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The Internment of Italian Canadians during the Second World War

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Letter from the Editor



Summer has arrived, bringing with it longer days, warmer weather, and the perfect opportunity to relax, travel, and enjoy community events. Whether you're attending concerts in the park, visiting the McMichael Art Gallery's *Morrice in Venice* exhibition—a must-see showcase of Venice through the eyes of Canadian artist James Wilson Morrice—or simply soaking up the

sunshine, this season is meant for making memories.

In this issue, I'm proud to feature a powerful story on the internment of Italian Canadians during the Second World War. It's a chapter of history that many have not heard, yet one that continues to shape our collective understanding of human rights in Canada. I chose to highlight this story because in a world where conflict and division persist, it's essential that we learn from our past to build a future of peace, dignity, and inclusivity.

Last month, Vaughan's Italian Heritage Month celebrations were a resounding success. Mayor Steven Del Duca of the City of Vaughan, along with his Councillor colleagues, hosted a memorable community event at Boyd Park bringing people together in the spirit of culture and pride. I look forward to what next year will bring as I continue to honour these traditions.

This summer marks Canada's 158th anniversary—a time to reflect on our growth as a nation. The spirit of unity and community continues throughout the season. If you're looking for a summer getaway, consider a trip to Ottawa. After the elections, it's a perfect time to visit our nation's capital. You can tour Parliament, watch the Changing of the Guard, explore local museums, enjoy the vibrant culinary scene, and shop at places like ByWard Market and Sparks Street. Ottawa's authentic charm offers a chance to connect with Canada's history in a meaningful way

As the summer unfolds, I encourage you to travel, recharge, and enjoy everything this beautiful season has to offer.

Cheers!

Josie Alonzi



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Tips to help you prepare for your favorite spring/summer activities and prevent injuries.

By Dr. Yako Merogi

As the weather starts to warm up, many people are looking forward to engaging in various spring/summer activities such as gardening, hiking, swimming, and cycling. However, without proper preparation, these activities can lead to injuries that can ruin your summer fun. As a Chiropractor, I recommend these tips to help you prepare for your favorite spring/summer activities and prevent injuries.

Warm-Up: Before engaging in any physical activity, it is essential to warm up your muscles to avoid injury. Take at least 5-10 minutes to warm up major muscle groups such as your calves, thighs, hips, back, shoulders, and neck.

Wear Proper Footwear: Make sure to wear appropriate footwear for the activity you plan to engage in. For example, if you plan to go hiking, wear supportive shoes that provide proper arch support and traction. Wearing proper footwear can help prevent foot and ankle injuries.

Stay Hydrated: Dehydration can lead to muscle cramps, fatigue, and dizziness, which can increase the risk of injury. Make sure to drink plenty of water before, during, and after your activity to keep your body hydrated.

Use Proper Techniques: Using proper techniques can help prevent injuries. For example, when lifting heavy objects, bend your knees and keep your back straight to avoid straining your back muscles. When swimming, use proper stroke techniques to avoid shoulder injuries.



Take Breaks: Taking breaks can help prevent overuse injuries such as tendonitis or carpal tunnel syndrome. Take frequent breaks to stretch, rest, and hydrate.


Consult with a Chiropractor: A chiropractor can assess your physical condition and recommend exercises or stretches to help prevent injuries. They can also provide treatments such

as adjustments, muscle release therapy, or physical therapy to help you recover from injuries.

In conclusion, preparing for your spring/summer activities can help prevent injuries and ensure you have a fun and enjoyable time. Remember to warm up, wear proper footwear, stay hydrated, use proper techniques, take breaks, and consult with a chiropractor. By following these tips, you can stay healthy and injury-free while engaging in your favorite activities.

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Sun, Safety & Staying Well: A Naturopathic Approach to Summer

By Dr. Sarah Capetola, ND

Summer invites us outside—to the sunshine, fresh air, and memories made with family and friends. But along with the joy of the season come a few important reminders to stay safe and well.

Hydration: More Than Just Water

In the summer heat, hydration is key. But it's not just about drinking more water—it's about replacing lost electrolytes. I often recommend adding a pinch of sea salt, fresh lemon, and a little honey to your water for a natural electrolyte boost. Watch for signs of dehydration like fatigue, dizziness, and dark urine, and include hydrating foods like cucumbers, watermelon, and citrus throughout the day.

