



THE MALTESE PRESENCE IN NORTH AMERICA



E-NEWSLETTER

Issue 60

MAY 2024

BUFFET DINNER AND MUSIC BINGO AT THE MALTESE AMERICAN COMMUNITY CLUB OF DEARBORN



🎵 Motown Hits 🎵

Think My Girl	Best of my love	Rescue Me	Heat Wave
Reach Out I'll Be There	Respect	I want you back	Just To See Her
I'll Take You There	Love Child	Please Mr. Postman	You are the Sunshine of My Life
Ain't No Mountain High Enough	Uptight (Everything's alright)	Jimmy Mack	Rock The Boat
When a Man Loves a Woman	ABC	The way you do the things you do	Disco Inferno
			Signed, Sealed, Delivered
			Do you love me

Scan the QR Code, like and follow our page to see your photos from tonight and our upcoming events!

Thank you for supporting Downriver Music Bingo



See pages 13-18.

**The Maltese Presence
in North America**
Issue No. 60 May 2024

Editor

Dan Brock

Proofreader

Mona Vella-Nicholas

Copy Editors

Mark Caruana

Maria Pia Gauci

Contributors to This Issue

CANADA

Ontario

Carl Azzopardi

Consulate General of Malta to
Canada

Fr. Roy Farrell

Malta Band Club

Marthese Fenech

Peter Pace

Richard S. Cumbo

USA

California

Evelyn and Dennis Simmons

Rita Borg

Michigan

Lisa Buttigieg-LiGreci

Mary R. Micallef

Rena Xuereb

Sara Said

North Carolina

Maureen (Busuttill) Fennell

EDITORIAL COMMENT

Many events were held at the various clubs and elsewhere during the month of May; some of them are featured herein.

In early May, the Malta Band Club of Mississauga held a craft and vendor show. (Pages 7-8, 28) Father Roy Farrell's 25th anniversary as a priest was observed, both within his parish and at his *alma mater* St. Augustine Seminary. See page 6 for the latter.

The music bingo, held after a buffet dinner, looks like a fun night at the Maltese American Community Club of Dearborn. (Pages 1, 15-20)

Mothers were honoured at the Maltese-American Social Club of San Francisco with both buffet dinner and dance (pages 23-25) and a mother-daughter tea party (pages 26-27).

Even non-Maltese cultural events are observed at the Maltese clubs in North America, a case in point being *Cinco de Mayo* being observed at the Maltese American Benevolent Society in Detroit. (Page 10)

Three articles outside of club news are: Owen Fennell's graduation, summa cum laude, from a prestigious high school in Raleigh, North Carolina (page 14), the celebration of Maria Brincat's 100th birthday (page 13), and Mar Fenech's eulogy on behalf of her father (pages 21-22).

The April issue of the newsletter generated a few queries and comments.

Charles J. Vella of California wanted to know whether the Dearborn Club had made a video of its pastizzi demonstration conducted on April 7th. It hadn't.

Joe Spiteri mentioned how each issue of the newsletter tends to send him down another "Maltese rabbit hole." (See page 11.)

If you have ideas to share, wish to be put on the free, bcc electronic mailing lists, would like to learn the newsletter's advertising rates, etc., I may be reached at danbrock62@gmail.com.

Owing to the kindness and efforts of Evelyn and Dennis Simmons of California, all issues and the latest "Table of Contents" are posted on the web page of the Maltese-American Social Club of San Francisco at <http://maltese-americanscsf.org/home.aspx>.

Click on to "News & Resources." Arrangements have also been made with Bernadette Bennie Blanco, the administrator of "Malta to Motown" on Facebook, to post this newsletter. Click onto <https://www.facebook.com/groups/405734643919052>.

The various Maltese organizations and associations in North America are encouraged to use this e-newsletter to promote themselves and their activities.

Another free e-newsletter in which you might be interested is *Maltese E-Newsletter*, a weekly edited and published by Frank L. Scicluna of South Australia. He may be contacted at maltesejournal@gmail.com.

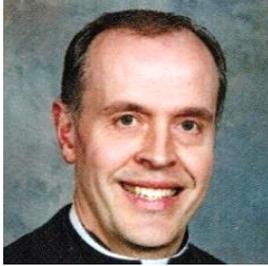
If you would like to listen to Maltese-language radio programs go to 3ZZZ by clicking onto the following url: <https://www.3zzz.com.au/shows/maltese/>. You may contact Paul Vella in Australia at paul.vella44@gmail.com to be put on the weekly mailing list.

CONTENTS

2. Editorial Comment
3. From the Desk of Fr. Roy...
4. Activities within the Maltese Communities
5. Heritage Language Classes Are Established in Maltese.
6. Father Roy Farrell Observes His 25th Anniversary as a Priest
7. Malta Band Club Spring Craft and Vendor Show
9. A Photo from the Past
10. Observing *Cinco de Mayo* at a Maltese American Club
10. Courage of a Maltese Immigrant
11. Readers' Comments
12. Preparing for Imnarja-Malta Fest
13. Celebrating Maria Brincat's 100th Birthday
14. Owen "Yeti" Fennell Graduates Summa Cum Laude
15. Buffet Dinner and Music Bingo
20. Executive Committee of the Maltese-Canadian Museum
21. A Eulogy for My Dad, Alfred Fenech
23. Mother's Day Celebrated at the Maltese American Social Club
26. Mother-Daughter Tea Party

ST. PAUL THE APOSTLE PARISH, TORONTO, CANADA

From our Pastor's Desk...



