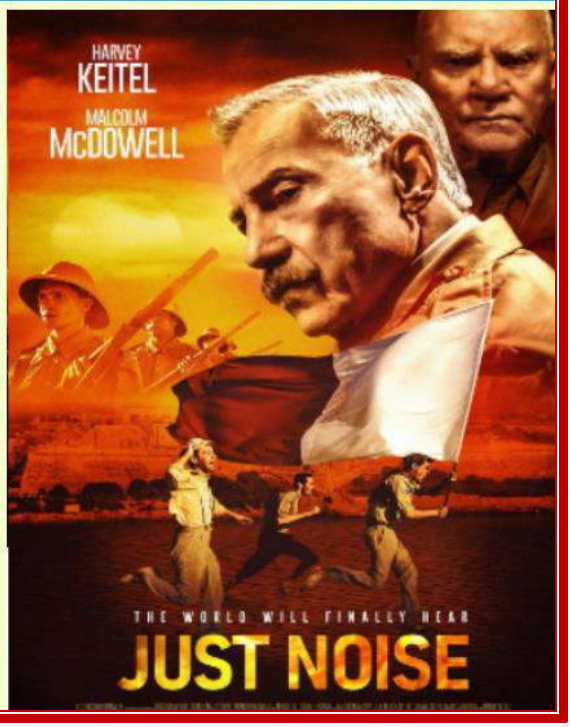
Maltese eNewsletter
JOURNAL OF MALTESE LIVING ABROAD
Editor: Frank L Scicluna

Thomas and Tessa Libreri
Destiny Band Oz

Oliver Friggieri
Loss of a Maltese icon



MALTA water services corporation

History

http://www.wsc.com.mt/

The Water Services Corporation was set up in 1992 to produce and distribute potable water in the Maltese Islands.

On the 20th January 1992 the Water Services Corporation was founded by means of the Act of Parliament No. XXIII of 1991. During its 20 year existence, the corporation has transformed the quality of drinking water and how it is produced and distributed. Fifty-seven percent of Malta's potable water is produced by three reverse osmosis plants whilst the remainder is pumped from underground aquifers. The electricity consumed to produce a cubic metre of water is nowadays much less than used to be consumed just a short decade ago.

Infrastructural leakages too have been reduced by such a large amount that we are now producing less water than we used to in years past, whilst still meeting a much greater demand.

One of the WSC's most significant milestones was, however, the incorporation of the former Drainage Department in 2004, making it responsible for the complete water cycle from production and distribution of water, to the collection and treatment of wastewater. From 2005 to 2011 three completely new wastewater treatment plants were constructed, one in Gozo, another in Mellieha and the ultimate one at Ta' Barkat which became fully operational by the end of May 2011. So for the first time ever, Malta is treating 100% of its wastewater prior to being discharged at sea. Malta is the first country in the Mediterranean and only the seventh in Europe to reach this goal.

The story of water for human consumption in the Maltese Islands started tenuously when man started digging shallow wells between 5000 and 3000 BC. History is peppered with notable milestones such as the construction of the Wignacourt Aqueduct between 1610-1615. Many reservoirs were built and galleries dug over a period of 400 years and the first pumping stations started to appear in the late 19th Century. During WWII a number of reservoirs as well as water mains were damaged by enemy action forcing the authorities to distribute water by means of tankers.

In 1944 a serious water shortage meant that around 5 million gallons (22,700 cubic metres) of water per month had to be imported from Sicily by ship. In 1950 the first drilling started at the Ta' Kandja underground gallery network. During the following years many water projects were undertaken to meet the demand of an ever-increasing population as well as the nascent tourism and industry sectors. By 1966 the first seawater multi-flash distillers were producing 20,430 cubic metres of water per day. In 1971 the first distiller in Gozo began producing 2,270 cubic metres per day.

Throughout the 1970s an intense programme of drilling for water was embarked upon as the nation struggled to keep up with demand. In 1982 the first Reverse Osmosis plant was inaugurated in Ghar Lapsi. Other RO plants were built in Marsa, Tigne and Cirkewwa in 1982, 1983 and 1988 respectively. In 1991 the WSC's showcase RO plant started operating.

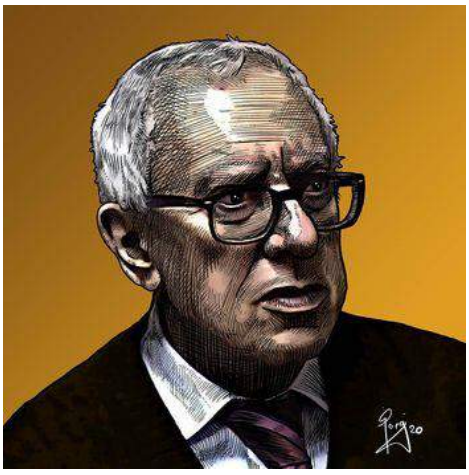
Today, one simply opens a tap and clean, safe water is always available upon demand. But as the above story shows us, this would not have been possible without the immense efforts of countless persons over many years.

The Water Services Corporation has come a long way during its first twenty years. But however proud we may be of our achievements, we know that the years ahead will provide many more challenges to improve our services and products whilst impacting the environment as little as possible

THE ONLY BILINGUAL, NON-POLITICAL AND FREE JOURNAL WHICH IS READ, RESPECTED AND LOVED BY THOUSANDS OF MALTESE AROUND THE WORLD

Oliver Friggieri - the loss of a Maltese icon

'He was the man who brought us a modern awareness of our literature'



9 hours ago|Sarah Carabott|94 min read

Oliver Friggieri. Photo: George Scintilla | The Face of Success

Social media was on Saturday flooded with tributes to Oliver Friggieri, the man who instilled a strong love for the Maltese language in many.

Friggieri, who died at home aged 73, will live on through his work, and will be remembered as an author, literary critic, educator, philosopher, colleague, friend and father. It was his daughter Sara who broke the news on Facebook, saying her father had died in the morning.

Archbishop Charles Scicluna was one of the first to pay a "heartfelt" tribute. Friggieri, he said, "taught us to love the Maltese language and be proud of our literary heritage.

The news shocked fellow author Alfred Sant, a former prime minister, who has known Friggieri since the mid-1960s.

"We did not always see eye to eye, but we were never adversaries – you could never be an adversary of Oliver because one of his best qualities, apart from the arts, culture and education, was a profound sense of tolerance."

Throughout the decades, his prolific writings were testimony to the Maltese genius, as the Maltese society transformed from a colonial to a more liberal one. Friggieri, he added, was a driving agent in ensuring that Malta opened its doors culturally and artistically after the Second World War.

Friggieri's former student, fellow writer and colleague Ġorġ Mallia penned a poetic tribute, accompanied by a portrait of his mentor.

"He was the man we emulated when we tried to understand the depths in the cavernous maws of literature... he gave us the method, he built the way with his incredible mind.

"He was my friend throughout the years, and a colleague for the last two and a half decades. But always, he was the master and I was the student. Always his words lifted me to levels my own mind would not be capable of traipsing on its own. He was the man who brought us a modern awareness of our literature." His close friend and fellow poet Daniel Massa will remember him as "working tirelessly" all his life for the cause of Maltese literature and all that is Maltese.

"Your numerous brilliant works will remain a beacon, lighting up the way for a younger generation of writers," he said upon learning of his passing away.

The university's Faculty of Arts said the country had lost an icon: "a life has come to an end, but what a life fulfilled! What better epitaph than one from a poem by the master he spent so much of his life studying: *Non Omnis Moriar".*

President George Vella offered his condolences to the family of the man "respected by everyone", who was also a "staunch promoter of the Maltese language and identity".

Former president Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca posted a photo of herself with the writer soon after he gifted her a series of books for the Melitensia library set up at San Anton Palace.

As the tributes poured in, Prime Minister Robert Abela described Friggieri as a man of great humanity and humility. "Today our country lost a point of reference, and a man who served his country of birth with loyalty in every role he was entrusted with.

"Above all, he was a man who dearly loved Malta, its people and language."

PN leader Bernard Grech referred to Friggieri as a giant of literature: "our country today lost one of the best prolific writers, author of a large number of books published in Malta and abroad in several languages." "The literary work that Friggieri has left us, and his efforts in favour of the Maltese language, are his best heritage."