Tick Awareness: Small Bites, Big Consequences

Ticks are more active in the summer and can carry serious illnesses like Lyme disease. Simple steps make a big difference:

- Wear long sleeves and pants on trails.
- Tuck pants into socks and use tick repellents.
- Check yourself, kids, and pets after outdoor activities.
- Remove ticks quickly and monitor for symptoms like a rash or fever.

Sun Care: What Goes on Your Skin Matters

The skin is our largest organ, and what we put on it matters. I recommend using mineral-based sunscreens with zinc oxide or titanium dioxide—they sit on the skin and reflect UV rays without harmful chemicals. Choose broad-spectrum SPF 30+, avoid ingredients like oxybenzone, and don't forget easy-to-miss spots like ears and feet. Also, use hats, shade, and light clothing to help protect your skin.

Embrace the Season

Summer is about movement, connection, and enjoying nature. Eat fresh, light foods, stay active, but always listen to your body's signals for rest and hydration. Wellness isn't about fear—it's about being mindful and prepared so you can fully enjoy everything summer has to offer. So, this season—soak up the sun, stay safe, and savour every golden moment.

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One Economy, One Nation: A Legislative Launch Toward a Stronger Canada

by *The Honourable Senator Tony Loffreda*

From the moment they took office, Canada's new Prime Minister and his government wasted no time in making their presence felt in Ottawa and addressing some of the country's most pressing issues.

In a rare and symbolic move reflecting the urgency of the moment and the generational challenges ahead, Prime Minister Carney issued a single mandate letter to all members of the 30th Ministry, departing from the traditional individualized letters. The letter outlines seven priorities, including the creation of a unified Canadian economy by identifying and expediting nation-building projects that will connect and transform our country, while also working to lower costs for Canadians, including in housing.

After a momentous and memorable opening to the 45th Canadian Parliament – the crowning moment being the Speech from the Throne delivered by His Majesty King Charles III from the Canadian throne – Members of Parliament and Senators had to get down to business to review a key piece of legislation meant to fulfill an important campaign promise.

Indeed, during the federal election, the Liberal Party committed to unleashing free trade in Canada by eliminating federal barriers to interprovincial trade and labour mobility. A commitment the Prime Minister promised to deliver by Canada's 158th birthday. Pressure was on!

As a result, Bill C-5, the One Canadian Economy Act, quickly became our legislative priority since its introduction in early June.

The bill contains two parts. First, it includes the Free Trade and Mobility Act which establishes a statutory framework to remove federal barriers to the interprovincial trade of goods and services and to improve labour mobility across the country. Bill C-5 also legislates the new Building Canada Act, which gives cabinet the authority to advance nation-building projects that are crucial to Canada's productivity growth, energy security and economic competitiveness.

Recognizing the urgency to get this bill adopted by the end of the month, the Senate held ten hours of Committee of the Whole proceedings – a unique procedural situation. Unlike Senate standing committee hearings, where a selected group of Senators question witnesses and review legislation,

committees of the whole are held in the Senate Chamber itself, allowing all Senators to participate directly in the study of a bill. Last week, we held three days of hearings in the Chamber and welcomed nearly 40 witnesses who appeared on the floor of the Senate – which included three key cabinet ministers in the Carney Government.

Some legitimate and valid concerns were raised during our deliberations (no bill is ever perfect!) on matters related to Indigenous consultation, environmental protections and the regulatory powers and authorities afforded to the Governor-in-Council. However, there appears to be broad support among Parliamentarians in both Houses. There is a shared recognition of the urgency to get down to work. If the Conservative Party is prepared to set aside partisanship and support this bill, it's a strong indication that Prime Minister Carney is on the right track.

As I raised during our committee proceedings, Bill C-5 has the potential of addressing two long-standing economic challenges facing our country: low productivity and weak competition. When questioning the CEO of the Business Council of Canada, I was struck by his comment that "productivity gain is available if we're able to get out of our own way and build things in this country", a clear indication that regulations in Canada are preventing growth and investment.

