

# Editorial:

## Habits leading to Tragedies

For a while in September, Gozo, and the whole of Malta, was immersed in the aftermath of a tragedy that killed 6 people, destroyed a family, and sent shock waves all over the island. The explosion of the fireworks factory was one tragedy in a continuing saga of events which seem to recur at regular intervals over the years.

The annual celebration of a village festa is by all accounts the acme of events in the community. All parishioners look forward to this one week-end in summer which seems to have become a competition as to who can outdo others in the amount of fireworks display that they can put up. For many, the festa is the fireworks. One could see hundreds of people stationing themselves in prominent positions on the outskirts, well away from the centre of the village with its teeming crowds, to be in a better position to appreciate the fireworks.

What is also an interesting phenomenon is the fact that this age-old festa tradition, unlike most other traditions,

is gathering strength from decade to decade, so that by all accounts, the energy and money spent on this one aspect of the festa has been upgraded out of all proportions to other aspects, compared to a couple of decades ago.

What makes fire works so attractive? There is something in the human psyche which is excited by the sight of a good fire. In colder climes, warmth and well-being were closely linked with a good hearth with a roaring fire. Bon fires are always crowd-pleasers. Any good display of fireworks is sure to bring an audience. Add to these some loud crackers, and the enjoyment is complete.

There is no sign that these primordial delectations are likely to diminish or go away soon. The only hope is to ensure that there is better education, and training of those involved, as well much better supervision of sites where such hazardous activities are carried out.

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Fireworks at the Xaghra Village Festa. Photo: <http://www.flickr.com/photos>