



## DECEMBER 2023 NEWSLETTER

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2023

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**President:** Mary Vella Gomes (415-517-5533); **Vice President:** Pauline Scerri Henderson (650-245-1774); **Secretary:** Maryann Ciappara Milla (415-218-6329); **Assistant Secretary:** Carmen Micallef (415-586-2597); **Treasurer:** Joseph Vella: (650-619-4565); **Assistant Treasurer:** Ninfa Pace (650-697-1079); **Parliamentarian:** Terrie Smith Aquino (650-438-5579) **Auditors:** Mona Vella Nicholas and Louis Vella

### Message from the President

Thanksgiving has come and gone, and the Advent Season is upon us. Decorations can be seen everywhere as people prepare for Christmas.

On Sunday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>, we had a wonderful Children's Christmas Party. Beautiful procession with baby Leo Battaglia as the infant Jesus. And let us

not forget Santa and Mrs. Claus. Best part...all the excited children with their smiling faces. I think the adults enjoyed the day as much as the kids! The hall was very festive, especially the ceiling which was decorated by Pauline and Rich Henderson in November. Thank you to everyone who helped make the day so much fun.

The Nominating Committee, namely Brian Ciappara, Emma Magarrell, Terrie Aquino, Jeff Milla and Michael Pace, which oversaw the nominating of the members that will form the 2024 Board of Directors, did an excellent job. Thank you so very much.

The members who accepted the nominations are Mary Vella Gomes for President, Pauline Scerri Henderson and Karen Borg for Vice-President, Maryann Milla for Secretary, Mary Borg Smith for Assistant Secretary, Joe Vella for Treasurer, Ninfa Pace for Assistant Treasurer and Terrie Aquino for Parliamentarian. Although the Sergeant-at-Arms and the Auditors are not officers, Laurie Scribner accepted the nomination for Sergeant-at-Arms, and Louis Vella and Mona Nicholas accepted the nomination for Auditor.

After the names were read at the November meeting, the Nominating Committee was dissolved. The floor was then opened for further nominations. Since there were no nominations from the floor, the nominations were closed. The Board of Directors for 2024 will be composed of those members that were nominated by the Nominating Committee. However there will be an election to choose between Pauline Scerri Henderson or Karen Borg since they have both accepted the nomination for Vice President. **The election for Vice President will be held at the General Membership Meeting, on Sunday, December 17<sup>th</sup> at 10:30.** My sincere thanks to all those members who accepted the nominations to serve on the Board of Directors, Sergeant-at-Arms and Auditors for 2024. **Please mark December 17<sup>th</sup> on your calendar and make an extra effort to attend and encourage other members to do so as well. Please note that the meeting is not at the end of the month.**

Zaren Vassallo met with the Board in November to discuss the possibility of bringing the Mosta Band here for Malta Day in 2024 when we will be celebrating the 95<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Club along with the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Malta's Independence and the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of when Malta became a Republic. He also spoke to the members who attended the November General Meeting. No decisions have been made as more information is needed before we proceed.

**We are looking for members to serve on the Malta Day Committee for 2024.** Please contact either Maryann Milla or me if you are interested.

The Holiday Market and Craft Fair proved to be a very nice event. The vendors were happy with their sales, and we had a nice profit mostly from the raffle and the fee the vendors paid. We are looking forward to holding it again next year.

In November we also had our last Family Bingo Pasta Night for the year. It was well attended and, as always, it was a lot of fun. Congratulations to all the winners!

While we were still planning on serving food, we had hoped to keep the cost down for our New Year's Eve celebration by not having the dinner catered. In response to questions that members had regarding dinner, we revisited our original plans and made some changes. Dinner will be catered and the updated flyer that is attached provides all the information. Although the cost for the catering is more, we have not changed the cost for each person. Robert Micallef has kindly volunteered to DJ for us. He welcomes requests from all of you to create a playlist which everyone can enjoy. Please send your email with requests to: [lroberob@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lroberob@sbcglobal.net) or text him at: 415-685-9365. Please be sure to send in your reservation prior to the deadline date of December 24<sup>th</sup>. We hope many of

you will attend and celebrate with all of us as we bring in 2024.

The City of South San Francisco along with the South San Francisco Fire and Police Departments and the YMCA of Northern California have kicked off their Holiday Toy Drive. On Friday, November 17th, firefighters dropped off a red container to collect donated toys. I am happy to say that it was filled in just a couple of days. It has been picked up and two others were delivered and they, too, are filling up. If you would like to participate, please bring an **unwrapped, new toy** to place in the container for children 0-10 years of age. No stuffed animals please. They will also accept monetary donations for children from 11-17 years of age. If you prefer to send a check, please make it out to Firefighters Local 1507 and send it to my attention. The containers will be picked up on or before December 11th. Thank you so much for your generosity.

