

COMPASS

ISSUE 4 Migration Heritage Project Newsletter December 2004

seasons greetings



www.mhpillawarra.com



Spanish speakers from around the world CAPAH Association Heritage Project.

CAPAH Association Inc. was created and established almost 25 years ago by Dorys Hernandez. Its main objective was to support and assist the Spanish speaking aged community in the Illawarra. On Fridays each week a Spanish speaking respite care group meets at the Anglican Church in Market Street. It is called "Sol de Otoño". Older people are able to share their experiences and seek help for issues encountered as immigrants in everyday life.

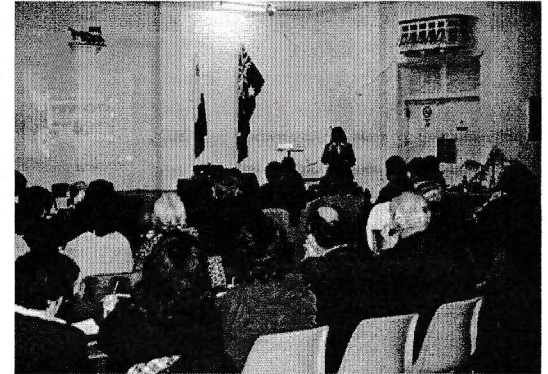
What we are doing: Tania Mastroianni, the MHP project officer, was invited by Sol de Otoño to explain about the Migration Heritage Project Inc. We found this project fascinating. We agreed to create a small booklet consisting of short summaries of client's experiences, during their departure from their country and arrival in Australia – what they felt, how they began to accept their new life. We can use this as a way of learning more about migration experiences and cultural diversity. It can also be given as gifts to their children or grandchildren. We got in contact with Community Services students at Wollongong TAFE and asked if the Spanish speaking students were interested in helping "Sol de Otoño" with the Migration Heritage project. We were lucky to have four students interested in assisting with the project.

Where we are up to: We have collected interviews and are preparing them for publication. This will be in Spanish and English. Much of the work is supported by volunteers who have language skills, equipment to scan pictures and help put it all into a presentable format.

What the project means to the group: It is a way of acknowledging their existence in the history of Australia. Sol de Otoño hopes to raise awareness of migration heritage and encourage other community groups to become involved. I believe TAFE students that have been assisting us to make our dream become reality will benefit by the opportunity to have met a variety of people from different cultures, which have different points of view of their countries.

Estimated completion date: May - June 2005

Photo above: Irene Lopez celebrates her 90th birthday in September 2004 with members of CAPAH. She was the first member when it began 25 years ago.



Maltese Community Heritage Project

As the Maltese Community Development Officer for the Illawarra Area, for the past five years, Lorraine Vargas (nee Sammut-Alessi) came to realise that amongst the aging population of Maltese people who immigrated to Wollongong, there were a vast wealth of memories that were not being recorded and many objects were in a real danger of being lost if no action was taken to preserve these stories and items.

Lorraine, herself a daughter of Maltese immigrants and a Wollongong resident for some 27 years, found that when people came in to her office to fill out some forms, for example, they would stay and talk about their life in Malta and their life in Wollongong. Lorraine felt it was a shame that nothing was in place to make sure that these stories were being recorded. Two years ago, with the formation of the Migration Heritage Project (MHP) Lorraine was given the opportunity to start documenting the Maltese migrant history in a structured way.

So on 17 June 2004 members of the Migration Heritage Project, together with Lorraine, held a presentation at the George Cross Falcons Club in Cringila and invited members of the Maltese community in Wollongong. This was primarily an information night to let them know that their stories were important and that if anyone wanted to share their information Lorraine was going to start collecting. Following the presentation Lorraine list of participants grew.

Lorraine is now in the process of collecting stories or information about objects, photographs or documents people may have at home. Their stories are then recorded on audiotapes or are being transcribed directly onto the computer. Lorraine scans photographs and documents and photograph objects, to record all this information. Lorraine also gives them a questionnaire to fill out, either with her in the office or to take away with them to do at home, which would record all their important personal immigration history, once again ensuring that their story is documented for history.

National Library of Australia Multicultural Documentary Heritage Project,

Fidelia Pontarolo of the Migration Heritage Project recently took part in a workshop for multicultural communities to learn to how to organise and preserve their heritage records.

The workshop held on 9-10 June at the National Library of Australia in Canberra as part of the Library's Multicultural Documentary Heritage Project, was organised in collaboration with the National Archives of Australia.

The event brought together 45 representatives of culturally diverse community organisations from all states and territories with 29 different language or ethnic groups represented.

