



The Voice of the Maltese

(driven by the voice of its readers)

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168

fortnightly magazine for the Diaspora

December 5, 2017

Republic Street's new look for Christmas a great attraction (see page 5)



*The seven-metre
Mdina Glass Christ-
mas tree made with
over 2,000 hand
made glass baubles of
varying colours and
sizes in front of Par-
liament Building at
City Gate*

Q. My mother has dementia and is in an aged care facility. I have just recently found another aged care facility that caters mainly for people with dementia. Am I able to move my mother from one facility to another and what happens to the Refundable Accommodation Deposit that I paid to the current facility?

A. Yes, if the new facility has room and is able to take your mother in, you most certainly can move your mother into this new facility. The refundable accommodation deposit (RAD) will be transferred directly to the new facility, but you need to confirm the amount of the refundable accommodation deposit requested by this new aged care facility. You may find that you may need to add an amount to the original RAD paid as this is a specialised facility with extra care provided to the residents.

Q. I have recently become a widow and I am aware that I will now lose my age pension in full as my assets will be well over the limit. I am receiving a carer allowance for looking after my son who has a disability. Will I be losing the carer allowance as well?

A. The Carer Allowance is not means tested and therefore if you are still looking after your son you should still continue to receive this allowance

Q. We are full age pensioners and have been living in Australia for the last 30 years. We have decided to return to Malta to retire there. Will our age pension be affected?

A. Your pension will most certainly drop as you will not be receiving any of the al-

lowances. Also for you to receive the full age pension you need to have been living in Australia 35 years so your pension will be calculated on 30 years.

You would, I believe, be selling your house in Australia and purchasing a property in Malta. This may leave you with surplus funds that would then be treated as assets. You need to take all of this in consideration prior to making this move so that you will be well informed and prepared for the outcome.

Q. We have been in Australia for the last 20 years and still own our house in Gozo. We have been using the house as a holiday home as we have been going back every couple of years for a few weeks holiday. We are planning to retire from the work force in six months' time as we will then be age pension age. Should we inform Centrelink of this house as it is our holiday home and not an investment property?

This is a monthly service offered by The Voice of the Maltese in which Marie Louise Muscat from the Fiducian Financial Services helps our readers understand the complexities associated with financial planning. If you need more advice send an email to Marie Louise via: maltesevoice@gmail.com.



A. Yes, one of the questions in the application form when you come to apply for the age pension is whether you have any other properties apart from your residential home. This includes properties overseas.

This holiday home, although you have not been generating any income, is still an asset and needs to be disclosed. You will need to get a professional to value the property for you, and then provide this information to Centrelink with your application form.

Q. I am 88 years of age and have a portfolio of direct shares and some money in the bank. My husband passed away five years ago and I feel that I do not know what to do with these shares. My accountant advised me a few years back that I no longer need to lodge a tax return and so I have not done so. Can I sell these shares or would I be up for a large sum in tax?

A. As you are not interested and not knowledgeable on shares you are probably better off selling them. However I would recommend that you see an accountant again before doing so in order for him to calculate your capital gains and/or losses and also to advise you on what capital gains tax you would be up for.

You should also ask him to lodge a claim for the franking credits that you would have received over the last few years had you lodged a tax return. Although you do not necessarily need to lodge a tax return any more, yet you are entitled to claim a refund on your franking credits.

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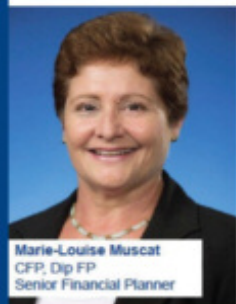
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Influx of foreign workers helps Malta to become multicultural

JOSEPHCUTAJAR

Recently I received a small parcel by post and when I thanked the girl that delivered it to me in Maltese, she answered back in English. I thought it strange as I was used to conversing with previous post persons in my native language, which is Maltese. When I asked if she was a foreigner she said she comes from Moldova. We talked for a while about the country that I visited years back, and then she left.

About an hour later I left home to travel to Valletta by bus. The driver who greeted me proved to be Italian. After finishing my errand in the city I visited a cafeteria and the waiter who took my order said he was Spanish from the city of Leon. I have also met other young waiters from Britain. The chef, owner of a restaurant I visited some days ago is Italian. No surprise really as restaurants in Malta owed by Italians have been mushrooming all over the island.

It is also very easy to find popular Chinese food restaurants owned and run by Chinese chefs serving food from their country. We also have restaurants specifically serving Indian, Russian and Arabic food prepared by chefs hailing from the respective different countries.

I also discovered a shop in Sliema selling Bulgarian food products that is run and owned by a Bulgarian.

A friend who works in the i-gaming industry tells me that most of his colleagues are foreign, coming from Britain, Switzerland, France, Sweden, Belgium and Italy. Another close relative who works in a company that leases private jets tells me that many of her colleagues are Hungarian. In hospital in one of the wards I also met a senior nurse from Romania.

At a construction site a couple of blocks away from my residence most of the workers are also foreign. There are Serbians (plenty of them), Croats, Romanians, Libyans, Eritreans, Syrians and Egyptians. Way back in the summer I also discovered Somalis working as beach boys.

Sometimes, boarding a bus in Malta could be an experience. Besides tourists of different nationalities, that use public transport to visit the sites, one has gotten used to meeting the same workers coming from different countries commuting by bus on a daily basis and at specific times. Many of them arrived in Malta as refugees and are now part of the community.

There is an influx of workers in Malta, and yes, as a result, Malta has become multicultural, with foreign nationals of all colours and creeds making a living – some better than others – on the island, trying their best

to integrate with the Maltese community and the environment, and as best they could also form part of the local scene.

Malta's economy keeps growing at a fast pace; therefore it needs a constant supply of workers, particularly in service industries that need qualified personnel that the local scene fails to provide. So their only solution is to import workers. In the last couple of years demand for labour has been outstripping local supply, especially in the sectors of tourism, health, construction, accounting, IT and communication as well as some other professional services.

As some employers keep finding it difficult to get locals to fill the job vacancies, they need to import even more workers from abroad, therefore they keep clamouring for a relaxation of the regulations that permit non-EU citizens to work in Malta.

A position paper outlining the Malta Employers' Association, MEA, strategic plan to address the demographic challenges facing Malta reveals that around 37,000 or 18% of the current workforce is foreign.

The document says the figure is necessary to sustain economic growth. It would even continue to grow as authorities adopt a more open door policy to foreign employees to combat labour shortages that are prevalent across all economic sectors.

Over the past few years Malta attracted thousands of foreigners to also augment local workers. There has been a sense of frustration among employers seeking enough workers. In recent years the government maximised the potential of the Maltese labour force with a number of measures, yet thousands more foreign workers are needed to meet employers' demands.

The MEAs document also noted that economic growth, the influx of foreigners, together with the IIP scheme, are boosting domestic demand for goods and services which in turn is generating business opportunities for example in retailing and property; it could also affect others negatively, through rising rental rates for example.

At the end of 2016 data had shown that there were 34,000 foreign workers, 25,115 of them coming from EU or EEA countries, while 9,042 were third country nationals.



Of the total, 20,380 of the foreign workers were men and 13,776 women.

At the time, the highest number of the workers came from Italy (5,724), the UK (4,218), Bulgaria (2,187), the Phillipines (1,625), Hungary (1,454), Romania (1,407), Serbia (1,380) Another 283 were registered immigrants from China, 107 from the USA, 443 from India, and 326 from Libya. There was also a worker from Saudi Arabia, one from the UAE, one from Mongolia, two from Uganda, and three from North Korea.

With investment on the increase, the employers believe foreign workers are the engine of growth. No wonder the numbers keep rising. The coming year should see even more foreign workers, that are desperately needed to meet the demand.

The rage of unemployment in Malta is negligible. NSO figures for September show the number of unemployed stood at 2,472, a 22.9 per cent decrease compared to the corresponding month last year.

Based on the latest United Nations estimates, the current population of Malta as of November 23 last, is 431,332, that is, equivalent to 0.01% of the total world population. The population density of the island, with a total land area of 320 Km² is 1346 per Km² (3,487 people per mi²).

Malta, where 96.2 % of the population is urban (414,397 people in 2017), ranks number 175 in the list of countries (and dependencies) by population.

The median age in Malta is 41.2 years.

Static shows that in the localities of St Paul's Bay, Birzebbuga, and Sliema, foreigners accounted for more than 20 per cent of total population, while the localities of Santa Lucia, Żejtun and Żabbar amongst other localities had the lowest percentage of foreigners out of the total population residing in each of the localities.

Section 44 of the Australian constitution and the politicians

An unprecedented number of Australian politicians have either been booted from the 45th Parliament or had to fend off questions about their eligibility. So far, 11 sitting or prospective politicians have fallen foul of section 44 of the constitution, ending their political careers for the time being.

ABC political reporter *Matthew Doran* writes that the politicians didn't all get into trouble over the same issue. There are five categories in section 44 that set out who can be a candidate for the federal parliament and – more importantly – who can't.

Citizenship

Put simply, **section 44(1)** of the constitution says someone can't be a dual national and sit in parliament. These politicians are gone:

- **BARNABY JOYCE** (Nationals) — was a dual national with New Zealand.
- **FIONA NASH** (Nationals) — was a dual national with the UK.
- **MALCOLM ROBERTS** (One Nation) — was a dual national with the UK.
- **SCOTT LUDLAM** (Greens) — was a dual national with New Zealand.
- **LARISSA WATERS** (Greens) — was a dual national with Canada.
- **STEPHEN PARRY** (Liberal) — was a dual national with the UK.
- **JOHN ALEXANDER** (Liberal) — believed he could have been a dual national with the UK.
- **JACQUI LAMBIE** (Jacqui Lambie Network) — was a dual national with the UK.

There is swag of others also under a citizenship cloud.

Criminal record

Anyone with a criminal conviction carrying a jail term of one year or more and cannot be elected to parliament, under **section 44(2)** of the constitution.

- **ROD CULLETON** (One Nation/In-

dependent) — had been convicted of theft ahead of nominating for the 2016 election. The conviction was later annulled.

- The same Mr Culleton was booted from parliament because of his criminal record, but he was also declared a bankrupt. Section 44(3) of the constitution bans people declared bankrupt or insolvent from holding office.

Office of profit under the crown

Prospective politicians cannot hold "an office of profit under the crown" and be elected to parliament, under **section 44(4)** of the constitution. In other words, public servants have to quit their jobs to run for office.

- **HOLLIE HUGHES** (Liberal) — was in line to replace Fiona Nash in the Senate, but was also ruled ineligible because she took a government job after the election and before the Senate recount. There were also questions raised about
- **Andrew Bartlett** (Greens) — worked for a university at the time of nominating for the 2016 federal election.
- **STEVE MARTIN** (Jacqui Lambie Network) — was a local council mayor at the time of the election.

Direct or indirect financial interest

Section 44(5) of the constitution bans politicians from benefitting financially from their role, either directly or indirectly. That could mean they have a company that gets money through government contracts.

- **BOB DAY** (Family First) — a business partner owned the building his electorate office was in, but rent proceeds from the Commonwealth went to another business owned by Mr Day. There were questions raised about
- **DAVID GILLESPIE** (Nationals) — owns a suburban shopping centre, and one tenant is an Australia Post outlet.



There are five categories in section 44 that set out who can serve the federal parliament and who can't. (ABC News: Jed Cooper)

- **BARRY O'SULLIVAN** (Nationals) — his family businesses have benefited from state and Commonwealth government construction contracts.

Australian Federal politicians are paid pretty well — the average backbencher earns a little over \$200,000 and that is before one adds on their entitlements and superannuation. When a member or senator is disqualified, the Finance Department will calculate how much they have earned over their parliamentary career, and ask them to repay it.

But by convention, the government of the day almost always waives the debt on request.

Back in 1907, the High Court ruled that any votes made on legislation still stand, even after a member is booted from parliament. So a disqualified member's service is still recognised.

Even though they were not supposed to be there, they were still doing their job.

As the then special minister of state Scott Ryan said when dealing with disqualified Family First senator Bob Day, it would be unfair for the Commonwealth to go after him for his debt given that he performed his duties "in good faith"



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E-counting to replace manual counting at elections in Malta

For the first time, as of the 2019 European Parliament Elections in Malta, the island's Electoral Commission electronic ballot counting (e-counting) would replace manual counting of ballot papers. The same procedure would be used for Local Council elections, and any subsequent General, European Parliament or Local Council Election, and any casual election until 2024.

Idox plc has been chosen to deliver end-to-end services, software and technical infrastructure to provide electronic ballot counting in support of the elections and any casual election. The contract is valued at €2.2 million.

The 2019 European Parliament Elections in Malta will result in the election of six members of the European Parliament, whilst the Local Council Elections will elect approximately 450 councillors across Malta's 68 Local Councils. The election of members serving on the Administrative Committee of 16 hamlets will also take place.

As Malta uses the Single Transferable Vote (STV) system, it is possible for the electorate to vote for every



candidate in order of preference. Due to this complexity, the manual counting of ballot papers can take any-

Mr Joseph Church (left) exchanges the signed contract with Mr Andrew Riley (Idox)

where between three to four days before the counting process is completed.

Through the use of an e-counting solution developed by Idox, the scanning of ballot papers will take hours and calculations just minutes thus improving the accuracy and auditability of results.

Joseph Church, Chief Electoral Commissioner said: "The award of this contract marks a significant step forward in the preparations for the 2019 elections. Over the past eighteen months, the Electoral Commission has worked closely with its stakeholders to develop an e-counting system specification, to ensure the delivery of an accurate, effective and transparent e-counting system that will meet all expectations."

