

Maltese American Social Club of San Francisco, Inc.

924 El Camino Real
South San Francisco, Ca 94080



650-871-4611
<http://maltese-americanscsf.org/>

MARCH 2026 NEWSLETTER



BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2026 - 2027

President: Mary Vella Gomes
415-517-5533

Vice President: Karen Borg
650-922-5670

Secretary: Gracie Aquino *
650-745-6990

Assistant Secretary: Mary Borg Smith
650-692-0413

Treasurer: Rita Borg
650-483-3957

Assistant Treasurer: Ninfa Pace
650-697-1079

Parliamentarian: Terrie Smith Aquino
650-438-5579

*Please note that correspondence to Secretary, Gracie Aquino, should be sent to her email address at mascsf-secretary@maltese-americanscsf.org.

Message from the President

It looks like we are going to have a great turnout for our St. Patrick's Dinner Dance on March 14th. I hope to see many of you there as we celebrate the wearing of the green!

At our February General Meeting, several suggestions were made which the Board has discussed and is working on. One of them is the singing of the Maltese National Anthem at our meetings along with the American National Anthem. We will be providing written copies of Malta's National Anthem and hope to have the opportunity to learn the words.

Thank you to Mary Rose Azzopardi, who has offered to teach us not only the National Anthem but also the Maltese language. Once the logistics are finalized, we will reach out and offer classes to those who are interested.

Another suggestion was that we take a look at the pictures displayed in the bar area. While it is important to preserve the memories of our past members, it is also important to include pictures of current members and activities. We will

be organizing a group to work on this project.

A television donated by John Falzon (Pacifica) has been installed near the pool table. We encourage people to play pool and will be uncovering the table when the Club is open. Thank you John!

I would like to apologize for indicating in the last newsletter that the Club closes at 10:00 p.m. on Fridays. Please note that this has been corrected, and the closing time once again reflects 1:00 a.m.

Antoine Borg has created an Instagram page for the Club and will now serve as our Social Media Coordinator. The Instagram link for the Club is: <https://www.instagram.com/masc.sf> He will manage the Club's social media presence, primarily on Facebook and Instagram, by sharing updates, promoting events, and helping keep members and the wider community informed about Club activities. Thank you, Antoine, for offering to share your talents in this area.

There are several important attachments this month, so please take the time to review them and make plans to attend the upcoming functions.

Included you will find a flyer for our Rummage Sale being held on April 11–12. If you have any questions regarding the Rummage Sale, please contact Rita Borg.

A flyer for our first Bingo of the year, being held on April 25, is also included. Please note the deadline date and send in your reservations early, as this is a very popular event and fills up quickly.

Donations of cash, gift cards or unwrapped raffle prizes are greatly appreciated. Please contact Mary Borg Smith regarding donations or any questions you may have.

The Installation Ceremony for the 2026–2027 Board of Directors will be held on March 22 at 10:00 a.m. An invitation is attached.

The Elders' Luncheon will be held on May 31 following the General Meeting. Invitations will be sent by the Maltese Historical Society.

An updated schedule of all Board and General Meetings is attached. Please refer to it throughout the year and make every effort to attend our General Meetings. Phone numbers for all of the Board of Directors can be found on the front page of this Newsletter.

If anyone would like to advertise in our monthly newsletter, or knows of a business that would like to do so, please contact Vice President Karen Borg. Advertising in the newsletter helps offset the cost of printing and postage and reaches nearly 300 households.

If you are thinking about renting the hall, please be sure to contact me in advance so we can reserve the date for you. Several dates have already been booked this year, including some as far out as September, so it is never too early to make a reservation. Our hall is a wonderful place to host a special event.

Happy St. Paddy's Day to all!

The March General Meeting will follow the Installation Ceremony. Please plan to attend.

**Message from the
Honorable Consul of Malta**

Greetings from Malta, dear friends of the Maltese American Social Club and the Maltese Community in California. Another month, another membership meeting. An organization like the Maltese Club and other Maltese groups that we have in the SF Bay Area exist, thrive, and grow because of the participation of members of the community. We are blessed with having several organizations that work together and support each other. There is no reason why every Maltese/American should not associate himself or herself with one or more of these organizations. Every member of the Maltese American community should make an effort to participate.

