Cardinal Carter transferred Fr. Bonavia to Our Lady of Victory Parish in Weston. His next posting was in 1985 to St. Ambrose Parish in Etobicoke.

Fr. Bonavia officially retired on June 30, 1995, and took up residence in Our Lady of Sorrows Parish, Etobicoke. He went to Cardinal Ambrozic Houses of Providence, Scarborough, in 1999.

He died at the Providence Centre on June 14, 2002. Fittingly, his remains reposed in the upper hall of St. Paul the Apostle Church before his Funeral Mass, on June 19th, in the church “he created and built.” He was interred in Assumption Cemetery.

Fr. Lawrence Bonavia



A Group of Priests/Friars, about 1955
(l. to r.) Fr. Emidio Cremona, OFM, Fr. Andrew Cuscheri, OFM (?), Priest in Cassock, Fr. Lawrence Bonavia, OFM, Priest in Cassock, Fr. Albert Vella, OFM and Dominican Friar (?)
Can any of our readers identify the two priests and the Dominican friar?

Photo courtesy of Richard S. Cumbo

MALTESE ORGANIZATIONS IN NORTH AMERICA

Festa San Gejtanu Association

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

Festa San Gorg Association of Toronto

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

Gozo Club Toronto

c/o 1205 Royal York Road, Toronto, ON M9A 4B5
416-231-9710
gozoclub@gmail.com

Inanna on Stage

www.joannedancer.com
c/o 356 Pacific Avenue, Toronto, ON M6P 2R1
416-707-2355
desertdancer007@yahoo.ca

Knights of Columbus - Canada – Council # 12782

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

Legion of Mary – “Our Lady of the Migrant”

c/o St. Paul The Apostle Parish
3224 Dundas St. W., Toronto M6P 2A3
Tel: 416-767-7054
www.saint-paul-Maltese.com
stpaulmssp@gmail.com
President: Mary Vella

Lehen Malti

<https://www.omnitv.ca/shows/lehen-malti>
c/o 2387 Chilsworthy Avenue., Mississauga, ON
L5B 2R4
Contact Person: Joe Sherri
416-571-3944
email lehenmalti@hotmail.com

Malta Band Club

5745 Coopers Ave., Mississauga, ON L4Z 1K9
905-890-8507
www.maltabandclub.com
maltabandclub@bellnet.ca

Malta United Society of Windsor, Ontario

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

Malta Village Association (Est. 1995)

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

Maltese American Benevolent Society

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

Maltese American Community Club of Dearborn

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

Maltese-American Social Club of San Francisco

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

Maltese Canadian Association of the City of Hamilton (MCACH)

c/o 381 Fairview Drive, Brantford ON N3R 2X7
mcach1964@gmail.com

Maltese Canadian Association (Gozo)

c/o Trillium, Sqaq Nru 1, Triq it-Tigrija, ix-Xagħra
Tel: 011 356 21560656
mcagozo@hotmail.com

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

c/o 2387 Chilsworth Avenue, Mississauga, ON
L5B 2R4
416-980-1975
mcbna2018@gmail.com

Maltese-Canadian Cruisers

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

Maltese-Canadian Cultural Association (Est. 2018)

c/o 2387 Chilsworth Avenue, Mississauga, ON
L5B 2R4
416-571-3944
joesherri@rogers.com

Maltese Canadian Federation, The (Toronto)

c/o 2387 Chilsworth Avenue, Mississauga, ON
L5B 2R4
416-571-3944
joesherri@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@isqtransport.com/b_azzo18@yahoo.com

Maltese Center, NYC

27-20 Hoyt Ave. S. Astoria, NY 11102
718-728-9893
info@themaltesecenter.com

Opening hours:

Wednesday and Friday 5:00 p.m. – 11:00 p.m.
Saturday and Sunday 8:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Maltese Cross Foundation of California

PO Box 698, San Carlos, CA 94070

Maltese Culture Club of Durham

c/o 124 Ribblesdale Drive, Whitby, ON L1N 7C8
289-939-8377
mmpastizzi@gmail.com

Maltese Heritage Association San Francisco Bay Area

maltesheritageassociation@gmail.com

Maltese Heritage Program (Toronto)

c/o 59A Terry Drive, Toronto, ON, M6N 4Y8
Coordinator: Carmen Galea
416-766-5830
qormija@sympatico.ca

Maltese Historical Society (San Francisco)

c/o leprofess@aol.com

Melita Soccer Club Inc.

3336 Dundas St. W., Toronto, ON M6P 2A4
416-763-5317
msc@melitasoccerclub.com

St. Paul the Apostle Parish

3224 Dundas St. W. Toronto, ON M6P 2A3
416-767-7054
www.saint-paul-maltese.com
stpaulmssp@gmail.com

St. Paul the Apostle Parish Mission Group

c/o 281 Gilmour Ave., Toronto, ON M6P 3B6
416-708-8627
www.facebook.com/john.vella.1044186
giovanvel@sympatico.ca

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

St. Paul's Maltese Choir

c/o St Paul the Apostle Parish
3224 Dundas St. W., Toronto M6P 2A3
416-767-7054
www.saint-paul-maltese.com
stpaulmssp@gmail.com
President: Lino Debono

**A VISIT WITH ALBERT AND THÉRÈSE VELLA
BY MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE AND THEIR SPOUSES
OF THE MALTESE CANADIAN CLUB OF LONDON
AT THE SWISS CHALET RESTAURANT, SCARBOROUGH, FEBRUARY 4, 2018**



Photos courtesy of Tony Galea