He added that the next 12 months would be of vital importance, as the Electoral Commission would engage in a robust testing regime of the e-counting system in advance of the elections in 2019. "This will provide confidence for the electorate, political parties, candidates and all those with an interest in Maltese elections," Mr Church said.

Caption to front-page photo

Republic Street's new look for Christmas a great attraction

The Valletta 2018 Foundation ushered in the Christmas spirit a month ahead of this year's Xmas activities, on November 25, in Valletta by switching on the Republic

Street Christmas lights. This year's installation, also with the help of the association of the business community in Republic Street, is designed on a baroque style in order to complement Valletta's architecture. It is the work of an Italian company, Faniuolo Illuminazione.

The lighting has become a great attraction in itself and thanks to it and the current economic stability in Malta, shops in Valletta, particularly those in Republic Street, have been noticing an increase in their sales. The presence of people in Valletta, especially when the lights are on after sunset has added to the Christmas spirit. The beautiful atmosphere is a great pull to the city that has come to life with this and countless other projects undertaken in the past few years.

Many visitors to the Maltese capital have been making favourable comments about the installation, particularly the lights in the form of a dome in front of the Law Court building.

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Christmas spirit: Lighted glass Christmas tree made with over 2,000 hand-made glass baubles of varying colours and sizes in front of Parliament Building at City Gate

JOSEPH CALLEJA – l-akbar attur Malti tal-films



Ghal xi raġuni jew oħra l-attur famuż Malti Joseph Calleja, mwieled ir-Rabat, ma tantx jidher li huwa marbut ma' dan il-lokal li tant hu mżejjen b'nies prominenti. Flief għal Ras (bust tiegħu quddiem il-Bank of Valetta fuq is-Saqqajja f'it wiehed isib dwaru. Anke l-post innifsu mhux wisq xieraq għax ikun mimli ħmieg tal-ħamiem. Il-monument ta' Joseph Calleja kien

inizjattiva personali ta' żagħżuġ, Eman Bonnici (sa fejn naf jien mhux mir-Rabat) li kien mar għand l-iskultur Anton Agius u talbu jskolpilu r-Ras tal-attur bravu Joseph Calleja. Għall-bidu Anton tħasseb għax l-inizjattiva kienet ġeja minn ġuvnott zġħir ħafna fl-eta'. Izda Anton (bħas-soltu) ma qalx le, u mn'alla.

Ir-Ras saret u tpoġġiet quddiem id-dar fejn twieled Joseph Calleja li minflokha llum hemm il-fergħa tal-BOV fuq is-Saqqajja.

Għadni niftakar meta dan il-monument tal-attur kien ġie inawgurat, f'Otubru tal-2005, mill-President ta' Malta dak iż-żmien, l-Eċċ Tiegħu Censu Tabone li kien jiġi mill-istess Calleja. Dakinhar kont ipprezentajt is-serata b'kitba ta' wiehed mill-aqwa kritiċi tal-films f'Malta, illum mejjet, Lino Cassar.

Joseph Calleja (isem shih tiegħu Joseph Alexander Caesar Her-stall Vincent) kien l-akbar attur Malti ta' kull żmien. Huwa twieled ir-Rabat fl-4 t'Awwissu tal-1897 u għex l-aktar f'Tas-Sliema. Miet ta' 78 sena.

Joseph Calleja kien ukoll kantant u bħala attur ħadem kemm fi Broadway kif ukoll f'films Amerikani. Mhux biss, imma ħadem ma ħafna atturi kbar u magħrufa ta' Hollywood, fosthom John Wayne, William Holden, Errol Flynn, Rita Hayworth, Mae West, Bette Davis, Jane Russel, Mario Lanza, Charlton Heston, Dean Martin, Jerry Lewis, Orson Welles, Tyrone Power, Alan Ladd u Anthony Quinn.

Għalkemm Calleja ħadem f'aktar minn 50 film kien dejjem jgħid li jippreferi l-palk miċ-ċinema. Bejn l-1926 u l-1945 fi Broadway kien meqjus bħala 'a bright light' u deher f'ħafna drammi ta' suċċess.

Dak inhar tal-prezentazzjoni u l-kxif tal-monument ta' Joseph Calleja kien tqassam ktejjeb zġħir ta' tagħrif dwar l-artist. Kien



L-attur Malti Joseph Calleja f'poster tal-film tal-1937, *Man of the People*



fih lista twila ta' films li ħa sehem filhom, ħafna minnhom f'partijiet ewlenin.

Fl-1914 meta kien għad kellu 17 il-sena Joseph Calleja ħalla Malta u beda jdur mal-Ewropa jkanta f'kafeteriji u fi swali tal-mużika ta' għadd ta' bliet kapitali li kienu mifnija bl-ewwel gwerra. Iktar tard mar ukoll ikanta fi New York. Kien hemm, li ta għat-teatru.

Fl-1931 Calleja iffirma kuntratt mal-Metro Goldwyn Mayer, MGM, f'Hollywood fejn beda karriera b'suċċess fl-industrija tal-films li fiha, bejn l-1931 u l-1955 deher f'57 film. F'ħafna minnhom ħadem fil-parti ta' pulizija, inkella ta' raġel kriminal f'films tal-gangsters u western (tal-cowboys).

Id-debutt tal-artist Malti fil-films kien fl-1935. Mill-ewwel ħalla mpressioni tajba. Ta' min ukoll jgħid li tlieta mill-films li ħadem lanqas biss kienu thallew jidhlu jew jintwerew f'Malta. Fost dawn kien hemm 'Full Confession' li fih l-attur kellu l-parti ta' qassis.

Fl-1936, waqt li Joseph Calleja kien qed jaħdem il-film 'Tough Guy', kien ħareġ bl-idea li jkanta l-kanzunetta folkloristika Maltija, 'Ah lilek mill-Gallarija'. Kienet l-ewwel diska bil-Malti li qatt instemgħet waqt film ta' Hollywood.

Għall-bidu l-kumpannija beżgħet tuża d-diska minħabba d-drittijiet tal-awtur imma Calleja ikkonvinċimhom li ma kien hemm l-ebda drittijiet fuqha u wżawha. Interessanti li meta kien għadu tifel din il-kanzunetta Calleja kien ikantaha ma' shabu r-Rabtin fil-Buskett.

Calleja rtira mill-films fl-1963 fl-eta' ta' 66 sena u miet f'Tas-Sliema meta kellu 77. Tliet snin qabel miet kienu offrewlu l-parti ta' Don Corleone fil-film kbir 'The Godfather', imma m'acce-tahix u minflok, il-parti ħadimha Marlon Brando. Daqshekk kien kbir Joseph Calleja!

Minkejja l-fama tiegħu fl-Amerka u l-Italja, mewtu ma kinetx aħbar kbira f'pajjiżu, Malta, iżjed u iżjed fir-Rabat. Mewtu kienet ukoll thabbret mill-istazzjon tar-radju u t-televiżjoni Taljan, ir-RAI. Kienu qalu li mietet stilla taċ-ċinema Taljana peress li Calleja kien ħadem ukoll bosta karattri Sqallin.

F'egħluq il-mitt sena minn twelidu fl-1997, il-gvern ta' Malta onorah b'sett ta' żewg bolol.



Joseph Calleja fil-film *After the Thin Man* tal-1936



Promoting better regional cooperation towards Smart and humane migration across the Mediterranean

Responding to current migration challenges

In recent years, a growing number of people have made their way to Europe across the Mediterranean to flee ongoing conflicts and repression or seek a livelihood in the absence of any economic opportunities in their countries. The magnitude and urgency of the current situation prompted the Parliament of Malta, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM) to organise a High Level Conference.

Over two days (Nov. 16-17) in Valletta, the Conference that brought together 164 participants, including members from 26 national parliaments from the Euro-Mediterranean region, identified responses to current migration challenges and opportunities and discussed long-term measures in order to promote stronger and regional and cross-regional coordination and cooperation to ensure that migration is governed in a fair, smart and humane way, in keeping with the Sustainable Development Goals.

The outcome of the conference provided a parliamentary perspective to the negotiation of a Global Compact for safe, orderly and regular migration that will take place at the United Nations in 2018.

The Maltese delegation at the Conference

was headed by Minister for Gozo Justyne Caruana, participated in the conference. She also took part in the debate highlighting that Malta has, on numerous occasions, called on European states, international bodies, and institutions to implement an inclusive and equal dialogue with neighbouring and southern states.

The opening speech at the Conference was delivered by Dr Anġlu Farrugia, the Speaker Malta's Parliament, who said that Malta, that new millennium presented a new set of opportunities for the island, that geographically and commercially is located at the centre of the Mediterranean, cooperated closely with the European bloc and eventually joined the European Union in 2004.

He said that protracted and emergent conflicts at its southern borders brought to light an unprecedented humanitarian crisis. "Furthermore, climate change, political persecution and famine in various African states pushed thousands, especially young people, to seek a better and safe alternative away from their country of origin.

"Whilst southern European states, such as Italy, Greece and Malta, continued to face pressures from an increasing number of people requesting assistance, it was only in 2013 that the situation escalated to unprecedented levels and which finally caught the attention of all European States," Dr Farrugia said.

He pointed out that unfortunately, action at European level was initially slow, fragmented and lacked the necessary political will to implement a mechanism to save lives, combat migrant smugglers and provide a safe and secure place for desperate men, women and children.

The tragic images following the demise of migrants in the Mediterranean Sea continued to increase pressure on European states to act in a united front and ensure no more lives are lost at sea, in the desert or across land borders.

He went on to say that unfolding humanitarian crisis highlighted the important link between stability and peace in the Mediterranean, and stability and peace in mainland Europe.

He maintained that the last three years

have been characterised by an increased effort to address the issue of migration from a political, humanitarian and security aspect. The different frameworks set up at European level promoted the centrality of having a united front and ensure that cooperation is maintained and strengthened across member states.

"The 4 R's: Relocation, Resettlement, Return and Readmission, represent the core of European action. Therefore, cooperation, dialogue and mutual understanding with countries of origin and transit countries are key to ensure the Mediterranean Sea does not become a deadly trap for migrants," the Speaker said.

He went on to describe the situations that culminated in the current situation and said he strongly believed that parliamentary diplomacy could greatly contribute to bring to the forefront of the discussions the role of root causes and promote greater attention and resources devoted to transform the young people of today into the leaders of tomorrow. "I am confident that, as Parliamentarians, we hold the tools and the power to promote these elements and ensure migration is addressed holistically and within a human rights framework," he said.

In his concluding remarks he underlined the importance of keeping in focus the role of root causes of migration and to identify means of cooperation that could seriously transform areas or situations of despair into flourishing hubs of innovation, sustainable development and peace.

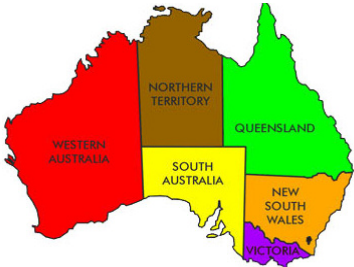
In her intervention Dr Justyne Caruana explained that Malta was instrumental to bring to the forefront the important role played by root causes and the need of sustained and continuous dialogue with key actors. In fact, the 2015 Valletta Summit on Migration, bringing together European and African heads of state and the Government recognised that migration is a shared responsibility of countries of origin, transit, and destination.

She reiterated that Malta would continue to give the Mediterranean dimension top priority to reaffirm the long-standing belief that there can be no security in Europe if there is no security in the Mediterranean.



Gozo Minister Dr. Justyne Caruana

Have your say/ Xi trid tgħid?



The Voice of the Maltese

fortnightly magazine

This is a bi-lingual (in English and Maltese) fortnightly magazine that specifically targets all Maltese living abroad with emphasis on the Australian and Maltese scenes.

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Leo Scicluna minn Smithfield NSW jikteb:

Hajr li *The Voice* tat-tagħrif li twasslulna dwar id-diffikultajiet konessi maç-çittadinanza doppja. Tassew hasra li qam dan il-paniku kollu fl-Awstralja.

Kont nahseb li l-Membri Parlamentari li għandna f'dan il-kontinent huma nies ta' stoffa aktar milli qed jidher, u mhux isibu ruħhom f'balbuljata bħal din. Fil-fehma tiegħi waqqghu lill-Awstralja għaž-żufjett mad-dinja.

Kif iriduna nemmnu li ma kienux jafu li għandhom parentela ma' pajjizi oħra, mela dawn qatt ma tkellmu mal-ġenituri tagħhom?

Nahseb li mhix xi haġa diffiċli li tkun taf x'dixxendenza int. Nittama li jekk hawn xi tfal ta' Maltin li 'l quddiem behsiebhom jidhlu għall-politika jitgħallmu l-lezzjoni.

Get rid of Section 44 completely Il-Personalita' tax-Xahar

Tony Frendo from Fadden ACT writes:

It is about time that the Australian people think seriously about changing the constitution, particularly Sec 44 regarding the dual citizenship.

It is so ridiculous that Australia, so closely linked with the UK, a Commonwealth country, and sometimes appears to be more British than the Queen, has Members of Parliament kicked out because they hold British citizenship or may perhaps have some distant ancestry from the UK or some other Commonwealth country.

Change the constitution I say. We are making fools of ourselves.

Avviż lill-qarrejja

Il-qarrejja li jixtiequ juru l-fehmiet tagħhom dwar xi sugġett għal fuq din il-paġna, huma mhegga jagħmlu dan. Imhegga wkoll li ma jhallux għall-aħħar. Indirizzaw l-emails lil maltesevoice@gmail.com u indikawhom bħala Letters to the editor (ittri lill-EDITOR).