I want to congratulate Ken Chetcuti on being promoted to Captain with the South SF Police Department. Ken is a member of the Club and, as most of you know, he is Charlie Chetcuti's son. His sister Julie told me how proud the family is of him and rightfully so, as the Maltese community is proud of his as well.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any suggestions, questions or issues that are of concern to you so that they can be addressed. Positive remarks are also welcomed! You can send me an email or,

if you prefer, you can drop a note in the suggestion box.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve as President this past year. It has truly been an honor and a pleasure.

Joy and blessings from my family and I to all of you during this Christmas season. May peace, hope and love live in your hearts all year long.

Il-Milied it-Tajjeb u s-Sena t-Tajba!  
Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

#### **Message from the Honorable Consul General of Malta**

Greetings dear friends of the Maltese American Social Club and the Maltese Community in California. We are now in the festive weeks of the year. The holiday season is upon us, and we look forward to a lot of cheer, parties, beautiful gatherings, and warm well wishes. We hope and pray this special time of the year brings lasting peace not only among nations and peoples but most especially in our hearts.

**November membership meeting at the Maltese Club:** It was very satisfying to see such a wonderful group of members who attended the meeting a few weeks ago. Our club is a membership organization. It exists because and for our members. Guests of members are of course welcome, but it is our membership that holds the organization together, helps it grow and keeps it strong. All members should feel proud that the Maltese Club has survived and thrived for almost 100 years. Yes, in 2029 we celebrate our centennial, which means that next year we celebrate 95 years since the club was formed in November 1929

**November:** We refer to the month of November which we have said goodbye to only a few days ago, as the month to remember. We remember our veterans, our heroes in our lives; we remember our loved ones. A few weeks ago, the Maltese community in the area gathered once again at St. Dunstan church to celebrate and commemorate those dear loved ones to whom we owe our heritage. We remembered them as we presented a red or a white rose in their memory. In Malta, England, and many other parts around the world, in November, it is very common to see people wearing a red poppy on the left side of their chest to honor and commemorate those lost in wars. Even sports athletes very often have a poppy printed on their uniforms during the month of November. The flowers, the gathering, and the poppy are but a few beautiful things that will help us remember.

**Maltese Citizenship Ceremony:** As was announced during the most recent meeting at the Maltese Club, preparations are in place to organize a fitting ceremony for those who have achieved Maltese Citizenship in recent months/years. The Maltese Citizenship Ceremony is scheduled to take place at San Francisco City Hall, on Monday December 11<sup>th</sup> in the morning. This will be that same week when Malta celebrates Republic Day which is a public holiday in Malta. Republic Day is celebrated every year on December 13<sup>th</sup>. The Ambassador of Malta in Washington DC is scheduled to be in attendance to congratulate and hand out letters and certificates of Maltese citizenship. Anyone who has received a letter or certificate of citizenship during the last recent years and would like to attend

this very symbolic and memorable occasion is invited. Family members and friends are welcome as well. Anyone who is interested or needs further information is encouraged to contact the office of the Hon Consul of Malta at, [malteseconsulate@yahoo.com](mailto:malteseconsulate@yahoo.com) This will be the very first of its kind anywhere in the world as far as we know. The huge honor has been granted to the Maltese – American Community in the San Francisco Bay Area. This will be an awesome opportunity for some stunning photos at the magnificent San Francisco City Hall rotunda.

**Vacation in Malta:** Many members of our community who visited Malta in the Summer have now returned and are getting ready for the holidays. The trips may be over but the memories certainly last. The photos and maybe Facebook postings for those who use it, help us remember and relive happy and relaxing times. Listening to stories and events from Malta or Gozo by those who visited is always a special treat.

**Malta at the United Nations:** As most know Malta has an embassy in Washington DC and another one in New York which is referred to as a Mission. The one in New York deals primarily with the UN (United Nations) At the beginning of 2023 Malta was elected as a member of the UN Security Council and later took on the responsibility of the presidency which is a rotating position. Recently Malta authored a resolution to safeguard hostages in the war-torn area of Gaza in Israel, to protect all hostages but especially children. The resolution was not only accepted, it was also voted on. This was not the first time that similar resolutions were presented to the security council by other member states,

but the one from Malta was the one that was accepted. Malta certainly continues to punch above its weight.