Thanks to the One Canadian Economy Act, we are setting ourselves up for success. I think this bill will instill a greater sense of confidence among investors, send a signal that Canada is open for business, and eliminate some uncertainty and unpredictability for project proponents.

Bill C-5 received Royal Assent on June 26th – a first legislative victory for Prime Minister Carney, and more importantly, a significant win for Canada at a time when it's sorely needed, especially as trade tensions with the United States persist. This bill has the potential to attract private investments into our economy, generate higher-paying jobs, and make life more affordable for Canadians.

A fitting gift for the country on the eve of its birthday, if I do say so myself!



A Life of Faith, Family, and Giving Back:

by Rita Parente

The Inspiring Journey of Rita Parente From the sun-drenched hills of Molise, Italy, to the heart of Toronto's Italian Canadian community, Rita Parente has lived a life steeped in tradition, shaped by faith, and defined by a profound commitment to others. Whether as a mother, mentor, professional, or volunteer, Rita brings passion, purpose, and joy to everything she does. Born in Boiano, Rita immigrated to Canada in 1974



as a young adult with her widowed mother, reuniting with four of her siblings who had settled in Toronto during the 1960s. She brought with her the enduring values of her Italian upbringing: faith, family, hard work, and service—the roots from which she built a life rich in meaning. Soon after arriving in Canada, Rita's deep Catholic faith found a new expression. In a parish that offered only English services, she helped welcome the first Italian priest and quickly volunteered to support the liturgy. She went on to found the vibrant Trans-Angels music group, composed of young Italian Canadians playing guitars, flutes, and drums, bringing joyful, contemporary liturgical music to the Italian Mass. She also coordinated gatherings to foster community, helping families get to know one another and form a distinct Italian faith community. Rita later married Carmine, an honest, hard-working Italian Canadian man who had immigrated as a child. They shared a deep commitment to tradition, faith, and the dream of a large family. While raising her four children, Rita also cared for her elderly mother with mobility issues, and extended her nurturing spirit to others by offering what many parents would call “the best babysitting experience.” Her home was filled with warmth, crafts, discipline, storytelling, and the joyful echoes of Italian family life. When the family moved to Woodbridge in 1985, Rita brought her community spirit with her, initiating gatherings with neighbours that blossomed into lasting friendships. She served on school parent councils and became deeply involved in the newly formed Immaculate Conception Parish—fundraising, teaching catechism, supporting liturgical celebrations, and helping to coordinate Marriage Preparation and Marriage Encounter programs alongside Carmine. They also sang together in the parish choir, generously sharing their faith and their story to support other couples in building strong relationships.

At the age of 51, Rita returned to school to update her skills and was soon hired at York University, where she worked across several departments for nearly 20 years. She was known not only for her conscientious work but also for her volunteerism and campus involvement. She led numerous initiatives, including Weight Watchers at Work, benefitting hundreds of staff; served on the YUSAPUY election committee; and regularly volunteered at Convocation ceremonies. Her collaborative spirit helped create a student award in Environmental Studies, in partnership with York University and the Leonardo Da Vinci Foundation, to honour the memory of an Italian Canadian environmentalist. After the passing of her beloved husband, Rita entered a new chapter of service and spiritual purpose. She remains actively involved in her parish, St. Clare of Assisi, participating in the Italian choir, Ladies Group, Bible Study, and the Rosary Apostolate, leading children in prayer in local schools. She also volunteers with Hospice Vaughan, supporting residents and their families through compassionate presence, visiting the sick and elderly in their homes—often with a gift of her homemade cookies—and participating in fundraising events. Rita also answered a new calling as a tour and pilgrimage organizer, earning her TICO Travel Counselor Certificate and coordinating spiritually enriching trips across Canada, the U.S., and Europe. These journeys bring people together in faith, community, and reflection—experiences that uplift and transform. In her latest endeavour, Rita wrote a personal legacy memoir titled *Rita: A Life in Two Worlds*. In it, she shares her story of immigration, faith, family, and tradition to preserve the values and experiences of Italian Canadians for future generations. Today, Rita continues to bring joy and inspiration to all who know her. An active member of her local seniors' club, she participates in cultural events, dances with gusto, and brings people together wherever she goes. Frequently called a “turbine of energy,” Rita is admired not only for her resilience, but for the light she brings into every space she enters. “You light up a room,” people often tell her—and indeed she does. With a warm smile, a generous heart, and unwavering spirit, Rita Parente lives her mission: to make the world a little kinder, more faithful, and filled with love.





