



THE MALTESE PRESENCE IN NORTH AMERICA



E-NEWSLETTER

Issue 55

DECEMBER 2023

THE CHRISTMAS COSTUME & UGLY SWEATER DJ PARTY



Maltese American Benevolent Society, Inc, Detroit

**The Maltese Presence
in North America
Issue No. 55 December 2023**

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EDITORIAL COMMENT

Owing to the many Christmas activities, messages, and particularly photos since the last December issue, it was decided to put out a second December issue! As it is, this issue would be much larger if all the clubs having activities on the weekend of December 16th-17th had posted Facebook photos.

This is the first time two issues for the same month have appeared. And it was just a couple of issues ago that two months appeared in one issue!

A special thanks goes to Dr. Godfrey Xuereb, Ambassador of Malta to the United States and High Commissioner to Canada, for sending me the Christmas and New Year's greetings to Maltese living abroad from Malta's President, Prime Minister and the Minister for Foreign and European Affairs and Trade.

One cannot but be aware of the efforts made by the Government of the Republic of Malta to reach out to the Maltese diaspora. The notice on page 4, is but another such example. In past issues, accounts of the Council for the Maltese Living Abroad and the more recent Virtual Youth Forum for Maltese Living Abroad have appeared.

Thanks go to Tanya Caruana and Bonnie Sparks for posting a photographic account of the Christmas Costume and Ugly Sweater DJ Party (pages 11-12) and Children's Christmas Party (pages 21-26) held at Detroit's Maltese American Benevolent Society. Again, in my selection of photos, I have tried to capture the wide range of activities which took place and show all those, especially the children, present.

In the case of the Children's Christmas Party, the expressions on the faces of some of the children's are priceless!

The article on Joe Sacco, the internationally acclaimed Maltese-American cartoonist (see page 14) would not have come to fruition had I not been alerted, through his cousin, Gioconda Schembri, to the honour he had recently received in Malta.

Gioconda is one of those who regularly receives the newsletter. Your input too is also encouraged and welcomed. (See page 13 as another such example.)

For the first time in this newsletter, the long-standing annual Muscat Cookie Day has been documented, thanks to Margaret Muscat Purdy, a frequent and valued contributor of material to this publication.

Back issues of this newsletter and the latest "Table of Contents" are posted on the web page of the Maltese-American Social Club of San Francisco at <http://maltese-americanscsf.org/home.aspx>. Click on to "News & Resources."

If you have ideas to share, wish to be put on the free, bcc electronic mailing lists, would like to learn the newsletter's advertising rates, you can reach me at danbrock62@gmail.ca.

Again, I would like to encourage the various Maltese organizations and associations in North America in particular to promote themselves and their activities through this e-newsletter.

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**ACTIVITIES WITHIN
THE MALTESE COMMUNITIES**

Dan Brock

CALIFORNIA

Maltese-American Social Club of San Francisco
A **New Year's Eve Dinner Dance** is taking place this evening, Sunday, December 31st.

MICHIGAN

Maltese American Benevolent Society, Inc
A **Christmas Costume & Ugly Sweater DJ Party** was held at the Club, on Saturday, December 16th, from 9:00 p.m. until 2:00 a.m. (See pages 1, 11-12.)

The **Children's Christmas Party** took place on the afternoon of Sunday, December 17th, beginning at 2:00 p.m. (See pages 21-26, 28.)

The **New Year's Eve 2024 Potluck Dinner** is being held this evening, Sunday, December 31, 2023.

Maltese American Community Club, Dearborn

A **Maltese Baking Demonstration**, featuring **Qagħaq tal-Għasel (Honey Rings)**, will take place at the Club, beginning at 2:00 p.m., on Sunday, January 14, 2023.

NEW YORK

Maltese Center, NYC

The **Kids Christmas Party** was held early in the evening of Saturday, December 16th. The **Adults Christmas Party** followed the tree lighting at 7:00 p.m.

The **New Year's Eve Party** to take place this evening, Sunday, December 31st was sold out days ahead of the event.



ONTARIO

**Greater Toronto Area
Maltese Canadian Federation**

The Federation, in conjunction with **Leġen Malti**, hosted a **Seniors' Christmas Luncheon** on Sunday, December 10th.

Malta Band Club

The **Member's Christmas Party** was held on Saturday, December 16th.

A **New Year's Eve Dinner & Dance** is being held this evening, Sunday, December 31st, at the Club.



St. Paul the Apostle Parish

The **Anointing of the Sick Mass** was held at 12:00 noon on Sunday, December 10th. This was followed by the **Seniors' Christmas** hosted by the **Maltese Canadian Federation** and **Leġen Malti**.

An **Advent Retreat**, led by **Debbie Gove**, took place on Saturday, December 16th.

Fr. Jimmy Zammit celebrated **Mass in Maltese** at 10:30 a.m. on Sunday, December 24th and at 10:30 a.m. on Christmas Day. Both the 8:00 p.m. Mass on Christmas Eve and that on Sunday, December 31st at 10:30 a.m. were bilingual. Fr. Jimmy also celebrated the 10:30 a.m. Mass on New Year's Day in Maltese.

A **New Year's Eve Dinner-Dance** is being held this evening, Sunday, December 31st.