Working together, the participants learned new skills to help them manage their organisation's archives and will also be able to pass on this information to assist other communities or organisations, who are undertaking the collection of documentation, photographs, tapes or objects to preserve their history, to ensure that the lifespan of any collection is increased by reducing damage and deterioration from improper storage and care.

Sir James Gobbo, Chairman of the National Library of Australia Council, said, By offering ethnic community organisations participation in the workshop the National Library aims to assist in the development and maintenance of community archives. Materials such as photographs, letters, videos, oral history, newsletters, reports, minutes of meetings collected by ethnic communities are an important part of



Australia's heritage. These items need to be preserved for future generations because they document migrant's experiences of settling in Australia and their significant contribution to Australian life. A truly beneficial part of attending the workshop was that the participants could establish a network with people from similar organisations to their own. In addition, they made contact with experts in collection management and preservation from institutions such as the National Library, National Archives and State Libraries he said.

To further help ethnic communities the National Library has recently published Preserving Australia's Multicultural Heritage in a practical and easy guide to starting and maintaining an archival collection.

The kit is available at www.nla.gov.au/multicultural/ 0438832094.

AT A GLANCE

As you can see from the articles in this newsletter, the Migration Heritage Project is making steady progress in its aim to highlight the wonderfully diverse heritage of the population living in the Illawarra. Most notably the Maltese and the Spanish speaking communities have initiated new activities in the last few months but I am confident that many more communities are recording their own histories in many different ways across the area and it would be great to see more of this work on display. At the Annual General Meeting in November, the MHP presented a report on progress against its strategic plan and it was pleasing to note the range and breadth of activities that have taken place over the year. A copy of the report is available if people are interested in finding out more.

To continue to further our activities, the MHP has submitted 2 grant applications in the last weeks. One to the Community Relations Commission for a heritage exhibition in 2005 and another to the Area Assistance Scheme to purchase equipment for groups to use to facilitate the recording of heritage projects. Hopefully we will know of the outcomes soon.

The MHP has also supported an application by the Illawarra Ethnic Communities Council for a film project, which will have a heritage component. It is pleasing to see that groups are making connections with the MHP and keen to work in partnership on projects with similar aims.

We hope to launch our website in coming months, to distribute our new brochure and begin the long road to securing sponsorship for some of our activities.

If anyone is interested in any element of the MHP please do not hesitate to contact us through our email address: mhp@1earth.net

Franca Facci / Chairperson.

cont.from front page

Lorraine never keeps any of these items as she does not want the people participating in her project to feel that they relinquish ownership of any objects, nor is any of the information or details made known as everything remains anonymous unless written permission is given by the owner. Lorraine, along with the MHP, feels very strongly about respecting the privacy and the wishes of the individual.

So far Lorraine has recorded a lot of this information into files, which she is archiving so that none of this information will be lost. Lorraine hopes to put all this information together and present it as part of the history of the Maltese community in the Illawarra. She would also like to make the information available to the Illawarra community as a whole, to be used as a means of learning and understanding the hardships and joy that the Maltese migrants in Wollongong experienced.

Much of the work Lorraine has achieved thus far is as a result of funding received from the Community Relations Commission of N.S.W. and with the support of the George Cross Falcons Club and its president, George Bajjada, who was very supportive and welcomed the idea of getting the Maltese community history together. To Lorraine's surprise her endeavours have achieved special attention both here and overseas.

Above all, Lorraine has found that members of the Maltese community who are participating in this project have found an opportunity to share their stories with other community members. Lorraine is also very pleased to know that her efforts have provided them an interest and is bonding the Maltese community as a whole.

If you too would like to participate, please contact Lorraine Vargas (Sammut-Alessi), whose details appear below.

Lorraine Vargas (nee Sammut-Alessi) is currently employed as the Maltese Community Development Officer for the Illawarra Area. Her office is located at: George Cross Falcons Club, 25-27 Lake Avenue, Cringila. Office hours: 9:00am-4:00pm Tuesdays & Thursdays. Phone & Fax: 4274 6121.

Email: admin@maltese.ngo.org.au



NEW WEBSITE ONLINE SOON
www.mhpillawarra.com

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Joining Fee:	individual	\$5.00
	pensioners	\$2.00
	organisations	\$10.00
Annual Fee:	individual	\$10.00
	pensioners	\$5.00
	organisations	\$10.00

Joining fees payable within fourteen days of receipt of advice of membership approval. Annual fees payable by 30 June of each year.

The Secretary
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We would love you to join but you don't have to be a member to participate.