Joe Parnis minn West Sunshine NSW, jikteb:

Is-sezzjoni fil-magazine dwar il-Prsonalita tax-Xahar qed tqajjem hafna interess għax qed inkunu nafu mill-qrib hafna dettalji dwar dawk li qegħdin jaħdmu fil-komunita' Maltija.

Pjaçir tagħna wkoll li fost l-oħrajn qed naraw ukoll uħud mill-istat ta' Victoria għax is-soltu dejjem ixxaqilbu lejn NSW.

Allura bhala qarrejja, nistgħu ahna wkoll ninnominaw xi persuni li nħossu li jisthokilhom jiġu nominati ?

Nota Editorjali: Jekk il-qarrejja jhossu li jkun hemm xi persuni li haqqhom li huma wkoll jiġu nnominati bhala l-Personalita' tax-Xahar iktbulna dwarhom halli nikkunsidrawhom. Iktbulna dwarhom u wkoll jekk tridu tagħmlu xi sugġerimenti lil: voice-ofthemaltese@gmail.com

Congratulations!

Andy Busuttill from Blue Mounains writes:

Congratulations to you both on a great publication '*The Voice of the Maltese*'. It is a wonderful journal with mature comment and insightful contributions and editorials. A real tribute to the Maltese people and the voice that you have given them.

Well done and may you continue for many years to come.

What kind of politicians?

Anth. Cassar from St Albans, writes:

I and many others are so disappointed with our Parliamentarians. They did not have the guts to decide themselves about same-sex marriage but left for us citizens to decide. We showed we have the guts and decided for them. Yet on an even more important matter, euthanasia, they go and decide for us.

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Malta commemorates the 43rd Anniversary of the Republic

On Wednesday December 13 commemorates the 43rd anniversary of day it became a Republic, on December 13 1974. That is when the country, ceased to recognise Queen Elizabeth II as its monarch, and head of state.

Before 1974, the Maltese citizens had decided through a vote, to form part of the British Empire after Great Britain liberated them from the French occupiers during the Napoleonic wars. The French soldiers had previously taken the Maltese Islands from the Knights of St John, but as they became tired of their rule, the Maltese then welcomed the Brits with open arms.

During the British rule, Malta became an important strategic outpost throughout the years, up until the end of WWII.

Then in 1964, the Maltese negotiated their independence from the British Empire and instead became a part of the Commonwealth with the Queen still in place as the head of state.

When the Malta Labour Party won the general elections in 1971,

Malta pushed the concept of turning the island into a republic with a President leading the country. With a massive vote in Parliament (two-thirds majority was needed), in 1974, Malta's constitution was drastically altered and it transitioned into a republic within the Commonwealth of Nations. Sir Anthony Mamo became the first President of the Republic of Malta.

As part of the commemoration, the President of Malta, currently HE Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca, will be presenting awards to citizens due to personal successes, or meritorious service that has brought honour to their country. A wreath-laying ceremony led by the President will also be held.

The celebrations on Republic Day, which is one of the five national days, and therefore a public holiday, are highlighted with band marches by the Armed Forces of Malta, AFM, while an impressive firework display that illuminates the Grand Harbour between Marsa and Valletta will also be held. Maltese living abroad also mark the occasion with a number of popular activities.



Call for Volunteers to assist homeless in Parramatta

In 2015, the NSW Branch of the Order of Malta initiated a new project to assist the Homeless. The project involved a van driven by volunteers and staffed by a nurse from St Vincent's Hospital to visit 'homeless hotspots' in the city and provide healthcare and distribute seasonal items to protect them from the elements.

The service has become a huge success, currently operating twice a week, distributing the Order's Coats for the Homeless in winter, sunscreen and sun hats in summer, water and hygiene packs year-round.

Following the success of this initiative, a second van has been secured to serve the homeless in Parramatta. The van, expected to be operational before Christmas, is looking for volunteer drivers and nurses and paramedics to provide this service to Parramatta's homeless.

Anybody wanting to learn more about volunteering for this service at Parramatta should email info@smom.org.au

ABOVE: Erin Longbottom, Nurse Unit Manager for the Homeless Outreach Team (centre) with Sydney Van volunteers Paul Bettar and Dunstan De Souza

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Perspettiva

A version of this series in English may be found in the author's blog at: <https://ivancauchi.blogspot.com>

kitba ta' IVAN CAUCHI



Xi ħnizrija!

Ghadni nitbaqbaq meta niftakar b' aħbar li qrajt f' nofs ix-xahar ta' Novembru, fejn pittura msejha Salvador Mundi, attribwita għall-ġenju Taljan Leonardo da Vinci, inbiegħet għal nofs biljun dollaru Amerikan.

NOFS BILJUN!

Halli nkun preċiż, inbiegħet għal \$450 miljun Amerikan (ekwivalenti għal \$600 miljun Awstraljan).

Fl-artiklu kompli jingħad li meta nbiegħet dawk prezenti nfexxew f' għajjat ta' approvazzjoni u applaws.¹ Ukoll.

Il-pittura, jekk jogħġbok, hija ta' bniedem qaddis, iben mastrudaxxa fqir, li għex madwar 2000 sena ilu, li ta' ħajtu, litteralment, jiggieled għall-fqir, il-batut u l-magħkus u jippriedka s-sewwa, ċertu Gesu Kristu.

L-ironija u l-oxxenità ta' din it-transazzjoni ekonomika jien biss qed naraha?

Tinkwetaw xejn, qaltilna s-Sydney Morning Herald dwar il-prezz għoli. L-ewwel haġa, il-prezz jirrifletti l-valur għoli tal-biċċa arti; it-tieniet, nofs il-prezz jirrifletti qligħ għas-sid ta' qabel u t-tielet-nett li min xtraha llum għamel deċiżjoni tajba ta' negozju.²

Eh, orrajt mela. Serraħt rasi, kollox sew.

Din x'logika bażwija hi? Din it-transazzjoni, fejn pittura ta' 45cm b'65cm bidlet l-idejn għal somma daqshekk astronomika, kif tikkontribwixxi għal dinja jew soċjetà iktar ġusta?

Jien għandi ninsa r-ritratt li rajt ta' dawk it-trabi għadma u gilda fil-Jemen, minħabba li l-fruntieri tiegħu huma magħluqin mill-Gharabja Sawdija, anke għal vjaġġi umanitarji?³ Irrid ninsa wkoll li \$10 tixtri tigieġa ħajja li tipprovi l-proteini għal hafna żmien lil tfa' l-familji fqar, u ta' sors ta' dħul?⁴

Jien meta kont żgħir tgħallimt li s-sistema soċjalista mhix tajba, għax ma tħajjarx lil min jiehu inizjattiva. Tgħallimt ukoll li s-sistema komunista mhix tajba, għax ma tippermettix li jkollok il-proprjetà. Tgħallimt li f'dawn is-sistemi jkollok il-ftit b'xi mod jakkumulaw il-ġid kollu huma, u l-bqija jkunu fil-faqar. Aħjar is-sistema kapitalista.

U hawn aħna llum, fejn is-sistema kapitalista nfirxet madwar id-



Il-pittura Salvador Mundi ta' Leonardo da Vinci

dinja, u l-ftit (1%) għandhom ġid daqs il-bqija tal-popolazzjoni (99%).⁵ Sistema fejn plejer tal-futbol wiehed (Neymar) jiġi trasferit minn klabb għall-ieħor għal somma ta' terz ta' biljun dollaru Awstraljan (222 miljun Ewro) u jithallas nofs miljun Ewro fil-gimgha, biex jagħti daqqiet ta' sieq lil ballun.⁶

Il-kapitaliżmu hija s-sistema li fiha l-ġid, jgħidu l-ekonomisti, jispiċċa jgħadd l-isfel biex jibbenefika kulhadd (*trickle down economics*). Intom din bħali tfakkarkom fid-diskussjoni ta' Gesu' mal-mara ta' Kana (Mt. 15:27), fejn qaltu li anke l-klieb jieklu l-frac li jaqa' mill-mejda ta' sidhom? Jien inhobbhom lill-klieb, imma fis-sistema kapitalista, id-99% meqjusin klieb?

Jien qed inhoss mewġa ta' għarfien madwar id-dinja li s-sistema ekonomika predominanti tal-lum, dik kapitalista, qiegħda twassal għal ingustizzji u diżugwaljanzi kbar, li l-ftit irnexxielhom jistagħnew, u bil-kbir ukoll, u l-kotra jkollha titqanna, u malajr tirċievi xi tgħajjira bħall-istqarrija tal-eks Ministru tal-Finanzi Awstraljan, Joe Hockey, li ta parir lil min huwa fqir biex isib xogħol aħjar! Mur obsor!

Jien inhoss li hafna mill-problemi ta' faqar u miżerja ta' madwar id-dinja huwa possibbli li jiġu solvuti bil-mezzi li għandha llum. Ma jissolvewx għax rieda tajba, minn min jista', u mill-mexxejja ta' madwar id-dinja, m'hemmx biżżejjed.

U ma ninsewx ukoll li fid-demokrazija li hafna mill-Maltin jgħixu fihom, il-mexxejja, li jiktbu r-regoli li s-soċjetà timxi bihom, aħna stess nagħżluhom. Il-mazz f'idejna, fil-fatt.

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Rational Accommodationism

Here we go again. When-
 by GwynneDyer

ever North Korea launches a new long-range missile or does another nuclear test, President Trump condemns the test and warns Pyongyang not to do it again, while his generals and diplomats point out that it “threatens the entire world.” But latterly, the pattern has been evolving.

North Korea has carried out seven long-range missile tests and one underground nuclear explosion (its first hydrogen bomb) since Trump took office in January, and until August Trump’s language on these occasions was blood-curdling. In July, when two ballistic missiles were tested, he said that any further North Korean threats “will be met with fire and fury like the world has never see.”

That was actually a threat to attack North Korea with nuclear weapons: Trump was deliberately using the same language, even the same phrases that Harry Truman had chosen to use in a warning message to Japan just before an American plane dropped an atomic bomb on Hiroshima.

His defence secretary, General James “Mad Dog” Mattis, continued to talk in apocalyptic terms even after North Korea tested an H-bomb in September: “We are not looking to the total annihilation of a country, namely North Korea. But as I said, we have many options to do so.”

Maybe Mattis just didn’t get the memo, but Trump’s own response on that occasion was less dramatic, and even rather gnomic. Asked whether he planned to attack North Korea, he only said “We’ll see.” That is the response of a poker-player, not the berserker he often pretends to be. It was striking, even from the start of his presidency, that Trump has never made specific threats with details and deadlines, and his tone has continued to soften. After North Korea tested its first full-range ICBM this week, one that can reach any part of the United States, he just said, “We will take care of it,” adding later “It is a situation that we will handle.”

This suggests that he knows there is nothing he can usefully do to stop these tests, and that he will just have to live with a North Korean nuclear deterrent. He is clearly frustrated by it, and is often abusive about the North Korean leader – he called Kim “little rocket man” at the UN General Assembly in September – but he is now a long way from the “fire and fury” of July. Has someone been getting at him?

I suspect somebody has, and my leading candidates are the three generals who are now his closest advisers on this issue: Mattis at Defence, General H.R. McMaster, the National Security



Adviser, and General John Kelly, Trump’s Chief of Staff.

In fact, I’m pretty sure it was mainly Kelly. The other two generals have been in their jobs practically since Trump entered the White House, and although I’m sure that they tried to talk sense to him about North Korea, it didn’t seem to be having much effect. Whereas Kelly only took up his job in late July (so the timing works), and since then he has had more face time with the president than anybody else.

At any rate, Trump is behaving as if he has finally been persuaded of the strategic realities by the generals who now surround him.

None of them believes that a war in the Korean peninsula would be a good thing for the United States, and they will have been working hard to persuade the US president to accept that fact. It looks like they have succeeded.

Don’t expect Trump to go public and explain to Americans



US President Donald Trump (extreme right) and his generals (from left): McMaster, Mattis and Kelly

that there are no good military options available to the United States. He’s not going to tell them that they are ultimately going to have to live in a state of mutual deterrence with North Korea like they already do with Russia and China, because his default mode is sounding tough. But if he understands that himself, that’s enough.

Trump is ignorant and bombastic, but he is not stupid. If his generals tell him the facts often enough, he can be persuaded to behave with appropriate caution. He CANNOT be persuaded to tone down his rhetoric, especially the midnight tweets, so the sense of crisis will continue, but we may be safer than we think.

I would not be suggesting that Trump is privately willing to accept a rational accommodation with North Korea and live with their bombs and missiles if his evil twin, Steve Bannon, were still his Chief Strategic Adviser.

To Bannon, ‘rational accommodationism’ is the worst crime of all. But that’s why Bannon’s resignation was one of General John Kelly’s conditions for taking the job of White House Chief of Staff.

Bannon is gone, and I think that Trump may now have secretly accepted reality. Of course, I could be wrong.

*Gwynne Dyer is an independent journalist whose articles are published in 45 countries. From time to time he also contributes to *The Voice of the Maltese*.



Roundup of News About Malta



PM Muscat appeal to financial operators

Addressing the Maltese Institute of Financial Services Annual Seminar Prime Minister Joseph Muscat appealed financial operators in Malta that in the face of criticism against the country's financial services sector, Malta should not adopt a siege mentality, and that while abroad, financial operators in Malta should help out by engaging with these critics.