The month of February in Malta is dominated primarily with two main celebrations. The feast of St. Paul of the Shipwreck and Carnival. The feast of St. Paul Shipwreck is celebrated in a big way in Valletta and among those attending the church ceremonies we usually find, the President and Prime Minister of Malta and many cabinet members. Also, in attendance there are usually many members of the highest courts and other dignitaries. The festa Mass is celebrated every year by the Archbishop of Malta. Our church dedicated to St. Paul of the Shipwreck located on Jamestown in San Francisco is, without a doubt, a Maltese church dedicated to the patron Saint of the islands of Malta. The procession with the historic statue of St. Paul and the celebrations in the streets of Valletta, once again had to contend with some wet weather but nothing could dampen the spirit, the enthusiasm, and the jubilation

of the thousands of people that every year participate in this one of the main festa in Malta. The City of Valletta was totally *en fe'te* in a major way. It is written that in the year AD 60, the apostle Paul together with 274 men sailing from Crete to Rome on board a large wooden ship, were caught in a violent storm. After 14 days battling the seas, the ship ran aground in Malta. And according to historical accounts Malta became a Christian country as a result of this unplanned but yet historic visit by the apostle Paul. Malta is still a Christian country to this day almost 2,000 years later.

Carnival in Malta 2026: This year Carnival was yet another spectacular event. The artisan craftsmanship is indeed a marvel. Many huge parade floats all decorated with synchronized lights, music, and dance troupes traversed through the streets of the capital city to the cheers and admiration of thousands of Maltese people and visitors. The tradition of the carnival dates back to the time of the Knights of Malta over 500 years ago. It is growing stronger and bigger every year. This year the weather did not cooperate, but weather permitting Carnival in Malta and Gozo is truly a sight to see and experience.

Visit by Deputy Prime Minister of Malta: I cannot fail to mention once again the successful visit of the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Ian Borg and his delegation to the club a few weeks ago. This was the first time for the Deputy Prime Minister and his group visiting our club and indeed the West Coast of the US and it was an impressive visit. I met Dr. Borg again a few weeks later in Malta and he repeated

and re-emphasized how much he enjoyed his visit at the club and how impressed he was with the activities of all the organizations we have here in the SF Bay Area. The Deputy Prime Minister, his wife, and the accompanying delegation were also highly impressed by the fantastic reception he and his group received at the club.....**WELL DONE.**

Maltese Scholarships: The annual Maltese scholarship program has been launched earlier this year. There are several weeks left until the deadline but time waits for no one. The scholarships are open to students of Maltese descent who are High School seniors or College freshmen, sophomores, or juniors. Anyone interested please check the Face Book page of the Maltese Cross Foundation of California (MCF of CA) or contact one of the board members of the MCF of CA.

Festa Season during the month of March in Malta & Gozo: The festa season is slowly ramping up in Malta/Gozo as the days gets longer and the weather gets warmer. The month of March starts with the feast of Jesus the Nazarene in Sliema, followed by the feast of St. Gregory the Great in Ta' Kercem in Gozo, St. Joseph in Rabat, Malta, then Palm Sunday followed by Good Friday and Easter Sunday celebrated all over Malta and Gozo and ending with the feast of the Risen Christ in Pembroke.

Freedom Day in Malta: is a public holiday and is celebrated on March 31st. On Freedom Day Malta celebrates the official and peaceful departure of all foreign military forces and navy from the islands on March 31st 1979. IL-Festa it-tajba:

We continue to encourage everyone to keep your families, friends and loved

ones constantly in your thoughts and prayers and to watch out for each other. One never knows the last time we are able to do so. We continue to hope and pray for lasting peace and a brighter future.

Message From the Secretary

As a reminder, if any of your contact information has changed, including your phone number, the updated details should be sent to me at mascsf-secretary@maltese-americanscsf.org Keeping our member list current helps us stay connected with everyone.

All correspondence and information, except for payments for functions and membership dues, should also be sent to mascsf-secretary@maltese-americanscsf.org.

Club Hours

Sunday: 9:00 a.m. -5:00 p.m.

Friday: 5:00 p.m. - 1:00 a.m.

Except for the 2nd Tuesday of the month for the Women's Social Group Meeting which is held from 6:30-10:00 p.m. **The Club is closed on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday.**

Library Hours

The last Sunday of each month from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. or contact Mona Vella-Nicholas, Librarian and Historian, at 650-589-4578 for an appointment.

Membership

At our February Board Meeting, we approved four new members: Christopher Sherry, Gianna Falzon, Kayley Camilleri and Christina Fortes. Welcome and we hope to see you at our meetings and functions.

Website

Visit us online for a look at the memorable moments through pictures, information about the Club and more using the following link: <http://maltese-americanscsf.org/about-us.aspx>

Facebook

If you do use Facebook, you can reach the Club's page by searching Maltese-American Social Club of San Francisco on Facebook or use the following link: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61578673141986>



Condolences to Louis Vella and his family on the passing of his sister, Rita. May she rest in Peace

Donations

Donations to the Club are also available as an option for those wishing to make a memorial contribution in remembrance of someone special. While families have graciously chosen to include the Club for memorial donations, please note that these donations are not tax deductible.