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MPP Lecce Hosts Largest Italian Heritage Event To Date

On June 27, Stephen Lecce, MPP for King—Vaughan, hosted his annual Italian Heritage Month Celebration for local seniors from the Maple Pioneer Italian Seniors Club, the Maple Italo Seniors Club, and Villa Giardino in Maple.

“Every year, I throw a celebration for Italian Heritage Month, to give thanks to those seniors who sacrificed so much as immigrants to Canada, but never gave up hope,” said MPP Lecce. “This year’s event was bigger and better than ever — and served as a great way to recognize the stories of resilience and unmatched work ethic of the greatest generation that have shaped our community. I was also proud to join Trustee Saggese to announce that we have preserved the Italian language program in York Region — a positive legacy as we keep Italian heritage and language alive in future generations.”





The Season of Connection: What Will You Do This Summer?

By Dr. Mary Marano

There's something magical about summer. It's more than just a shift in temperature—it's a shift in tempo. The days stretch longer, the sun feels warmer, and the air carries the scent of fresh blooms, barbecue smoke, and possibility. After months of hibernation—physically, emotionally, and socially—summer arrives like a long-lost friend, beckoning us to step outside, breathe deeply, and reconnect with the rhythm of life.

For many of us, life moves too fast. We juggle work demands, family responsibilities, and the ever-growing to-do list that never quite gets done. We go through the motions—eat, sleep, repeat—often disconnected from the very people and passions that bring us joy. But summer has a way of softening those hard edges. It invites us to pause. To savour. To gather.

As a psychotherapist, I often say *connection is the cure*. And summer, in its own glorious way, makes that medicine easier to swallow. It offers the perfect backdrop for reconnection—whether with others, with nature, or with ourselves.

Think about it: when was the last time you sat around a picnic table laughing until your cheeks hurt? When did you last take a walk barefoot in the grass or sip something sweet on a patio as the sun dipped below the horizon? These aren't luxuries. They're lifelines.

There's healing in shared moments:

- A spontaneous game of beach volleyball that reminds us we're still playful.
- A slow paddle across a quiet lake that brings silence to a noisy mind.
- A backyard barbecue where laughter replaces small talk and stories are passed around like potato salad.
- A camping trip where phones go dead and real conversation comes alive.
- Farmers' markets filled with fresh fruit, smiling faces, and the simple joy of supporting one another.

Summer food has its own soul language. Corn on the cob dripping with butter. Watermelon slices so sweet they stain your shirt. Charcuterie boards by the fire. Popsicles melting too fast.

Meals shared outdoors feel different—less about calories and more about communion.

And then there's family. Friends. The ones who know you, the ones you want to know better, and even the ones you've drifted from but feel ready to invite back in. Summer has a way of softening distance. Maybe it's the warmth, maybe it's the light, maybe it's the reminder that our time together is limited—and precious.

But connection isn't just external. It's also internal. Summer can be the season you finally sit still with yourself. Journal in the early morning light. Read the book that's been sitting on your nightstand for months. Take yourself on that long overdue solo adventure. Reconnect with who you are beyond the roles you fill.

This season, I challenge you to ask yourself not just "What am I doing this summer?"—but "*Who am I being?*" Am I being present? Am I saying yes to the bonfire and the bike ride and the chance to deepen my relationships? Am I choosing connection over convenience? Intention over impulse?

Because here's the truth: it's not about having the perfect cottage trip or the most Instagram-worthy vacation. It's about how deeply we allow ourselves to be moved by the moment. To share a meal without rushing. To watch children run through sprinklers and remember the freedom in getting soaked. To hold someone's hand, hug longer, and say what we usually save for later.

Let this summer be your season of warmth—on your skin and in your soul. Let it be a season of invitation: to reach out, to laugh harder, to heal deeper.

So I'll ask again: **What will you do this summer?**
More importantly... **Who will you connect with?**

Because if connection is the cure, then summer might just be the perfect prescription.