Fr. Roy Farrell, a diocesan priest within the Archdiocese of Toronto, is pastor of St. Paul the Apostle Parish, Toronto, the only Maltese parish outside Malta worldwide.

Parish Bulletin for May 11th-12th

Dear Friends & Parishioners, I am writing to express my heartfelt gratitude for your presence at the special Mass celebrating my 25th ordination anniversary. Your participation made the occasion truly memorable. The reception that followed was a beautiful expression of our community's spirit, and I was deeply touched by the warmth and generosity extended to me. Each conversation, smile, and gesture added to the joy of the day. I am particularly grateful for the many gifts I received. They are not just material tokens but symbols of the love and support that have been the bedrock of my vocation. Your kindness has left an indelible mark on my heart. A special word of thanks goes to the social committee, whose dedication and hard work made the event seamless and enjoyable. Your efforts behind the scenes did not go unnoticed, and I am truly appreciative. As I reflect on this milestone, I am reminded of the role each of you has played in my journey. Your faith and encouragement have been a constant source of strength. Please continue to keep me in your prayers, as you are in mine. Together, let us move forward in faith, hope, and love. With sincere thanks and blessing, Fr. Roy.

Parish Bulletin for May 18th-19th

In today's world, Pentecost encourages us to be beacons of hope and faith. It calls us to reach out to those who may be struggling with their faith or who feel they have none. We are reminded that our actions, inspired by the Holy Spirit, can speak louder than words in witnessing to the love and mercy of God.

To spread our faith, we can:

- Live authentically, letting our lives be a testament to the values of the Gospel.

- Engage in dialogue, listening and speaking with compassion and understanding.
- Serve others, showing the face of Christ to the least among us.
- Pray for guidance, that the Holy Spirit may lead us to those who need to hear the message of Christ's love.

Gifts and Fruits of the Spirit:

The Holy Spirit bestows gifts upon us which include wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord. These gifts are meant to be used for the common good to build up the Church and serve others.

The fruits of the Spirit:

Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control are signs of how we are living out our faith. They are the natural outcomes of the Spirit's presence in our lives, and they become our witness to the world.

Living Out Our Christian Faith:

We measure our Christian life by how well we embody these gifts and fruits. They are not just for our own sanctification but are meant to overflow into the lives of others, drawing them closer to God.

Here's a brief prayer we can use to grow in our love for the Holy Spirit.

Come, Holy Spirit.

Fill the hearts of your faithful,

And kindle in them the fire of Your love.

Send forth Your Spirit, and they shall be created,

And You shall renew the face of the earth.

O God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit,

Did instruct the hearts of the faithful,

Grant that by the same Holy Spirit,

We may be truly wise and ever enjoy His

consolations,

Through Christ Our Lord, Amen.

Parish Bulletin for May 25th-26th

The Trinity is foundational to the Christian identity. It's not just a theological concept but a reality that impacts how we live. The feast is a time to remember that we are made in the image of God who is relational and loving. It's a call to reflect that love in our relationships with others.

Practical Examples:

Community Service: Just as the Trinity reflects perfect unity, we can strive for unity in our communities by volunteering and helping those in need.

Prayer: Engaging in prayer, especially communal prayer, is a way to connect with each aspect of the Trinity.

ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE MALTESE COMMUNITIES

Dan Brock

CALIFORNIA

Maltese-American Social Club of San Francisco

A **Mother's Day Dinner Dance** took place on Saturday, May 11th. (See pages 23-25.)

A **Father's Day Luncheon** will be held on Sunday, June 16th.

The **Member's Annual Picnic** is scheduled for Sunday, July 21st.

GOZO

Maltese Canadian Association (Gozo)

The Association will be celebrating **Canada Day** on Monday, July 1st with a **flag-raising ceremony** in the morning and a **dinner** in the evening.

MICHIGAN

Maltese American Benevolent Society, Inc.

Cinco de Mayo was observed by some at the Club. (See page 10.)

The Club was open on Thursday, June 6th in connection with the **grand opening** of the **restored Michigan Central Station**. It was through this train station that thousands of Maltese emigrants entered Detroit after arriving in America.

The **First Friday Mass** on June 7th, with Fr. Joe was the last one until September.

Team Terry had a **Bottle Drive** and **Bake Sale** with all proceeds going to **The Michigan Parkinson Foundation**. The goal is to raise \$10,000 for the **Metro Detroit Parkinson Walk** at Jimmy John's Field on Saturday, September 14th.

The Society's annual **Show and Shine** event was held on Saturday, June 8th, between 1:00 and 5:00 p.m.

The **General Membership Meeting** took place on the afternoon of Sunday, June 9th.

NEW YORK CITY

Maltese Center: Astoria

The annual **Majjalata** was held on the evening of Saturday, June 1st.

