



JUNE 2023 - NEWSLETTER

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INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT 2023/24

Dr. Patti Hill from Edmonton, Alberta, Canada has been elected to serve as International President of Lions Clubs International. Her election to the highest rank of our Association was confirmed at the International Convention held in Boston, USA, this month. Lion Dr. Patti Hill becomes the second lady to become President of our Association. Lion Gudrun Yngvadottir from Iceland was the first lady President for the Lionistic Year 2018/19.



President Patti Hill

Lion President Patti Hill is President of a consulting firm in Canada with over 30 years of experience as an educator and psychologist. Lion Patti has monitored graduate students and psychologists in training. She has also championed the rights of children and youth who are deaf and/or blind. She has been a member of Edmonton Host Lions Club since 1990. She held several offices within the Association also receiving numerous awards including several International Presidents awards.

In addition to her Lions activities, President Hill is active in numerous professional, human rights and community organisations.

She is married to Creg Holmes, who is also a Lion, and is grandmother of three boys and three girls.

PRESIDENTIAL HANDOVER

Wednesday June 28 was a red letter day for our Club as Lion President Norman Wilson handed over the chain of office to incoming President Lion Karl Grima Bezzina.

The ceremony was held at the Hotel Victoria roof top area in the presence of numerous Club members and other Lions from Lions Club Licata, with whom our Club has a "Friendship Agreement".

2022/23 President Lion Norman Wilson delivered a speech outlining his two years in office and also presented awards to Club members for their contributions towards the success of the Club's achievements during his term of office. A significant award was the posthumous Melvin Jones Award to the late Lion Isabelle Micallef who passed away earlier this year. This was a merited award to Lion Isabelle who was ever present at meetings and functions of our Club. Isabelle's son Jan accepted the award.



Incoming President Karl Grima with outgoing President Norman Wilson

Outgoing President Lion Norman Wilson then handed the chain of office to incoming President Lion Karl Grima Bezzina, who was introduced to Lions by his aunt the late Lion Isabelle Micallef.

Hereunder is the "Handover Speech" delivered by our new President which merits reproduction in full.

"Lions are supporters, not just in a financial way. Lions offer support through service, helping others not to quit. Most of us here aren't here by luck. Being in a better financial situation is being here and now, because we put in the hard work to achieve our goals. We are persistent. We wake up every morning and say to ourselves, today we give hundred percent. We are what we are through work. Though we had family who supported us when things got tough, when quitting looked like the easiest way out, we have friends who supported us. When they saw us on the verge of throwing in the towel. That is what makes the difference winning our daily problems or quitting altogether.

As Lions we have been there not to give our fish, but to support our peers on how to go fishing. We have worked on bringing a guide dog to help visually impaired persons to wake up every morning achieving their own goals moving on in life. We have managed to provide transport to palliative care patients

who even though through their sufferings and their difficulties, they want to live on. And we, as Lions, supported their dignity through transport. We have supported a group of young men achieve their dream of being sportmen by sponsoring rowing boats for special needs persons to achieve their dreams of becoming para-athlete. To this I salute all the Past Presidents and I salute all of you who help Sliema Lions achieve all this”.

A big “THANK YOU” to our now Past President Lion Norman Wilson, through whose guidance, dedication and hard work throughout the past two years stirred the Club into achieving all the goals we had set for ourselves. However our work never stops, and like we do every day for ourselves every morning, we shall continue to do so with others in support.

I like to conclude by mentioning a paragraph from a book I came across recently.- “The boy, the fox, the mole and the horse”, where the boy and the horse are walking in a dark wood and the small short boy tells the horse “I cannot see where I’m going”. The horse standing tall next to him tells the boy, “Can you see where to take your next step?” The boy says “Yes”. So the horse replies: “Then do it”. Like the horse we should be there in guiding others to take their next step by step forward.

Whilst thanking the Board and members for showing their trust in me, I’d like to end by my adopted ethos for the coming year – “NEVER DEPRIVE SOMEONE OF HOPE. IT MIGHT BE ALL THAT THEY HAVE”.

PRESIDENT’S AGM REPORT – JUNE 2023

Good evening fellow Lions. I am not going to do what you think. I was meant to prepare a report to say what I have done during the year but you know all that. Instead, I would like to share a few thoughts with you that I think are much more important.

We are a strange and diverse group of people in a way, coming together to form a club. Many of us did not know each other before joining and were not even friends but we all had a similar noble desire to help others by raising funds and serving.

The Club does a superb job of this precisely because we are all different. A colleague of mine used to say that he loves to celebrate differences and I always wondered what he meant.



2022/23 President Norman Wilson

Now I know. By pooling our differences, we achieve much more than the sum of the individual parts. It is a bit like the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra. Individually they sound good but together they sound wonderful.

For a second, I'd like you to think of two members of Lions Club Sliema who are very, very different from you. It is not difficult, is it? And that is why together we work well - we come up with the results because we each contribute something different to the machine. One makes a part, another produces another different part, one supplies the fuel, another puts the nuts and bolts together, and yet another drives the machine. It works because we are all willing to help in our own special way contributing our own unique talents.