Melita Soccer Club, Inc.

A **bus trip to Niagara Casino** took place on Saturday, December 16th.

A **bus trip to Casino Rama** is planned for Saturday, January 27th.

Lehen Malti

The photographs of their cribs, as submitted by viewers, were televised on the December 24th program.

LEHEN MALTI
(Maltese Voice)

OMNI 1 – Ontario
Saturdays 8:30 a.m.
Tuesdays 11:30 a.m.
Thursdays 8:30 a.m.

OMNI BC
Saturdays 2:00 p.m.

OMNI Alberta
Saturdays 2:00 p.m.

Hamilton

**Maltese Canadian Association
of the City of Hamilton**

Breakfast with Santa was held in the Sacred Heart Parish Hall, on Poplar Avenue, in Hamilton, on Saturday, December 16th.

London

A **luncheon** for the Maltese group of the area and friends is planned for Thursday, January 18, 2024, at the **Mandarin Restaurant** on Wellington Road South.



GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

Dan Brock

The years have seen the demise of a number of Maltese Clubs throughout southern Ontario in such cities as Oshawa, Toronto, Guelph, St. Thomas, and London.

This December marks the fifth anniversary of the dissolution of The Maltese Canadian Club of London.

The formal dissolution took place on the afternoon of Thursday, December 20, 2018, in the upper room of The Royal Canadian Legion Byron, 1276 Commissioners Road West.



GLOBAL RESEARCH, MALTESE ROOTS

Council for Maltese Living Abroad

On Monday, November 27, 2023, the following information was released:

The Malta Council for Science and Technology, with the support of the Ministry for Foreign and European Affairs and Trade and the Parliamentary Secretariat for Youth, Research and Innovation is reaching out to Maltese researchers working abroad to participate in a mapping exercise of Maltese researcher diasporas. This mapping exercise aims to lay the foundation for future initiatives in bringing together Malta’s domestic R&I ecosystem and leading Maltese scientists abroad.

Interested Maltese researchers conducting research in any given domain are invited to sign up to the Voluntary registration of Maltese Nationals of Value Living Abroad via this link: <https://foreign.gov.mt/formv>.

**JOIN THE MALTESE DIASPORA
RESEARCH NETWORK**
GLOBAL RESEARCH, MALTESE ROOTS





CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR'S GREETINGS FOR THE MALTESE LIVING ABROAD



Messaġġ irrekordjat ta' xewqat għall-Milied u għas-Sena l-Gdida mill-E.T George W Vella għall-Maltin li jgħixu barra Diċembru 2023



Hekk kif qed ningħaqdu flimken għal dan iż-żmien speċjali tas-sena, Miriam u jien nixtiequ nawguraw Milied hieni lil kull wieħed u waħda minnkom. Il-Milied huwa żmien ta' ferħ, riflessjoni, u konnessjoni, u hu għalhekk bi pjaċir kbir li nixtiequ ningħaqad mad-dijaspora Maltija madwar id-dinja f'din iċ-ċelebrazzjoni.

Dan iż-żmien tal-Milied huwa żmien ta' għaqda bejn il-familji u l-komunitajiet, fejn naqsmu ma' xulxin l-imħabba u r-rieda tajba, li hija riflessa fil-valuri Maltin.

B'hekk inhegġgkom sabiex dan il-Milied tiegħu mument biex tirreflettu fuq il-valuri tagħna bħala Maltin – il-valuri tal-komunità, tar-reżiljenza, u tal-kompassjoni. Hekk kif ningabru flimkien mal-maħbubin tagħna, ftakru li intom parti integrali tal-familja Maltija, irrispettivament fejn qegħdin madwar id-dinja. Għalkemm Malta pajjiż żgħir, li tkun Malti jmur lil hinn minn hekk, u nistgħu ngħidu li Malta tinsab kullimkien madwar id-dinja fil-qalb ta' kull membru tad-dijaspora Maltija.

Christmas and New Year's messages by H.E. George Vella for the Maltese living abroad December 2023

As we come together to celebrate this special time of year, Miriam and I extend our warmest wishes to each and every one of you. Christmas is a time of joy, reflection, and connection, and it is with great pleasure that I reach out to our Maltese diaspora spread far and wide.

The Christmas season is a time when families and communities come together, sharing love and goodwill, which is reflected in our values.

This Christmas, I urge you to take a moment to reflect on our values as Maltese – the values of community, resilience, and compassion. As we gather with our loved ones, remember that you are an integral part of the Maltese family, no matter where you are around the world. Although Malta is a small country, being Maltese goes further, and we can say that Malta is everywhere around the world, in the heart of every member of the Maltese diaspora.

As Maltese Islands we have a unique history and culture. The ability to see the Maltese diaspora contribute to the international sphere instills a sense of pride. The Maltese have gained their reputation as a successful and determined people. It is inspiring to see Maltese, and others of Maltese descent, make a name for themselves but also for their country. Their achievements, resilience, and commitment to preserve Malta's heritage sets an example to all. I would therefore like to express my gratitude for the impact they are leaving in their respective areas.