ONTARIO

Greater Toronto Area

Maltese-Canadian Museum

An **Executive Committee** was **appointed** at the meeting held on Tuesday, May 7th. (See page 20.)

Malta Band Club

The **Spring Vendor and Craft Show** was held on Saturday, May 4th. (See pages 7-8, 28.)

A **Club Luncheon** was held on Wednesday, May 8th. **Lehen Malti**

The **Anniversary Dance** took place on Saturday May 18th.

A **Show & Shine Car Show** in conjunction with the **Maltese Canadian Cruisers** was held on Sunday May 26th. (See June issue for account.)

The **St. George's Festa Dinner and Dance** took place on the evening of Saturday, June 8th.

Another **Show & Shine Car Show** will be held on Sunday, June 23rd.



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.

Melita Soccer Club, Inc.

The **Fallsview Casino Bus Trip** took place on Saturday, May 25th

A bus trip to **Fallsview Casino** will take place on Saturday, June 22nd.

A **bus trip** to **Casino Rama** is planned for Saturday, July 27th.

Maltese-Canadian Cultural Association

This year's **Malta Fest** will take place at Runnymede Park on Saturday, June 22nd. (See page 12 for further details.)

London

A **Monthly Luncheon** took place on Thursday, May 30th, at the **Mandarin Restaurant** on Wellington Road South. (See June issue.)

The **Annual Picnic** will be held at **Springbank Park**, Site K, on Friday, June 28th, between 10:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.

🌀🌀🌀
**HERITAGE LANGUAGE CLASSES
ARE ESTABLISHED IN MALTESE***

Dan Brock

According to Richard S. Cumbo, heritage language classes were established for the first time outside Malta in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) in the summer of 1977. These were set up with the cooperation of both the Federal Government and first-time the Metropolitan Toronto Separate School Board (now Toronto Catholic District School Board) and were held in St. Cecilia Separate (now Catholic) School on Annette Street in Toronto and James Culnan Separate (now Catholic) School in York.

Some of the texts books were purchased directly from Malta.

🌀🌀🌀

Owing to its initial success, between 160 and 180 students, ages four to 18, were taught Maltese at St. Cecilia's between December 1977 and May 1978 for two hours on Saturday mornings, in one of four classes divided according to age.

The teacher in charge was Antoinette Agius, a former Maltese educational script writer from Sliema, Malta. The teachers of the other three classes were her husband, Dennis A. Agius, a linguist; Miss D. Zarb; and Mrs. M. Sammut, all former instructors.

The pupils were described as "eager" and the parents as "showing a great interest."

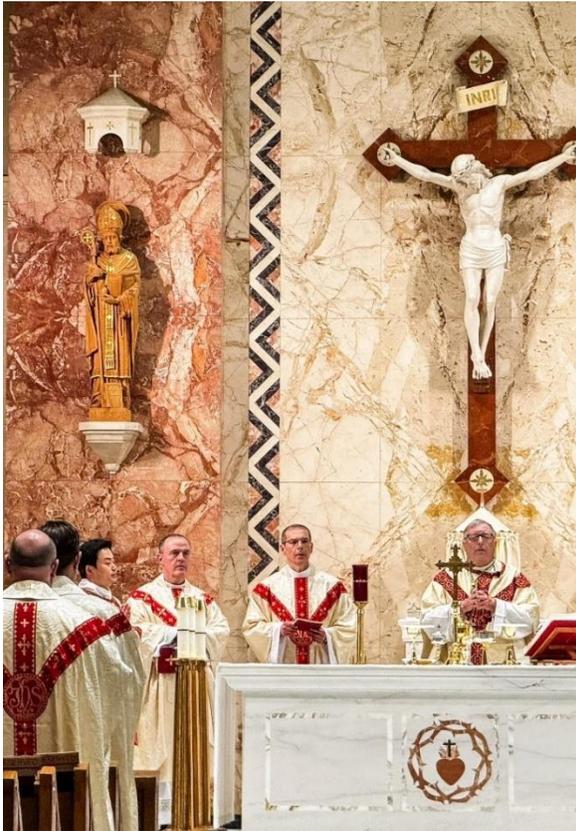
* *Extracted from Richard S. Cumbo, O.S.J., "Heritage Language Teachers," Forum Melitense, nos. 3 & 4 (Summer-Autumn-Winter 1978), 4.*

FATHER ROY FARRELL OBSERVES HIS 25TH ANNIVERSARY AS A PRIEST

Consul General Denise Demicoli

Congratulations to Rev. Roy Farrell, Parish Pastor at St. Paul the Apostle Maltese-Canadian Parish in Toronto on his 25th anniversary of service and to the Ordinandi Class of 1999.

Thanks for your service, support and pastoral guidance to our Maltese community in Toronto, with the help and support of Deacon Raymond Frendo, Ms Rita Apalit and the vibrant group of volunteers at St Paul's.



This celebration was held early in May at St. Augustine Seminary. This seminary was established in 1913 to train diocesan priests.

MALTA BAND CLUB SPRING CRAFT AND VENDOR SHOW

Malta Band Club and
Consulate General of Malta in Toronto

The Spring Craft and Vendor Show was held on Saturday, May 4th at the Malta Band Club. Vendors started setting up their tables and products early in the morning in preparation for a 9:00 a.m. start time.



