



## CLUB NEWS



**NEXT MEETINGS** are scheduled for Thursday May 2 (kindly note change of date since May 1 is a public holiday) and Wednesday May 15 commencing at 6.30 p.m., at the VICTORIA HOTEL, Sliema. The meeting on April 17 will be followed by a talk by a guest speaker. Members can invite guests for the talk which usually starts at 7.30 p.m. After the talk, members and guests can stay on for a meal at the hotel.

**FOR YOUR DIARY:** AWARDS NIGHT is being held on Friday June 28. Further details regarding venue etc. Will be announced in due course.

Though it is still perhaps too early kindly note that CHARTER NIGHT will be held on Saturday November 9, 2019. This annual event which usually attracts several members and their guests to attend is once again being held at the Grand Hotel Excelsior in Floriana. Members are reminded that they have only to pay for their guests for this event since the annual club subscription fee entitles the member to attend without paying.

**CURRY DINNER:** A successful "Curry Dinner" was held at the Union Club, Sliema, organised by Lion Doreen Davis on April 13. Besides enjoying a nice evening, members and their guests attending the event raised €184 towards the Club's Philanthropic funds. Well done Lion Doreen.

**DONATION TO LCIF:** Our Club recently made a donation of \$1000 to the Lions Clubs International Foundation. The donation was made in response to the appeal made by Lions Clubs International after the natural disasters in several countries. The donation entitles the Club to nominate a member for the Melvin Jones Award. The name of the recipient will be made known during the "Awards Night" scheduled for June 28.

***WE SERVE***



APRIL 2019

## MD108 ITALY NATIONAL GUIDE DOG SERVICE

The National Guide Dog Service, founded by the Italian Lions, is a Non Government Organisation (NGO) with the objective to donate, for free to blind individuals, a trained dog that will help to make them more independent in their daily life.

At the Training Centre in Limbiate (near Milan), each year, around 50 guide dogs are trained and donated to blind individuals that, always free of charge, are hosted for "chemistry training" with their future life partner.

The training of a guide dog for a blind individual requires around six months and entails disbursement borne solely by the Lions Guide Dog Service of around 25,000 Euros.

The NGO is financed from donations of the Italian Lions Clubs, enterprises, public entities, private citizens and by the membership fees of members and supporters.



**The Puppy Walker Programme** The Guide Dog Service has also started the "Puppy Walker Programme" that entails giving Labrador and Golden Retriever puppies into custody of volunteering families to be educated in socialising until ready for training.

The first year of life of the dog is fundamental for the development of his personality and for its physical growth, all the activities should be aimed at the creation of those characteristics and habits that create the basis of a good guide dog.

After around 10 months, the dog has to be given back to the school to be evaluated and start the Training Programme.

The Lions Guide Dog Organisation was born in 1959. The founder was Lion Maurizio Galimberti who was a member of Lions Club Milano Host (the oldest club in Italy) thus finding some new and very generous friends willing to help in the project. >>>> P.3

## INDUCTING LION EGOR NOSKOV AS MEMBER

During the meeting of April 17 Lion President Alex Arena officially inducted Lion Egor Noskov as member of our Club. Lion Egor who is from St. Petersburg, Russia, joined our Club two years ago. However due to his commitments overseas he could not attend the Charter Night, when Lion John Rusher was President, to be inducted.



*Lion President Alex Arena (right) and Lion Egor Noskov*

On Wednesday April 17 Lion Egor was in Malta and his sponsor Lion Tom A. Restall asked him to attend our meeting. Lion Egor who is a Lawyer spoke briefly about his career and also stated that he obtained Maltese Citizenship through the recent act of the Maltese Parliament. Lion Egor stated that whenever he is in Malta he would try to attend our Club meetings. At the end of his short speech, Lion Egor donated €500 towards our Club's project to obtain a guide dog for a blind person.

## -2019/2020 BOARD OF DIRECTORS



During the meeting of April 17, Lions present approved the nominations of the 2019/2020 Board of Directors which were made by the Nominations Committee. Since Lion Antonio Varriale withdrawal as President due to professional duties requiring his frequent absence from Malta, it was unanimously agreed that the current President Alex Arena will continue as President for the next Lionistic Year.

It was also unanimously agreed that Lion Margaret Frendo will now become First Vice President and Lion Edward Zammit will assume the duties of Second Vice President.

Lions Lorna Farrugia and Carmelo Azzopardi will respectively continue as Secretary and Treasurer.

## PARTY FOR THE ELDERLY

The annual party for the elderly residents at Ta' Sawra, a church home at Rabat, was held on Tuesday April 30. This party has become an annual event. Lion Vivienne Zammit organises this party with the help of other Lions.

This year Mons. Charles Cordina, who is responsible for Church Homes in the Archdiocese of Malta, attended the party and spoke highly about the work done by Lions Club Sliema who brings some joy to the elderly at the home.

The residents were presented with toiletry gifts kindly donated by Lion Victoria Muscat. Mr Frank O'Neill entertained the residents during the afternoon. He asked that instead of paying his fee the Club makes a donation towards Dar Tal-Providenza at Siggiewi. This was duly done. Lion President Alex Arena also made a donation of €250 to Mons. Cordina towards the Church Home for Elderly priests at B'Kara.