**Festa Season during the month of December in Malta & Gozo:** Needless to say, that in December everything revolves around Christmas and the festivities leading up to the happiest season of the year. However, Christmas is not the only festa in Malta. On December 8<sup>th</sup> a public holiday, another big festa is celebrated in the town of Cospicua or Bormla. It is the festa of the Immaculate Conception. Also in December, the small town of Mtarfa celebrates the feast of St. Lucy. IL-Festa it-tajba:

We continue to encourage everyone to keep your families, friends, and loved ones constantly in your thoughts and prayers and to watch out for each other. One never knows the last time we are able to do so. We continue to hope and pray for better days ahead. Always remember, it is not what we take but what we give that makes us truly rich. So, give without remembering and receive without forgetting.

**Message from the Secretary  
Maryann Milla**



*Thank you to all the members for giving me the opportunity to keep you informed through our monthly newsletter! Wishing you a very happy holiday season and looking forward to ringing in 2024!*

### **MEMBERSHIP**

**Welcome to our newest member –  
ANTHONY SCERRI!**

**REMEMBER TO PAY THE ANNUAL  
MEMBERSHIP DUES BY JANUARY  
31<sup>ST</sup>**

### **DECEMBER FUN FACTS**

St Nick has a day! St. Nicholas was a patron saint of children during his time, and he has a day dedicated to him in December. The 6<sup>th</sup> of December is Saint Nicholas Day - and it is celebrated by different people around the world.

The **Winter Solstice** is an astronomical event that marks the **shortest day and longest night** of the year in the Northern Hemisphere. It occurs when the tilt of the Earth's axis is farthest away from the sun, resulting in the least amount of daylight hours. The Winter Solstice is celebrated in many cultures and religions around the world with various traditions, holidays, and festivals. In 2023, the Winter Solstice will occur on **Thursday, December 21, 2023, at 10:27 p.m. EST.**

### **REQUEST**

#### **NEW YEAR'S EVE DJ**

**Robert Micallef**

Please send in your song requests, or artist(s), so he can create a playlist which everyone would enjoy for the evening! You can contact Robert by phone: **415 685-9365** email: [1roberob@sbcglobal.net](mailto:1roberob@sbcglobal.net)

**THE CLUB WILL CLOSE AT NOON  
ON DECEMBER 31<sup>ST</sup> AND REOPEN  
AT 7:00 PM. IT WILL BE CLOSED ON  
NEW YEAR'S DAY.**

### **Website**

Visit us online for a look at the memorable moments through pictures, information about the Club and more. Dennis Simmons strives hard to keep it updated as much as possible for us.

<http://malteseamericanscsf.org/memberservices.aspx>

### Club Hours

Sunday: 9:00 -5:00p.m.

Friday: 5:00 p.m. -1:00 a.m.

**CLOSED**

Monday, Wednesday, Thursday & Saturday -**EXCEPT**: The 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month for the Women's Club Meeting from 6:30-10:00 p.m.

### Library Hours

The last **Sunday** of each month from **11a.m. to 1p.m** or contact Mona Vella-Nicholas, Librarian and Historian, at 650-589-4578 for an appointment.



*Our condolences and prayers to the Spiteri family on the loss of Charlie. May he rest in peace.*

*Those we love don't go away, they walk beside us every day, unseen, unheard, but always near, Still loved, still missed, and very dear.*

### Correspondence

**Except for payments for functions and dues**, please remember that all correspondence, and any important information that may need to be put in the newsletter, should be addressed to: [secretary@maltese-americanscsf.org](mailto:secretary@maltese-americanscsf.org).

Please remember to **notify me of any changes to phone numbers and/or email change and address changes, so that we can keep our records current**. You can reach me at 415-218-6329 or via email.

### Grievance Committee

The 2023 volunteer members are Mary Ann Fassler (Chairperson), Charlie Catania, Barbara Fenech, Paula Moffitt and Peter Abela.

### Origin of Maltese Last Names

Is your last name De Gray? If so, you may be interested in knowing where your name comes from. De Gray is of English origin. Another form of this name is simply the English last name "Gray." Going back a bit farther, it seems that the name takes its origins from a place named "Graye", in Normandy which is in northwestern France. Thus, De Gray would mean someone who came to England from that area of France.

### Maltese History Month

*By: Mona Vella-Nicholas*

*Librarian and Historian*

**November 19, 1846** -- Spiridione Buhagiar is born in Cephalonia, one of the islands off the coast of Greece, to Maltese parents. At the age of 23, his is ordained a Capuchin priest in Malta, taking the religious name of Anton Maria. Three years later, his is sent to Sfax, a town in Tunisia with a large Maltese community. Due to his exemplary work ministering to the people of Sfax, he is appointed auxiliary bishop of Carthage, a suburb of Tunis, the capital of Tunisia.