Bhala gzejjer Maltin ghandna storja u kultura unika. Li tara d-dijaspora Maltija tikkontribwixxi fil-qasam internazzjonali inissel sens ta' kburiya. Il-Maltin kisbu r-reputazzjoni tagħhom bhala poplu ta' suċċess u ta' determinazzjoni. Ninspira ruħi nara Maltin u oħrajn ta' dixxendenza Maltija jagħmlu isem għalihom infushom imma anke għal pajjiżhom. Il-kisbiet, ir-reziljenza, u l-impenn tagħhom biex jippreservaw l-wirt storiku Malti huwa ta' eżempju għal kulhadd. B'hekk nixtieq nuri l-apprezzament tiegħi għall-impatt li qed iħallu floqsma rispettivi tagħhom.

Nixtieq nieħu mument biex naċċenna fuq l-importanza tal-wirt lingwistiku u kulturali Malti. Wieħed mill-modijiet ta' kif nistgħu nikkomunikaw bejnietha huwa permezz tal-lingwa. F'dinja fejn il-globalizzazzjoni tffisser il-prevalenza tal-midja soċjali, għandha tkun t'opportunità sabiex nippreservaw u nipromwovu l-lingwa tagħna. Il-lingwa tagħna hija xempju tal-kuraġġ u s-saħħa li wrew l-antenati tagħna billi żammew l-awtonomija u l-wirt tagħna. Ejjew ngħożžu u nippreservaw dan it-teżor uniku li jgħaqqadna flimkien, li jgħinna nsibu l-għeruq tagħna li jservi bhala simbolu tal-identità nazzjonali tagħna.

Għandna wkoll nieħdu din l-opportunità li kif qegħdin niċcelebraw il-Milied, niċcelebraw ukoll ir-rikkezza tal-kultura Maltija li anki tidwi fit-tradizzjonijiet li għandna marbuta ma' dawn iż-żmenijiet sabiex ngħożžu l-patrimonju Malti u dak li jgħaqqadna bhala Maltin.

Nixtieq ukoll nuri l-apprezzament tiegħi lid-dijaspora Maltija talli laqgħuni waqt iż-żjarat tiegħi f'pajjiżhom. L-ospitalità li rajt gewwa l-Irlanda, ir-Renju Unit, l-Istati Uniti, l-Kanada, l-Emirati Għarab Maqħuda, il-Ġreċja, l-Awstralja, u lil hinn, huwa verament apprezzat. L-entuzjażmu, kif ukoll l-impenn tagħkom biex iżżommu rabta b'saħħitha bejn id-dijaspora u Malta ħallew impressjoni indimentikabbli fuqi. Grazzi talli tkunu ambaxxaturi ta' pajjiżna u talli iżżommu l-valuri li jagħmluna kburi li aħna Maltin.

I would like to take a moment to highlight the importance of Malta's linguistic and cultural heritage. One of the ways in which we can communicate between us is through language. In a world where globalisation means the prevalence of social media, it should serve as an opportunity to preserve and promote our language. Our language is a reflection of the courage and strength our ancestors have shown by retaining our autonomy and heritage. Let us cherish and preserve this unique treasure that brings us together, that helps us find our roots and that serves as a symbol of our national identity.

As we celebrate Christmas, we should also take the opportunity to celebrate our culture, which also resonates with the traditions we have attached to these times, in order to cherish Maltese heritage and what unites us as Maltese.

I would also like to show my appreciation to the Maltese diaspora for welcoming me during my visits to their home country. The hospitality I've seen in Ireland, UK, USA, Canada, United Arab Emirates, Greece, Australia, and beyond, is really appreciated. Your enthusiasm, as well as your commitment to maintaining a strong link between the diaspora and Malta, have left an unforgettable impression on me. Thank you for being ambassadors of our country and for upholding the values that make us proud to be Maltese.

We should also be grateful for the fact that we will be able to spend this Christmas with our loved ones. Whether in the last year we have lost loved ones, or experienced difficult times, for many of us, we have been lucky to live in the safety and security that allows us to be together at this special time. Let us take a moment to think of those who are less fortunate than we are. In the past year, we have seen an increase in conflicts around the world like in Ukraine, Israel and Palestine, among others. It is in these countries that people will be unable to celebrate Christmas as we can.

Once again, I would like to extend my heartfelt wishes for a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Għandna nkunu grati wkoll għall-fatt illi ha nkunu nistgħu nqattgħu dan il-Milied mal-maħbubin tagħna. Kemm jekk f'din l-aħħar sena tlietna xi għeżiež tagħna, jew esperjenzajna żminijiet diffiċli, għal hafna minna, konna xxurtjati illi ngħixu fis-sigurtà li tħallina nkunu flimkien f'dan iż-żmien speċjali. B'hekk aħsbu ftit f'dawk li huma inqas ixxurtjati minna. Fil-fatt din l-aħħar sena, rajna żieda fil-kunflitti madwar id-dinja, fl-Ukrajna, l-Iżrael u l-Palestina, fost oħrajn. Huwa f'dawn il-postijiet fejn in-nies mhux se jkunu jistgħu jiċcelebraw il-Milied kif se nkunu nistgħu aħna.

Mill-ġdid nixtieq niringrazzjakom mill-qalb u nawguralkom Milied hieni u s-Sena t-Tajba.