For that I must say a great big thank you. A President is only as good as his team. A leader can only lead if people are willing to follow.

I have some regrets too. There were some things that I did not manage. At the start of the year, I sketched out what changes I would like to see in the club including changes to the second meeting of the month, shadowing and role switching. Everyone nodded and agreed; there was not a dissenting voice. But I had not carried you with me; what I suggested was done half-heartedly and mostly not at all.

However, I was interested to note that Lion Treasurer Alex Arena brought out that same plan once more at the end of the year when we voted for our new Directors including Vice President. He said, referring to his desire to move on, "Am I stuck in this role for ever? Is there anyone trained enough shadowing me to take over?" But, all in all, we have had fun together and came together to do what we are meant to do – "TO SERVE", to help others less fortunate than ourselves.



Presentation of car to Hospice Movement

I can think of one badly disabled person who is one of the key people running the Paralympic Committee. He has had twenty-two operations. I can think of someone who is very fit, but has two badly deformed and shortened arms and felt he was useless and could do nothing until he started rowing on a machine at

Dar tal-Providenza and found out he was good at it. It gave him a real purpose in life and his attitude changed completely. Imagine what joy he and others will feel on our boat and row for real in the water perhaps to compete for Paralympic Medal. I can think of families who were so grateful to have a car to take them to hospital with their sick relative and trollies and medical equipment waiting to be used in the new St. Michael's Hospice.

I see lonely hungry faces, some very young, many of whom are alone in this world having been rejected by their families and society so grateful to have a warm place to sit, a shower with shower gel, clean clothes and to eat a hot meal at the Valletta Soup Kitchen. I was offered lunch there three times, and three times I refused. I could not take food out of some poor hungry mouth.

In November we held Diabetes Day and put at rest many minds regarding health. However, we alerted three minds that they have diabetes and that they need to see their doctor urgently. We also found a unique blood sample that excited the researchers at Mater Dei Hospital no end particularly in the shape of one of our members, Professor Alex Felice. It cost us nothing but it really will help save lives. In January a grateful Priest stood before me after Mass and accepted a cheque from us to support a very worthy organization – Dar tal-Providenza.

Thanks to the suggestion from one of our Lions we supported the Anglican Church in Sliema to repair their Bell Tower. Our role is not only to serve individuals, but also to serve the community by preserving the past to ensure continuity.

I can think of overseas disasters and the war in Ukraine where families are fleeing from a country, they leave with absolutely nothing. They have lost their home, their belongings, their savings, and more, their father and/or mother.

Most of us being not so young swallow tablets to correct something that is not quite right in our bodies and some of us attend Mater Dei Hospital for the odd operation or two. Our deficiencies are put right. And every time this happens to me, I see in my mind's eye faces of people who have no proper hospital and who cannot think of tablets because there is no free health service in their country. Lions Club Sliema have provided thousands of pairs of spectacles to help people from Africa to see, and with a few golf balls hit at the Marsa Golf Tournament, helped people in Ethiopia to build a school.

Similar feelings of hopelessness must have been felt in the aftermath of the Turkey/Syria border earthquake where again we helped to the tune of Euro one thousand (1000).

I can think of little children playing in the street in a rough neighbourhood where drugs are the main currency pedalled by older youths. As these precious young children grow, they too will end up as druggies except that is no longer the case for some of them in part because there were over 100 people at the Phoenicia Hotel enjoying a lovely concert and having afternoon tea to help them. I sat at a table with tow of these Philippine children, now 21 and 22 years old, and I will never ever forget the grateful look and joy on their faces when they saw so many people from our Club and guests all there to help their little brothers and sisters and friends in the Philippines. And help them we did. Congratulations to all of you for we raised over Euro 1500.

Etched in my memory too was the joyous look in the eyes of those singing and dancing in their wheelchairs at Ta' Sawra Residence and who were all delighted with the presents we gave each of the 55 residents. It was a very bright day for them and many had been looking forward to our party for ages. We made a difference. One old resident even remembered that tall lady with a strong voice and big character and asked after her commenting that she made the party for them three years ago. She was referring to our dearest Lion Bella.

We must not forget those businesses that helped the Club giving up time, resources, profit, and manpower. There are many of these helpers and I am not going to list them all here but would like to mention The Phoenicia, Marsa Sports Club, Camilleri Paris Mode, Meridiana Winery, Jardinland and of course our new home, The Victoria Hotel. You see it is not the events that are important, it is what they stand for, what they do, what they cause and the help, relief, and joy that they give.

We did other things too. It is always import for a Club to come together through socializing, connecting, understanding each other, celebrating, smiling, and laughing, and we did all that, sometimes in real style. Surely as a Club we must be so proud, so humbled, and feel true joy that we have achieved all this and served not only in Malta, but around the world too. On a global scale, some of our offerings and doings may seem small but they do make a real difference and we show a shining example to the rest of humanity. Thank you all.

Editor's note: Lion President's presentation at the last meeting in June is being reproduced in full as it merits to be made known to all Club members and friends who receive the newsletter. I personally wish to thank Lion President for all he did during his two years as our President and wish him and his dear wife Victoria good health, happiness, and joy.

