

September 23, 2004

Issue 5

# AMRC Newsletter

*Alexandro Malaspina Research Centre, Malaspina University College, Nanaimo, BC, Canada*

## Alexandro's Birthday Celebrated in Style!

The celebrations for the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of the most famous of the illustrious Malaspina family took place in Pontremoli, in northern Tuscany, from September 2<sup>nd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>. Among the many scholars present, from Italy, Spain, Peru, Canada and Australia, were the AMRC Director and Assistant Director, John Black and Russell McNeil.

They were joined by prominent members of the family, including Alex and Doris Malaspina from Atlanta, friends of AMRC

for many years, Alexandre Giuntini-Malaspina, from Luxembourg, and the Marchese of Varti.

The activities for the four-day meeting revolved most importantly around plans for the future of Malaspina research. Black and McNeil presented the latest projects of the AMRC, while their counterparts in Europe followed suit.

A fascinating new light was thrown on Malaspina work by the news that an opera about the navigator is being written by American-

Spanish composer José Luis Greco. Participants were treated to a piano sonata by Greco as a foretaste of the larger work to come. The AMRC has since been able to help the composer and his librettist by supplying the text of some philosophical writing by Alexandro Malaspina, to add depth to his operatic characterisation.

Other collaborations began which will be of great value to the Centre. Carlos Novi, the general editor of the Hakluyt Society English translation . . . (*cont'd p.2*)

## Continuing Studies Course on Malaspina Starts Soon

Beginning on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> October, John Black and Russ McNeil are offering a six-week night-school course on "The Life and Times of Alexandro Malaspina" at the Nanaimo campus of the University College.

After a general introductory presentation, participants will read and discuss the biography of the navigator by Dario Manfredi, Director of the Centro di Studi Malaspiniani in Mulazzo, Italy.

"Alexandro is a fascinating figure," said Black, "but it is not easy to learn much about his courageous and tragic life, never mind about his writings and ideas.

"This course provides the opportunity to put that right, presenting his life against the backdrop of the European Enlightenment and the contemporary influences which fashioned his views."

The course is intended for all levels of interest, from those who know little or nothing about Malaspina, to those who have had considerable exposure.

If you are interested in registering for the course, please call the Centre for Continuing Studies toll-free at 1-866-734-6252, quoting course number PILT 001, F0401.

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## Birthday Bliss Continues ... (from p.1)



**John Black entertains the crowd with his latest hit single: "Proposed Research Projects at the Alexandro Malaspina Research Centre"**

of the mariner's journal, agreed to send the Centre a copy of the glossary of nautical terms used in that project. The glossary will be put to use in Black's ongoing translation of Malaspina's letters for the AMRC website.

The celebrations were not all hard work, however. Aside from the ceremony, replete with brass band playing patriotic songs, to unveil on the wall of the castle at Mulazzo a plaque

commemorating the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary, there was much fine food and wine, and a true spirit of warm friendship across cultures and languages. Mercedes Palau, formerly of the Spanish Ministry of

External Affairs, was perhaps the most active of the participants in this regard, displaying the gay enthusiasm for her subject which has gained her the title of "Mother of all Malaspinistas."



**Participants gather for yet another group photo at the Hotel Napoleon in Pontremoli**



**Discussion of the future of Malaspina research, in the Council Chamber of Pontremoli**