Former prime minister Joseph Muscat referred to Friggieri as a "genuine friend" and "one of the greatest Maltese of all time". He said his work was a symbol of Eddie Fenech Adami's 'resistance' in the 1980s, however, he was also one of the people who acknowledged the good in Dom Mintoff. Muscat said he was one of the people who influenced him during his time in politics.

Among Friggieri's most famous works, his 1986 novel *Fil-Parlament Ma Jikbrux Fjuri* had sparked controversy for its depiction of political tribalism.
Other politicians, including Education Minister Owen Bonnici and Health Minister Chris Fearne, who said he felt privileged to be one of Friggieri's students, also paid tribute to the man.

L-Għaqda tal-Malti – Università ssellem il-memorja ta' Prof. Oliver Friggieri

Il-Kumitat tal-Għaqda tal-Malti – Università jixtieq jesprimi s-sogħba tiegħu għall-aħbar tal-mewt ta' Prof. Oliver Friggieri, pilastru fil-lingwa u l-letteratura Maltija.

Kien b'inizjattiva ta' Prof. Friggieri li l-Għaqda tal-Malti għaddiet f'idejn l-istudenti fid-disgħinijiet, billi qabel, kien ikun il-Kap tad-Dipartiment tal-Malti fil-Fakultà tal-Arti tal-Università li kien jokkupa din il-kariga. B'insistenza ta' Prof. Friggieri, l-Għaqda bdiet titmexxa mill-istudenti. Billi kien Kap tad-Dipartiment tal-Malti bejn l-1988 u l-2002, Prof. Friggieri kien ukoll membru ex-officio fil-Kumitat tal-Għaqda tal-Malti.

L-istudenti tal-Malti jibqgħu jiftakru lil Prof. Friggieri għall-umiltà tiegħu u għall-imħabba li kattar fihom lejn l-ilsien u l-letteratura Maltija.

L-Għaqda tal-Malti sikwit organizzat intervisti jew attivitajiet bis-sehem tal-poeta u akkademiku. L-aħħar tnejn saru s-sena li għaddiet, waħda f'Marzu u l-oħra f'Mejju. Tistgħu ssibuhom fil-ħolqiet t'hawn taħt:

- Tfulitu kif kitibha hu: www.youtube.com/watch?v=l0R5t0TX9Mc&list=PLqAYx-Of932HrJy8bra-O6SX0-69vZieF - Niftakar: www.youtube.com/watch?v=BPCbnavch7I&list=PLqAYx-Of932EVMyd-yvA-19lEJ5xL4Nii&index=5 Il-Kumitat tal-Għaqda tal-Malti jgħaddi l-kondoljanzi tiegħu lill-familja ta' Prof. Friggieri.

IL-FUNERAL TAL-PROF. OLIVER FRIGGIERI FIL-KONKATIDRAL TA' SAN GWANN VALLETTA

L-omelija tal-Arċisqof Charles Jude Scicluna fil-funeral organizzat mill-Istat għall-Professur Oliver Friggieri, li sar fil-Konkatidral ta' San Ġwann, il-Belt Valletta.

Fil-messaġġ tiegħu, Mons. Arċisqof spjega kif Friggieri kien għaraf li l-għerf ikollu jgħaddi mill-għarbiel tat-tbatija u mhux bilfors iwassal għar-risposta tal-mistoqsija anke jekk diġà hu don meta tasal tagħmilha. Semma' wkoll kif Friggieri kien jiddiskrivi lilu nnifsu bħala "moderat għaliex tgħallem iħares lejn dak kollu li jinseġ ir-ruħ u s-soċjetà Maltija u japprezza d-dawl u d-dellijiet". Żied jgħid li ma jafux jiddemonizza lil xi ħadd, jitkellem ċar iva, imma jweġġa' qatt.

Fakkar ukoll fil-patrimonju kbir ta' għanjiet reliġjużi li ħalla warajh Friggieri, li spiss jitkantaw fl-istaġuni liturġiċi, u li għalih qal l-Arċisqof "il-Knisja f'Malta hi grata".

Fl-aħħar Mons. Arċisqof għalaq b'din it-tislima personali:

Ofroq is-sema griż li jibki x-xita;
Leħnek hekk kiebi għeb fid-dell tax-xitwa:
Iżda kitbietek ġwejda, għarfa ħelwa
Venvnet fil-qalb tal-Malti bl-għatx għall-ħajja!
Ersaq lejn id-dawl il-hena ta' kenn sidek,
Ruħek tistrieħ fis-sliem, qalbek fil-hena.

On behalf of the readers pf the Maltese Journal I applaud the contribution of the late Oliver Friggieri to the Maltese society, particularly his contribution to the Maltese language and literature.

Oliver

Manwel Mifsud u Thomas Pace
isellmu lil Oliver Friggieri b'dan il-mod

Magħruf imma ma jħobbx jidher,
maħbub imma ma jħobbx jitfissed,
internazzjonali imma baqa' Malti.

Għex bħal tifel kurjuż, jitħasseb, jissaħħar quddiem
il-misteri kbar li jdawruna,
ħabb bis-sħiħ il-valuri l-qodma li jsaħħuna,
kittieb ta' veru, ittratta t-temi li tassew jaħarqu, dawk
li dejjem se jibqgħu jolqtuna.
F'kitbietu qaxxar ir-ruħ tal-poplu Malti, il-ġlieda tiegħu biex jinbidel bla ma jitlef
rasu, ruħu, ilsienu.
Kien inkwetat fuq il-futur tal-kultura u tal-lingwa Maltija...

Forsi t-testment tiegħu hu l-muftieħ għal dak li ilna ħafna nfittxu u nixtiequ,
il-bilanċ bejn il-Jien u Lil Hinn Minnu.

Bħal Ninu Cremona, Dun Karm u Ġużè Aquilina, kompla jikxef is-setgħat tal-Ilsien
Malti,
kompla jsaħħilna l-aqwa mezz għall-identità tagħna.

Ta' dan kollu, u ta' tant ġid ieħor li forsi lanqas intbaħna bih...
Oliver,
nirringrazzjawk.

Manwel u Thomas fb.com/se

Creation of H.EM. Mgr Mario Grech as first Cardinal from Gozo

GOZONEWS.COM

A special hand stamp will be issued to honour the creation of H.EM. Mgr Mario Grech as the first Cardinal of Gozo. MaltaPost said that this special hand postmark will be used on Saturday, the 28th of November, at the Victoria Post Office, situated at 5, Triq Sir Adrian Dingli, Victoria, Gozo.

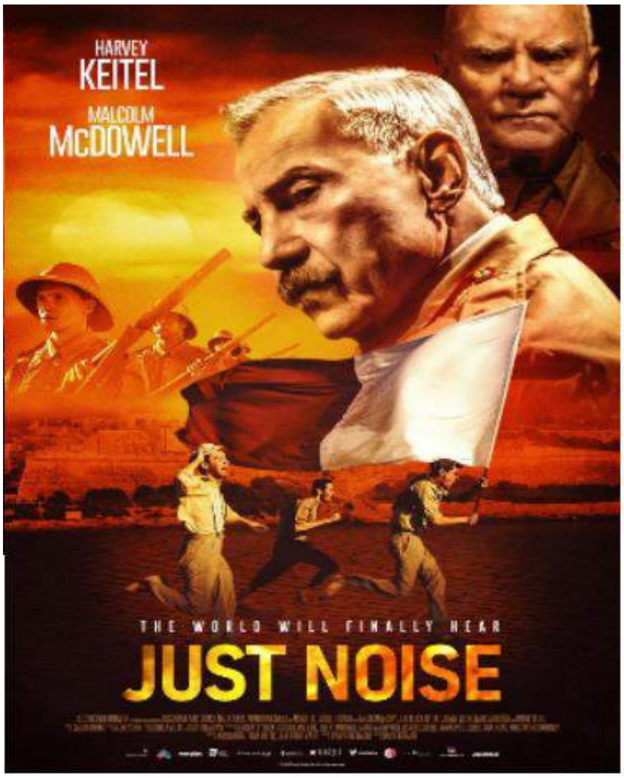
Orders for this special hand postmark may be placed from the Philatelic Bureau, MaltaPost p.l.c. 305, Triq Hal Qormi, Marsa, MTP 1001, online at www.maltaphilately.com or by mail – Telephone 2596 1740 – e-mail: info@maltaphilately.com.