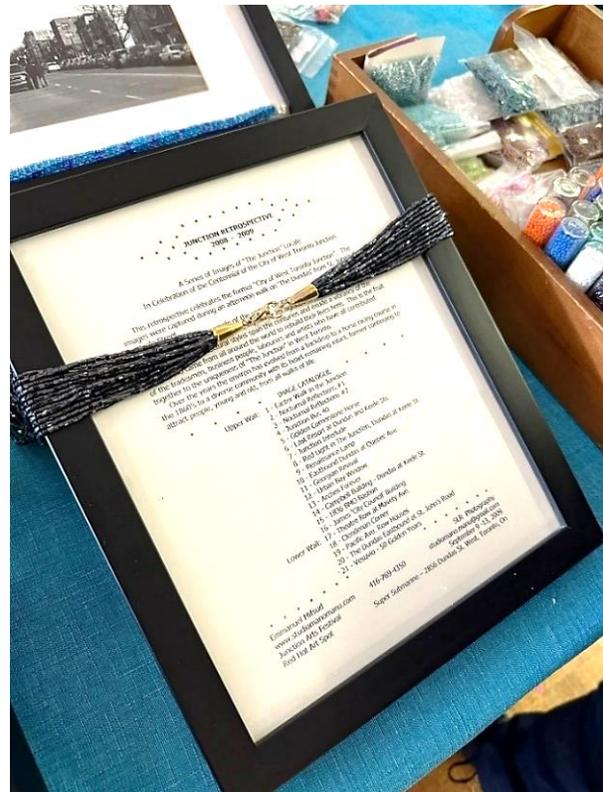
People started arriving shortly after the designated start time and we were happy to see a steady attendance throughout the day. Everyone had an opportunity to visit all of the 40 vendors who attended the show.



Mani Mifsud



Joe Sherri



The MBC kitchen staff kept everyone's appetite satisfied with a variety of food items that were available.



Consul General Ms. Denise Demicoli (standing)



This event was a great success and will hopefully happen again at the Malta Band Club. Special thanks to Virginia Church and all the dedicated volunteers that worked very hard to make this event possible!

See page 28 for more photos.

A PHOTO FROM THE PAST

Richard S. Cumbo

The photograph below is of a banquet of the Executive Committee of the Maltese-Canadian Society of Toronto (M.C.S.T.), at the Flamingo Hall. The date is believed to have been Sunday, May 21, 1972.

At the time, the Flamingo Banquet Hall, at 3878 Dundas Street, Toronto, was owned by Gozitan realtor Anglu Falzon.

Each hall – upper and lower - had very large murals, one of Mdina and the other of Mellieħa, as well as a large Maltese Cross in the centre of each floor.

For many years, beginning about 1968, The Maltese-Canadian Society of Toronto rented the large basement. Prior to this, for a short while, the Society had rented Eric Stellini's basement further west on Dundas Street.



Clockwise I to r: Espedito Falzon, Publius "Pullu" Falzon, Kelina Falzon (wife of Espedito), Guza Mizzi (mother of Joan Mizzi-Fry a contributor to this newsletter), Carmen Portelli, Richard Cumbo (wearing glasses and writer of this article), Charlie Portelli (husband of Carmen), Paul Stivala, Doris Goggi (wife of Alfred Goggi who took the photo and was president of the M.C.S.T.), _____, _____, _____, and Frans "Frank" Camilleri

OBSERVING CINCO DE MAYO AT A MALTESE AMERICAN CLUB

Dan Brock

It's to be expected that the culture within the country to which one immigrates will be absorbed by newcomers over time. We have seen in the pages of this newsletter the celebration of St. Patrick's Day in the various Maltese clubs within North America and Canada Day by the members of the Maltese Canadian Association in Gozo.

Sara Said has posted on Facebook these photos of *Cinco de Mayo* being observed at the Maltese American Benevolent Society in Detroit.



Interestingly, *Cinco de Mayo* is more popular in the United States than in Mexico itself and has become associated with the celebration of Mexican American culture.

Cinco de Mayo, Spanish for "Fifth of May" is an annual celebration held on May 5th to celebrate Mexico's victory over the Second French Empire at the Battle of Puebla in 1862, led by General Ignacio Zaragoza.



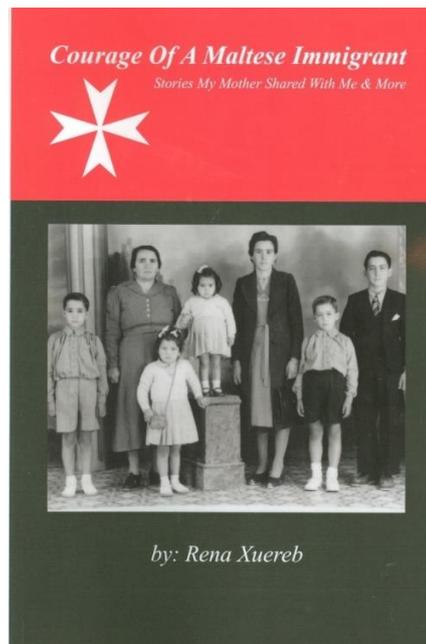
COURAGE OF A MALTESE IMMIGRANT

Dan Brock

In the April issue, reference was made to Rena Xuereb's recent book, *Courage Of A Maltese Immigrant: Stories My Mother Shared With Me & More*. (\$24.99 US)



Rena, a trustee at the Maltese American Community Club in Dearborn, Michigan, was at the Club's Buffet Dinner and Music Bingo on May 10th to sell and sign her book. (See page 15.)