Origin of Maltese Last Names

By: Mona Vella-Nicholas

Is your last name **Saliba**? If so, you may be interested in knowing where your name comes from. **Saliba** is of Arabic origin. Just as in Maltese, the Arabic word "salib" means "cross." It can also mean "crusader." It might be a name given to a Christian who lives in a Muslim country, with the name identifying him by his religion, "l-salibi", i.e. "the Christian."

Maltese History Month By: Mona Vella-Nicholas Librarian and Historian

February 2, 1838 --- Karmni Grima is born in Gharb, Gozo to a peasant family. On her way to the fields each day to help her parents, Karmni would stop to hear Mass at a little chapel. One day, when she was 45 years old, she hears a voice as she is walking past the chapel. The voice tells her, "Come...come today. For a whole year, you will not be able to return." Frightened, Karmni nevertheless enters the chapel. While standing in front of a painting of Mary's Assumption, the voice speaks to her again, saying "Recite three Hail Marys in honour of the three days that I stayed within the tomb." As the voice has told her, she becomes ill immediately after this experience and is unable to return to the chapel for an entire year.

Karmni tells two people of her experience: her confessor and her neighbor Francesco Portelli. Surprisingly, Francesco tells her that he, too, has heard voices and that his mother has been cured of an illness because of his prayers to the Blessed Virgin. The story is reported to the bishop, Pietru Pace, who interrogates the two peasants and comes to the conclusion that they are telling the truth. Word soon spreads throughout the islands and throngs of people begin to visit the chapel every day. A larger structure is built to make room for the pilgrims. By 1920, even this structure is too small and construction begins on a much larger church in honor of Mary. The church is known as Ta' Pinu and is eventually raised to basilica status. It is well-known as a pilgrimage location to this day. Karmni dies on May 25, 1932 at the age

of 94. Her house in Gharb is now a museum open to visitors.

February 3, 1995 --- Um El Faroud, a Libyan tanker, is docked at the dry docks in Malta for maintenance work. Suddenly, one of the three tanks on the ship explodes, causing extensive damage to the structure of the vessel and, worse, killing nine Maltese dock workers. Because the ship is beyond repair, it is decided to tow her out to sea and sink her for use as an artificial reef in the water off of Wied il-Qrendi. Although broken in half by a storm in late 2005 and early 2006, the wreck is still accessible to scuba divers, who can even enter the engine room and surrounding areas of the ship.

Entertainment Committee

Co-Chairperson(s): Karen Borg: kb99karebear@aol.com Gracie Aquino: graciea0503@gmail.com The members of the Committee are Lina Agius, Terrie Aquino, Sina Borg, Brian Ciappara, Betty DeBattista, Dorothy Falzon, Gracie Lacey, Emma Magarrell, Ninfa Pace and Mary Smith



Board Installation 3/22
Rummage Sale 4/11 – 4/12
Pasta Bingo Night 4/25

When making reservations for a function, please review all information carefully. The cost per person is always clearly listed. Guests who are not members of the Club must pay the non-member rate. In fairness to all who have followed the payment guidelines, no exceptions can be made to this policy. **All payments for functions must be made by the deadline date.**

Women's Social Group

At the March meeting, the theme of the evening was High Tea, and the table was filled with delightful treats ranging from crumpets to tea sandwiches to pastries and more! On March 24th, a group of women will be visiting the Westborough Royale to spend some time with a few Maltese residents who are living there and enjoy their company.

Grievance Committee

The names of the 2026 Grievance Committee members are Paula Ebejer Moffitt (Chairperson), Peter Abela, Charlie Catania, Rita Goldberg, and Celina Gomes.

Support Our Advertisers!

Please take the time while reading the newsletter to check out the advertisers who are supporting our Club through July 2026. Your acknowledgment of the Club when patronizing these businesses is greatly appreciated and helps reinforce our valued partnerships.

Payments

Payment for dues and all functions can be made by check payable to: Maltese American Social Club of San Francisco (MASC) and sent to the attention of: **Ninfa Pace** or via Zelle. **Please use the Club's telephone number 6508714611** to make your Zelle payments from your bank to the Club. Please be sure to provide **separate checks or Zelle payments for each event.**

Regardless of the payment method you choose, required written RSVPs must be sent to Ninfa Pace.

Hall Rental

EMMANUEL MICALLEF HALL

The hall is available for rent to members only. Please contact Mary Vella Gomes at **415-517-5533** to schedule a meeting to arrange for the rental and to review the Contract.

Non-Responsibility Declaration

All activities are arranged for or sponsored by the members and their guests who desire to participate. The Maltese American Social Club does not assume any responsibility for the well-being or safety of the participants or their property in any matters pertaining to said activities the Maltese American Social Club of San Francisco, Inc. are for the convenience and pleasure of.

This month's Newsletter was created by Mary Vella Gomes with the Approval of the Board of Directors. Future editions will be created by Secretary, Gracie Aquino.