A SAD FAREWELL AFTER 65 YEARS

It was an emotional service on the Sunday 22, November at St Francis of Assisi parish Warrawong, south of Wollongong NSW. The occasion was to say thank you and good bye to the Maltese Franciscan Conventuals friars after 65 years of continuous service in the parish and the Maltese community.

The Parish was established by the Maltese. The first parish priest was Fr Victor Bonello OFMConv who emigrated from Gozo in March 1956 to establish the Warrawong parish.

At the farewell Mass Bishop Brian Mascord of Wollongong was the main celebrant, the Provincial in Australia of the Franciscan Fathers Fr David Blowey, Fr Rick Micallef from Wagga Wagga diocese (originally from Warrawong parish) were co-celebrants. Monsignor Ryan formally of Port Kembla parish, Monsignor Jones of Shellharbour parish, and other religious including the Maltese sisters of the Heart of Jesus were in attendance. Mrs Sandra (nee Grech) gave a talk about the history of the parish including mentioning about the large contribution made by the Maltese over the years. A powerpoint presentation with photos from the different periods of the parish life was shown. Despite, the departure of the friars, the bishop encouraged all to continue the Franciscan spirit and the mission of the church. Due to the covid 19 restrictions only 100 guests could be invited. A diocesan priest will look after the parish from January 2021 as the parish transition occurs ,,



Based on actual events, Just Noise presents the concealed account of how Maltese citizens fought for their independence against the British Crown in 1919. Immediately following the end of World War I, in a plea for their country's independence, Maltese citizens from all different walks of life, united to lead an uprising against the British. "Just Noise" is Malta's long-awaited triumph to share with the world, about how a small Mediterranean island took on the British Empire.

It is directed by Davide Ferrario (After Midnight, We All Fall Down), with Jean-Pierre Magro, Pedja Miletic and Aaron Briffa producing.

Based out of Los Angeles, California, Electric Entertainment is an independent studio headed by veteran producer Dean Devlin along with his partners Marc Roskin and Rachel Olschan-Wilson. This full-service production and distribution company also houses Electric Post, a digital effects and post production facility.

Malta's first resident Ambassador in the United Arab Emirates and in the Gulf, and first-ever Permanent Representative to IRENA

Reference Number: , Press Release Issue Date: Nov 26, 2020

Maria Camilleri Calleja presented her letters of credence as Malta's first resident Ambassador to the United Arab Emirates on Monday, 23 November 2020 at Qasr al-Watan (The National Palace) in Abu Dhabi, received by His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates and Ruler of Dubai. Ambassador Camilleri Calleja is also the first Maltese female Ambassador to ever present credentials in the Gulf region.

Following the raising of the Maltese flag and the playing of the Maltese National Anthem, Ambassador Camilleri Calleja conveyed in the Arabic language the salutations of the President of the Republic of Malta and the desire to continue to enhance the excellent relations which already exist between the two countries. In the past months, Malta and the United Arab Emirates have converged on various levels – political and technical - to discuss matters of mutual interest namely healthcare, aquaculture, commerce, investment, sports, youth affairs, cultural cooperation, climate change and the environment, as well as the situation in and around the Mediterranean and the impact of COVID-19.

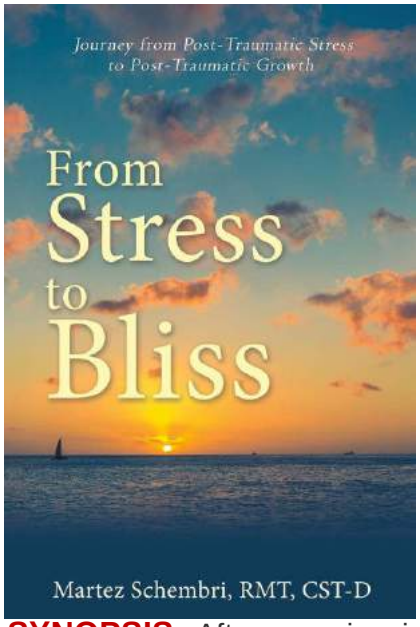
Maria Camilleri Calleja presenting her letters of credence to His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum

On his part, His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid noted he was glad to receive and welcomed the first Ambassador of Malta resident in the country and noted that all cabinet ministers will continue to assist in the amplification of relations between the two countries.

This was the first in-person presentation of credentials held in the United Arab Emirates since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. A total of seven Ambassadors presented credentials (in order of precedence): Malta, Bangladesh, Mauritania, Afghanistan, The Maldives, France and Vietnam.

Last Thursday, 19 November 2020, Ambassador Camilleri Calleja also presented her letters of credence to the Director-General of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), located in Abu Dhabi, as Malta's first Permanent Representative to IRENA. During their conversation, Ambassador Camilleri Calleja thanked Director-General Francesco La Camera for the forthcoming disposition of all experts at IRENA who have already started working with Maltese experts in renewable energy sharing as a first meeting was held on 1st October 2020 to explore ways how the two sides can take forward this renewable energy portfolio in the context of the international commitments enshrined in the Paris Agreement within the framework of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

This signifies that the Embassy of the Republic of Malta in the United Arab Emirates will now carry two portfolios: that of a bilateral embassy to strengthen relations with the United Arab Emirates as well as Permanent Representation with the scope of forging stronger relations with the IRENA and its member states.



MALTESE CANADIAN COMMUNITY NEWS

Martez Schembri

A new publication from a Maltese Canadian professional - Martez Schembri Diskey A big congratulations to Martez Schembri, the author of a new self help publication; "From Stress to Bliss- An Integrative Approach to Health Care and Self Care", which is also now online. Martez you continue to make the Maltese Canadian Community proud.

SYNOPSIS: After experiencing four traumatic car accidents and suffering the agonies of healing, Martez Schembri was diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Refusing to submit to what felt like a "life sentence," she preferred to reframe this as a post-traumatic stress reaction, and use her experiences as something to grow from and become stronger through, resulting in **Post-Traumatic Growth**. She learned first-hand the importance of an integrative approach to healthcare. She spent decades learning from stress and trauma, and post-traumatic stress and has developed a body-oriented integrative healing approach on body, mind and spirit for healing and growth.

In *From Stress to Bliss,* Martez shares the biopsychosocial-spiritual dimensions of treating for healing through this integrative approach to help us to connect and balance of mind, body and spirit to journey to our own unlimited possibilities.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR - **Martez Schembri-Diskey** is a Registered Massage Therapist, Integrative Craniosacral Therapist; Massage Therapy Professor; Solution Focused Counselor; Spiritual Director, currently studying Spiritual Psychotherapy at Transformational Arts College.

Martez is a proud mother of two professional children. She's also an author of two books, "**From Stress to Bliss**– *Journey from Post-Traumatic Stress to Post-Traumatic Growth*" and "**Journal MAGIC,**" workbook on successfully integrating *Meditation, Affirmations, Gratitude, Intention and Connects.* She is a Contributing Author in the late Louise Hay book "Modern Day Miracles- Louise Hay and Friends", Lynda Dyer's "Life After Lupus, Healing Your Immune System", and "You Have So Much Potential"

She is a highly sought after speaker and retreat facilitator on the subjects of: Integrative Healing; Body, Mind and Spirit, Compassion Fatigue, Burnout, Post-Traumatic Stress, Growth and Self-Care through a Biopsychosocial-Spiritual Approach.

Martez facilitates various seminars, workshops and retreats such as Heal the Healers Retreats for Health Care Practitioners, First Responders, Social Workers, and Teachers ; Integrative Craniosacral Therapy Courses; Body-Oriented Integrative Approach to Treating Stress; TRE Tension Trauma Releasing Exercises and Trauma Informed Care for Registered Massage Therapists- From Stress to Bliss.