H.E. Dr. George Vella, President of the Republic of Malta, his gracious wife, Miriam, and his entourage visited the United States and Canada during May of 2023. See issue number 49 (June 2023) for some accounts of that visit to Dearborn and Detroit, Michigan, New York City, and Toronto, Hamilton, and Mississauga, Ontario



Messaġġ ta' xewqat għall-Milied
u għas-Senal-Gdida
mill-Prim Ministru Robert Abela
għall-Maltin li jgħixu barra
Diċembru 2023

Hekk kif qed ningħaqdu flimkien għal dan iż-żmien sabiħ tas-sena, Lydia, Giorgia-Mae u jien nixtiequ nawguraw l-isbaħ xewqat lill-Maltin li jinsabu barra minn xtutna. F'din l-okkażjoni, ningħaqdu flimkien fl-ispiritu tal-Milied, u minkejja l-fruntieri li hemm bejnietna ningħaqdu xorta waħda bħala poplu wiefeħed. Pajjiż li jestendi ferm lil hinn minn xtutu, fl-identità ta' dawk kollha li jhossu rabta ma' Malta.

Hekk kif inħarsu lura lejn is-sena li għaddiet, infakkru r-reżiljenza u s-saħħa li jiddefinuna bħala poplu. Din is-sena kienet sena ta' sfidi għad-dinja kollha iżda pajjiżna baqa' b'saħħtu u kompli jimxi 'l quddiem. Komplejna nwieżnu u nsostnu l-familji u fuq kollox inġibu bidliet favur Malta ġusta. Kienet sena ta' kunflitti, iżda pajjiżna kien vuċi b'saħħitha u kredibbli favur il-paċi u d-djalogu. Pajjiżna stabbilixxa ruħu fil-Kunsill tas-Sigurtà tan-Nazzjonijiet Uniti u laqa' f'pajjiżu anke taħdidiet ta' paċi fl-Ukrajna u laqgħa ta' djalogu bejn potenzi kbar fid-dinja, l-Istati Uniti u ċ-Ċina. Fl-istess waqt, pajjiżna ġie elett biex jippresjedi l-ikbar organizzazzjoni tas-sigurtà fid-dinja, l-OSCE.

Founded on August 1, 1975 in Helsinki, Finland, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) is a regional security-oriented intergovernmental organization comprising member states in Europe, North America, and Asia. Its mandate includes issues such as arms control, the promotion of human rights, freedom of the press, and free and fair elections.

Christmas and New Year's messages
by Prime Minister Robert Abela
for the Maltese living abroad
December 2023



As we come together to celebrate this special time of the year, Lydia, Giorgia-Mae and I would like to extend our warmest greetings and heartfelt wishes to all the Maltese nationals living overseas. On this occasion, we come together in the spirit of Christmas, unity and shared identity, despite the distances between us.

Looking back on 2023, we once again see the resilience and strength that define us as a people. In the face of global challenges, our nation persevered and emerged stronger and more resilient. We remained committed to progressing as a country, whilst steadfastly supporting our families and implementing reforms for a fair and just Malta. Malta taking its seat on the United Nations Security Council was a key highlight: it altered our presence on the world stage and bolstered our voice on shared issues and priorities.

L-identità unika Maltija tnissel sens ta' kburija li tmur lil hinn mill-fruntieri ġeografici. Għalhekk aktar minn qatt qabel inħossni kburi meta nara lid-dijaspora Maltija żżomm it-tradizzjonijiet tagħna u tgħaddi l-wirt kulturali tagħna lill-ġenerazzjoni li jmiss. Il-Milied huwa żmien speċjali biex ngħożžu dawn ir-rabtiet. Din il-festa għandha sinifikat b'saħħtu għal pajjiżna, festa li għandha tradizzjonijiet li huma parti integrali tas-soċjetà Maltija. Il-ħin flimkien mal-familja biex niċċelebraw u nuru apprezzament lejn il-valuri tal-għaqda, l-imħabba, ir-rispett u l-gratitudni huma parti essenzjali tat-tradizzjoni tal-Milied.

Dawn il-valuri huma mħaddna mill-komunitajiet Maltin huma fejn huma. Nixtieq nuri l-apprezzament tiegħi lejn il-komunitajiet Maltin mifruxa madwar id-dinja. Id-dedikazzjoni tagħkom sabiex tippreservaw it-tradizzjonijiet, il-lingwa Maltija u l-valuri Maltin hija tassew ta' min ifaħħarha. Sewwa jekk tkunu qed tiċċelebraw fl-Awstralja, fil-Kanada, fl-Istati Uniti, fir-Renju Unit, jew f'kull rokna oħra tad-dinja, l-impenn tagħkom biex iżżommu l-valuri Maltin ħajjin huwa dak li jagħmel id-dijaspora tagħna daqshekk vibranti u msaħħa. Huwa grazzi għad-dedikazzjoni tagħkom, permezz tan-numru kbir ta' assoċjazzjonijiet, għaqdiet, kif ukoll il-Kunsill tal-Maltin li Jgħixu Barra, li d-dijaspora Maltija tkompli tiffjorixxi.