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The 2025 Moonlight Gala Celebrates *Morrice in Venice* Opening Night at the McMichael Canadian Art Collection

June 4, 2025, KLEINBURG, ON — The McMichael Canadian Art Collection is pleased to announce the outstanding success of its signature fundraising event, the 2025 Moonlight Gala, held in support and celebration of Canadian art, the McMichael's community programming, and educational outreach.

As one of the most anticipated events in Canada's cultural calendar, the Moonlight Gala plays a vital role in supporting the conservation and exhibition of more than 7,000 works in the McMichael's permanent collection and the presentation of special exhibitions. Funds raised also contribute to the development of award-winning educational initiatives for children and youth and the stewardship of the gallery's beloved natural landscape and outdoor installations.

Distinguished guests in attendance included Gala co-chairs Debra Fenwick and Laura Mirabella, as well as honorary co-chairs Hon. Steven Del Duca, Mayor, City of Vaughan and Hon. Stephen Lecce, MPP King-Vaughan. They were joined by artists, gallerists, community leaders, donors, and corporate partners from across the country.



Hon. Dawn Gallagher Murphy, Hon. Stephen Lecce, Hon. Steven Del Duca, Sarah Milroy, Laura Mirabella, Debra Fenwick

Guests were treated to a culinary experience curated by The Food Dudes, complemented by gourmet offerings from award-winning Indigenous chef David Wolfman and local restaurants, including Castello Ristorante, Speducci Mercatto, and San Antonio Seafood Market & Oyster Bar among other generous vendors. Wine was provided by Stratus Vineyards, Canada's first fully LEED-certified winery. Live musical performances, including a headline set by The Collective, created a vibrant and celebratory atmosphere under the stars.



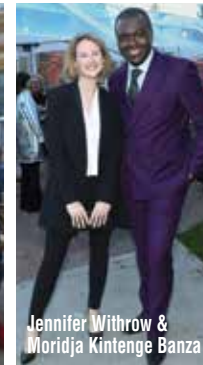
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Adding to the evening's excitement, guests enjoyed exclusive opening night access to the McMichael's newest exhibition, *Morrice in Venice*. In honour of the exhibition, the Gala embraced a Venetian theme, infusing the event with the charm and elegance of one of Europe's most iconic cities. Curated by renowned Canadian art historian Sandra Paikowsky, the exhibition presents James Wilson Morrice's luminous visions of Venice through a selection of canvases, pochades, and sketches. These works capture the city's quiet, intimate moments—secluded calles, peaceful squares, and glimmering waterways—brought to life through Morrice's distinctive mastery of light and colour. The McMichael extends its sincere gratitude to the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts and the National Gallery of Canada, whose generous support was instrumental in realizing this exhibition.

The success of the Moonlight Gala would not be possible without the generous support of its sponsors, with special thanks to the Toronto chapter of the Canadian Italian Business and Professional Association, this year's presenting sponsor.



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The Historical Background to the Internment of Italian Canadians

By Angelo Filoso

On June 10, 1940 under the authority of the War Measures Act, Prime Minister Mackenzie King (in concert with the United States of America and the Government of the United Kingdom) issued an order-in-council the Defense of Canada Regulations (DOCR) for the internment of “all residents of Italian origin whose activities have given ground for belief or reasonable suspicion that they might, in time of war, endanger the safety of the state or engage in activities prejudicial to the prosecution of the war. Similar measures had been issued the previous September against German Canadians and would be followed in January and February of 1942 with the internment and evacuations of the Japanese Canadian population away from Canada’s west coast. The use of the DOCR was responsible for Canada’s charting its contradictory role both as a war effort partner supporting freedom and democracy while at the same time ignoring the democratic rights of half a million of its own people on the Homefront.

In 1940 there were approximately 150,000 Italian Canadians living in Canada. Half were Canadian born, while 41,942 had become Canadian (Naturalized British Subjects) citizens. The order resulted in 30,000 being immediately labelled enemy aliens. The RCMP moved swiftly into the communities and arrested those that they felt were Fascist leaders and sympathizers. The list of names had already been developed from secret agents, sometimes from the inside of the community itself, who were willing to report their neighbours. They were registered, photographed and fingerprinted. They needed to report to the local RCMP any move they made as their civil rights were ignored. Some were fired from their jobs and because of their alien status they were not able to apply for public assistance, hence families were left in very difficult circumstances. Hundred were arrested and eventually

619 men and 13 women were imprisoned in internment camps across Canada.