Martez's lifework and passion is to educate, empower and inspire healing on all levels through integration of the three pillars of health, our mind, body and spirit by renewing our mind, relaxing our body and restoring our spirit for healing, transformation and growth.

https://www.whitbymassage.com/whitby-massage-services/craniosacral-therapy

Destiny Band Oz is making national charts in Australia with single celebrating 70th anniversary of guitarist Thomas Libreri's parents

- **Tessa Randello**

Tessa and Thomas Libreri have released a single celebrating the 70th wedding anniversary of Thomas' parents titled Great Courage. Thomas' parents Emmanuel and Doris moved to the Latrobe Valley from Malta in late 1949 and early 1950 respectively. Their son Thomas and his wife Tessa, who make up Destiny Band Oz, detailed the couple's wedding and subsequent move to Morwell in the latest song Great Courage released on January 6. "Mum was arranged to be married to someone else in Malta, she had someone bringing her gifts and visiting her and all of those things, but she never liked him," Thomas said.

"By chance she bumped into my dad and it was love at first sight, but he had already booked to come to Australia, so they only had a short few weeks to get to know one another."

"My mum's mother liked my father straight away, dad came to Australia first in October of 1949 and then mum came six months later."

"But, her mother told my mum that you're not leaving unless you're married so they got married over the telephone when (my dad) was in Australia and she was still in Malta."

"They stayed the night in the city after her two-month trip and the headed to Morwell."

"It was a four-hour train ride and mum was like 'where are you taking me?' to my dad and she loved it there." The couple held the wedding ceremony in Morwell once they had settled in and had three children, Thomas being the youngest.

Thomas said that when he heard this story he started writing all of the dates down to keep the story alive, and later immortalised it in song.

The song was originally released in Maltese and they premiered it at the Maltese Festa in Morwell in 2018 and later premiered in Malta, it was later translated into English.

Thomas and Tessa met while performing with another band and called the band Destiny "because it was destiny that we met," Tessa said.

The couple moved to Yinnar a decade ago from Kinglake on the one-year anniversary of the Black Saturday fires. "We were builders at the time so we did a lot of work rebuilding the area, it was a really trying time for us," Tessa said.

"We had never heard of Yinnar before and we were talking to Thomas' dad and he said 'that's just down the road from Morwell where we used to live'."

"It's funny how life can circle back like that."Destiny Band Oz have been touring for the last two years, once their two daughters were finished with high school.

The band headed to Tamworth for the Toyota Country Music Festival on Thursday, where they are finalists in six competitions at the festival

Maltese Actress Living With Cerebral Palsy Breaks Disability Stigma After Walking Without Aid

By Jean Paul Azzopardi
www.lovinmalta.com

For the first time since being diagnosed with Cerebral Palsy, Maltese actress and disability rights advocate Jeanesse Abela has managed to leave her wheelchair and walk around her room with no aid whatsoever.

Abela is set out on breaking the stigmas surrounding disabilities through her social media pages and has completed her "biggest challenge ever" after she managed to walk around her room without the assistance of anyone else or her wheelchair.

"This is my biggest challenge ever," she said.

Despite living with Cerebral Palsy, Abela hasn't let her disability interfere with her life goals including becoming an actress on the Maltese hit TV show, Division 7.

However, she's used her platform primarily to advocate for disability rights and to break through stereotypes often associated with those who live with disabilities, uploading videos of her accomplishing daily tasks, such as using her mobile phone, without the need of others to help. Her latest video goes to show that people who live with disabilities are as capable as anyone else

Le Christ Rédempteur de Rio de Janeiro illuminé par le drapeau de l'Ordre de Malte : l'hommage du Brésil pour le 900ème anniversaire de la mort du Bienheureux Gérard, notre fondateur et premier Grand Maître.

Christ Redeemer of Rio de Janeiro illuminated by the flag of the Order of Malta: Brazil's tribute to the 900th anniversary of the death of Blessed Gérard, our founder and first Grand Master.

THE JOURNAL THAT IS CONNECTING MALTESE
IN MALTA, GOZO AND THE REST OF THE WORLD
2013 - 2020 - SEVEN YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITIES
BUILDING BRIDGES maltesjournal@gmail.com

Joe Calleja from Western Australia

MENTAL HEALTH BUDGET FAIL

Four successive State Budgets under the McGowan Government have increased the number of mental health inpatient beds in WA, with no corresponding funding for early intervention, prevention, or community support for people with mental health issues.

Despite a record allocation of $1billion to the Mental Health Commission, the recent budget was another missed opportunity to rebalance the WA mental health system. Rebalancing would help meet people's needs before they reach crisis, especially at a time when we need to maintain good mental health in response to the impact of COVID-19.

Unless we fund early intervention, reintervention and prevention services in the community, people will become increasingly unwell. Family and friends might not be able to offer the support and safety required so the person ends up at an emergency department.

Hospital beds are expensive at $1595 a day. What the budget papers do not reveal is the human cost of a system that can be dehumanising, distressing and unable to provide recovery after hospital care.

Provide the front-end support and the likelihood of an Emergency Department presentation reduces. Family and friends want their loved one and themselves to be safe and would rather find this safety and support in the community, before the situation deteriorates even further.

Hospital bed expenditure is now at 43% of the $1 billion mental health budget. Prevention spending sits at 1.7% of the budget which is $17m of the $1billion budget. It is a similar story for community support which is only 5.3% of the budget.

It is no wonder then, when a person reaches out for services which are close to home, person centred and provide early intervention, they are not available. Mental Health Minister Cook is a kind and compassionate person who is genuinely concerned about mental health. Now is the time for this compassion to be directed towards community solutions because a continued focus on the acute end simply increases costs of health without breaking the cycle of demand. Earlier this year he released the state priorities for mental health, alcohol and other drugs and suicide prevention. He called for a rebalancing of the system away from increasing beds to increasing support in the community and prevention services, but these are yet to be funded.

Ben Wyatt as Treasurer understands the importance of directing spending in ways that maximise the impact of the dollars spent. There is scope for more efficient spending on mental health. If he wants to see the Health budget spending contained, he will see the sense in investing in early intervention and community support as that will help reduce the numbers of people having to be hospitalised.

This state budget had a strong reliance on construction and infrastructure, bricks and mortar and hard hats. There was little that focussed on social infrastructure. In mental health spending it is easier to demonstrate a budget result by counting beds. But ask people if they would rather avoid going to hospital and be supported in the community their answer would be "yes."

When we feel the first signs of a cold or some other physical health concern, we usually take some preventive action. Otherwise it might progress to a more serious illness, even hospitalisation. When the first signs of emotional distress or mental health problems emerge, we should not wait until we are sick enough to access the public mental health services.

According to the 2019, Mental Health Inpatient Snapshot Survey, 178 people were deemed unable to be discharged from hospital because of a lack of suitable community-based accommodation and/or mental health support services. According to the 2019, Mental Health Inpatient Snapshot Survey, 178 people were deemed unable to be discharged from hospital because of a lack of suitable community-based accommodation and/or mental health support services.

That's why we have gathered the voices of people with mental health issues, their families and friends to call on the Government to urgently and significantly increase funding into prevention and community mental health services under the Prevent Support Heal campaign.

We will illustrate what 178 people looks like by marking out people in position and we invite everyone to join us at midday on November 10 on the front steps of Parliament House. It takes courage for a person to reach out to get help for their mental health challenge.

Premier McGowan, Deputy Premier Cook and Treasurer Wyatt, please match this courage to ensure the funding and resources are available to enable people to remain in the community and not b hospitalised. It is time to rebalance the mental health system.

Who is Joe Calleja?

Joe Calleja was the Chief Executive Officer of the Richmond Fellowship of Western Australia from July 2005 – January 2016. He is a member of the Advisory Committee of the Centre for Social Impact of the UWA Business School and has over thirty years' experience working with the community sector. He was previously Director for Court Support Services with the Department of Justice in Western Australia,

Principal Social Worker of the Department for Community Services and Executive Manager of Kin Way Anglicare WA Family Relationship Services. He is a past President of the WA Association of Mental Health (WAAMH), past National Vice President of the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) and has been on the boards of WA Council of Social Service (WACOSS), Community Employers WA (CEWA), the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences Advisory Board (UWA), Psycho Social Rehabilitation and Recovery Association of WA (PRRAWA) and the previous state government Social Inclusion Reference Group.