Several Club members attended the event and helped to make the event enjoyable for the residents. This event has been organised by our Club for a number of years. When started all the catering was done by the wives of Club members. (We did not have any female members in our Club at the time.

We also used to give a ticket to each resident for a raffle with a quilt as a prize. On one occasion one of the resident refused to take the ticket stating that he did not want to die as the two previous winners passed away a few weeks after the party.

*Photo at left. The group of members at the party from Lion Carmelo Azzopardi, Victoria Muscat, Vivienne Zammit, President Alex Arena (centre), Frank O'Neill. Third from left Mons. Charles Cordina, Lions Allred Micallef Attard and Nadette Valla Briffa.*



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<<< **P.2 New premises for a Training Centre.** By 1973 the training of guide dogs became a national project and it was felt that new premises of traing were needed. Hence the NGO acquired land in Limbiate which eventually became the fully equipped training centre. In 2013 the NGO completed the construction of new kennels, that were inaugurated on May 5 during the "Limbiate Day" celebration. The new sstructure includes 38 new kennels, each of which can host 2 dogs and has an indoor and a covered outdoor area. Further more it also has a grooming area and also a food storage area.

The Organisation eventually bought the Limbiate area and a year later on June 10, 2015 the Lions Guide Dogs Organisation achieved another importan goal namely the consignment of two thousand (2000) guide dog.

In 2016 a new nursery was built in line with internaitonal rules and it has 5 Delivery Rooms, a Veterinary Office a food preparation area for the weaning puppies and an obstacle cxourse, that was specially created for the puppies.

Presently the NGO has a waiting list of over 170 blind people who have applied for a guide dog. Applicants are invited to the Training Centre for a techincal interview with one of the instructors in order to have a better overview of the applicant. After the evaluaation the blind person enters a wwaiting list for his guide. The Organisation employs 15 persons including 8 trainers. All the employees have a regular contract that respects the laws regarding the "Cmmerce Services" jobs.



45% of the costs are covered by the Lions Clubs all over Italy, with their subscription fees or by private and public donations.

The president of the Organisation is Lion Giovanni Fossati, since at right in the photo, together with our Honorary Member Lion Paolo Gattola.

*Lion Margaret Frendo reports on the monthly talk when a guest speaker is invited to talk*

## **"THE LIFE OF MIKIEL ANTON VASSALLI"**

The April guest speaker was Professor Frans Ciappara. He spoke to us about The Life of Mikiel Anton Vassalli (1764-1829) referred to by some scholars as the 'father' of the Maltese Language.'

Prof Chappara is a lecturer at the Institute of Baroque Studies at the University of Malta. His specialization covers the eighteenth century social and religious History of the Maltese parish and The Inquisition. He is the author of several publications.

Michele Antonio Vassali was born to a humble family in Zebbug in 1764. He was born into the most turbulent period of Maltese History. Vassalli studied at the bishop's seminary at Mdina followed by a stint in Rome, in preparation for the priesthood. He, however, changed his vocation and became a professor of Oriental Studies at the University in Rome, La Sapienza. It was at this stage in life that he changed his surname from Vassallo to Vassalli. In 1795, he returned to Malta, where he devoted himself to the creation of an orthography for the writing of the Maltese Language.



*Mikiel Anton Vassalli*

Vassalli was a visionary who advocated the liberalization of commerce, even with Muslim states. He spoke about the need for education for the masses and the setting up of a Maltese branch within the Order. All of his ideas were rejected. His liberal ideas landed him in prison. With the change of rulers in Malta, from the Knights to the French, Vassalli openly showed his support for the French. However, this was not to last for too long, as Vassali turned against the French when he saw how he and other Maltese were treated by the French while beseiged within the walls of Valletta. Vassalli joined in the uprising against the French and was thrown out of Valletta.

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## **DID YOU KNOW?**

**Lions Clubs are the largest service organisation in the world?**

**We have 1.4 million members in over 46,000 clubs worldwide.**

**Where there's a need, there's a Lion.**

**We are men and women serving in more than 200 countries and geographical areas.**

**Lions Serve - Our motto is "WE SERVE"**

**Founded in 1917 we are best know for saving sight but we also feed the hungry, and seniors and the disabled and so much more. We are a global service network of volunteers that make a difference in our local communities.**

**Become a Lion**

**Becoming a Lion club member gives you the opportunity to volunteer locally, or internationally. Make new friends and professional connections. Get involved in projects that make your community a better place to live. Have fun doing it!**

*The above was written by Past International President Barry Palmer who uses Facebook to propagate Lions and Lionism. PIP Palmer was in Malta for our Club's 40th anniversary celebrations.*

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Once out of Valletta he was arrested on suspicion of being a French sympathiser, tried, jailed and exiled ending up in Spain and France. Vassalli was allowed to return to Malta after twenty years in exile. He returned with a wife, Catherine Formosa de Fremeaux and three children. He befriended John Hookham Frere, who had him appointed the first professor of the Maltese Language at the University of Malta. He published a new Maltese Grammer in Italian, a book of Maltese proverbs and he translated the Gospels, probably also the Protestant Gospel.

Vassalli died in 1829, a poor and broken man, He was buried at the Msida Bastions Garden of Repose, a Protestant cemetery, on suspicion of having converted to Protestantism.