MIGRANTS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

The problem facing the Mediterranean countries regarding migrants was one of the main topics at the 2023 Mediterranean Solidarity Organisation Conference held in Tangiers.



Three well prepared contributions that brought to light this epochal problem, which particularly affects the Mediterranean, a human drama that continues to worsen. How many drowned at sea? How many abandoned children? This phenomenon is due to economic problems, but also to climate change, drought, and inflation which makes life very difficult in Africa, especially the sub-Saharan part. Let's not forget the aftermath of the colonial occupation, hence the tidal wave of flows that should be regulated. Statistics have shown us the extent of this phenomenon, at world level, 3% (5% in Europe) of the population is concerned. Take into account the demographic decline in Europe and the needs of the labour market. Difference between migrants (voluntary emigration) and refugees (fleeing wars, persecution). The public authorities, the states, the United Nations have made billions of dollars available, some of which is surely dispersed through inevitable corruption. The Lions work as free volunteers hence they should be able to enter this mechanism of public funds to bring concrete help. For example a close collaboration between Clubs of the North and the South Mediterranean for training centres in the countries of origin. In short rely on regular immigration, training before leaving, help afterwards in the countries of arrival for an orderly integration into the world of work and therefore into the society.

Ed Note; Above presentation was made by a Tunisian and Moroccan Delegate at the Mediterranean Forum

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LIONS CLUB INTERNATIONAL MISSION STATEMENT

***"To create and foster a spirit of friendship
Among all people for humanitarian needs
Providing voluntary services through
Community involvement and international cooperation***

VISIT TO MERIDIANA WINERY

A group of Club members and their friends paid an interesting visit to the Meridiana Winery at Ta' Qali on Friday June 9 during which Ms. Ingrid Cefai who works in the front office of the winery, mainly conducting tours, explained to the group the process of producing wine. It was an interesting experience for those who had never been to a winery. Ms. Cefai who has been at the winery for the last 25 years stated that the vineyard is now the property of Marchese Antinori who acquired the property from the Farrugias.



1 Presentation of plant to Ms. Cefai

After the tour, all those present partook of a variety of snacks and tasted three types of wines. With 35 persons present, who paid Euro 30 each, the total sum of Euro 1050 was presented to the Club by Meridiana. This sum was deposited in the Philanthropic Funds. At the end of any enjoyable evening, Lion President Norman Wilson presented a beautiful plant, which was donated by Jardiland to Ms. Cefai.

MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT OF LC SCIACCA HOST

Dear Lions Club Sliema members, I am Marco Maggio incoming President of Lions Club Sciacca Host. I am sending this message to let you know that as from July 1, I will be President of Lions Club Sciacca Host. I am extremely happy to revive the good relationship that existed between our two Clubs. I remember several friends from Sliema -Tom Restall, Joe Messina, Frank Galea, Alfred and Carmelo. I want that some Lions from Sciacca come to Malta for your Club's Charter this November and then members of your Club to reciprocate the visit to Sciacca. I also hope to return to Malta for your Club's fifty anniversary of Charter in 2024.

Ed. Note: The above message was received from Lion Marco Maggio on Saturday June 24 after he had phoned me to let me know that he was appointed Club President".

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WHAT IS LEADERSHIP?

Leadership is not about being the best.

Leadership is about making everyone else better.



CLUB NEWS

NEXT MEETINGS: July meetings are scheduled for Wednesday July 5 and 19. Meetings commence at 1830 and will be held at the Victoria Hotel.

FUND RAISING EVENT: The popular “Majjalta” is being held at the Marsa Sports Club on Friday July 11. Lion Doreen Davis is taking booking for this event.

JULY MEETINGS: Meetings are planned for Wednesday July 5 and July 19. Meetings commence at 1830 and will be held at the VICTORIA HOTEL. More information will be sent nearer to the date of each meeting.

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PRESIDENT AWARDS

During the Handover Ceremony Lion President Norman Wilson presented awards to the following members:

SECRETARY AWARD:

Lion Secretary Lorna Farrugia Secretary and lots of other things.

TREASURER AWARD:

Lion Treasurer Alex Arena – Treasurer and long queued banker.

EDITOR AWARD:

Lion Tom Restall - Newsletter, PRO, Overseas contacts

APPRECIATION AWARDS:

Zone Chairman George O. Attard – Help at Marsa Sports Club, visits of foreign clubs. Auditor

1st Vice President Victor Borg Barthet – Visits from Overseas, Twinning, Arts

Lion Marie Therese Cuschieri – Club Website

Lion Louise Cutajar Davis – Speakers, Co-ordinating English Committee

Lion Yvonne McElhatton – Fund Raising

Lion Joe Messina – Organising Events and getting us back to The Victoria

Lion Victoria Muscat – Providing presents

Lion Louis Sciberras - Taking care of the paraphernalia, Spectacles to Africa and Diabetes Day.

Lion Martin Ward – Photographer. Superb Diabetes Day and talks

Lion Vivienne Zammit – Invaluable help on many things.

“WE SERVE”

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