



Marhaba



Rotary Club of Beirut Cosmopolitan Monthly Publication - April & May 2014 - Page 1

Club Charter Date

June 22, 1995

Club Number

30893

District

2452 Rotary Int'l

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District Governor

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Assistant Governor

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2013—2014

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Tony Asfour

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Joe Boulos

Tuesday April 8, 2014 -- Business Meeting at the Phoenicia Hotel Guest Speaker: Dr. Claude Doumet Serhal -- Topic: "16 Years of British Museum History in Sidon vs 5000 Years of Sidon History"

Dr. Serhal (see photo RHS with RCBC P Mounir Jabre) is the Director since 1995 of the British Museum/Lebanese Directorate General of Antiquities Excavations Project in Sidon. She holds a BA, MA and PhD in Archeology and has been made a Member of the Order of the British Empire for distinguished contributions to her field.



"The further backwards you look, the further forward you can see" Mrs. Serhal quoted, from a famous politician and man of letters. This is what the British Museum excavation aims to do -- from its location on land expropriated by the Lebanese Department

of Antiquities in the heart of modern Sidon. The site, referred to as the College Site, is located near the Land Castle of Sidon, close to the natural harbor that has always been user-friendly and a safe haven. Thanks to former Lebanese Prime Minister HE Mr. Fouad Saniora (himself a son of Sidon) and a generous contribution from The Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development, a museum will be built on the College Site to commemorate Sidon's rich heritage.

The excavations have uncovered much information relating to Sidon during the 3rd Millennium. These include information concerning methods and materials of construction; foodstuffs and methods of preparation, preservation and storage thereof; metallurgy and metal working; gypsum working; animal hunting practices; as well as social and ritual practices.

The 2nd Millennium is physically separated from its predecessor by a thick layer of fine clean sand that came from the seashore, why and how is uncertain. The relics that have been uncovered by the excavations reveal a great deal about this period. Some 136 burial sites dating back to the period between 1900 and 1500 BC and uncovered so far tell a great deal about it: Feasting around burials was an important social activity at which eating was customary; whilst it used to take place at the graveside, it later moved to a monumental 45 meter long temple. The objects found in graves tell about differences between the age, sex and social status of the deceased.

RCBC Website

www.rcbclebanon.org

RCBC Facebook Page

[www.facebook.com/
beirutcosmopolitan](http://www.facebook.com/beirutcosmopolitan)

***RCBC meets Tuesdays at the Phoenicia Hotel, Ain-Mreisseh, Beirut
Business Meetings at 7:00 PM — Dinner Meetings at 8:30 PM***

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We welcome your comments and suggestions.



***Tuesday April 15 2014 -- Dinner Meeting at the Phoenicia Hotel
Guest Speaker: Dr. Nabil Fahed -- Topic: "Prevailing Economic Conditions and Future Prospects"***

Dr. Nabil Fahed, Chairman and CEO of Fahed Holding, is the Vice-Chairman and Treasurer of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Beirut and Mount Lebanon. He is shown in the RHS photo exchanging certificates with RCBC President Mounir Jabre. Dr. Fahed teaches Finance and Management at the Olayan School of Business of the American University of Beirut (AUB).

He holds a BE in Electrical Engineering from AUB and a PhD in Engineering Management from the George Washington University, USA.



Ours is a liberal economy in which the private sector has been the prime mover and the principal motor of growth and prosperity, he pointed out. Unfortunately, populist politics have taken over from rational thinking in recent years and have triggered a steep decline in the economy and a sharp rise in national indebtedness. The tourist sector is suffering seriously from extremely low occupancy rates despite having slashed prices by 75%. The Government has been operating without a budget for years and the budget deficit is of the order of 9.5% of GDP, but inflation has abated and expatriate remittances have enabled the economy to survive.