He said that at a time when Malta's financial services are being kept under close, "we have

to speak out and engage to show how much our systems are transparent and compliant with all the legislations and regulations involved. This work cannot be done solely by the Government."

On the other hand, Minister Edward Scicluna said that while the financial sector is going through a severe stress test both locally and internationally, investors from outside the country "believe in us, and we will continue to be one of the competitive choices in the Mediterranean."

Malta committed to people-to-people contacts

Malta's foreign policy is not solely Mediterranean and Europe-oriented, but is also projected to firmly engage with important partners from other regions and continents, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade Promotion, Carmelo Abela, told a working session of Ambassadors of European Union Member States accredited to Malta.

The session, organised by Poland's Ambassador to Malta, was also attended by the Head of the European Commission's Representation in Malta; the British High Commissioner; the Ambassadors of the Czech Republic, Finland, France, Greece, Italy, and The Netherlands; and the Chargés d'Affaires of Belgium, Germany, and Romania.

While maintaining a strong focus on the unfolding developments in the Med. Minister Abela said over the years Malta's foreign policy has branched out to explore new areas of cooperation and exchanges with countries beyond its immediate neighbourhood.

"To this end, we will continue to promote development, people-to-people contacts, multi-sectoral cooperation, and political dialogue, besides the enhancement of trade relations for the benefit of all," the Minister said.

At the same time Malta would continue to work within the EU, and through its engagement in regional and multilateral fora, to further its collective strategic interests and objectives together with all our partners.

Malta offers best online Govt services among all EU states

The European Commission has placed the Maltese Government's online services, about 800 online services aimed at reaching the public with more comfort and efficiency, and that are used 24-hours a day the whole week by thousands of people, as the best among the 28 EU member states.

In its report the European Commission placed Malta first in all the established indicators, including accessibility and availability of the Government online service.

The Head of Public Service, Mario Cutajar, said that the plan is that although the service was classified as the best, would

continue to be improved.

He added that efforts and the investment made in the past four years was not internationally recognised, but as declared by the EU itself with regards to online services Malta is the best in Europe.

Together with the online services, the Government also opened five one-stop shops for citizens and the Business First for businessmen so that the public is served by a personal contact instead of the Internet.

Another service aimed at providing information on government entities, is used by more than 15,000 persons a month.

Another thumbs up sign for the economy

Malta has received another positive credit rating for its economy, this time from the German credit rating agency, Creditreform Rating, which has affirmed Malta's long-term sovereign rating at A+ with a stable outlook.

In his reaction finance Minister Edward Scicluna said this positive rating came just two days after Malta received the green light by the European Commission on Malta's 2018 Budget and the health of the economy.

He said, "Such results will continue to boost international and local consumer and business confidence."

The A+ rating was driven by a number of favourable macroeconomic and fiscal developments including the very strong growth performance exhibited by the Maltese economy that supported further improving labour market conditions and the output growth, which the credit rating agency expects to remain among the strongest in Europe in 2017 and 2018.

Creditreform also attributes the positive rating to the advancements in budget consolidation in 2016, which it expects to continue in the medium term. It remarked that the Maltese Government has a track record of overachieving its fiscal targets. It expects further progress on debt reduction, with the government's debt-to-GDP ratio expected to fall close to 50 per cent in 2018.

The report acknowledges the labour market policies implemented in 2014 aimed at increasing the labour force participation rate especially amongst females and notices that such policies are indeed bearing fruit.

Creditreform also positively notes that exports have sustained their growth momentum, contributing to an improvement in the trade balance and an increase in the current account surplus.

Meanwhile, the National Statistics Office, NSO has confirmed a surplus of €4.3 million in Malta's consolidated fund balance for the period January to October of this year, which represents an improvement of €109.2 million, turning a deficit of €104.9 million in the period January to October of last year to a surplus this year.

Minister Scicluna expressed confidence that Malta would manage to attain its end-of-year fiscal target with ease."

He noted that all revenue categories recorded significant increases, which shows that both employment and consumption continue to grow at robust rates.

These developments had a positive impact on debt developments as gross debt decreased by €73.9 million in October of this year, over the same month last year.



Roundup of News About Malta



Malta with second lowest unemployment rate in EU

According to data published by Eurostat for October Malta has the second-lowest unemployment rate in the European Union. The lowest was in the Czech Republic at 2.7%. Malta followed with a rate of 3.5% beating Germany, which is in third place with 3.6%. The average rate of unemployment in the EU is at 8.8%.

When it comes to Malta the figures register a drop of 26.8% compared to the same month last year.

Overall, the number of individuals seeking work in October stood at 2,319, that is almost 27% better off than in October 2016 when 3,166 were unemployed. That is a drop of 847. Unemployment decreased across all age groups with the largest drop registered among 25-29 year-olds – a 44% decrease.

Enemalta involved in €70m wind project in Montenegro

Enemalta plc is involved in the first wind project that the international company, Renewable Energy Development (RED), is currently carrying out together with Enemalta plc, Envision and Vestigo in Montenegro.

Following a visit to the work in progress work Energy Minister Joe Mizzi said that the project, which consists of 23 wind turbines of 2 megawatts each and spread on an area of 8.5 kilometres in the south of the country, is expected to cost €70 million.

Meanwhile, in a statement the Energy Ministry said that the project is the result of the agreement signed between Enemalta and Shanghai Electric Power four years ago. It shows the Maltese Government's capability that, through the excellent relations with China and even Montenegro, it can bring together larger countries in joint projects for a better environment.

BOV to open London office

Following a recent visit to the UK, Mr Deo Scerri, Chairman of the BOV Group announced that in line with its plans to strengthen the Bank's international reach and elevate its visibility in strategically important locations Bank of Valletta will soon be opening a new office in the London hub. He said that having a presence in London makes strategic and business sense for the bank.

Meanwhile, Mr Kenneth Farrugia, the bank's Chief Business Development Officer explained that the Bank's decision to extend its touch points by opening new offices in London is a natural extension to the existing offices currently in operation in Milan and Brussels. BOV also has an office in Libya, which is temporarily closed.

Through this Office, the Bank is confident that it will be able to tap new opportunities.



President Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca (right) with other participants at the summit

Malta President gets Women Political Leader Award 2017

At the just concluded high-level global summit for women political leaders in Iceland, President Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca was presented with the Women Political Leader Award 2017. The summit brought together a unique gathering of over 250 women political leaders from all around the world.

President Coleiro Preca, who is a member of the Advisory Council of the Women Political Leaders Global Forum and is also the patron of the #Girl2Leader Campaign, dedicated the award to the Maltese and Gozitan people. She said she would like to share it with all those women who are not in the spotlight, not given visibility in the media, and who are sacrificing their lives, in communities, in conflict-stricken countries.

She maintained that these women

are leaders too, in their own right.

Earlier, addressing the attendees in a Girl2Leader campaign-themed session of the summit, the President of Malta encouraged all female political leaders at the session to establish networks of young girls in their countries in an effort to promote empowerment. "In this way, young girls can feel a sense of unity through their respective network, and can consequently thrive in solidarity with one another," she added.

The President said that it takes the effort of people of all genders to achieve full gender parity. "We are leaders in our own right. We need to do something in our countries to encourage young girls to come forward so that our next generation will not be like our generation. We owe it to our wonderful girls in our countries".

Tourism to Malta 2017 surpasses 2 million mark

The number of tourists visiting Malta in the 10 months between January and October this year has surpassed the 2 million mark (2,037,000), which is an increase of over 287,000 tourists or 15.7 per cent over the same period in 2016. Total nights spent by inbound tourists went up by 10.2 per cent, reaching almost 14.7 million nights.

This is indicated in figures released by the National Statistics Office following October's arrivals that totalled 245,922, an increase of 12% over the same month last year.

NSO noted that tourist visitors to Malta spent in excess of €1,700 million, an increase of 13% over last year. The per capita expenditure stood at 874 euro.

In October, a total of 209,832 inbound tourist trips were carried out for holiday purposes; a further 19,712 were undertaken for business purposes.

Inbound tourists from EU Member States went up by 11.3 per cent to 204,779 when compared to the corresponding month in 2016. Most inbound tourists were aged between 45 and 64, followed by those within the 25-44-age bracket.

Total nights spent went up by 6.2 per cent when compared to October 2016, surpassing 1.6 million nights. The largest share of guest nights (59.5 per cent) was spent in collective accommodation establishments.

Mix-xena tal-ħajja Maltija

minn Ġuzè Camilleri

L-Inglizi kienu jsejtna *Maltese gemgem*. Fostna neqirdu mhux hażin,

imma l-fatt jibqa' li fuq kollox u minkejja kollox il-poplu Malti fil-maġġoranza tiegħu huwa wieħed kuntent, li jaf jiddeverti, li kapaċi jirkebi id-diffikultajiet u jhares aktar lejn it-tazza nofsha minn millija milli nofsha vojta.

Dan gie saħansitra osservat mill-barranin. Tant li fir-Rapport Dinji tal-Kuntentizza, (*World Happiness Report*), imhejji minn 'Sustainable Development Solutions Network' bi shab mal-Ġnus Magħquda, poġġa lil Malta bhala s-27 pajjiż l-aktar kuntent fid-dinja.

Malta marret tajjeb ukoll fl-istharrig imhejji minn 'The Good

Il-Maltin kuntenti

Country' dwar dawk il-pajjiżi li l-aktar qalbhom tajba, mhux biss ma-ċittadini tagħhom,

imma wkoll ma' oħrajn ta' pajjiżi oħra. F'dan l-istharrig Malta giet fis-27 post minn 163 pajjiż. Fil-kategorija tal-kultura, Malta giet ikklassifikata fid-disa' post.

Madankollu skont l-indiċi Malta għadha lura dwar ċerti aspetti bħalma huma, sigurtà u l-paċi internazzjonali; hawnhekk klassifikat fil-129 post.

Ma neħodhiex bi kbira li fejn tidhol is-sigurtà Malta qeġhda lura għax bil-ftuħ tal-bibien għall-barranin l-għadd ta' atti kriminali qed jikbru, l-aktar fejn jidhol il-*pickpocketing*, fastidjar, glied li jnvolvi fil-biċċa 'l kbira barranin, eċċ.



Jagħżlu lil Malta

Għadd ta' Maltin fil-vaganzi tal-Milied jgħid li xi pajjiż barrani, speċjalment lejn ir-Renju Unit halli hemmhekk igawdu ċ-ċelebrazzjonijiet tal-Milied u tal-Ewwel tas-Sena f'dawn il-pajjiżi (għalkemm Londra tiġbed hażna Maltin ukoll għax barra l-festi jgawdu wkoll mill-prezzijiet irhas fis-*sales* tal-istaġun. L-hekk magħrufa bhala s-*sales* ta' Jannar).

Iżda forsi hażna Maltin ma japprezzawx biżżejjed l-attrazzjonijiet li joffri pajjiżhom stess f'dan fost l-isabħ żmien tas-sena.

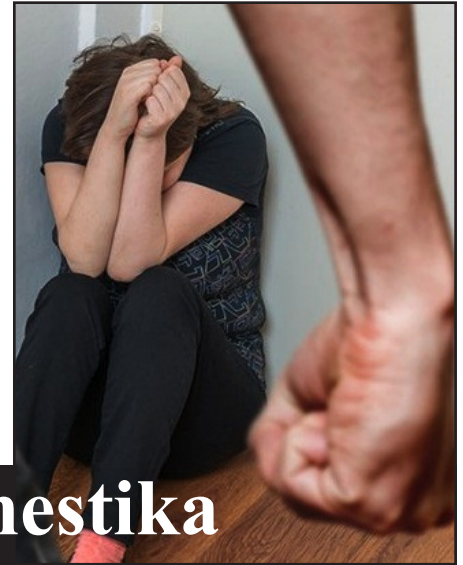
Imma dan gie nnutat minn waħda mill-aġenziji l-aktar magħrufa tal-aħbarijiet fid-dinja, is-CNN li poġġiet lil pajjiżna fl-ewwel post fil-lista ppubblikata mis-sit

tagħha, bhala d-destinazzjoni per eċċellenza għall-Milied.

Tas-CNN jidentifikaw il-presejpu Malti u x-xeni ta' natività (it-twelid ta' Gesu') bhala l-attrazzjoni ewlenija tal-Milied f'pajjiżna.

Għamluha ċara li japprezzaw l-użanza Maltija, li għadd ta' residenzi jibdlu parti mid-dar jew il-garaxx tagħhom f'wirjiet mill-isbah billi jibnu xi presejpi mill-isbah għall-pubbliku.

Tissemma' ukoll l-attività mfittxija minn bosta fil-gżira ta' Ghawdex, il-magħrufa '*Betlehemf' Ghajnsielem*'. Hawnhekk kull sena jkollna presejpu haj b'nies u annimali hajjin fuq mhedda ta' 20,000 metru kwadru ta' għelieqi, ukoll diversi attivitajiet oħra.



Vjolenza domestika

Hażna drabi mali naqraw dan it-titlu mill-ewwel moħħna jmur għal dawk l-irġiel li jsawwtu, jew b'xi mod jaħqru lil marthom, fejn is-sess maskil huwa dominanti fuq il-femminil.

Imm'issa tfaċċa fenomenu ġdid, mhux dak li kultant issib irġiel maħqurin min-nisa, forsi mhux dejjem fizikament imma aktar psikoloġikament, imma ta' tfal li jużaw il-vjolenza fuq il-ġenituri tagħhom. Fil-fatt matul l-aħħar sena kien hemm 100 rapport (u mhux kull min jirċievi vjolenza minn uliedu jmur jirrapporta) fejn l-ulied użaw vjolenza fizika fuq il-ġenituri tagħhom, fil-maġġoranza fuq ommhom.