He was a member of the Ministerial National Marriage and Family Council and a Board Member of Family Services Australia. He was a non-government representative on the National Mental Health Service Framework, Project Steering Committee for the development of the WA Mental Health Strategic Plan 2010 – 2020 and chaired the Centrelink Consultative Committee on Mental Health in WA. He is currently semi-retired and undertakes short term consultancy with organizations general related to mental health service delivery. He is a Graduate of the AICD course and is a life member of the Australian College of Social Work.

The 25th November was the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women – a day which recent happenings, both in Malta and abroad, have shown us we still desperately need.

Violence against women is still happening on a daily basis and is a reflection of the patriarchal structures of dominance in our society. The culmination of this violence results in femicide, which is the most dramatic form of violence against women; it is the murder of a woman just for being a woman.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IS STILL ON THE RISE

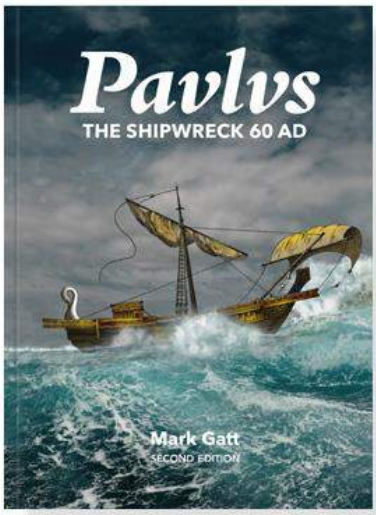
FACEBOOK: The People of Malta

www.facebook.com/thepeopleofmalta

"Nisma' lill-kunjata tgħid li kienet taħdem hawn meta kienet xebba, iktar minn 60 sena ilu. Issa ilu f'idejna għal dawn l-aħħar 15-il sena. Apparti l-ixkafef ma rranġajt xejn. L-isem ħallejnieh kif sibnieh. Għalkemm kobor m'għandix, nippruvaw naqdu lill-klijenti. Inġibu li jridu huma u mhux li rridu aħna, il-problema l-ispazju. Lin-nies drajthom. Issib min ġieli jqabbiżhielek, imma la qed bil-ħanut mingħand in-nies trid. Hawn xogħol mit-Tnejn sal-Ħadd u sat-3pm; m'hemmx Ħdud u festi, dejjem miftuħin. Hawn jiġu anki turisti u jiġbdu r-ritratti tal-ħanut biex joħduh rikordju magħhom. Jien la nkun qomt, qomt...u rrid nibda x-xogħol. Il-mara, Lenice, differenti. Sa ma tibda, taraha kerha. Lili x-xogħol ma jaqtagħlix qalbi u ma ngergirx." - Chris u Lenice

✠ ✠ ✠

"I remember my mother-in-law saying that she used to work here before she got married over 60 years ago. We have been running it for the last 15 years. Apart from the shelving we didn't change anything. We left the name as we found it. Even though space is limited we try and do our best to serve our customers. We provide them with what they request not what we want. Space is a problem. I have got used to the people. They do irritate you at times, but since this is our work we need their custom. Here we work from Monday to Sunday and till 3pm; we have no Sundays and Feast days, we are always open. Tourists come and take photos of the shop to take as a keepsake with them. Once I'm awake, I'm awake and want to start work. My wife, Lenice is different. She finds it hard to start. I am not daunted by work and never grumble". - Chris and Lenice Penza Valletta Malta



GIFT FOR BOOKLOVERS

About the Book.

This book, narrating the discovery of an ancient lead anchor stock embossed with the names of the Egyptian gods ISIS and SARAPI(S) in the seabed off Salina Bay on a Sunday morning in April, 2005, is also the story of the search for the real site of St Paul's shipwreck in Malta. In the process the author surprises us with a novelistic but accurate account of the storm, shipwreck and landing of St Paul in Malta, as set out in chapters 27 and 28 of the Acts of the Apostles. But Mark Gatt's own investigations on the site of Apostle Paul's shipwreck is also his own quest for the spiritual message of salvation in St Paul's life and teaching embodied in the real 'anchor' of Christ Jesus.

Paul Guillaumier Biblical scholar

About the Author.

Mark is a man on a mission. His PAVLVS The Shipwreck 60 AD is the result of a wondrous underwater discovery while scuba diving just off Qawra Point – the remains of a huge Roman-period lead anchor stock embossed with the names of the Egyptian gods ISIS and SARAPI(S). He has been scuba diving for the past 30 years and has been an active volunteer in Civil Protection for the same number of years. For most of this time, Mark was commanding and coordinating a group of rescue divers and was involved in many underwater search and recovery operations for missing persons at sea.

To purchase the book go to the author's website http://www.stpaulshipwreck.com/

Christmas lights switched on in Valletta

12-metre Christmas tree and decorative lighting installed in the capital city

Christmas lights brighten Republic Street in Valletta. Photo: DOI/Clifton Fenech A large Christmas tree in Valletta's freedom square was switched on for the first time this year on Friday evening as the capital city adopted some festive cheer. The 12-metre tree is decorated with around 5,000 LED lights and will illuminate its surroundings throughout the Christmas period. It was set up by the Valletta Cultural Agency.

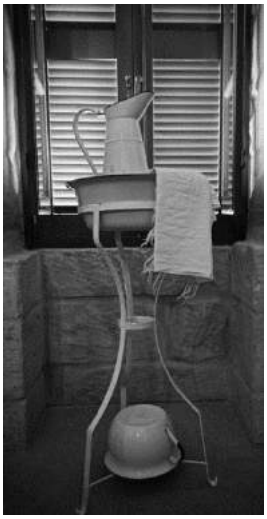
The 12-metre high Christmas tree in Freedom Square. Photo: DOI/Clifton Fenech

Lights were also installed on Republic Street, Merchants Street, Archbishop Street and Strait Street. Decorations have this year been entrusted to Metalux, a company known for its decorations in Rome's Via del Corso.

The decorations form part of the government's Christmas in the City programme which drew criticism when it was first announced earlier this month, with doctors saying the plans would draw crowds to the capital in a time when social distancing was paramount. Ministers and the VCA had responded by saying no events were being held this year, with the festive spirit limited to lighting and decorations, a small crib exhibition and small choirs across the capital.
Speaking on Friday, Culture Minister José Herrera said the decorations would boost Christmas spirit while ensuring public health regulations were respected. VCA chairman Jason Micallef said that more street lighting was installed this year to make up for the lack of a Christmas program

Liturgical Feast day, band members salute St Catherine from their homes

The date of 25 November is the liturgical feast of St Catherine. Although Covid-19 has stopped the usual celebrations, the Soċjetà Mużikali Santa Katerina V.M. of Żurrieq still celebrated this day. The St Catherine Band still saluted the patron saint of Żurrieq with the melodious notes of the hymn "Saltan Fostna Katerina", with members of the band playing from their homes under the baton of bandmaster Josef Grech. Besides this initiative, the Liturgical Day of St Catherine was also commemorated with a mass and homily about the patron saint by Dominican prelate Aaron Zahra, after which fireworks were let off. Representatives of the Soċjetà Mużikali Santa Katerina also placed flowers at the foot of the monument to St Catherine



Il-Majjistra u Twelid fil-Komunità Maltija
The Midwife and births in the Maltese Community
Janice Caruana

"I am a nurse and around six years ago I started looking into the work of midwives and community births in the past. A part of my work consists of aiding during birth and six years ago I started enquiring how birth used to take place.

In the past, in every village, you could find one midwife and sometimes more. I wanted to get to know more and I started going around and interviewing women who were midwives in the past and mothers who had home births with the help of a midwife. During my interviews I noticed items used by midwives in their homes and this prompted me to start collecting objects related to midwifery.

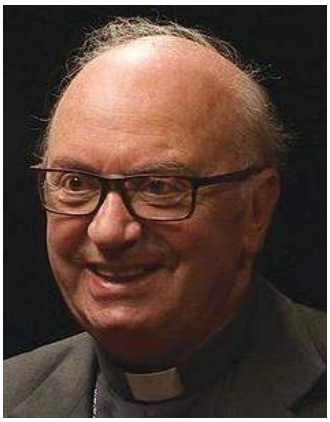
I ended up putting together this small museum with authentic tools and objects related to labour and the work of midwives. All is documented and I published a book on the subject; "The Midwife and Maltese Community Birth in the 20th Century." I published it this same year. Amongst the oldest things I have is a midwife's guidebook dated back to 1817. I have never encountered anyone else with a similar passion.