These internees were never charged with an offence, and the largest numbers were held for up to three years at camps at Petawawa, outside of Ottawa and at “har Gagetown” the camp outside Fredericton, New Brunswick. As of October 1940, Camp Petawawa, about 160 kilometers from Ottawa had 632 internees. There were 209 naturalized British subjects, 20 Canadian born Italians and the 403 Italian nationals. There were eight doctors, one dentist, and one lawyer. The rest were blue collar workers, Labourers, hotel and restaurant owners, manufacturing and office workers. On their arrival they were strip searched and then given some clothing as well as two extra-large shirts with large red circles on the back. This of course would make them very visible to the armed guards who patrolled from towers and on the grounds of the barbed wire fenced area. If any of them tried to escape they were easy targets. There were roll calls several times a day and after the first few months of internment where they did little, eventually all able-bodied men were sent outside the camp to cut down trees and/ or worked in the kitchen.

Apology

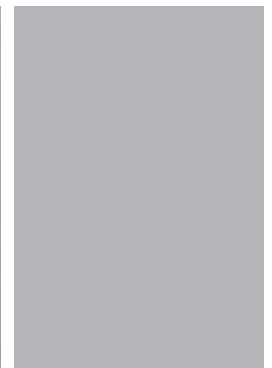
In May 2021, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau delivered a formal apology in the House of Commons for the internment of Italian Canadians during the Second World War. Following Italy’s declaration of war against Canada on June 10, 1940, the Government of Canada interned more than 600 people of Italian heritage, and around 31,000 Italian Canadians were declared “enemy aliens.” The apology recognized the pain and hardship endured by those affected and reaffirmed the government’s commitment to a strong, diverse, and inclusive Canada.

Conclusion

As Jim Zucchero stated “For ethnic communities, memory can be painful, but it also helps to consolidate a sense of collective identity “. It is the hope then that this project and the memories

of those interned and their families will help record a dark moment in Canadian history by exploring the memories, gathering information, and documenting the experiences of a small group of Canadians from Ottawa. This will be done not only to consolidate the collective identity of this Italian Canadian community, and understand our historical memory, but also to help move it forward by looking back with the hopes of also offering it a sense of closure, by remembering.

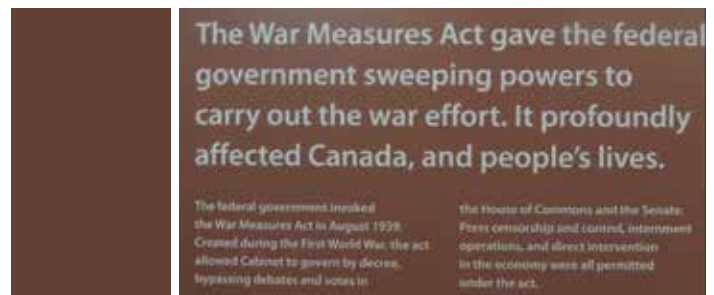
Additionally in a post - September 11 climate, Canada continues to find itself debating the sensitive issues of how to balance human rights and civil liberties against the need to ensure the safety and security of Canadian citizens. As one such community whose own "history and experience were subjects of such legislation, policies and security measures that were and remain for some the cause of so much hardship, shame and suffering, reflecting back on the internment. Not only of Italian Canadians but that of other ethnic groups is important. This history, these dark chapters can help move us as citizens of this country to respond to the difficult security issues that continue to face Canada by remembering the dangers of ethnic profiling. Human Rights and a true participatory democracy must include all Canadians.



CIPBA (Canadian Italian Professional Business Association) of Canada organizes with the War Museum The Internment Exhibit at the Canadian War Museum in Ottawa, Ontario Canada



His Excellency Alessandro Cattaneo attends the unveiling of the Internment Exhibit



Members of the Internment Families during the second world war with Senator Francesca La Marca





Gino Tiezzi, 2nd from left bottom row at internment camp. Petawawa 1941-1942

Professor Italo Tiezzi is the son of interned Professor Gino Tiezzi interned for five years at Petawawa Camp.