Minn dawn, 80% kienu vjolenza fuq l-omm. Din il-vjolenza ssir miż-żewġ sessi, subien u bniet, pero l-maġġoranza huma subien, tant li mit-80%, 70% kienu subien.

Tmorrux bl-idea li din il-vjolenza ssir minn ulied kbar biss, għax wieħed mill-abbiżi fuq l-omm kien jinvolvi tifla ta' għaxar snin.

Jizdiedu l-incidenti

Skont ċifri tal-Uffiċċju Nazzjonali tal-Istatistika, imqabbel mal-2016 l-incidenti tat-traffiku żdiedu b'71 u laħqu t-3891.

Minkejja li l-għadd ta' incidenti tat-traffiku żdied, l-għadd ta' persuni midruba naqsu bi hdax imqabbel mal-istess xhur tas-sena l-oħra meta ndarbu 502 żewġ persuni.

Il-maġġoranza assoluta ta' dawk midruba kienu irġiel – 257 – u n-nisa 162. Fost li ndarbu gravi, mill-75, fil-maġġoranza tagħhom kienu wkoll irġiel.

Mill-istess ċifri joħroġ li l-akbar għadd ta' incidenti tat-traffiku sehew f'Birkirkara, f'San Pawl il-Baħar u fil-Mosta. Fil-fatt, bejn Lulju u Settembru f'dawk il-lokalitajiet kienu rrapportati 572 incident.

Wieħed ma jistgħagħibx biż-żieda fl-incidenti meta jqs li l-għadd ta' vetturi fit-toroq Maltin qed jizdied bir-rata ta' 42 kuljum.

Ir-Riskju ta' faqar fit-tfal

Hażna kienu jaħsbu li l-faqar f'Malta hija xi haġa tal-passat billi illum spicċaw it-tallaba fit-toroq, imma l-fatti juru xort'oħra, għax bejn l-2010 u l-2013, minn 21,000 tifel u tifel f'riskju ta' faqar, fl-2013 dawn telgħu għal 24,000. B'xorti tajba din ir-rata ta' zieda mhux biss twaqqfet, imma sar progress kbir billi sas-sena l-oħra il-figura niżlet għal-18,000.

Veru sar progress, imma wieħed ma jistenniex li fis-seklu 21 f'pajjiż fejn l-ekonomija hi tant tajba li jkollna dan l-għadd ta' tfal fir-riskju. Il-Gvern lest jagħmel minn kollox biex din il-figura tonqos bil-ħsieb li fi żmien erba' sa hames snin il-figura tinzel fix-xejn.

Il-Gvern wiegħed li se jkompli jissielet ukoll ir-riskju tal-faqar fost l-anzjani li sfortunatament qed ikompli jizdied.

Mix-xena tal-ħajja Maltija

minn Ġuzè Camilleri

Ħadmet bil-kontra?

Bla dubju li l-Gvern Malti tpoġġa fi stampa xejn sabiha bil-qtil ta' Daphne Caruana Galizia, aktar u aktar meta anke ġurnali influwenti barranin b'mod orkestrat bdew jifgħu dell ikrah fuq is-sitwazzjoni fi ġżiritna. Is-sitwazzjoni ssoktat tiċċajpar bil-mod kif il-Parlament tal-Unjoni Ewropea wvota favur mozzjoni xejn kumplimentuża dwar Malta.

Sintendi, l-Oppożizzjoni ma naqsitx milli taprofitta mis-sitwazzjoni halli ssawwat kemm tiflah lill-Gvern. Attwalment min dak li qal l-istess Prim Ministru Malti Joseph Muscat kien jidher ċar li xejn ma kien kument bl-effett fuq il-Gvern.

Iżda mbagħad meta kulhadd kien qed iqis li l-Gvern kien taht pressjoni, li l-popolarita' tal-Gvern u tal-Prim Ministru kienu taht pressjoni, saru żewġ stħarriġ minn żewġ gazzetti differenti lokali fejn hareġ li kemm il-Gvern kif ukoll il-Prim Ministru kienu żdiedu sew fil-popolarita' tagħhom filwaqt li l-Partit Nazzjonalista u l-mexxej tiegħu ħadu tumakka l-isfel.

Fil-fatt skont wieheh mill-istħarriġ, tal-Maltatoday, hareġ li:

- 24.5% tan-nazzjonalisti ma jivvutawx jekk issir elezzjoni illum
- 93.2% ta' dawk li vutaw PL jergħu jivvutaw lil-Labour illum
- 3.1% ta' dawk li vutaw PN hames xhur ilu, illum jivvutaw AD
- 49.8% jivvutaw PL u 20.7% PN jekk issir elezzjoni bhalissa
- Id-distakk bhalissa taż-żewġ partiti huwa ta' iktar minn 71,000 (favur il-Labour)
- 53.7% jafdaw lil Joseph Muscat u 15% jafdaw lill-mexxej il-ġdid tal-PN, Adrian Delia
- Il-fiduċja f'Muscat tiżdied bi 2.8%, u ta' Delia tonqos b'7%
- 85% tal-Laburisti u 25% tan-Nazzjonalisti jhossu li l-pajjiż sejjeg tajjeb
- 15.7% ma jivvutawx kieku kellha ssir elezzjoni illum

Id-differenza tad-distakk ta' madwar 70,000 vot bejn il-partiti kien ikkonfermat mill-istħarriġ li sar ukoll mill-gazzetta ta' kull nhar ta' Hadd, *It-Torċa*. Kien stħarriġ li tmexxa mill-istess persuna li qabel l-elezzjoni bassret eżatt il-maġġoranza li kien se jikseb il-Partit Laburista.

Allura x'ikkważa dan?

Hemm hafna raġunijiet, iżda bla dubju li waħda mill-ewlenin hija l-kriżi fi ħdan il-Partit Nazzjonalista, u li kompliet tikber meta fil-Parlament, għall-ewwel darba f'ħafna snin grupp ta' sitt deputati tal-PN irrifjutaw li jivvutaw skont id-direttiva tal-partit tagħhom stess, u biex is-sitwazzjoni tkompli taggrava żewġ deputati li ma kienux preżenti fil-Parlament ukoll appoġġjaw lil dawn id-sitt deputati.

Jingħad x'jingħad m'hemmx dubju li waħda mir-raġunijiet għal dak li qed isehh fi ħdan il-Partit Nazzjonalista huwa għaliex għadd hemm ġemgħa mdaqqsqa ta' deputati u nies influwenti fil-partit li għadhom ma aċċettawx lil Delia bħala l-kap tagħhom.

Din is-sitwazzjoni qed thasseb bi kbir, u bir-raġun, mhux biss lin-Nazzjonalisti, iżda lil kull min ġenwinament jemmen li biex ikollna Gvern li jmessxi tajjeb jinhtiegħ li jkun hemm ukoll Oppożizzjoni b'saħħitha.

U dwar is-sitwazzjoni tal-Oppożizzjoni qed titkellem ċar il-midja, anke dik li ma tappoġġjax lill-Partit Laburista.

Hekk li l-editor ta' *The Times*, taht it-titlu ta' *Bumpy ride on the 'new way'* jibda biex jgħid hekk:

After a gruelling leadership election that saw Adrian Delia emerge winner and a lacklustre election campaign for his deputies, David Agius and Robert Arrigo, the party leaders may now start picking up the pieces.

Given the recent survey results, the PN is in a much worse state than it was at the June election, where it got a second thumping

U jtemm l-editorjal b'dan il-mod:

Dr Delia did not hit the ground running. His first real challenge will be at the European Parliament and local council elections in 2019. It will be at that point that the promised 'new way' will be put to the test. A poor showing then would mean the PN would have to move again, fast.

Li jista' jiġi jfisser, kif qed isostnu xi kumentaturi, li jekk il-PN imur hażin f'dik l-elezzjoni t-tmexxija tal-Partit tista' tkun fil-periklu.

Importanti li fl-elezzjoni tal-Parlament tal-EU u dawk tal-Kunsilli Lokali l-Partit Nazzjonalista jmur aħjar mill-aħhar elezzjoni.

Jispikka wkoll editorjal tal-Maltatoday li fiħ inkiteb:



Il-Kap tal-PN Adrian Delia

Recent events appear to suggest serious problems for Malta's parliamentary Opposition. The PN can no longer hide its deep internal rifts; and our most recent survey suggests the chasm faced by PN leader Adrian Delia is so wide, that the 2019 European and local council elections might even wound the PN's very survival chances.

L-editor tas-Sunday Times fl-editorjal tiegħu bit-titlu, "*PN's uphill road to recovery*", jiffoka fuq id-diffikultajiet li qed jifacċja l-Partit Nazzjonalista u jgħid:

Whatever the reasons for the recent defeats, the Nationalist Party faces an uphill road to win back the support not just of floating voters but also of its hard core supporters.

Fil-fatt isemmi li:

The PN's present leader has so far failed to project himself as a strong unifying leader that can lead the party out of the woods and back to winning the support of the electorate.

L-editor itemm hekk:

Any political analyst will tell you that a disunited party has little chance of convincing the electorate that it is the ideal party to lead the country. At present, the PN is unlikely to be seen by the majority of the electorate as a compact party united behind its leader. The risk of a PN failure at the next European Parliament election in less than two years is indeed high.



Marru kontra x-xewqa tal-Kap (mix-xellug): Simon Busuttill, Mario de Marco, Chris Said, Therese Comodini Cachia, Karl Gouder u Karol Aquilina



A quick glimpse at Australia

Labor win predicted in Queensland

With Queenslanders still waiting to know the result of the state election held on November 25, Anastacia Palaszczuk (Pictured right) is expected to be returned as Queensland Premier with her government predicted by the media to win the 47 seats needed to enable her to claim a slim majority. The Liberal National Party is predicted to win 38 to 39 seats.

Despite close to 95 per cent of the votes having been counted, Queensland's Electoral Commission has now officially called eight of the 93 seats, but with voters eagerly waiting the results, the final result is expected later in the week.

The first seats to be declared went to incumbents, with Labor getting five of them, including Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk's seat of Inala; three others went to the LNP. Ms Palaszczuk said she was confident of securing a majority but it was too early to talk.

"As soon as every vote is counted, then I will be talking to my



colleagues about the future ministry," she said. There were swings against both major parties, and Ms Palaszczuk said she would work to engage better with Queenslanders.

A handful of seats remain in doubt including the Greens and Labor candidates separated by only a few votes.

According to Assistant Queensland Electoral Commissioner Dermot Tiernan the introduction of compulsory preferential voting had made the races a lot tighter than in the past and had increased the time it took to count votes.

He went on to say that in seats where the race is tight one could be waiting for postal and declaration votes to be sent back before it is possible to declare a winner, and Queensland law gives people up until 10 days after the election to return them.

Neither Labor nor the Liberal National Party are willing to declare a victory or conceding defeat but will wait for the final determination by the Electoral Commission.

Disgraceful fear campaign about

Mr John Howard the former prime minister, who according to reports, campaigned for religious freedoms and parental rights during the same-sex-marriage postal survey, said the argument that extra religious freedoms could mean the establishment of Islamic law in Australia was a disgraceful fear campaign that was not true.

"The argument that religious freedoms will lead to the imposition of sharia law is just plain wrong and is a disgraceful appeal to community fears," Mr Howard said.

He added that Sharia law cannot be introduced without state government approval, and that is simply not going to happen. "Anyone practising some of the punishments of sharia law would be committing a crime," he said.

Malcolm Turnbull the current PM has cautioned against additional religious freedoms because of the danger of allowing Sharia law and has created a committee, including Howard government minister Philip Rud-

Sharia law

dock, to report by March on necessary religious protections in expectation of the passage of the same-sex marriage bill before Christmas.

Mr Howard, who challenged Mr Turnbull to disclose religious protections before the same-sex marriage debate, said the government "should have had a plan" setting out religious protections in the event of a "Yes" vote on same-sex marriage.

He also predicted that the proposal for a committee to look at religious freedoms next year would mean the extra religious protections the Prime Minister promised during the same-sex debate would never come to legislation next year.

Mr Howard has criticised the Coalition's handling of the same-sex marriage debate, except for the conduct of the postal survey



Former Australian PM John Howard

itself. He was disappointed that conservative cabinet ministers didn't speak out more and the lack of preparation for legislation.

"Precisely as I said, the pressure is on to move on to legislate the outcome of the postal survey before Christmas and that effectively 'kicks the can down the road' on religious protections," he said. "My worry is that the whole thing will die in the sand."

\$4.5 million in damages

In a stunning decision, a Supreme Court judge awarded PITCH Perfect 3 star Rebel Wilson more than \$4.5 million

The judge claimed the extent of Wilson's defamation was "unprecedented" and warranted substantial damage after a jury found that articles published in Woman's Day, Australian Women's Weekly, New Weekly and OK! unfairly painted Wilson as a serial liar who'd faked her way to Hollywood.

While visiting Malta Stay at:
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A quick glimpse at Australia

Victoria becomes first Australian state to legalise Euthanasia



Victoria has become the first state in Australia to legalise assisted dying for the terminally ill (euthanasia). MPs voted that as from mid-2019, patients would have the right to request a lethal drug to end their lives.

It took Lower House MPs more than 100 hours of debate across both houses of Parliament and two all-night sittings to ratify the Andrews Government's amended bill. It will now go to the Governor for royal assent.