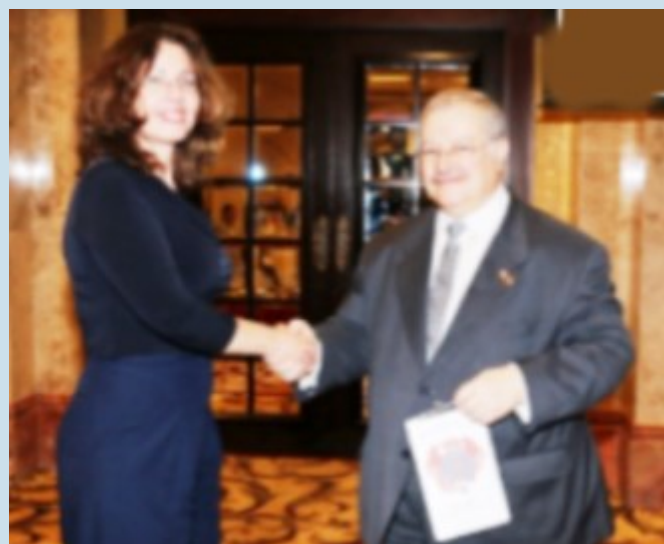
Much needs to be done to redress the situation. First and foremost investment in infrastructure, which the government cannot afford on its own. A partnership with the private sector is required. Government support is also needed in critical export areas; such as wine for example. Hopefully, the rebuilding of the Syrian economy will provide opportunities for the Lebanese private sector -- together with the Lebanese diaspora, plus Arab and European partners -- to participate in the rebuilding of the Syrian economy.

In the discussion that followed the presentation, attention was drawn to the impact that the swelling number of Syrian refugees was having on the situation in Lebanon .

April 15, 2014 Dinner Meeting Gift From Visiting UK Rotarian Friend

Helen Perkins, Incoming President of the Rotary Club of Wednesfield in the United Kingdom attended the Dinner Meeting.

On her third visit to Lebanon, she handed over to P Jabre a contribution of GBP 1,500 that members of her Club had collected from their community for the Santa Maria Home for the Elderly in Lebanon. IP Perkins is shown RHS exchanging banners with RCBC P Mounir Jabre.





April 15, 2014 Dinner Meeting -- Visiting Rotarian Friends From Germany

A large group of friends joined our dinner meeting of April 15 -- from RC Wasserburg as well as from RC Vilsbiburg, RC Worms and RC Landshut-Trausnitz. The photo below shows our friends intermingled with our own members after the dinner. They were in Lebanon to visit the Schneller School of which they have long been a strong supporter. Indeed, a number of Global Grants have been implemented by their partnership with RCBC.



The LHS and Middle photos below show RCBC P Mounir Jabre exchanging banners with PP Christian Belicke of RC Wasserburg and PDG Hans Georg Fick of RC Landshut-Trausnitz. In the RHS photo, President Jabre is shown presenting a book on Lebanon to PP and ADG Peter Rink of RC Wasserburg.



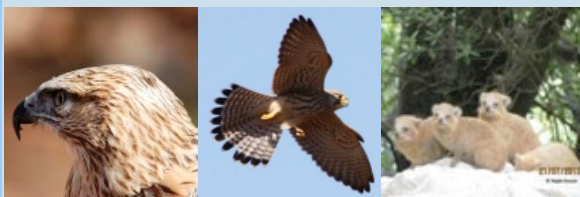


Tuesday April 29 2014 -- Business Meeting at The Phoenicia Hotel
Guest Speaker: Ms. Christelle Abou Chabke -- Topic: "Jabal Moussa"

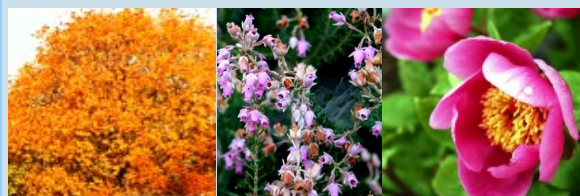
Ms. Abou Chabke is the Communications, Marketing & Ecotourism Manager of the Association for the Protection of Jabal Moussa (APJM). She holds a BA and MA Political Science, both from St. Josef University, Beirut. She was assisted by Mr. Roman Bruder, Technical Assistant and Coordinator in APJM. Mr. Bruder holds a BS in Forest Science from Dresden Technical University in Germany.