Midwives are a source of wisdom, autonomy and capabilities that are not sufficiently appreciated by the Maltese society. They used to have a lot or responsibility and competency to do their work.

Can you imagine a midwife running in the rain to give birth to a child in someone's home? Or maybe think of her running in shelters during the war, in the midst of air raids to aid in childbirth? Or in caves in the middle of fields? It was definitely not an easy task. These midwives are dying and their stories and experiences are dying with them. Although women were not emancipated in society, midwifery was as important as being a lawyer or the village doctor." - Janice Caruana –

www.facebook.com/majjistrautwelid/

ARCHBISHOP FRENDO RECOVERS FROM CORONAVIRUS

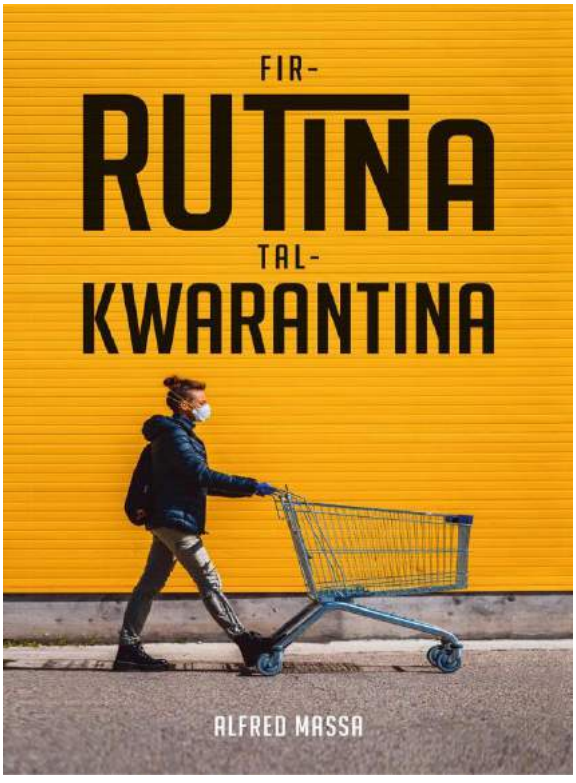


Archbishop George Frendo was released from a hospital in Bari, Italy, after the doctors declared him “clinically cured” from coronavirus. Archbishop Frendo is resting at the friary of the Caphucins in Bari where he is waiting for the result of others test expected to confirm in a definitive way that he has been cured of coronavirus. He is expected to return to Tirana probably some time next week. Mgr. Frendo is Archbishop of Tirana and President of the Conference of Albanian Bishops Frendo was admitted to a hospital in Tirana, Albania on November 12 after he suffered from respiratory problems as a result of coronavirus. He was later transferred to a hospital in Bari, Italy.

The National Archives of Malta

November 14 at 4:30 PM ·

14 ta' Novembru 1920. Mitt sena ilu grupp żgħir ta' nies waqqfu L-Għaqda tal-Kittieba tal-Malti. Erbat ijiem wara, l-għaqda waqqfet kummissjoni biex tħejji abbozz ta' alfabet biex jinkiteb il-Malti. Dan l-abbozz kien approvat waqt laqgħa ġenerali fit-18 ta' Diċembru 1921; wara s-Segretarju bagħat l-alfabet lill-Prim Ministru biex dan jintuża mill-awtoritajiet. Ritratt: Akkademja tal-Malti. 14 November 1920. One hundred years ago, a small group of people set up L-Għaqda tal-Kittieba tal-Malti (Union of Writers in Maltese). Four days later, the Association set up a commission to prepare a draft alphabet for writing in Maltese. The draft was approved during a general meeting held on 18 December 1921. Later on the Secretary sent the draft to the Prime MInister requesting its use by the authorities. Photo: Akkademja tal-Malti.



FIR-RUTINA TAL-KWARANTINA

Awtur: Alfred Massa
Paġni: 160
Prezz: €9.95
Norma, tfajla twila, kemxejn mibruma, b'xagħarha twil iswed tuta, b'għajnejha kbar kannella u b'karnaġġjon samrani. Minn xiex kellha tgħaddi din it-tfajla li tant tiġbdek lejha, dejjem bi tbissima fuq fommha, b'qalb tajba u sensittiva?
Pawlu ġie mill-Ingilterra għall-festin ta' għeluq snin ommu Karmena. Sadattant martu Jessie waqt li kienu hawn intlaqtet mill-Coronavirus u spiċċat f'Mater Dei... Ir-rumanz jinseġ is-sitwazzjoni drammatika u traġika fi ġrajja mżewqa b'karattri u b'ċirkostanzi varji u interessanti filwaqt li jlaqqagħna ma' żewġ familji tassew żvinturati. Storja mżewqa ta' mħabba, niket, ferħ, taqtigħ il-qalb u tama
www.facebook.com/ghaqdamalti/

Street decorations at a Maltese festa.

Maltese Abroad: 'I left Malta to ensure my children went to university'

John Saliba chose Cape Town, South Africa in the 1980s

Claudia Scavuzzo timesofmalta.com

John Saliba left Malta to help his children succeed by attending university in Cape Town, South Africa. There, his own career grew in the hospitality industry, to the point that he became director of most of the hotels partially owned by the company he worked for.

In 1984, my wife and I decided to leave Malta as we were not prepared to see our children possibly being deprived of having a tertiary education. My three children attended private schools at the time.

The Verdala Hotel, where I worked, closed down. I was immediately offered a job at the Halland Hotel, which was taken over by the Tumas Group a few months after I joined. Mr. Tumas treated me with great respect and I am still grateful for the way he complemented my work. However, my desire to leave the country continued to grow.

I applied for a position with three hotels abroad, one in New Zealand, one in the USA and another in South Africa. The New Zealand one did not acknowledge receipt of my application. The New Waldorf Astoria in New York offered me a position of Front Office Manager, but with the condition that if I did not get a Green Card, my family and I would have to leave the country. The five star Heerengracht Hotel in Cape Town offered me a position as Rooms Division Manager and the South African government offered to pay for our flights and the relocation of whatever we wanted to take with to South Africa. I accepted the South African offer.

Before leaving, my brother-in-law told me something I will never forget: "John remember, Malta will always be your mother country, South Africa will be your adoptive country. I wish you all the very best. You are very lucky; you have experienced in 1964 the birth of our country and the day will come that you will experience the birth of your adoptive country."

My career grew tremendously in South Africa. I soon became general manager of a hotel and a couple of years later, I became the manager responsible of four hotels. A year or so later I became Regional Manager of half the Western Cape hotels within the Protea group. I ended up being a Director of most of the hotels partially owned by the company. During the time that I was with the group, the Company started with four managed hotels and ended up with 131 hotels under the Protea umbrella.

My children all made it. I brought my three children to South Africa so that they could attend the University of Cape Town (UCT). It gives me great pride and pleasure to say that the three of them made it. My eldest son, Kevin is Professor at the Medical School and Research School of Biology at the Australian National University. The University have named a laboratory "Saliba Lab''. My daughter Ruth studied philosophy at UCT and later continued further studies at the Malta University. She now teaches English in Zurich. My other son also studied at UCT and became an engineer. He now is the North America Quality Manager of Baltimore Aircoil Company, a multinational, world leader in thermal transfer and ice thermal storage products.

I am proud of my decision. Bringing my family to Cape Town was a good move. My adoptive country has given my children the opportunity to be successful. Thank you South Africa. However, our greatest pride is being Maltese.

NATHAN SPITERI IS A MAN OF MANY TALENTS

https://www.nathanspiteri.com/

nathan is a film maker, actor and writer. He is also a sexual abuse victim and strong advocate. Born in Canberra, Australia, Nathan, who is of Maltese heritage, was sexually abused as a child, threatened with his life and that of his family. He turned to drugs, violence and sex as a result. Hitting rock bottom, Nathan finally came out the other side, through intense therapy, Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics and Sex Anonymous. He has chosen to use his painful past to help others, aligning himself with organizations both in Australia and the US to raise awareness, educate people and act as an advocate for sexual abuse.