Dan huwa żmien ta' għaqda, biex naqsmu l-imħabba u l-ferh, u biex noffru l-għajnuna għal dawk fil-bżonn. Ejjew niftakru fl-ispirtu veru tal-Milied u nżommu dan l-ispirtu magħna matul is-sena li ġejja. Matul dan l-istaġun tal-festi, inhegġigkom sabiex tingħaqdu mal-Maltin li jgħixu fil-komunitajiet tagħkom. Id-dijaspora tagħna m'hijjex biss kollezzjoni ta' individwi. Hija komunità magħquda li turi biċ-ċar ir-rabtiet dejjiema tas-solidarjetà Maltija. Minn qalbi nawguralkom Milied hieni u sena ġdida mimlija riżq.

Robert Ablea, KUOM, a lawyer and politician, has been serving as prime minister of the Republic of Malta and leader of the Labour Party since 2020. By right, as Prime Minister of Malta, he became a Companion of Honour of the National Order of Merit (KUOM) in 2020. This fourth grade, Companion of Honour of the National Order of Merit, is the highest honour that the government of Malta may confer upon its citizens.

Moreover, we actively facilitated peace talks on the war in Ukraine as we also played a pivotal role in fostering diplomatic relations by hosting two global powers - the United States and China. Furthermore, our successful election to preside over the largest security organisation in the world, the OSCE, reflects further our commitment to international stability and cooperation.

Malta's unique identity instills a sense of pride that extends beyond geographical borders. I am truly proud to see Maltese diaspora around the world maintaining our traditions, passing on our cultural heritage from generation to generation, and creating a strong link with their adopted homes. Christmas is a special time to cherish these connections and appreciate the diversity that enriches our global Maltese family. Christmas has a deep meaning to our nation, and our traditions are a testament to its importance to our society. Coming together with family to celebrate and cherish the values of love, respect and gratitude is fundamental to the Christmas tradition, and is an essential part of Maltese values.

These values are endorsed by all Maltese communities no matter where they may be, and for this, I want to express my gratitude to the Maltese communities around the world. Your dedication to preserving our customs, language, and values is truly commendable. Whether you are celebrating in Australia, Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, or any other corner of the globe, your commitment to keeping Maltese values alive is what makes our diaspora so vibrant and strong. It is through your dedication, such as the multiple associations and organisations - including the Council for the Maltese Living Abroad, that the Maltese diaspora continues to flourish.

This season is a time to come together, to share love and joy, and to extend a helping hand to those in need. Let us remember the true spirit of Christmas and carry it with us throughout the year ahead. During this festive season, I encourage you to connect with fellow Maltese in your communities. Our diaspora is not just a gathering of individuals: it is a tight-knit community that reflects the enduring bonds of Maltese solidarity. I take this opportunity to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year.

**Messaġġ irrekordjat ta' xewqat
għall-Milied u għas-Sena l-Ġdida
mill-Onor. Ian Borg għall-Maltin li
jgħixu barra
Diċembru 2023**



Din l-aħħar sena kienet waħda ttimbrata minn numru ta' sfidi globali kbar u kumplessi. B'hekk irridu nirrikonoxxu li fi żminijiet bħal dawn, huwa importanti li l-komunità globali tingħaqad wara messaġġ ewlieni favur il-paċi, is-sigurtà u s-solidarjetà internazzjonali.

Il-gwerra ta' aggressjoni tar-Russja kontra l-Ukrajna u l-kunflitt li għaddej bejn l-Iżrael u l-grupp tal-Ħamas biddlu x-xenarju tad-dinja. L-għajta ta' appoġġ għal dawk li qed jiġu milquta, fosthom dawk li qeġħdin jaffaċċjaw ingustizzja, u kif ukoll in-numru ta' rġiel, nisa u tfal li ħajjithom giet affettwata mill-konsegwenzi tal-gwerra, huma l-istampi li sawru s-sena elfejn u tlieta u għoxrin.

Il-kisba kbira li wettaqna f'din l-aħħar sena, bħala membri mhux permanenti tal-Kunsill tas-Sigurtà tan-Nazzjonijiet Magħquda, hija xhieda tad-dedikazzjoni ta' pajjiżna biex nipromwovu l-ġustizzja, l-ugwaljanza u d-diplomazija fuq livell globali. Minkejja ċ-ċokon ta' dan il-pajjiż, Malta irnexxilha tkun fuq quddiem fid-diskussjoni ta' dawn il-kwistjonijiet internazzjonali. Is-Sena elfejn u tlieta u għoxrin, għalhekk, kienet sena fejn stajna nagħmlu impatt sinifikanti, aktar minn qatt qabel.

Quddiem dawn il-kwistjonijiet, bqajna ddeterminati sabiex inżommu l-impenn tagħna favur il-paċi u l-istabbiltà internazzjonali. Din il-pożizzjoni tħallina nikkontribwixxu b'mod attiv fid-diskors u r-riżoluzzjonijiet li jindirizzaw dawn il-kunflitti, naħdmu favur is-soluzzjonijiet diplomatiċi li jirrispettaw id-drittijiet u l-aspirazzjonijiet tal-partijiet involuti.

**Christmas and New Year's greetings
by Hon. Ian Borg
for the Maltese living abroad.
December 2023**

The past year has been stamped by a number of major and complex global challenges. We must therefore recognise that in times like these, it is important that the global community unites behind a key message in favour of international peace, security and solidarity.

Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and the ongoing conflict between Israel and the Hamas group have changed the world landscape. The cry of support for those being affected, including those facing injustice, as well as the number of men, women and children whose lives have been affected by the consequences of the war, are the images that shaped the year two thousand and twenty-three.

Our great achievement in the past year, as non-permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, is a testament to our country's dedication to promoting justice, equality and diplomacy globally. Despite the small size of this country, Malta has managed to be at the forefront of the discussion of these international issues. The year two thousand and twenty-three, therefore, was a year where we were able to make a significant impact, more than ever.

In the midst of these pressing issues, we have remained determined to maintain our commitment to international peace and stability. This position allows us to actively contribute to the discourse and resolutions addressing these conflicts, working towards diplomatic solutions that respect the rights and aspirations of the parties involved.

Recognising the challenges faced by the global community, it is crucial to highlight the significance of the Maltese diaspora. We are working towards the concept of Global Malta, where Malta exists not only as a physical country restricted to our archipelago, but that Malta would be interpreted as an identity that exists wherever the Maltese are.

Filwaqt li nirrikonoxxu l-isfidi li taffaċċja l-komunità globali, huwa kruċjali li nenfasizzaw is-sinifikat tad-dijaspora Maltija. Qegħdin naħdmu lejn il-kunċett ta' Malta Globali, fejn Malta teżisti mhux biss bħala pajjiż fiżiku ristrett għall-arċipelagu tagħna, imma li Malta tkun interpretata bħala identità li teżisti kull fejn jinsabu l-Maltin.

Il-preżenza tagħkom bħala simboli tal-identità Maltija madwar id-dinja għandha rwol kruċjali biex inrawmu l-paċi u rieda tajba. Hafna Maltin madwar id-dinja wrew bil-provi dan l-irwol. Għalhekk, sew jekk fil-kontribuzzjoni lejn il-kawżi umanitarji, fil-ġlieda favur il-paċi jew anki billi komplejtu żżommu r-rabtiet b'saħħithom ma' art twelidkom, intom bħala dijaspora Maltija, iżżommu post uniku u essenzjali fl-identità globali tagħna. B'hekk, ma nistgħux ma nirrikonoxxux u nuru l-apprezzament tagħna għax-xogħol tal-Kunsill tal-Maltin li Jgħixu Barra, li kelli l-pjaċir niltaqa' magħhom hawn Malta f'Settembru li għadda, fejn il-ħidma tiegħu jiżgura rappreżentanza tal-kwistjonijiet li jikkonċernaw il-komunitajiet li jirrappreżenta u lil hinn minnhom. Iżda nixtieq nestendi dan l-awgurju anki lill-assocjazzjonijiet u komunitajiet oħra tal-Maltin madwar id-dinja għax-xogħol imprezzabbli li qegħdin tagħmlu fost il-Maltin.

Hekk kif se nibdew dawn iż-żminijiet ta' festi, ma ninsewx daww kollha affettwati minn kunflitti, diżastri naturali u l-effetti tat-tibdil fil-klima madwar id-dinja. Nispera li l-ispirtu tal-Milied jinspira t-tama għall-paċi u r-rikonċiljazzjoni. Minkejja d-distanzi fiżiċi li jifirduna, l-identità komuni tagħna bħala individwi Maltin tgħaqqadna b'mod uniku u profund.

Biex nagħlaq, nixtieq nestendi x-xewqat sbieħ lil kull wieħed u waħda minnkomm għal Milied hieni mimli tama, imħabba u paċi. Nispera illi s-sena li ġejja tkun waħda ta' suċċess, prosperità u għaqqda kontinwa għad-dijaspora Maltija. Nirringrazzjakom u nawguralkom *Is-Sena t-Tajba*.

Your presence as symbols of the Maltese identity around the world plays a crucial role in fostering peace and goodwill. Many Maltese people around the world have proven this role. Therefore, whether in contributing to humanitarian causes, fighting for peace or continuing to maintain strong ties with your homeland, you as a Maltese diaspora, hold a unique and essential place in our global identity. Therefore, we cannot but recognise and express our appreciation for the work of the Council of Maltese Living Abroad, which I was pleased to meet here in Malta last September, since its work ensures representation of the issues concerning the communities it represents and beyond. But I would also like to extend this wish to the associations and other communities of the Maltese around the world for the valuable work they are doing among the Maltese.

As we begin this festive season, let us not forget all those affected by conflicts, natural disasters and the effects of climate change around the world. I hope that the spirit of Christmas inspires hope for peace and reconciliation. Despite the physical distances that divide us, our common identity as Maltese individuals unites us in a unique and profound way.

To conclude, I would like to extend my heartfelt wishes to each and every one of you for a Merry Christmas full of hope, love and peace. I hope that the coming year will be one of success, prosperity, and continued unity for the Maltese diaspora. I thank you and may you have a Happy New Year.

By early 1986, the Maltese Canadian Social Club of Guelph, Ontario, apparently had an indoor hockey club known as the Guelph Maltese Falcons. A notice appeared in the February 1986 issue of the Club's newsletter stating that the Falcons would be playing the Guelph Platers, on the evening of Thursday, February 27th, in the gymnasium of John F. Ross Collegiate Vocational Institute.