Ms. Abou Chabke is shown with RCBC P Mounir Jabre in the first photo to the RHS, whilst Mr. Bruder is shown in the photo to the extreme RHS.

Jabal Moussa is located about 50 km to the NorthEast of Beirut about 1,600 meters above sea level. The APJM was founded in 2007. Its mission is three-fold: Conservation of biodiversity; preservation of the cultural heritage; and sustainable development. In 2008 it was declared a "Protected Forest" by the Lebanese Ministry of Agriculture. In 2009 UNESCO declared it a Biosphere Reserve, its functions being research and monitoring, conservation and sustainable development. In 2012 the Lebanese Ministry of the Environment declared Jabal Moussa a "Protected natural Site". It has also been recognized internationally as a Global Important Bird area.



Photos of Jabal Moussa are shown LHS: Fauna in the top row and Flora in the middle row. The photo in the bottom LHS corner shows a group of eco-tourists approaching the top of Jabal Moussa, about 1,100 meters above sea level.



Visit of DG Jamil Mouawad (2013-2014)

DG Jamil Mouawad (D 2452) joined our meeting on April 29 to thank RCBC members for their cooperation and achievements during the Rotary Year .

RCBC P Mounir Jabre thanked him in return and presented him with a certificate of appreciation and the club banner in recognition of his efforts (see photo RHS).





Tuesday May 13 2014 - Business Meeting at The Phoenicia Hotel
Guest Speaker: Dr. Imad Patrick Saoud -- Topic: "Lebanon's Environment -- Are We Past the Point of No Return?"

Dr. Saoud (see photo RHS) holds a BS in Biology, MS in Oceanography and a PhD in Coastal Ecology and is a Professor of Aquatic Sciences and Aquaculture in the Biology Department of AUB, which he joined in 2008. A passionate environmentalist, Dr. Saoud decried the criminal lack of concern for the environment in Lebanon -- both on the part of the political leaders and of much of the Lebanese population.

The evidence? Soon there will be no wildlife left if the hunters continue to shoot the birds and the animals and the fishermen continue to dynamite the fish. Soon there will be no trees left if the builders continue to replace them with concrete. Soon there will be no rain water catchments left if the quarry owners continue to excavate the hills for sand, gravel and stones. Soon there will be no clean water on our shores, nor in our lakes or rivers, nor our streams. Soon our cities and our towns and our villages will be surrounded with mountains of garbage.



As for air pollution, when will black furnace fumes stop darkening our skies and cigarette smoke and automobile exhaust fumes stop polluting our lungs? And what about our youngsters and our not so young Lebanese who smoke hubbly bobbies -- would you believe it : on the beach? We cut down trees that convert CO₂ into Oxygen and cool the air and replace them with modern buildings equipped with the air conditioning systems that go with them that spew CO₂ into the air and raise the ambient temperature -- to which our growing automobile population keeps contributing.

Our agricultural policies are also environment unfriendly. We impose import duties on potatoes to subsidize the expensive potatoes we grow within our borders, using polluting chemicals and scarce water resources. And we subsidize locally grown tobacco for cigarette production when we should be promoting the production of marijuana which is both environment friendly and far less of a health hazard.

Add to this our environment unfriendly habits as consumers: the packaging materials that we do not recycle, the electricity we do not save from computers we do not put to sleep when idle, and the multitude of electrical device chargers that we keep connected even when idle.

The presentation was followed by a lively discussion focused on what Rotary could do to help. Strong support was voiced for efforts to mobilize the awareness and support of the young. Dr. Saoud felt strongly that there was no reason why the Lebanese should not collect condensed water from air-conditioning units or rainwater from roofs; nor why they should allow water taps to run whilst they brush their teeth, nor , for that matter, why they should continue to waste electricity by allowing chargers to run empty.