Nathan studied acting and film while in Sydney, at The Actors Lab with Annie Swann, before he was encouraged to further his studies in New York. He attended the prestigious HB Studio, in the West Village, where he studied under the likes of Carol Rosenfeld, Edward Morehouse and Austin Pendleton. With his green card in hand, he went on to study with Larry Moss, Brad Calcaterra, and Tim Phillips. All the while, not facing and coming to terms with his past.

Having starred in several short feature films and theatre productions in both Australia and USA, Nathan has now turned his hand to writing and producing. His first feature film, Toy Cars, tells the story of his life. A gritty, dark, independent film that is in the pre-production stage. He has since completed another short film script, and has started writing his second feature film.

With his good friend and artist Melanie Jai, based in Australia, Nathan is working on Paper Boat Days. A large scale visual documentation, showing the effects of child abuse and domestic violence in a raw, brutal, honest, and vulnerable way told through the eyes of an artist. He has also been invited to be the keynote speaker at the 7th Annual Surviving Sexual Abuse Conference, Paths to Healing, in Madison, Wisconsin.

LITTLE BOY LOST: HOW A BRUTAL PAEDOPHILE GROOMED THIS SMALL-TOWN BOY

It was January 1987. A sweltering summer day in a small town in south-east Australia; the kind of day where the seatbelts in the Kingswood burn kids' bums and families get hot chips for dinner because mum's too tired to get up from in front of the fan.

Eight-year-old Nathan Spiteri was packed into the local swimming pool with his mates and pretty much the entire population of his home town of Queanbeyan, NSW. The rowdy boys drew stern looks from sunbaking teens and parents as they bombed, splashed and shouted. Nathan will never know what it was about him that drew the attention of a man sitting on a towel, watching the pool intently. It may have been his dark hair and skin (he's of Maltese heritage). It may have been his exceptionally loud fluoro Hang Ten board shorts. Or his master bombing ability.

Whatever it was, it prompted the man to follow Nathan to the change rooms at the end of the day - long after people had dried off and dawdled out the front gate to head to their local takeaways for hot chips."I've lived with shame and guilt for so many years but now I understand the worst thing that happened to me could potentially become the best," Nathan says of the screenplay.

"I've accepted what happened to me and I feel like the reason it happened was so I could share my story and help others.

"There are so many men and women in the world who have never spoken of their abuse and hold so much shame, guilt and pain inside. They're unable to connect with people, feel any kind of love and hold a meaningful relationship - I know only too well how that feels.

"If I can help them to get the help they need, it will all have been worth it. If I can stop someone from killing themselves, abusing another child, going down the path of sex and violence, like I did, then I've done the right thing." (Sydney Morning Herald 2018)

Romancing the Cure: Film shot in Malta set to be released in 2021

A new film shot in Malta called Romancing the Cure is set to be released in 2021.

Romancing the Cure is described by its production team as a family faith film with action, adventure and romance elements.

The film is lensed by Hollywood director Matt Shapira (Lionsgate - A Swing of Things & Finding Love in Quarantine) and its cinematographer is Eitan Almagor.

The production team, speaking with The Malta Independent, said that the movie is the journey of Colton Riggs, played by David A.R. White (Beckman & God's Not Dead), a former detective who retires to Malta. He begins a business of tours on his Luzzu boat based out of Marsaxlokk. Riggs accidentally stumbles upon a secret formula, a panacea that will cure the world of disease, thus becoming its reluctant guardian. Riggs, however, encounters evil forces that want to take it for themselves.

Aside from David A.R. White, the ensemble cast also includes Golden Globe nominee Steven Bauer (Scarface, Traffic, & Queen of the South) Jeff Fahey (LOST, Silverado) International actress' Lauriane GIlleron (Stand up Guys) Nataly Rapti Gomez (Romeo & Juliet) Emmy award winner Vincent De Paul (Tesla & House of Cards), Matthew Marsden of Helen of Troy shot on location in Malta (Rambo & Transformers) Kira Reed Lorsch (Beckman & Acts of Desperation) Andre Claude (Vikings & Game of Thrones) Alex Watson (Finding Love In Quarantine) Yasmin Canli (Bridge of Spies) John Bryant & Adam Micallef as Luigi Santini.

Asked why they chose Malta as a location, the production team said that the locations in Malta are “so textured and historical. We were very happy to collaborate with actor/producer Matthew Marsden (Helen of Troy & Rambo) who showed us the unique seascapes and landscapes of Malta. We were so enthralled by its distinctive look. Moreover, the film has a great faith element so we were pleased to shoot on the location of St Paul's island. When prepping the script, we researched apostle St. Paul who was shipwrecked on his way to Rome in AD 60, an event which saw the beginning of Christianity in Malta. Furthermore, tradition has it that Publius, the Roman Governor of Malta at the time of Saint Paul's shipwreck, became the first Bishop of Malta following his conversion to Christianity.”

Approximately 75% of the crew is made up of locals, the team said and a large percentage of their budget is being spent in Malta. “A large portion of the film is being shot in Malta in Marsaxlokk, Buggiba, Valetta, Fort St. Elmo, Mellieha and Attard. Director Matt Shapira and the film’s stars have such high praises about filming in Malta that they are already in talks of a sequel to the franchise "Romancing the Cure" aka "Colton's Cure", "Love On The Rock". Furthermore, director and star David A.R. White said: "We arrived in Malta as guests and we leave feeling like family."

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send it to us

MALTESE E-NEWSLETTER

This journal of Maltese living abroad is preserved at the Malta Migration Museum - Valletta, on Facebook and Twitter, the Maltese-Canadian Archives, Toronto and Gozo National Library and on www.ozmalta.com
Several organisations and institutions print the journal and distribute it among their members.
Our readers share it with their family and friends

Emmanuel (Manuel) Dimech – the 160th anniversary of his birth on Christmas Day 1860

By Tony Mamo

Manuel Dimech was a Maltese patriot, social reformer and activist who was exiled for his courage to stand up for the fundamental rights of the Maltese. Before talking about Dimech's life and achievements let us briefly look at the situation in Malta in the British era.

From the mid 19th century, Britain began to expand its naval facilities in the Grand Harbour by building new drydocks, stores, foundries, repair shops and coal bunkering facilities to support and maintain its Mediterranean fleet. This fleet controlled the Mediterranean Sea and the imperial route (via the new Suez Canal) to the Far East colonies. Malta also became a thriving trans-shipment port for British goods and grain from the Black Sea areas.

After the decline of Maltese traditional industries, the Admiralty drydocks and commerce were the main employers and attracted people from the villages in search of steady paying work. This influx of rural people depressed wages and increased rents in overcrowded Valletta, Birgu, Senglea and Cospicua. Unscrupulous property owners sub-divided their vacant houses into smaller houses to rent to these new arrivals. The Dimech family lived in one of these overcrowded houses (kerrejja).

The colonial administration in Malta evolved in the 19th and early 20th century as a reaction to Maltese demands for local government. In the early years, the military governors ran Malta like a garrison with little regard to Maltese aspirations. Under the 1849 constitution, Malta had a Council of Government with some legislative power. The Council included majority of members nominated by the governor and a minority of members elected by a small number of voters.

In 1887 Malta was granted a new constitution (the Knutsford Constitution) and a representative government responsible for internal affairs and spending. The Council of Government included a majority number of members elected by voters with the rest of the members nominated by the governor. The governor, however, retained the ultimate right to veto motions that were not in Britain's imperial interests. A very small number of men had the right to vote.

In 1903 Joseph Chamberlain, the Colonial Secretary, suspended the 1887 constitution because of endless disagreements between the governor and the elected members of the Legislative Council. Malta was viewed as a "fortress pure and simple" and the "welfare of the people was of little consequence" to British imperial interests.

In Malta education was under-funded and not compulsory. Families like the Dimech's were too poor to send their children to school and did not see any value in education. As soon as the children were old enough, they were sent out to earn a few pennies doing odd jobs or begging. Those few pennies were very precious when the bread winner had so many children to feed.

The Maltese were staunch Catholics under the tight control of the Bishop and parish priests. The Bishop of Malta was the second most important person after the British governor. The clergy were always ready to stamp out foreign ideas and beliefs that could undermine the power of the Church. Britain assisted the Church to retain its hold on the population in return for its loyalty.