I liken Rena's labour of love to a literary scrapbook. In it is a collection of short accounts of growing up in both Malta and Detroit, family photographs, documents, and Maltese recipes. And then there are the scraps of genealogical data scattered throughout. All is not in complete chronological order and one need not start on the first page to fully enjoy this book.

Anyone who has left Malta to settle elsewhere or has had parents or grandparents who have done so will immediately identify with the contents of this book. It speaks of Rena's family, especially that of her mother, growing up in the northwestern part of the Island of Malta, of the family immigrating to Detroit, and of adjusting to a culture quite different than that experienced back home.

While aware of the lack of sex education among the female Maltese youth until well into the nineteenth century, it was an eye-opener to read on pages 38-39, that Rena's great-grandfather, Vincenzo Gauci, a young married man at the time, was still unaware as to how babies came to be! Of course, his wife wouldn't have known either.

Another interesting tidbit was feminine hygiene, or more the lack thereof, in rural Malta (pages 45-46).

The reluctance of Maltese wives to leave their homeland is proverbial. Rena's mother was no exception and her priest gave her sage advice: "You must follow your husband, if you don't follow him, you may be responsible for his actions." (page 20)

Humorous incidents occurred as the family adjusted to the American way of life. One such occurrence was the use Rena's mother had made of free samples of fragrant panty liners (page 46). Another was when her mother took a shower for the first time in her life (pages 142-143).

Some customs from Malta carried over into America. When 25-year-old Grace was dating, Rena or her sister Dolores were expected to accompany their older sister and her boyfriend "at all times" (page 147, 172).

For those of the Maltese Diaspora, I highly recommend this book. Not only is it enjoyable reading but it should inspire others to collect and organize in some fashion both oral and documentary information on their own families.

For Rena, I believe the primary reason was to show her mother's courage, as the title of the book implies. "The strength to leave Malta, the only home she had ever known all her life, and venture into a new and foreign land, not speaking the language and with six children in hand from ages nineteen to four, and more importantly, leaving behind her firstborn and her young family thinking she would never see them again."

For me, Rena's book, reminds me of the two books by the late Joe E. Bugelli, *Immigrating to Canada* and *Immigrating to Canada: The Sequel*.

In my library, Rena's book will take its place beside Joseph M. Lubig's *Maltese in Michigan* and Diane Gale Andreassi's *Maltese in Detroit*.



READERS' COMMENTS

Great ongoing work for Maltese Diaspora!!

Charles J. Vella, California

Thank you, Dan. Every time I receive a new edition, it leads me down a "Maltese Rabbit Hole". This one led me to my North African/Sicilian roots to the name(s) Spiteri and Refalo.

Joe Spiteri, Ontario

Thank you so very much, Dan. This will be my Sunday afternoon companion.

Maria Pia Gauci, Malta

Thank you very much for your newsletter.

Perhaps some people would also like to read an interesting book.

I would like to point out a book that I bought in Malta: *Christina and the George Cross Island* by Weston, Gordon Edgar; 354 pages; ISBN 978-1-03-584724-2

Christian Launer,
President of the Maltese German Association,
Cologne, Germany

Thank you so much for the article featuring my two interviews - so kind of you to continue to promote and support my work. And thank you from the bottom of my heart for the acknowledgment of my dad's passing. I will never stop keeping his memory alive.

Marthese "Mar" Fenech, Ontario

Interesting edition. See you did some genealogy on Louis Zammit. Hope he does well for the KC Chiefs. Take care.

Fred Aquilina, California

Thanks for sending me the journal MALTESE PRESENCE IN NORTH AMERICA. another one for the archives.

Frank Scicluna,
Editor of *Maltese E-Newsletter*, South Australia

I would like to thank you for the occasional news you send us re Maltese activities. Anything to do with the Maltese Islands is important for us to keep contact re our news.

Carmen Muscat, Malta

Nice pitch you put in for me. Can't thank you enough.

Rena Xuereb, Michigan

PREPARING FOR IMNARJA-MALTA FEST

Maltese-Canadian Cultural Association



This year we have over six different entertainment acts gracing us on stage with Eric Bested DJ Maltese making sure that there isn't a moment where we aren't dancing. We have kept in mind all generations for this event, both young and old.

Parents, bring your kids; they are the next generation and we want to show them what growing up Maltese is all about. We have bouncy castles, character actors, balloon animals, ice cream trucks and many more games to keep them occupied all day.



The official MaltaFest poster

By scanning the barcode on the poster, you can be connected to our Instagram page and keep updated with all the news from Imnarja - MaltaFest 2024.