**CHRISTMAS COSTUME &
UGLY SWEATER DJ PARTY**

Tanya Caruana

We had such a great time celebrating at the Maltese American Benevolent Society, Detroit, on the evening of Saturday, December 16th and seeing all the creative costumes!





First prize went to the Grinch - Sonya Regalado-Perez



We also celebrated Alice Quesada Perez's 50th!



Alice on far left

Merry Christmas everyone! Thank you for supporting the Detroit Cub. 🌲 🌲 🎅

A MALTESE PRESEPJU IN THE BAY AREA

Ambassador Godfrey Xuereb

The Maltese diaspora in the San Francisco Bay Area once again has a Maltese-built *presepju* (nativity creche) on display for all to admire. This creche was one of 10 works of art that were previously exhibited at the Museum of the Bible in Washington, DC. It depicts a typical folkloric agricultural village scene with different old trades and costumes.

Through the initiative of the diaspora, who saw the great Maltese heritage value of this work of art, this *presepju* was shipped to the Bay Area instead of going back to Malta.

The cognizance, understanding, and acceptance of the Maltese heritage on the West Coast of the United States is of utmost importance to the Maltese Americans in the Bay Area and this *presepju* will greatly enhance this effort.



The *presepju* fully set up in place



**Fr. Charles Puthota,
pastor of St. Elizabeth Parish, San Francisco,
blesses the *presepju***



READERS' COMMENTS

I enjoy looking and reading through these. A lot of work on your part.

Miriam Allistone, Ontario

Another amazing newsletter – thank you so much – I just love reading every article and there is always so much to know and take in.

Marion, Brisbane, Australia

A few words to thank you for the work you do in keeping us informed each month. Keep up the good work.

Tom Azzopardi

I just received your newsletter and wanted to thank you for the beautiful and informative newsletter...I'm looking forward to the newsletter in the new year.

Alf Mallia

A wonderful and quite a bumper issue for the month of December 2023. You are doing a great service by promoting and keeping alive Maltese traditions and family connections. This is the life of a nation with a small island but certainly has a big heart. We spread to all corners of the globe and very happily settled and made our homes, in countries of adoption like Canada, USA and United Kingdom and many other European countries. Keep up the good work dear friend.

George Stagno Navarra, Malta

I just finished reading the December issue of "The Maltese Presence." You do amazing work! Great reporting and journaling.

Margaret Purdy, Michigan

You've been a busy guy....This issue is huge....On top of the Malta trip, I don't know how you do it.

Rena Xuereb, Michigan

**DOCTOR OF LITERATURE DEGREE
CONFERRED UPON RENOWNED
MALTESE-AMERICAN CARTOONIST,
JOE SACCO**

Dan Brock

In the late afternoon of Friday, November 17th, Joe Sacco was awarded the degree of Doctor of Literature (Honoris Causa) by the University of Malta.

The ceremony took place at the Church of the Jesuits in Valletta. Among those in attendance was the President of Malta, George Vella.

Dr. Gilbert Calleja of the Faculty of Arts, delivered the orations for Joe Sacco.

Dr. Calleja commented on the genius of work, “whose contributions and ‘funny’ cartoons depicted the world through a point of view that separated Sacco from his counterparts” and “concluded by thanking Sacco for being the ‘funny-looking guy’ he is, reiterating the impetus of his publications that often unearthed the strengths in being vulnerable, inept, and lost.”



On Wednesday, November 15th, at 6:00 p.m., the Aula Magna of the Valletta Campus hosted a public talk “In Conversation with Joe Sacco” which was moderated by Gloria Lauri-Lucente, Head of the Department of Italian and coordinator of the M.A. in Film Studies, and Fabrizio Foni, senior lecturer in Italian and Coordinator of the study-unit Celluloid Balloons. This talk was organized by HUMS, the Humanities, Medicine and Science Platform of the University of Malta.

Joe was born in Malta in October 2, 1960, to Leonard and Carmen Sacco. The following year, the family immigrated to Melbourne, Australia before relocating in Los Angeles, California in 1972.

Sacco graduated with a BA in journalism from the University of Oregon in 1983.

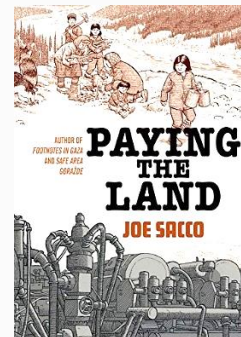
In 1986, he started working for Fantagraphics, one of the most distinguished American publishers of independent comics and cartoons.

Over the following years, his critically acclaimed strips and graphic novels focusing mostly on war-torn countries and geopolitical issues, won him the name of father of comics journalism. Sacco received a Guggenheim Fellowship, in April 2001, to help further his work. In 2012, he earned the PEN Literary Award in Graphic Literature for Outstanding Body of Work.

He has travelled to and lived in Europe and the Middle East. This in turn has provided much material for his works. While living in Malta, his first professional cartooning work, a series of romance comics, was published. This included *Imħabba Vera* (True Love), one of the first art-comics in the Maltese language.

He is best known for his work in comics journalism, in particular in the books *Palestine* (1996), *Safe Area Goražde* (2000), *The Fixer* (2003), and *Footnotes in Gaza: A Graphic Novel* (2009). This latter work earned him the 2010 Ridenhour Book Prize.