The church, the professionals, the merchants and the nobility spoke Italian as had been the custom since the days of the Hospitallers. Italian was used everywhere. Maltese, "il-lingwa tal-kcina" (the kitchen language or the language of the servants), was spoken by everyone else. In the early years, some British administrators and visitors were angry that Malta, a British colony, used Italian rather than English as the means of communication. The Language Question – the

struggle for supremacy between the English and Italian language and culture impacted everything. At the end, the Maltese language emerged as the rightful winner.

In 1877 the British Government sent Francis N. Rowsell to examine the colony's finances and taxation. Malta relied on imported wheat on which a duty of about 20% to 30% was paid.

The price of Maltese bread included this levy and the monopolistic profits made by grain merchants and grain millers. Rowsell recommended that the grain tax which had become the main source of government income should be eliminated or reduced and replaced by a broader-based tax so that everyone would pay "his fair proportion of the expenses of government". This proposal would have benefited Dimech and other families; the additional tax revenue could have been used to fund education, health and public works. However, because the Roswell's recommendations threatened the privileged position of the nobility and the upper middle classes (they would have to pay more taxes), the Council of Government rejected the proposal. Vested interests had made sure that the status quo of a few would be maintained at all cost to the detriment of the poor majority.

Let us now turn to Manuel Dimech. Dimech was born on Christmas Day 1860, one of ten children of Carmelo Dimech (1836 – 1874) and Evangelista nee Zammit (1831 – 1900). The Dimech family was extremely poor and lived in one room, in a tenement that housed 60 families in St John's Street, Valletta. His father an artisan, suffered from poor health and died in 1874 at the age of 37, leaving his wife the impossible task of looking after their large family.

Let us pause for a minute to construct an image of the Dimech family. It is late afternoon and everyone is sitting on the floor in their rented one-room home. They all look exhausted and malnourished. There is an air of despondency. The mother tries to comfort her hungry young children. Everyone is waiting for the eldest child to return from the shops with some fresh bread, tomatoes and oil for their dinner. When the family succeeded to earn a few extra pennies, the family might have some vegetable soup (minestra). Meat was a luxury beyond their meagre income. The mother is the last one to have her food in case her husband and children are still hungry. When the sun went down, they lie down on the straw covering the floor, wrap themselves in rugs and go to sleep dreaming of the day when things will get better for the family.

The teenage Manuel Dimech appeared to have mixed with the wrong people so that by the time he was 36 years old, he had already spent 20 years in gaol for theft, burglary, murder and forging counterfeit money. Only his young age saved Dimech from the gallows for his part in the murder.

Corradino (Kordin) prison life was strictly regulated by rules and timetables under the watchful eyes of prison officers. Dimech had witnessed and feared the "prison terror" - the abusive treatment of inmates by some sadistic prison officers. As part of their rehabilitation, prisoners attended church services and classes where they were taught reading and writing and technical skills (tailoring, carpentry, shoe making) that they could use after their release. In prison, the illiterate Manwel became a changed man. He learned to read and write and got interested in "literature, grammar, politics, history, philosophy, religion", and languages (Maltese, English, French and Italian). Perhaps the prison chaplains encouraged by Dimech's thirst for learning gave him additional tuition and access to their library.

After his release from prison in 1897, Dimech established a private school "Istitut Dimech" (The Dimech Institute) to teach languages. He also published a number of self-teach books and satirical political poems. In 1898 he started a weekly newspaper "*Il Bandiera tal-Malti"* (The flag of the Maltese) that became his platform for spreading his ideas. Dimech wrote and spoke about

social justice, trade unions, the protection of workers, the reforms of the courts and prison, the emancipation of women, craft guilds, and religion. Dimech argued that "poverty, illiteracy and deprivation" could be overcome by sensible government policies. Dimech promoted the development of the tourist industry and new industries (that would be protected tariffs) in order to diversify the Maltese economy and to reduce its over-reliance on military spending. Dimech dreamt of an independent Malta with Maltese as its official language. Dimech's ideas reflected political and social views of the time; for example in Britain, men and women were fighting for better working conditions and voting rights and in 1891 Pope Leo XIII (1878 – 1903) issued his famous encyclical Rerum Novarum on "The Conditions of Labour".

Dimech's message resonated with people from all sections of society in particular the drydocks workers who became his "foot soldiers". The "Dimechians" longed for meaningful transformative change in Malta. The colonial government and the church became very worried by Dimech's growing appeal among the people and marked him as a trouble maker and agitator to be silenced. Dimech was excommunicated in October 1911 and a few months later he was attacked by an angry mob at Qormi. Although the excommunication was lifted in 1912, Dimech remained a watched person. Shortly after the outbreak of World War I, Dimech was arrested and exiled to Egypt. He was never to see Malta again. During his last months, Dimech was "half-paralysed, bed-ridden, infested with parasites, constantly soiled and starving, and ill-treated by other patients". Dimech died alone and forsaken on 17th April 1921 and was buried in an unmarked grave.

Dimech was dead but his ideas continued to spread and influence political and social thinking in Malta. The Government of Malta erected a statue of Manual Dimech in Castille Square, Valletta to honour his contribution to the political awakening of Malta.

My son read this story and this was his reaction: "I felt very sad reading this dad. It must have been so hard to live back then. I feel his life started and ended the same way which was so unjust given what he had done for Malta".

www.facebook.com/ghaqdamalti/

TREASURE IN MALTA

Filmed in Malta (1963)

Treasure in Malta is easily one of the films most dear to Maltese audiences for its portrayal of the charming locations and fun adventure plot. Tom and Sukie arrive in Malta to spend the holidays with their father, an archaeologist digging for a legendary golden statue of Calypso on the island of Gozo. He fails to meet the children who make friends with Jiminy, a Maltese boy, and go to the villa where they overhear two crooks threatening their father. The crooks fool the police to whom the children have gone. They escape and make their way finally to Gozo to see their father's colleague where they all captured. Just before the statue is handed over Jiminy arrives with an army of children who rout the crooks and drive them into the arms of the police. You can watch it on YOUTUBE.

About the 'Be the Rabbit' Scene in 'JoJo Rabbit'

Sharon Knolle

In Taika Waititi's World War II satire, "Jojo Rabbit," 10-year-old Johannes Betzler (Roman Griffin Davis) is an avid member of the Hitler Youth whose imaginary friend is none other than Adolf Hitler (played with comic flair by Waititi).

He's excited to spend a weekend learning war skills, including — disastrously — handling knives and explosives.

SPOILERS

In one pivotal scene, two of the leaders ask the boys if they're ready to kill. All enthusiastically say they are. JoJo (as Johannes is nicknamed) is then singled out to prove his willingness to kill. They hand him a rabbit and order him to choke it to death. He freezes, aghast at the thought. Despite their urgings, he puts the rabbit down on the ground and tells it to run. (The brown rabbit blends in almost completely with his uniform, underlining JoJo's sympathetic bond with the animal.)

Alas, the bunny doesn't escape. One of the scornful leaders than grabs it, breaks its neck and throws it off the side.

Horrified and ashamed, JoJo runs away as everyone else mocks him as "JoJo Rabbit."

That's when he's joined by his imaginary friend, Adolf, who tells him being called a rabbit is no shame and delivers this speech:

The rabbit is no coward. The humble bunny faces a dangerous world every day. Hunting carrots for his family and his country. My empire will be full of many animals. Lions, giraffes, zebras, rhinoceroses, octopuses, rhino-octopuses. Even the mighty rabbit. Let me give you some good advice. Be the rabbit. The humble bunny can outwit all of his enemies. He's brave and sneaky and strong. Be the rabbit."

JoJo is encouraged that he hasn't blown his chance to be the ideal Nazi. But he beings to rethink his pro-Nazi stance when he discovers his mother (Scarlett Johansson) is hiding Elsa (Thomasin McKenzie), a Jewish girl, in their house.

To avoid getting his mother in trouble, he's got to keep Elsa's presence a secret. His natural kindness — as demonstrated by his refusal to kill the rabbit — ultimately wins out. As Waititi says in an on-set interview, the message of the film is, "We need to be more tolerant and spread more love and less hate."

The film has been nominated for 2 Golden Globes, 6 BAFTAs and 2 SAG Awards.

No animal trainer or provider is credited on the film. Since it was shot in the Czech Republic, it would not have been monitored by Humane Hollywood.