When Bishop of Malta Carmelo Scicluna becomes too old and infirm to keep up with his duties, the French Cardinal Lavigerie recommends Bishop Buhagiar. (Remember, Tunisia is a French colony currently.) After interviewing him, the Pope appoints Bishop Buhagiar "Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Malta," so he returns to Malta. This appointment does not include the right of succession to the ailing Bishop Scicluna, however.

When Bishop Scicluna dies in 1888, the British governor of Malta, along with certain high-ranking members of the Maltese clergy, speak out forcefully against the appointment of Bishop Buhagiar as Bishop of Malta. Due to his birth on a Greek island and his service as bishop of a French colony, they do not consider him Maltese. As a result, the Pope appoints Bishop of Gozo Pietro Pace as Bishop of Malta.

Since Buhagiar's service as bishop is no longer required in Malta, he is sent to the Caribbean to serve as "Apostolic Delegate to Santo Domingo, Haiti, and Venezuela." He dies of yellow fever on August 10, 1891, at the age of 44. He is buried in the Cathedral of Santo Domingo in the Dominican Republic. To this day, some Maltese believe that Bishop Buhagiar was a victim of political interference in the decision to deprive him of the Maltese bishopric.

**November 28, 1942** --- Carmelo Borg Pisani is hanged for treason. He is born in Senglea in 1915 and as a teenager studies art at the Umberto art lyceum in Valletta, a pro-Italian school. He later receives a scholarship to study art in Rome. While in Italy, he renounces his British citizenship and joins the Fascist party.

In May of 1942, Borg Pisani volunteers to go on an espionage mission to Malta. His assignment is to find out what Malta's defense capabilities are as a prelude to Italy's planned invasion of the island. His little boat lands at the Dingli Cliffs but, due to the bad weather (it is November, after all) his food and equipment are washed away by the

rough seas. Stranded, he is forced to attract a passing boat to ask for help. Borg Pisani is later taken by a British patrol boat to a naval hospital, where he is recognized by an old friend. Under questioning, he admits to being a spy for Italy. He is tried, found guilty of treason, and sentenced to death. He is hanged on November 28th. He is first buried at the Corradino Prison, but his remains are later moved to the ossuary of the Paola cemetery.

### **Women's Social Committee**

**Meetings** are held at 6:30pm on the 2<sup>nd</sup> **Tuesday** of every month. Functions *may be held* on different days (members will be contacted if there are changes to the date and/or time for the meeting). This year's Women's Christmas dinner is being held on **December 12<sup>th</sup>** at the Basque Cultural Center. The January meeting will be held on the 9<sup>th</sup>

### **Entertainment Committee**

The Entertainment Committee consists of the following volunteers: Rita Borg (Chairperson), Sina Borg, Brian Ciappara, Pauline Henderson, Richard Henderson, Carmen Micallef, Emma Magarrell and Ninfa Pace. **Volunteers** for our functions are ***always needed*** and welcomed. **If you are interested in serving on the 2024 Entertainment Committee and/or would like to volunteer at our many events, please be sure to contact Rita Borg at: [luftymom2000@gmail.com](mailto:luftymom2000@gmail.com)**

**Looking forward to the 2024 Entertainment Calendar of Events that will be available towards the beginning of the year!**

## Support Our Advertisers!

Please take the time while reading the newsletter to check out our advertisers who are supporting our Club. Remember to mention the Club when patronizing these businesses.

### Payments (**No CASH**)

Payment for dues and all functions should be made by CHECK payable to: Maltese American Social Club of San Francisco (MASC) and send it to the attention of Ninfa Pace. Please be sure to provide **separate checks for each event**. Payment for functions must be made by the deadline date. **IF PAYMENT IS NOT RECEIVED BY THE DEADLINE DATE, ATTEMPTING TO PAY AT THE DOOR ON THE DAY OF THE EVENT WILL BE DENIED.**

## Hall Rental

### EMMANUEL MICALLEF HALL

The hall is available for rent to members only. Please contact Mary Vella Gomes (415-468-3747 or 415-517-5533) for information and to pick up a form and guidelines from the Club.

### Non-Responsibility Declaration

All activities arranged for or sponsored by the Maltese American Social Club of San Francisco, Inc. are for the convenience and pleasure of the members and their guests who desire to participate. The Maltese American Social Club does not assume any responsibility for the well-being or safety of the participants or their property in any matters pertaining to said activities.

*This Newsletter is created by Secretary, Maryann Milla, with the approval of the Board of Director*