Jackson Begley from Oshawa, Ontario, Canada, is a multi-award-winning, high energy Elvis entertainer who covers Elvis' entire career from the Rockin '50s, the Army/Movie years, the '68 comeback, and right to the Amazing Vegas Years. Jackson portrays Elvis in an honest manner, paying close attention to the sound and movement that Elvis had in all his different eras as well as striving to recreate some of the breathtaking excitement that Elvis caused while performing one of his more upbeat numbers.

Jackson has burst onto the Legends scene like no other. With his close resemblance to Elvis, his natural charm and charisma and of course his undeniable talent, Jackson has quickly become the most sought-after and busiest entertainer in the industry.

Come watch Elvis live on June 22nd @ Imnarja - MaltaFest



We are so proud to announce that @mascotbrewery is the official beer sponsor for Maltafest 2024! They have amazing brews and we can't wait for everyone to enjoy!

☁️ They will also graciously host the event at their brewery if there is rain on the day of the festival!!!



Thank you to everyone who has supported us and donated to our cause and we hope that on June 22nd, we can make you all proud. Viva Malta!

CELEBRATING MARIA BRINCAT'S 100TH BIRTHDAY

Richard S. Cumbo

A very happy occasion took place on the afternoon of Saturday, May 11th, in the events room at AgeCare Westbury Long Term Care Residence in Etobicoke. Employee Ji Young decorated the room for the occasion of the 100th birthday of Westbury resident Mrs. Maria Brincat.



Maria was born in Msida, Malta on May 15, 1924, the daughter of Marianna and Michael Saliba.

During the Second World War Maria dated Frank Brincat, who had been in the army and whose family lived on the same street. In August 1946 Maria and Frank were married in Msida's parish church of St. Joseph. For the first few years they lived with Maria's parents and during this time they had three children: Marthese, Doreen, and Victor.

Wanting better opportunities for their children, Frank immigrated to Canada in 1963 and a year later the rest of the family followed.

Frank had worked as a jeweller back home and did the same type of work once they had settled in Toronto. For many years the family lived in Toronto's "Bloor West Village" and attended St. Pius X Catholic Church.

Frank died in 2001 and Maria, who had been a "stay-at-home mom," continued to live on her own. Her daughter Marthese and husband Michael Fenech lived very close by. Maria's other two children Doreen and Victor and their spouses lived out of town, but would often come to visit their mother.

In 2021 in consultation with her children Maria decided that it would be best if she moved into a long-term care facility. Blessed with good health, Maria still knits baby clothing for charity, enjoys bingo, and watches two Masses every day on television.

During the happy event at the AgeCare Westbury Maria was shown much love by her children, their spouses, five grandchildren, and one great-granddaughter.



Present were also many relatives, some who drove in from out of town and also close family friends.

All enjoyed the delicious food.

Messages were received from Canada's Governor General and King Charles III and Queen Camilla. There was also a papal blessing from Pope Francis.

**OWEN “YETI” FENNEL
GRADUATES SUMMA CUM LAUDE**

Dan Brock

Owen James Joseph Fennell, a native of Raleigh, North Carolina, is the son of Randy and Maureen (Busuttil) Fennell. Maureen was born in London, Ontario, the daughter of first-generation Maltese Canadians. Maureen’s father, Joseph Busuttil, was born in Rabat and his wife, the former Mary Briffa, was born in Marsa. After living in London for a number of years, Joe and Mary returned to Malta in July 2001 where Joe died in October 2022. Mary currently lives in Bugibba.

Owen recently graduated summa cum laude, with the National Honor Society cords as well, from Wake STEM Early College High School in Raleigh, North Carolina.

Wake STEM Early College High School is a small public school of choice and is a joint project between the Wake County Public School System and NC State University. Its theme is STEM: science, technology, engineering, and math. Over a five-year period, the students take college courses at NC State as well as the courses required to earn a high school diploma.

This year’s commencement took place on the evening of Tuesday, May 21st.



National Honour Society cords

At commencement Owen wore the wristwatch of his deceased maternal grandfather and the Maltese cross and chain given to him by his nanna. Inside his graduation cap he had a photo of himself as a youngster with his nanna.



Owen Fennell



With proud parents Maureen and Randy

BUFFET DINNER AND MUSIC BINGO

Lisa Buttigieg LiGreci and Mary R. Micallef

We had a buffet dinner and music bingo at the Maltese American Community Club of Dearborn on the evening of Saturday, May 11th.

The event drew a full house. (See page 1.)



Chicken Alfredo pasta



Marinara pasta

Rena Xuereb has finally published her book, *Courage of a Maltese Immigrant* and was selling it along with club merchandise and pastizzi with the help of Louise Grech Weglarz and Karen Greig.



Rena, Louise and Karen



Nice green salad

Dinner consisted of two kinds of pasta and salad. And of course, pastizzi.

Music bingo followed the meal. The game is played with songs instead of numbers. A song is played and you mark it off if you have it on your sheet. Motown Hits, Stadium Songs and 80s Song were played.



Our hosts Jason and Kevin from Downriver Music Bingo



Cathy Rosenthal



Mary Theresa Cutajar, Lisa Buttigieg LiGreci, and Crystal West with her daughter from Monroe, MI



Crystal West



Doris Micallef Durkin



Vicki Schembri and Rita Vella Cruz

John Muscat



Linda Lee

**John Muscat,
Mary Muscat Motowski & Joe Motowski**



Norman, Jr.