His 2020 work, *Paying the Land*, discusses climate change and the indigenous Dene community of Northwest Canada who, according to Sacco, “were subject to cultural genocide by means of compulsory residential schooling, treaties, and capitalism.”



Closer to home, owing to other commitments, I was unable to see him when he took part in London, Ontario’s first Words Fest, held on the last weekend in October 2014. Here, he appears to have attracted the largest crowd of any guest at the Fest.

Sacco currently lives in Portland, Oregon.

MUSCAT COOKIE DAY

Margaret Muscat Purdy

The 38th annual Muscat Cookie Day 2023, held at the Maltese American Community Club (MACC) in Dearborn on Saturday, December 16th, is in the books.

This day originally was held in the basement of my mom and dad's place but, over the years, we outgrew their home. Being a trustee of the MACC, I was able to arrange the rental of the lower level of the Club for this annual event where we carry on this Muscat family tradition.

This year's Cookie Day turned out to be a very productive, busy, and fun day from beginning to end.

Of course, there was the making and baking of cookies.











In addition to cookie making and baking there were kids doing crafts and playing and the watching of college games on TV for the older set.



There was *ħobż biż-żejt* for lunch and DIB pizza for dinner. Thanks Dad!





Some just had to take a break from it all



CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PARTY

Bonnie Sparks

The Maltese American Benevolent Society of Detroit held its Children's Christmas Party on the afternoon of Sunday, December 17th.











THE HISTORY OF MALTA DAY IN TORONTO

Kt. Cdr. Frank Savona, O.S.J.

Editor's Note: The following, with certain editorial changes, is taken from Forum Melitense, vol. 4, no. 1 (Winter 1977-1978), pages 22-23.

When in 1966 I was still the President of the Maltese-Canadian Society of Toronto, Malta was celebrating the 400th anniversary of the founding of Valletta, its capital city. It was then that I conceived the idea that the Maltese flag be raised at Toronto's City Hall (Ontario, Canada) in commemoration of that auspicious occasion.

The majority of the members on my executive felt that the authorities at City Hall in Toronto would never give the necessary permission. The Rev Fr. Lawrence Bonavia, who at the time was the Pastor of St. Paul the Apostle Church and Spiritual Director of the Society, had the same apprehension on the grounds that there were so many ethnic groups in the city, none of which had ever raised, whatever the occasion, the national flag of the respective country of origin.

Notwithstanding the negative response I had received from my own co-nationals, a response which for obvious reasons was only natural, I stuck to my decision, and without the least hesitation contacted the Mayor's Office, and respectfully asked for an appointment with His Worship. The request was granted.

A delegation of the Executive and myself were courteously received by His Worship Philip Givens, Q.C., the then Mayor of Toronto. We submitted to him a brief that explained in detail our project. Discussions on this exceptional petition soon followed between the Mayor and City Hall Officials.

When we eventually left the Mayor's Office, I thoroughly analysed the situation and came to the conclusion that somehow or other the project would be approved. Without anymore ado, I sent in an order to the manufacturer in Hamrun, Malta for a standard Maltese flag.

In early June, 1966, I was jubilant when the following letter from the Mayor's Office was received at the Society's Headquarters for me personally:

Mayor's Office – Toronto – June 2, 1966.

Chev. Frank Savona, O.S.J.
President
The Maltese-Canadian Society of Toronto, Canada
5254 Dundas St., W.,
Toronto 9.

Dear Mr. Savona: -

I have before me your letter of April 27th., suggesting that on the occasion of the Quadricentennial of Valletta, the City of Toronto declare Thursday, September 8th "Maltese Day" in Toronto; that the Maltese National Flag be displayed at City Hall, and that members of your Society call at my office for the purpose of delivering the flag. As the date of the celebration is some months away, I cannot, at this time, set a definite hour for the appointment, I suggest, as an alternative, that you deliver the flag to Mr. H.H. Rogers, our Commissioner of City Property, a few days in advance of September 8th., in order that he may make the necessary arrangements to raise the flag on the day of celebraton.

I am also pleased that approval is given to the designation of September 8th as "Maltese Day", and in accordance with City Policy enclose a Public Notice to this effect for such use as you may wish to make of it.

Yours sincerely,
Philip G. Givens
Mayor.

City of Toronto – Public Notice "MALTESE DAY" Thursday, September 8th., 1966

On September 8th., the Maltese-Canadian Society of Toronto will celebrate the Quadricentennial of Valletta, the Capital City of Malta, and those who hold a special spot in their heart for the little Island will mark the event by various means.

While the City of Toronto is not favoured to have an abundance of people of Maltese descent in her midst, she is nevertheless proud of the Maltese who have made their home here, and in their own individual way constitute our way of life.

In order to suitably recognize the contribution
15 011 i Giuseppe Fenech Bonici, b.
17??

the people of Malta have made to our City and way of life, the City of Toronto has designated September 8th as "Maltese Day" and urges everyone to take part in the celebrations being held on this occasion.

City Hall
Toronto
September 8, 1966

C.E. Norris
City Clerk

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PARTY





Maltese American Benevolent Society, Inc. Detroit