The Preface of the Booklet Memories to Memorial written by Professor Italo Tiezzi the son of Gino Tiezzi interned in Petawawa for five years

“Those who ignore history’s lessons in the ultimate folly of war are forced to do more than relive them. they may be forced to die by them” Dan Simmons, (2011:12) The Fall of Hyperion

Often, historical events that occur in a community are ignored, forgotten, or deliberately hidden for one reason or another. This booklet aims to recount one event that occurred in our community as well as in many other communities throughout Canada.

As the son of one of the internees, I find it difficult over seventy years, to revisit the sad event. But as a former teacher of history, I see the importance of recording this story for Canadians in general and for young Canadians in particular.

I thank the hardworking committee that has put this booklet together and I invite the readers s citizens of Canada to reflect on these events and remember.



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Remembering the Past : the Italian-Canadian Internment

By Dominic Campione, Lawyer

The concept of the “Past” has been thought of, discussed and defined in all its facets by everyone, from philosophers such as Socrates to the Canadian poet, Lieutenant- Colonel John McCrae, in his iconic poem, “In Flanders Fields” (1915). Everyone has and continues to confront and live with the Past – “a point in time before the present and the things that have happened”. However, it is more than just a point in time as the “Past” often emits feelings of happiness, pain, despair, sorrow, anxiety, contentment, accomplishment, as well as an understanding of a wholeness of one’s being which helps guide him/her through life’s present and future journeys.

It is often said that one needs to know his/her past in order to appreciate and understand who he/she is. Remembering the past is a fundamental element in living our present life and in planning for the future. The past, present and future all contribute to defining who each of us is and in turn, contributing to our understanding of humanity.

Our past experiences, including historical events, both good and bad, have and continue to shape us into who we are today as well as give us lessons from which we can reflect and learn from. One such historical event occurred just over 85 years ago, when on June 10, 1940, immediately following the declaration of war against Italy, the Canadian Government invoked the Canada’s War Measures Act (*repealed in 1988 and replaced with the Emergencies Act*) and directed the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) to round up members of Canada’s Italian communities deeming them “enemy aliens”, a threat to the safety of Canada. In fact, from the Italian population in Canada at that time of about 112,000 (per available census), 31,000 men, women and children of Italian origin (over 90% of who were either born in Canada or had become Canadian citizens and ranging from 16 to 70 years of age) were designated “enemy aliens”; 6,000 were arrested; over 600 were interned/imprisoned (*the three main internment camps were Kananaskis, Alberta [region wherein Canada hosted the 2025 G7 Leaders Summit on June 15-17, 2025], Petawawa, Ontario and*

Fredericton, New Brunswick) some up to 4 years without ever being charged, with neither any right to a fair hearing nor right to counsel; the remaining designated “enemy aliens” who were also mortified and indignified in such labelling, were also fingerprinted, photographed and ordered to report every month to the RCMP wherein they had to confirm their place of work, residence and activities; and the Italian Canadian community was wronged and under siege by the unjust elements of discrimination and as such suffered great loss and hardship.


The post WWII period saw the internees, with the exception of a few, their families and the Italian Canadian community try to put the above-mentioned historical wrong behind them. However the ever growing Italian community was resilient and community leaders and organizations such as the National Congress of Italian Canadians (NCIC), National Federation of Canadian Italian Business and Professional Association (CIBPA), the now Order of Sons and Daughters of Italy of Canada, etc. took up the torch in their dealing with the Canadian Government in pursuit of an apology and compensation for the historic wrong suffered by the internees, their families and the community culminating to date with a formal apology on May 27, 2021 by the former Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Justin Trudeau in the House of Commons (wherein the War Measures Act was invoked on June 10, 1940) for the Canadian government’s unjust policy of Italian Canadians during WWII.