Mary Anne Muscat

The last game of the night was a coverall. Mike Sandoval was the big winner for the night.



Mike Sandoval

It was a fun night at the Maltese American Community Club’s fundraiser, a great buffet dinner and refreshments from the bar, singing, and dancing. The crowd was amazing. We plan on doing another.



EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE MALTESE-CANADIAN MUSEUM

Richard S. Cumbo

During the meeting held on Tuesday, May 7th, the following were appointed as the Executive Committee:

- Chairperson: Fr. Roy Farrell
- Curator: Richard S. Cumbo
- Assistant Curator: Rose Cassar
- Secretary: Carmen Galea
- Treasurer: Emmanuel “Mani” Mifsud
- Assistant Treasurer: Mary Agius
- Project Manager: Mary Zarb
- Directors: Marthese Fenech, Debbie Lightfoot, Michael Gouveia

Consultants/Directors (Malta):
 Niġel & Kealey (Kennedy) Klemenčič-Puglisevich



A EULOGY FOR MY DAD, ALFRED FENECH

Marthese Fenech



Mentor. Hero. Pillar. Legend.
 These are just some of the words people have used to describe Alfred Fenech over the past week.
 But to me, he’s Dad. And that makes him a mentor. A hero. A pillar. A Legend.
 He’d have to be, to raise five kids as amazing as us.

And each of us possesses qualities so uniquely Dad—compassion, faith, intelligence, creativity, integrity, a sense of justice. His big heart. I inherited his impatience as a driver.
 But how do I begin to describe a life as full as our dad’s? How do I capture 86 years in a few words? Despite being a central figure within the Maltese community, Dad never liked to be the centre of attention—so *this* would have made him a little uncomfortable.... He never bragged, never spoke in a loud voice about his many accomplishments, always carried himself with quiet dignity. But we, his family, we will speak of our dad the way he deserved, and heaven knows, our family is loud.
 Dad touched countless lives with his soulful presence. His father Luigi passed when Dad was 18, and he helped provide for his mother Pauline and siblings, Mary, Rita, Margaret, Victor, Joe, Charlie, and Tony, many of whom are also dearly departed.
 Reputed as honest, hard-working, passionate, and very generous, Dad came to Canada from Malta in 1958 and served briefly in the Canadian Armed Forces.



He met our mom Doris at this very church, where he served as the parish organist for over six decades. Upon arriving in Toronto, Dad lived with his sweet sister Mary, and she had a piano he loved to play. One day, the parish priest walked by as Dad's music spilled into the street through an open window. Deeply impressed, the priest knocked on the door and immediately asked Dad if he would play for the church. And as ever, he said yes.

His Maltese heritage and love of media came together when he began bringing news to the Maltese-Canadian community as a radio and television broadcaster. In the many years he anchored the show, he sat across many highly esteemed guests, including former Maltese Prime Minister Dom Mintoff. Another such guest was the director of *id-Dar tal-Providenza* (House of Providence), a home for adults with special needs. Viewers flooded the studio with calls to donate money to the home. In a single evening, he raised seven thousand dollars—a significant sum in those days. This inspired our dad to host an annual Telethon, which he took on once a year for many decades. During his time producing the Telethon, he helped to raise over half a million dollars. A wing of the House of Providence is named Villa Paola for our grandmother.

Our parents set such a profound example of giving, volunteering, helping others. And, how to make a marriage last. Mom and Dad reminded us of a comedy duo, their banter, their exchanges always lively, always coloured with vivid Maltese expressions. They had social lives, far more active than mine – going to dances, meeting friends at the Melita Club, or hanging out with their crew at McDonalds. And whether at home, at a dance, or in their living room, if “*Unchained Melody*” began to play, they would dance.

In the past few years, our dad came to rely more on our mom for simple tasks – zipping up his jacket, putting on his shoes. Our mom doted on our dad, and there was nothing but adoring appreciation on his face as she did so. A marriage of over sixty years is a remarkable feat worth celebrating. And our mom never stopped remarking about our dad's full head of beautiful hair.



Dad's connection to his Maltese roots inspired his kids. For a time, he stepped into the role of President of the Maltese-Canadian Society of Toronto. In March 2006, our dad was invested into the Sovereign Order of St. John of Jerusalem, the Knights of Malta, for his remarkable contributions to the Maltese community.

Those lucky enough to visit Malta with him always got a tour of the Mosta Dome, complete with the history of the bomb that dropped through the structure but did not detonate, capped off by a visit to his favourite pastizzi shop. Those pastizzi were good. Dad's were better.

And that's something that stood out about our dad – he could just do anything. Fix anything. Learn anything. He worked as a mechanic for the Toronto Transit Commission but was also a television broadcaster, an organist, a baker, a video technician, a storyteller, a philanthropist, and later, a YouTube star.

His mind worked like an engineer's but also an artist's. His creativity knew no bounds. He even made his own tools when the ones he had on hand didn't do the job.