Premier Daniel Andrews, who started to support euthanasia after the death of his father last year, said it was an historic day, a day of reform, compassion, and a day of giving control to

those who are terminally ill.

The landmark legislation passed the Upper House 22 votes to 18 the previous week, but the changes had to be approved by the Lower House for voluntary euthanasia to be enshrined in law. It was eventually approved on November 28.

Last month Lower House MPs voted 47 to 37 in favour of the original bill.

Ms Jill Hennessy, the Victorian Health Minister (pictured on left) said the lengthy debate had given the Parliament the opportunity considered what constitutes a "good death". She added that they had some frustrating moments, but ultimately managed to land in a place where Victorians who are confronted with terminal illnesses, that are enduring unbearable pains, "would have a safe and compassionate option around assisted dying."

She said experts would immediately start work finalising the scheme, including the type of lethal drug to be prescribed to patients.

Mental illness and disability alone are not grounds for access to assisted dying, but people who meet the criteria and also have a mental illness or disability will not be denied access.

During debate on the issue, MPs expressed concern about who would be considered Victorian, arguing people seeking a doctor-assisted death could move to the state.

Key points:

- *Assisted dying will only be available to adults over 18 who live in Victoria
- *They must be deemed able to make decisions and suffering from an incurable illness
- *Patients must be experiencing intolerable suffering, and expected to die within a year
- *There are 68 safeguards in the legislation

Senate defeats religious freedom amendments

Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull is facing mounting hostility among conservative MPs after an overwhelming majority of Coalition senators voted to broaden religious protections only to be shot down when six Coalition senators, including three cabinet ministers, voted with Labor and the Greens to defeat them.

Liberal frontbencher Zed Seselja accused colleagues of conspiring with the Greens and Labor to undermine the rights of parents and freedom of speech.

Conservative MPs have warned that the Prime Minister faces a potentially hostile partyroom with six cabinet ministers and a growing number of frontbenchers supporting amendments, which will now be taken to the lower house when it returns next week to vote on the bill.

In September, Mr Turnbull pledged to protect religious protections following the same-sex marriage survey.

"I just want to reassure Australians that as strongly as I believe in the right of same-sex couples to marry, as strongly as I believe in that, even more strongly, if you like, do I believe in religious freedom," Mr Turnbull said.

Senator Smith told The Australian newspaper that religious freedoms "does not end with the passage of the same-sex marriage bill".

Turnbull rejects call for holding royal commission

The president of the Berowra Waters Liberal Party branch in Sydney, NSW Peter McNamee, has made an impassioned plea, by writing to Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull to appeal for him to change his mind to avoid "deserting" those hurt by the banks that are the "backbone of our country".

Mr McNamee, a property developer who has been Berowra Water branch president for 28 years, has been at the forefront of a campaign waged over many years against the Commonwealth Bank concerning BankWest loans that went bad. *The Australian Financial Review* has reported.

Two parliamentary inquiries and several court cases failed to prove the CBA acted unethically or illegally in foreclosing on the bank's clients. However, Mr McNamee's campaign has helped fuel public discontent.

Labor, the Greens and most crossbenchers are in favour of holding a royal commission; Mr Turnbull has repeatedly rejected the idea.

The increasing pressure to hold a royal commission was raised in Cabinet discussions recently.

Michelle Rowland

FEDERAL MEMBER FOR GREENWAY

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Kelma ħafifa u qasira. Kelma ta' origini Taljana, imma tant indrat f'pajjiżna Malta li mhux għalkemm naqilbu għal dik ta' bixra aktar Maltija, il-kelma "ħajr". Waqt li hemm ukoll il-verżjoni bl-Ingliż "thank you".

Qed ngħid li ndrat, forsi jkun aħjar jekk fl-istess nifs nammetti li wara li ndrat waslet biex tintnesa għal kollox, u mhux biss dik bil-Malti, iżda b'kull ilsien ieħor.

Ma nafx eżattament x'gara f'dawn l-aħħar snin, imma din il-kelma "grazzi" jew l-ekwivalenti tagħha m'għadhomx moda. Tant hu hekk li xi drabi meta tlissen "grazzi" lil xi hadd wara li jkun għamillek xi kumpliment jew xi pjacir, bilkemm ma jħarisx lejgħ għal speċi ta' spjegazzjoni. Ikolli ngħid li ftit tas-snin oħra din il-kelma ma tibqax tidher fid-diz-zjunarji.

Tkun qed issuq u tħalli lil xi hadd jgħaddi qablek, tistenna xi tip ta' rikonoxximent, li mhux dejjem jasal. Tinzerta fuq karożza tal-linja mimlija sa ruħ ommha u ċċedi postok lil xi hadd. Naħseb li haqqek il-"grazzi".

Mhux dejjem hemm il-ħtieġa li tliss-inha, tista' turi l-gratitudni tiegħek ngħidu aħna bi tbissima jew iċċaqlaq kemxejn rasek, ixxejjer idek, inkella tibgħat messaġġ bil-mowbajl jew kartolina. Hi x'inh, is-sens ta' gratitudni huwa karatteristika nobbli tal-bniedem edukat u li jaf japprezza, u għandna nibzġhu għaliha.

Niftakar kif sa ftit tas-snin ilu, malli tarbija tibda turi li lesta biex tlissen kliem ta' sillaba waħda bħal "ma" u "pa" konna ma' dawk dritt ngħallmuha tlissen "ta" (minflok grazzi) malli nagħtuha xi haġa li tkun tixtieq jew xi biċċa ħelu. B'hekk sa mill-jiem bikrin dik il-kreatura kienet tidra li għandha tkun rikonoxxenti waqt li tapprezza wkoll kull ġid li tircievi.

B'xorti ħażina dan il-proċess ta' tagħlim xi mkien falla. Illum rari tisma' min ilissen din il-kelma. X'ħasra! Għax il-"grazzi" ma tiswiex flus u lanqas tiflef wisq ħin biex tliss-inha, waqt li għandha s-seher li ggorr magħha ċertu sens ta' ħbiberija, ta' kollox sew u li jien qed napprezza dak li għamilt miegħi. Ma jfissirx li jien qed numilja ruħi miegħek.

Imma qabel ma nippuntaw subgħajna lejn l-oħrajn ejjew nagħmlu ftit tal-eżami tal-kuxjenza fuqna nfusna. Kemm il-"grazzi" għedt dalgħodu? Din il-mistoqsija ma tghoddx wisq għal min jgħix waħdu, għalkemm dan jista' jużaha kull darba li xi hadd iżuru jew jagħtih xi telefonata, inkella



kitba ta' **Lina Brockdorff**

"Grazzi"

li b'xi mod jurih li qed jaħseb fih.

Mela, nagħtu każ li inti guvni jew raġel, qomt mis-sodda u bil-għaġla mort tibra' kikkra te jew kafè u kisra ħobż biex tfit-tex taħrab lejn ix-xogħol. Nammetti li inti mgħaġġel, imma stajt int u ħiereg mill-kamra tal-ikel irringrazzajt lil martek jew lill-ommok għal kull ingredjent li inti kilt minnu qabel ħriġt.

Qatt għedt "grazzi" jew "prosit" wara l-iklet li tant haġu sigħat biex xi hadd sajjarhom? Qatt irringrazzajt lil

sitt kelmiet biss: "Grazzi ta' kull ma tfisser għaliha!" Kont għaddejja minn żmien ftit ikrah, u dik il-"grazzi" imlietni bil-kuraġġ u bis-saħħa.

Qed ngħixu fi żmien meta m'hawnx bniedem li m'għandux mowbajl. Veru li drabi messaġġi bla sens idejquk u jtilfulek il-ftit paċenzja li jkollok, imma jekk hemm xi ħabiba li tassew tinteressa ruħha minnek u spiss tistaqsi għalik, din qatt irringrazzajtja?

Hemm punt ieħor. Xi drabi nirraġunaw li lil dak li nħallsuh għas-servizz tiegħu mhemmx għalfejn nirringrazzajawh: ngħidu aħna lill-pustier, lil dak li jigbor l-iskart, lill-gardinar, lil tal-merċa, lil min jagħmlilna xi qadja.



min jaħsillek u jgħaddilek il-qomos? Qatt urejt gratitudni għall-imħabba li qed tagħtik ommok jew is-sieħba?

Jekk inti xebba jew mara hemm ukoll għalfejn spiss turi gratitudni lejn min jgħix miegħek kemm jekk inhi ommok jew sieħeb. Ilek ma tghidlu jew tghidilha li inti tħobbha? Li inti grata tal-protezzjoni li tħoss li jagħtik? Tal-flus li jipprovdule? U jekk inti omm ilek ma ssemmlu kemm inti kuntenta b'dawk uliedkom? U lit-tfal qed iddarrihom li huma wkoll għandhom ikunu rikonoxxenti lejkom, lejn xulxin u lejn is-socjetà kollha?

Minix xi waħda sentimentali zzejjed, imma ngħożż ferm kartolina bi fjura waħda li snin ilu ħabib tal-qalb baġhatli. Kien hemm miktub dawn is-

Imma dan huwa żball.

Ipprova xi darba għidilhom dik il-kelma maġika ta' "grazzi" u tara kif wiċċhom jixgħel u kif jibdeu jaqduk aħjar minn qatt qabel.

Idea oħra żbaljata hija li ċerti ommi-jiet li kibru fl-età jippretendu wisq minn uliedhom u rari jirringrazzajawhom ta' kull ma jagħmlu magħhom. Jgħidulek: "Aħna għamilna tant magħhom meta kienu żgħar!"

Imma dan ir-raġunar ma jghoddx. Xieraq li tirringrazzajawhom. Inti x'se tiflef billi tidra tghid "Grazzi" u turihom li inti rikonoxxenti?

Iva, "grazzi" hija kelma qasira u ħafifa biex tghidha imma għandha ħabta tibdel malajr l-atmosfera benjietna l-bnedmin.

Deborah Abela's Teresa wins 'Best Book' Award in Malta

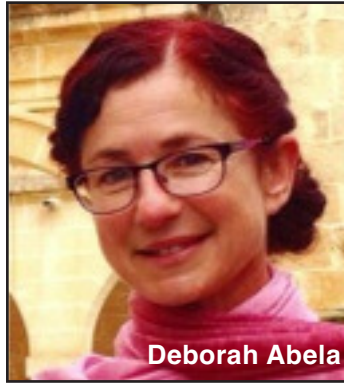
Deborah Abela's book, *Teresa A New Australian*, the Maltese Australian author's debut on Maltese bookshelves with a book in Maltese, has been awarded the most prestigious *Terramaxka Book Prize* for Best Translated Novel (ages 8-12).

The *Terramaxka Book Prize*, for Maltese literature is the children's prize segment of the National Book Awards. It is the most important book prize in Malta, organised by the Malta Book Council and backed by the Office of the Prime Minister as well as the Ministry for Education.

All books published in Malta during the previous year (2016 in this case) are entered, out of which 3-4 titles per category are then shortlisted. Deborah's *Teresa* was one of the shortlisted titles in the category Translation: Books for Children (Ages 8-12) for the Maltese translation by Leanne Ellul and Clare Azzopardi. It is published by Merlin Publishers.

The winners for the *Terramaxka Prize* are announced during the annual high-profile ceremony held during the opening night of the Malta Book Festival - the largest yearly book event in Malta. This year's event was held early November.

At this year's event held early November, *Teresa* went on to win. The prize was handed out to the translators and publisher by the Chairman of the Malta Book Council and by the Permanent Sec-



Deborah Abela

retary within the Ministry of Education.

Teresa is a very special title. It marks possibly the first time an Australian children's book was translated into Maltese and published in Malta. It is also the first collaboration between a Maltese publisher and Scholastic (Australia).

The Maltese edition of *Teresa*, Deborah's first novel available in the Maltese lan-

guage, the only translated title in the mix of otherwise original Maltese fiction, has since been a regular on the bestseller charts in Malta. It has also made it to the Top Ten New Titles of the year.

Deborah's immediate reaction to the news: "It is so completely thrilling!!"



Dr Carmel Mallia (right) receiving his honour in Sicily

Maltese writer honoured -named as Cavaliere di Sicilia

Dr Carmel Mallia, a contributor to *The Voice of the Maltese* magazine, was recently conferred with the honorary title of "Cavaliere di Sicilia" at the Hotel Parco Augusto, Terme Vigliatore, in the province of Messina, Italy.

Dr Mallia, who is also member of the Esperanto Academy, was one of the judges (the only non-Italian) that adjudicates at the annual poetry competition in Italian and Esperanto, organised by the *Federazione Sicilia Esperantista* led by Prof. Giuseppe Campolo of Messina. This yearly competition is called: "Poesia da tutti i cieli/Poezio el ĉiuj ĉieloj"

At the evening of the honour, Dr Mallia read a paper on the importance of poetry and on his Esperanto literary works, both original and translated.

He is currently also translating poems of Maltese poets to be published in the renowned literary review in Esperanto "Literatura Foiro" (Literary Fair) published in Switzerland. This will eventually lead to a third anthology of Maltese poets in Esperanto.



Dr Carmel Mallia reading his paper

Tagħrif dwar il-kitba Maltija

Aktar regoli u tagħrif uffiċjali dwar kif wiehed għandu jkteb il-Malti. Dan skont Akif maħruġ mill-Kummissjoni fi hdan l-Akkademja tal-ilsien Malti f'Malta.

TISWIR FL-ISMIJJIET U FL-AGGETTIVI

Is-suriet tal-Għadd fin-Nomi u fl-Aggettivi

37. Il-Għadd imkattar *miksur* isir mingħajr zieda ta' ittri konsonanti fil-kelma, imma biss (1) bit-tibdil tal-lehen u tal-hoss tal-vokali, (2) u bit-taqlib fil-qagħda tal-konsonanti fl-istess kelma.