There have been many historical wrongs throughout the world such as the Jewish Holocaust, the Ukrainian Holodomor, the Armenian Genocide, the Pontian Greek Genocide, etc. Canada has also had its few with not only the Internment of Italian-Canadians in WWII, but with the Chinese Head Tax; the internment in WWI of Austro-Hungarians and some Ottomans among whom were Ukrainians, Serbians, Russians, Jews, Armenians and others; the internment of Japanese-Canadians in WWII; the Komagata Maru (1914) and SS St Louis (1939) incidents, etc. However, the historical wrongs cannot remain in silence as their stories must be remembered for to do otherwise we face the heed in the aphorism of the philosopher George Santayana who stated “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it”.

Accordingly, the commemoration of a past historical event/wrong, such as the recent opening on June 4, 2025 of the permanent exhibit of the Internment of Italian Canadians at the Canadian War Museum in Ottawa, allows individuals and societies not only to reflect on this past experience but to learn from mistakes and thereby help to avoid repeating them in the future. We applaud this landmark exhibit along with the Piazza Dante Memorial Wall in Ottawa (2011); the monument by sculptor, Egidio Vincelli in the Casa D’Italia, in Montreal; the movie “Piazza Petawawa: The Paradox; the numerous books and plaques in various cities across Canada, etc. as all were created and/or produced with the purpose to tell the story of the Italian-Canadian internment, to ensure its remembrance and provide us with valuable lessons from which we can reflect and learn from.

Remembering the past helps us appreciate how far we have come-in-stilling both gratitude and motivation for future advancement and growth. The Italian Canadian community, like many others, have come a long way.

Let us ensure that these past historical wrongs, such as the Italian Canadian internment continue to be not only memorialized in commemorative exhibits, monuments, films and books but most importantly by working together immortalize these past historical experiences through the embodiment of same in the educational system and thereby bring knowledge and awareness to all and concomitantly safeguard our precious democratic values and our humanity.



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Celebrating Italian Heritage Month in Canada Highlights from events in Caledon & Vaughan



Our Community In Action



Italian Mayors from Rapino Pretoro Montelapiano and Journalist Goffredo Palmerini are hosted by the Abruzzo Federation of Canada in Ottawa Canada.



Thank You to the Committee consisting of Olimpia Bevilacqua, Angelo Filoso, Lucia Alloggia, Rocco Petrella, Nello Scipioni, Lorenzo Miccuci, Genarino Salvatore and Lorenzo Ferrante for hosting the Guests from Italy in Ottawa

St. Margaret Mary Annual Fashion Show







An exceptional moment today on Parliament Hill as we hosted the FIFA World Cup Trophy to Canada!

I was proud to join Prime Minister Mark Carney, FIFA Vice-President Vittorio Montagliani, Adam van Koeverden, and my colleagues from the National Capital region — Yasir Naqvi, Anita Vandenbeld, Mona Fortier and Bruce Fanjoy — in highlighting this important step in the #future. view of the 2026 tournament co-organization. A big thank you to the talented young athletes from the Nepean Hotspurs Club who brought remarkable energy to the court - a great example of the inspiring impact of sport on young people.

As we prepare for 2026, the excitement is building. Hosting the World Cup is more than just a sporting event—it's a unique opportunity to bring people together, celebrate our diversity, and make Canada shine on the world stage. Today's event reminded us of how sport can unite communities and create pride across generations. The countdown is on! #FIFAWorldCup #Canada2026 #UnitedThroughSport #NepeanHotspurs #ParliamentHill #RoadTo2026

An incredible moment today on Parliament Hill as we welcomed the FIFA World Cup Trophy to Canada! I was proud to stand alongside Prime Minister Mark Carney, FIFA Vice President Vittorio Montagliani, Adam van Koeverden, and my colleagues from the National Capital Region — Yasir Naqvi, Anita Vandenbeld, Mona Fortier, and Bruce Fanjoy — to mark this exciting milestone on our road to co-hosting the 2026 FIFA World Cup. A special shoutout to the talented young athletes from the Nepean Hotspurs who brought incredible energy to the field — a true reminder of how sport inspires youth and builds community.

As we look ahead to 2026, the excitement is palpable. Hosting the World Cup is about more than just the matches — it's a celebration of unity, diversity, and global connection. Today's event was a powerful reminder of the role sport plays in bringing people together across generations and backgrounds. Canada is ready to welcome the world! #FIFAWorldCup #Canada2026 #UnityThroughSport #NepeanHotspurs #ParliamentHill #Road-To2026





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