As my brother Steve said, Dad wasn't just a resourceful guy but a miracle worker, never hesitating to tackle the toughest jobs no one else would touch—and succeeding where no one else could. My sister Carm affectionately recalled the number of times our dad would drop everything to go fix her family cars or malfunctioning appliances. The same held true for his own vehicles, which our mom didn't particularly love, since it meant he'd keep a car well past its expiration date, like the giant red 1975 Catalina or its replacement, the 93 Intrepid he'd only recently retired. Both cars carried our family on road trips across the US, probably stuffed with more occupants than legal.



He loved gadgets. Understanding how something worked fascinated our dad. He saw wonder in the littlest things. Seldom would you see him without a video camera, capturing all the details of the world that surrounded him. Something for which I am now very grateful—a way to hear his voice and see through his lens.

He travelled extensively across the globe and had a keen sense of curiosity and openness. My brother Dave spoke of when Mom and Dad visited him in Japan. He took them to temples, shrines, and festivals. They witnessed a Shinto wedding and a Buddhist funeral. Dad so appreciated drawing similarities between our cultures. When a Buddhist monk blessed a couple's car, Dad videotaped it and said, "We did the same thing with our car but by a priest!"

Mom and Dad also stayed with Brad and me when we lived in Singapore, and I found great joy in watching him take everything in—he asked questions, marvelled at architecture, drank straight from a coconut, and of course, filmed everything and anything with his camcorder.

Dad took pleasure in small things. A cup of tea over breakfast with Mom. A good slice of pizza. A beautiful strain of music. A little bird hopping on his bench. His heated sweater. And he loved his word searches – I remember his proud declarations every time he'd complete another book of word searches. He'd hold it up and proclaim, "I finished another one."

Dad was fiercely protective of his family. My brother Lou recalled the day our dad charged into his elementary school office because the principal, a rather cantankerous nun, had wronged my brother terribly. I cannot repeat what Dad said that day, but suffice it to say, the issue was resolved. Each of us has a similar story – indeed, our dad earned his title of Knight.



Dad, Mom, their children and spouses, and their grandchildren at the wedding of my niece Catherine Pollard, March 30, 2024

As the youngest by a decent gap, I had the privilege of having our dad all to myself when my older siblings were in school. He worked nights, but that didn't stop him from taking me to the park or the "big playground" at "the faraway" McDonalds. He'd sing "*Yellow Submarine*" and invent songs about my favourite blue blanket. He'd let me "help" him cook.

He was a constant, steady presence in my life. He never stifled my big imagination. He told me there was nothing wrong with blue being a girl's favourite colour or pink being a boy's. He'd brush my hair and braid it into pigtails. I often tell people my dad was an unapologetic feminist.

He poured that same sweetness onto his grandkids, Michael, Catherine, Chris, Hanno, and Agatha, who lit up his world. All have wonderful memories of their nannu, whether watching him bake, clean the swimming pool, or spending time with him in Malta as he excitedly shared his homeland with a new generation. And as my niece Catherine relates, the bond that forged between them forever occurred in Malta, when they were both separately blamed for "the Scottish bag incident of 2007" – though neither was at fault.

Dad also delighted in his role as father-in-law to Steve, Christine, and Brad. He enjoyed taking their sides in poking fun at his birth children. He so loved his many nephews and nieces, proud to be their Uncle Freddy. As my husband said, Dad just had this immense capacity to give – whether insisting he pay for dinner, providing mechanical expertise, making a meal, or simply giving his time. Mr Fenech (Brad always called him Mr Fenech) would spend a weekend making *pastizzi* for the family. Or pour hours into digitizing old home movies so we could relive our happiest memories. More recently, he discovered a talent for baking tea biscuits. And knowing that we loved them as much as he did, he always sent us home with an entire Tupperware full.

During my last visit with Dad, that's exactly what he was doing. I can see him so clearly, kneading the dough on the countertop, cutting out the circles, and putting them in the oven to ensure they'd be ready before I left so I could bring some home.

Rest now, Dad, and rest easy. Cruise around in that big, red, 1975 Catalina, stop for a coffee and some *pastizzi*, a smile on your face and a little laugh in your heart as you watch over us from above.

Mentor. Hero. Pillar. Legend.

You are all of this and so much more. Thank you, Dad. We will always love you.

** Editor's note: Alfred Fenech died unexpectedly on Tuesday, May 7th. The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on Friday, May 17th at St. Paul the Apostle Church, on Dundas Street in Toronto.*

Marthese Fenech, his youngest child, is the author of The Siege of Malta Trilogy.

MOTHER'S DAY CELEBRATED AT THE MALTESE AMERICAN SOCIAL CLUB

Rita Borg

A fun time took place at the Maltese-American Social Club in San Francisco with a Mother's Day dinner and dance held on the evening of Saturday, May 11th.







Thank you to all the volunteers for making this event a success.



MOTHER DAUGHTER TEA PARTY

Rita Borg

A fun mother daughter tea party celebration took place at the Maltese American Social Club of San Francisco during the monthly Women's Committee meeting on the afternoon of Tuesday, May 14th.





MALTA BAND CLUB SPRING CRAFT AND VENDOR SHOW



See pages 7-8.