Ara: *gnien, gonna; tifel, tfal; qarn, grun; moħħ, mħuħ.*

T.ċ. Meta ngħidu li l-għadd imkattar *miksur* isir mingħajr zieda ta' konsonanti, ma rridux ngħidu għal dawk il-konsonanti dgħajfa li fil-għadd *farrad* huma vokali twal jew mixrubin.

(Ara *taħt it-Tnejn u Erbgħin Regola – l-Ewwel Taqsima*).

Johorġu minn din ir-regola l-kelmiet: *salib, dabra, kamra* li fil-għadd imkattar jagħmlu *slaleb, dbabar, kmamar* biż-zieda ta' waħda mill-konsonanti tal-għerq.

Nistgħu ngħidu illi fit-tiswir tal-għadd imkattar *miksur*, il-biċċa l-kbira tal-kliem għandu l-ewwel żewġ konsonanti ta' għerq il-kelma wara xulxin mingħajr vokali bejniethom.

Jitbiegħdu minn din is-sura:

(1) Kliem ta' żewġ sillabi bl-aċċent sħiħ u biż-zieda tal-vokali *a* f'tarf il-kelma.

Ara: *baqra, baqar; bajda, bojod; belha, boloh; borka, borok.*

(2) Xi kliem li għandhom l-aċċent twil.

Ara: *fqir, foqra* li jagħmel ukoll *fqar; marid, morda.*

(3) Ohrajn ta' żewġ sillabi bil-vokali maħtufa, li l-plural tagħhom jibda u jispicċa b'vokali u jiġbor it-tliet konsonanti flimkien.

Ara: *qamar, oqmra; qasam, oqsmā; qabar, oqbra; saqaf, isqfa.*

Kliem ta' sillaba waħda

(1) Sura: *qalb s., qlub pl.; sawt s., swat pl.; belt s., bliet pl.* (plural bil-vokali twila).

Fuq din is-sura ibni u iktieb: *halq, hlug; xaqq, xquq; denb, dnuq; qarn, grun; xatt, xtut; xemx, xmux; hadd, hdud; cens, cnus* u fuq dawn għerq, *ghruq; ghonq, ghnuq; ghant, ghnut.*

Fuq dawn ukoll: *bejt, bjut; gens, gnus; lipp, lpup; fils, flus; habb, hbub; nejba, njeib; qamħ, qmuħ; dejl, djul; gild, glud; tajn,*

tjun; dejn, djun; moxt, mxat; mewt, mwiet; ħawt, ħwat; newl, nwiel; modd, mdied.

(2) Sura: *būr s., bwar pl.; kbūr s., kbār pl.; bnūn s., bnien pl.* (plural bil-vokali twila).

Fuq din is-sura ibni u iktieb: *sur, swar; dar, djar; mus, mwies; għar, għawar; bir, bjar; but, bwiet; zir, zjar; twil, twal; zghir, zghar; xiħ, xjuħ; riħ, rjieħ; ruħ, rwieħ; wild, wlied jew ulied; ghud, ghwied; jum, jiem; smin, smien.*

Kliem ta' żewġ sillabi

(3) Sura: *farka s., frāk pl.; gilda s., glūd pl.; sinna s., snien pl.* (plural bil-vokali twila).

Fuq din is-sura ibni u iktieb: *darsa, dras; demgħa, dmugħ; qal-għa, qlugħ; xiehed, xhud;*

goxra, qxur; għaxra, għxur; komma, kniem; qolla, qliel; ħabba, ħhub; nejba, njeib; newba, nwieb.

(4) Sura: *mārsa s., mrāsi pl.; tērha s., trieħi pl.* (plural bil-vokali twila).

Fuq din is-sura ibni u iktieb: *darba, drabi; felli, flieli; kilwa, kliwi; qorti, qrati; sala, swali; qatgħa, qtiegħi; ħotba, ħtiebi; roqgħa, rqiegħi (jew roqgħat, rqajja); xitwa, xtiewi; wegħda, wghiedi; għatba, għtiebi; ħarqa, ħrieqi; għabra, għbieri; gimgħa, gmiegħi; fergħa, friegħi.*

(5) Sura: *marid s., mōrda pl.* (plural bil-vokali maħtufa).

Fuq din is-sura ibni u iktieb: *tabib, tobba; għamja, għomja; ghāni, għonja.*

(6) Sura: *sēqer s., isqra pl.*

Fuq din is-sura ibni u iktieb: *satal, istla; gemel, iġmla; ġebel, iġbla; faħal, ifħala; saqaf, isqfa; qabar, oqbra, kefen, ikfna; qasam, oqsmā; qafas, oqfsa (u mhux osqfa).*

(7) Sura: *rāħal s., rħūla pl.* (plural bil-vokali twila).

Fuq din is-sura ibni u iktieb: *ħabel, ħbula; baġħal, baġħula; qamar, qmura; qabar, qbura; naġħal, naġħula; faħal, fhūla.*

(8) Sura: *bieqja s., bwieqi pl.* (plural bil-vokali twila).

Fuq din is-sura ibni u iktieb: *giebja, ġwiebi; sieqja, swieqi; nieqa, nwieqi; qiegħa, qwiegħi (jew qigħat); sienja, swieni; dielja, dwieli.*

Aktar regoli u tifsir fil-ħarġa li jmiss



Il-kumitat għall-2018 tal-Grupp Letteratura Maltija ta' Victoria

Fil-24 ta' Novembru li għadda l-Grupp Letteratura Maltija ta' Victoria organizza l-Laqgħa Generali Annwali, fil-Librerija ta' Centru Malti ta' Parkville u wkoll ħatar il-kumitat il-ġdid. Ma sarix elezzjoni għaliex in-nominazzjonijiet għal kull kariga ma kienux akbar milli kien meħtieġ.

Fil-ftuħ tal-laqgħa l-President, Dr Victor Sammut qara r-rapport ta' x'għara matul is-sena, filwaqt li s-segretarja, Rosemary Attard qrat il-Minuti tal-aħħar laqgħa generali.

Inqas wkoll ir-rapport finanzjarju mill-kaxxier, Ray Anastasi, filwaqt li l-president imbagħad ta' ħajr lill-kumitat għax-xogħol tiegħu matul is-sena, u lill-membri kollha tal-appoġġ tagħhom.

Wara, il-kumitat ta' qabel xolja, b'Joe Lofaro jiehu l-inkarigu ta' riċevitur għan-nominazzjonijiet.

Minħabba li l-karigi ma gewx ikkontestati, skont in-nominazzjonijiet, Dr Victor Sammut reġa' ġie maħtur president. L-istess għall-kariga ta' v/president, okkupata minn

Marie Louise Anastasi. Ma kien hemm l-ebda nominazzjoni għall-kariga ta' segretarju/a, filwaqt li Ray Anastasi nħatar teżorier.

Paul Vella ġie maħtur PRO, Salvina Vella segretarja għall-affarijiet soċjali, u George Portelli aċċetta li jiffirma parti mill-kumitat bħala membru.

Is-segretarja ta' qabel, Rosemary Attard, dis-sena ma hargitx għall-kumitat. Giet irringrazzjata għax-xogħol li



għamlet għal hafna snin.

– Paul Vella

Malta's maritime history and traditions under one roof at the Maritime Museum



The imposing church of San Lawrenz, the Freedom Monument, the Inquisitor's Palace and of course the magnificently restored Fort Saint Angelo are all within walking distance, but particularly on a rainy day in Malta, the best place to visit is the Malta Maritime Museum (Maltese: *Mużew Marittimu ta' Malta*). The largest museum on the island is right at the entrance to the Vittoriosa (Birgu) Waterfront housed in the former Royal Naval Bakery on the Birgu waterfront.

The building itself was constructed between 1842 and 1845 on the site of the arsenal of the navy of the Order of Saint John. It was designed by the architect William Scamp. Its façade was reportedly inspired by Windsor Castle. The bakery took over the role of the Order's bakery in Valletta.

The bakery used to form part of the Victualing Yard of the Malta Dockyard, which supplied naval personnel of the Mediterranean Fleet with food and drink. At its peak, it produced 30,000 lbs. (14,000 kg) of bread and biscuits every day using steam-powered machinery.

After World War II, the bakery was converted into the headquarters of the Admiralty Constabulary, also housing some offices and stores. It remained in use until the British forces left Malta in 1979. It was subsequently abandoned before reopening as the Malta Maritime Museum in 1992.

The Malta Maritime Museum, which charts Malta's maritime history and lore within a Mediterranean context, also illustrates Malta's maritime history, without neglecting the overall global nature of seafaring and its impact on Malta's society starting from prehistory to the present, within a Mediterranean and a global context.

It houses numerous artefacts highlighting the different epochs of Malta's history that is inadvertently tied to the sea, including a large model of a third-rate ship of the navy of the Order of Saint John, a model that dates back to the mid 18th-century, and was probably used by the Order's nautical school, awe inspiring artefacts and the largest Roman lead anchor in the World weighing four tons.

The collection also includes unique collections synonymous with Malta, such as the 60+ full size traditional Maltese boats, other models of various ships and boats, anchors, amphorae, cannons, weapons, documents, paintings, uniforms, and a 1950s steam engine.

The collection also includes the figurehead of the Napoleonic-era ship of the line HMS Hibernia, the Cathedral Triple Expansion Engine, Roman Anchors, the Voxel Model, the Lepanto Ex-voto, the St. Barbara Cannon, the 'Dghajsa tal-Latini' (Latin boat) model, a French Sabre, an Eastney Canteen and the Admiralty Mace.

The first plans to establish the Malta Maritime Museum were made in 1988 when an advisory committee was set up to set up the museum and collect artefacts from a number of sources. The then-derelict former Royal Naval Bakery in Birgu was chosen to house the museum. Four years later, on July 24, 1992, the museum opened to the public. It was inaugurated by then Minister for Education and Museums, Ugo Mifsud Bonnici.

Since its establishment, the museum's collections have increased aided by the constant donations over these past years by the Maltese general public, foreign individuals, companies, corporate bodies, foreign maritime and naval museums, foreign navies, and Maltese and foreign ambassadors and high commissioners.

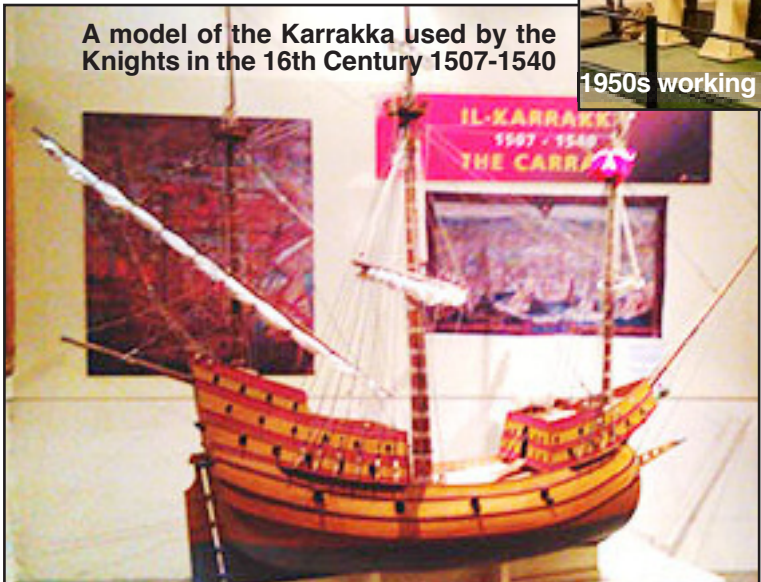
This is a large achievement when one considers that in 1988 the museum didn't even have one single artefact. Today the museum that covers over 2,000 sq. m., and with some 30 per cent of the total floor area currently available, houses a unique collection of over 20,000 artefacts belonging to Malta's Maritime past and helps visitors chart 7,000 years of history under one roof.

The Maritime Museum is a must visit attraction in Malta.



1950s working marine steam engine

A model of the Karrakka used by the Knights in the 16th Century 1507-1540



The Grand Master's ceremonial gondola



Community News

Community Wheels Inc.
Connecting you with your community
 Community Wheels is your local community organisation that provides door-to-door transport services to eligible people (+65 years old etc.) to:
 * attend medical appointments * go shopping (including assisting clients with their shopping bags) * meet a friend for a chat or coffee, and *go on bus tours etc.
 Available in the Parramatta City Council and parts of Cumberland Council areas
 For further information call 88681400

Please Note
 Anybody interested in advertising on *The Voice of the Maltese* magazine in order to reach the widest audience possible, particularly among the Maltese diaspora is requested to write to: Maltesevoice@gmail.com

La Valette SC
Cherry picking Bus Tour to Orange on Tuesday December 12
 Bus leaves La Valette centre at 6.am Greystanes 6.30am. Lunch at Orange RSL at one's own expense or BYO. For any information phone Frances 0412 320432 or Centre 9622 5847

new years eve
 Sunday 31 December 2017 - Doors open 7.30pm
Welcome the New Year

at La Valette Social Centre
 175 Walters Road, Blacktown
 and Dance the night away with **Charlie Camilleri and The Rockin Mustangs**

 Tickets: Members \$50 - Non-Members \$55
 Children (8-12 yrs) half price - (Under 8 yrs) FREE
 3-Course meal, fruit platters & wine
 Book early to avoid disappointment
 Tickets: Frances: 0412 320 432; Antoinette 9671 2992; Centre: 9622 5847

THE MALTESE CULTURAL ASSOCIATION OF NSW INC
 Invites all members to our
Annual Christmas Party
 On Thursday December 14 at 7.30 p.m.
 Join our MCA Choir in our Carol Singing
 Finger food and drinks will be served
 You may renew your annual membership of \$5 on the night.
 Financial members free entry. Non members to pay \$10 or become a member for \$5 on the night.
 Please ring: Mary Ramundi on 9688 1432 or Charles N Mifsud 0421 662 298

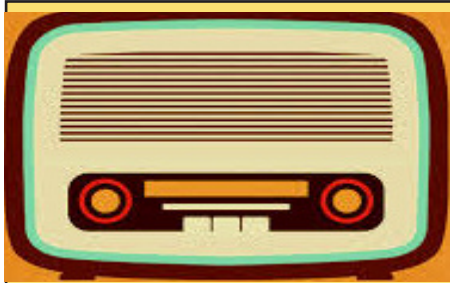


Dr Hugh McDermott MP
 State Member for Prospect
 For issues concerning:
 Ageing and disability - community services - education - environment - health - housing - planning - Police - transport - water
 P: (02) 9756 4766 E: prospect@parliament.nsw.gov.au
 2/679 The Horsley Dr, Smithfield NSW 2164

ST HELENA MALTESE AUSTRALIAN SC
December Event
 Dec. 16 – Sat.: Xmas Function at Melrose Tullamarene

Join us on facebook:
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/thevoiceofthemaltese>

Community News



Maltese Radio Programmes

MELBOURNE, on 3ZZZ 92.3FM or on www.3zzz.com.au. Mondays 5-6 pm, Fridays 5-6 pm and Saturdays 10-11am.

MELBOURNE on 98.9 North West FM, every Friday 6.00 - 7.00p.m. and Mondays 7.00 to 8.00pm. Presenter: Emmanuel Brincat.

MELBOURNE: STEREO 974 (93180930): 97.4FM Wed (Maltese Magazine) & Thursday (Mer'ba): 6.00pm to 8.00 pm Co-ordinator – Ray Anastasi

On SBS Radio

Day Time Analogue and Digital
Friday: 12:00-13:00 97.7fm **SBS 2**
Saturday: 14:00-15:00: 97.7fm **SBS 2**

To tune into digital radio you need a receiver or device with a DAB+ chip. Tuning in is by station name not frequency. Digital radio can also be heard via digital TV.

In **SYDNEY**, listen to the MCC radio programmes on 2GLF FM 89.3.

Tune In to Radio and Television

The SBS MALTESE NEWS: L-A 'barijiet on SBS TV twice a week nationwide Sunday at 8.00 am on SBS2 (Chan. 32); Thursdays at 8.00 am on SBS2

Isma' l-programm tar-radju bil-Malti mill-Kunsill Malti ta' NSW minn fuq l-istazzjon 2GLF 89.3FM.

Jista' wkoll jinstema' On Demand minn fuq l-Internet www.893fm.com.au

(On Demand >Ethnic >Maltese Council 11am)

Il-Ħadd 11.00 am: l-aħħar aħbarijiet minn Malta, mużika, tagħrif, kultura, avvizi u sugġetti ta' interess.

UNCLE SAM DJ (Maltese Radio) tune in to link: www.unclesamdj.com
SBS Radio 2 on Channel 38.

Programmes can be accessed online (live or catch up) at sbs.com.au/maltese and via mobile phone, using the SBS Radio app. For television news from **Malta - SBS 2 TV** on Thursdays and Sundays at 8am.

VIVA MALTA on COAST FM 96.3

Community Radio in Gosford Central NSW. Aired on Thursdays every fortnight from 6 pm -7 pm. Presenter: Nathalie Gatt.

Web streaming on: www.coastfm.org.au.

In **BRISBANE** listen to the Maltese Programme on 4EB on Tuesdays 6.00 -8.15am; Sundays 4.15pm to 5.15pm

Xaghra Association of NSW Inc.

Cherry picking at Orange for the day on Dec. 10

Riverstone: 6:00am: bus leaves from St John's Church Mc Collouch Str
Blacktown: 6:30am: bus leaves from bus stop near Blacktown Workers
Greystanes: 6:45 am bus leaves from bus stop opposite Greystanes church (close to Braeside Rd)

Morning tea, lunch & dinner will be provided.

Contact: Ray/Josephine Bigeni: 9627 4182 or 0439 974 182; M'Ann Teuma: 4579 6771

L-aħbarijiet tal-PBS (Malta)

I-PBS ta' Malta tforni lill-SBS fl-Awstralja bis-servizz tagħha, imma l-qarrejja xorta huma mheġġa biex x'hin iridu jistgħu jidhlu fil-website tal-istazzjon Malti bil-Malti u bl-Ingliż: www.tvn.com.mt.

Il-website hija aġġornata tul il-jum kollu għalhekk wiehed jista' jiehu stampa ċara tal-grajijiet li anke jkunu qed iseñħu dak il-fin **stess**.

MALTESE LANGUAGE SCHOOL OF NSW

Learn Maltese!

Classes are available for students from six years to adults at all levels of ability in the Maltese language. We have trained and experienced teachers qualified in language teaching and with Maltese study credentials.

Learn the Maltese language, the culture, lifestyle, cuisine, traditions and about the amazing history of the island.

Australian High Commission on facebook; HC on twitter

The Australian High Commission's in Malta now has a new Facebook page, and the High Commissioner a Twitter account that could both be accessed by the readers.

The High Commission's Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/AusHCMalta/>
The Commissioner's Twitter handle is: <https://twitter.com/AusHCMalta>

Maltese Seniors Social Welfare Day Groups

Fairfield Active Maltese Seniors

Meets on the last Tuesday of the Month. Group meets in Parish Hall, cnr of Stella Street & The Boulevard, Fairfield Heights at 10 am.

Maltese Seniors Central Coast

Have to contact our Welfare Officer for an appointment. For all information and referral matters call Cen-sina Cefai: 02 439 000 12 or 0414 267 652

Daceyville Maltese Seniors

Meets the last Wednesday of the month in the Meeting Room One, No. 3 General Bridges Crescent, Daceyville.

Note: The Groups also arrange regular Bus Trips Join us and make new friends.

Merrylands Social Maltese Seniors

Meets every second Friday of the month: Miller Room, Memorial Avenue Merrylands from 10.30am to 12.30 am

Llandilo Maltese Seniors

Meets on the first Wednesday of each month at the Llandilo Community Hall, Seventh Avenue, from 11am to 1 pm.

Maltese of Bankstown

Group meets 3rd Wednesday of month at New BCRG offices 15 Kitchner Parade, Bankstown NSW (opposite RSL Club). Every other 3rd Thursday an outing. Enquiries call: Sam 9534 2357

Greystanes Maltese Seniors

Meets on the second Monday of each month at the George Preca Centre of OLQP Church, 198 Old Prospect Road, Greystanes from 10 am to 12 noon

The Sutherland & St George Maltese Group

Meets every First Wednesday of the Month from 10:00am-1:00pm. Meetings/Get Togethers are interesting, informative & entertaining, so come Join us and make new Friends

For more information contact our Co-ordinator: Charles Mifsud J.P. Phone (02) 9501 5525 – mobile 0421 662 298.

***(All Groups are co-ordinated by The Maltese Community Council of NSW) with a sponsorship from Multicultural NSW. Please contact the MCC Welfare Officer: Marisa Previtera JP on 0414 863 123. The MCC offices are at 59b Franklin Street (corner with Young St) Parramatta West NSW (next to West Parramatta Primary School).**



Socceroos draw France, Peru, Denmark for Russia 2018 final



Fabio Cannavaro picks up Australia at the World Cup draw

The FIFA World Cup draw for Russia 2018 has grouped Australia with France (one of the favourites to win the World Cup in Russia), Peru and Denmark in Group C with supporters believing that the draw has given the Socceroos their best chance of progression at the tournament since 2006 in Germany when they advanced to the round of 16. They will start the campaign against France on June 16.

Based on FIFA world rankings, Australia's Group C is actually the toughest at the tournament. France are ranked ninth in the world, Peru 11th and Denmark 12th. The Socceroos are at number 39. If they manage to finish second in the group, they would play the winners of Group D that is made up of Argentina, Iceland, Croatia and Nigeria

Australia are without a coach after Ange Postecoglou's resignation on November 22. He quit after a gruelling World Cup qualification campaign, battling with intense media speculation over his position while getting Australia over the line to Russia. Australia needed two play-offs of their own

to progress to a fourth-straight tournament. The Socceroos now need to find a new coach to guide them at the 2018 World Cup

Australia's schedule in Russia

Australia v France (Kazan Arena, Kazan), Saturday June 16, 8pm AEST

Australia v Denmark (Cosmos Arena, Samara), Friday June 22, 1am AEST

Australia v Peru (Fisht Olympic Stadium, Sochi), Tuesday June 26, 12am AEST

The Socceroos failed to make it out of its group in 2010 or 2014.

The draw took place in the Kremlin's concert hall in Moscow with millions watching around the world.

The complete World Cup draw!

Group A: Russia, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Uruguay

Group B: Portugal, Spain, Morocco, Iran

Group C: France, Australia, Peru, Denmark

Group D: Argentina, Iceland, Croatia, Nigeria

Group E: Brazil, Switzerland, Costa Rica, Serbia

Group F: Germany, Mexico, Sweden, South Korea

Group G: Belgium, Panama, Tunisia, England

Group H: Poland, Senegal, Colombia, Japan

The World Cup kicks off on June 14 in Moscow with hosts Russia taking on Saudi Arabia. The tournament also concludes in Moscow with the final on July 15. Germany are the defending champions. No team has repeated as world champion since Brazil, in 1958 and 1962.

Early defeat for Malta's Alex Borg at Betway Snooker C'ship

Malta's top snooker player, Alex Borg participated in one of snooker's most historic and prestigious tournaments the UK Betway Championship, that ends this coming Sunday, December 10. However, he was eliminated in the first round when he lost 6-2 to UK's Jimmy Robertson.

The Championship is considered the second biggest ranking event, after the World Championship. Both tournaments make up snooker's Triple Crown along with the Masters. Matches are being played at the York Barbican Centre in England.

Mark Selby, who was defending champion after beating five-time winner O'Sullivan last year, this time crashed out in the second round 6-3 to Scott Donaldson.

Sydney FC open five-point gap on top of A-League

A-League champions Sydney FC beat Adelaide United 1-0 at Hindmarsh Stadium on Friday with Brazilian striker Bobo scoring with a classic counterpunch.

The winning of the three points and Newcastle's loss at home to Melbourne City enabled the Sky Blues to stretch their lead atop the table to five points before weekend games with their away win at Hindmarsh Stadium on Friday night.

Bobo's 45th-minute goal came against the tide as Adelaide control-led territory and possession but

fail-ed to land a telling blow on the title-holders.

Melbourne C are now third, while Melbourne V managed an away win.

DAY 7	
Adelaide U v Sydney FC	0-1
Newcastle J v Melbourne C	1-2
W Sydney V v Brisbane R	0-2
Wellington P v Melbourne V	2-3
CC Mariners v Perth G	1-0
DAY 8	
Sydney FC v Brisbane R	3-1
Melbourne C v Perth G	1-3
Newcastle J v Melbourne V	4-1
Adelaide U v W Sydney W	2-0
Wellington Ph v Mariners	1-4

HOLDERS knocked out from FA Trophy

Last weekend in Malta, the Premier League gave way to 16 matches from the third round of the FA Trophy that also involved teams from lower divisions. Trophy holders Floriana figured in the only surprise as they were eliminated.

The Greens, were defeated 3-1 by 10-man Naxxar in extra time. Floriana also mis-sed a penalty. Other Premier sides eliminated were Gżira, by Hamrun and St Andrews, by Sliema. The rest got through, some rather comfortably.

Meanwhile, in the only league programme (on Day 12) the previous week, that kicked off with three teams on top, the number was reduced to two after Gżira got beaten by neighbours Sliema resulting in Valletta and Balzan, who won their matches, to share first position.

Gżira dropped to third, now in the company of defending

champions Hibernians. They both have 24 points, a gap of three points with the leaders.

The big match on the day was Valetta vs. Floriana with the team from the capital emerging 1-0 winners.

Balzan made hard work of beating Senglea with a single goal, but it was enough for them to retain their position.

Floriana are now joined fifth on 23 points with "Old Firm" rivals Sliema iWanderers.

The day's most convincing victory was obtained by Hamrun who defeated Lija 5-1, while Naxxar defeated Mosta in the match between the neighbours.

RESULTS – DAY 12

Valletta v Floriana	1-0
Balzan v Senglea	1-0
Hibernians v Tarxien R	3-0
Sliema W. v Gżira	2-1
Birkirkara v S. Andrews	2-0
Hamrun S.v Lija Ath	5-1
Naxxar L. v Mosta	2-0
STANDING P W D L Pts	
Valletta	12 8 3 1 27
Balzan	12 8 3 1 27
Gżira U	12 7 3 2 24
Hibernians	12 7 3 2 24
Floriana	12 6 5 1 23
Sliema W.	12 7 2 3 23
Hamrun S.	12 6 2 4 20
Birkirkara	12 5 1 6 16
Mosta	12 4 2 6 14
Senglea A	12 2 3 7 9
Naxxar L.	12 2 3 7 9
S. Andrews	12 2 1 9 7
Tarxien R.	12 2 1 9 7
Lija A.	12 0 2 9 5