A suggestion that seemed to have general appeal was to launch a campaign to "Grow a Forest on Your Roof". Obviously, this would have to be accompanied by instructions concerning how to do this without damaging building structure and integrity.



Tuesday May 20 2014 - Business Meeting at The Phoenicia Hotel
Guest Speaker: Mr. Ziad Abichaker - Topic: "To Garbage with Love"

Our speaker is the CEO of Cedar Environmental-Lebanon (www.cedarenv.com), a company he founded in 1996 to build garbage recycling plants that accelerate the composting of garbage to produce high-grade fertilizer -- using a process he and his team developed at Rutgers University in New Jersey, USA. He has also devoted considerable effort to convert waste (such as plastic packaging) into commercially viable products. He describes himself as an Environmental and Industrial Engineer/Master Garbage Man and is the recipient of several international awards for innovation, energy conservation and environmental leadership. The title Mr. Abichaker chose for his presentation says it all:



**"From Garbage to Organic Agriculture
ON THE PATH TO CREATE THE ZERO WASTE SOCIETY
From Waste to Green Jobs".**

There are two clashing philosophies with regards to waste disposal:

1: WASTE IS A PROBLEM <<>> 2: WASTE IS A RESOURCE

The first of these philosophies is well entrenched in Lebanon: Waste smells and causes disease; its collection and transportation as far away as possible costs money and money is scarce. Countless Lebanese communities suffer from exposure to one or more of the seven categories of waste: (1) Household; (2) Slaughterhouse; (3) Industrial; (4) Medical and Pharmaceutical; (5) Waste Water; (6) Electronic; (7) Construction and Debris.

Mr. Abichaker spent 23 years working on making waste a resource. His company offers communities a collection and disposal service for which it charges a modest monthly fee per household; the company makes the necessary capital investments and sets up and manages operations. Garbage does not have to be transported long distances to be disposed of. Small, odorless, composting plants nearby can do the job, turning waste into valuable fertilizer.

Meanwhile, both valuable and potentially harmful content can and should be sorted out -- valuable content to be recycled and potentially harmful content to be neutralized or otherwise disposed safely. Plastic has many desirable qualities: It does not rust and it does not deteriorate; Cedar Environmental converts it into useful building products dubbed ECO-Board. On the other hand heavy metals must be removed and disposed of safely before composting waste for use in agriculture.

Needless to say, a back-up infrastructure is needed to help sort waste as close to source as possible. This in turn requires that members of the community at all levels behave in a socially responsible way, which ultimately requires a change in mentality and behavior on the part of the Lebanese. This is best accomplished by starting with, and educating, the young. It is in this and similar initiatives that Mr. Abichaker believes Rotarians can help.

Many Happy Birthday Returns to

Joe Boulos April 2

Elie Rebeiz April 18

Edouard Rassie May 2

Mounir Jabre May 22

Tony Asfour May 28



Saturday May 14, 2014 -- RCBC Brainstorming Session at the Al Bustan Hotel

As RCBC has done traditionally every year, a brainstorming session which lasted a little over two hours was conducted by Incoming President Lina Shair (see photo RHS) on Saturday May 24 at the Al Bustan Hotel in Beit Meri. The performance of RCBC during the prior Rotary year (2013-2014) was assessed and new ideas and suggestions to further improve the performance of the club were put forward by the members. In addition, committee chairs each presented a summary of their action plans for the coming year 2014-2015.



There was a unanimous agreement among the members that attendance at both our business meetings and our dinners was quite high relative to prior years. This improvement in attendance reflected positively on our finances and helped balance our administrative expenses. These improvements were in large part due to good speakers (thanks to the Programs Committee) and to strong relations with other clubs (thanks to President Mounir Jabre). By the same token, we were reminded that traditionally, Rotary Club meetings were never always speakers, and that RCBC should include a variety of interesting agenda items besides just speakers. It was emphasized that next year there should be more Rotary-related subjects presented by senior members of the Club throughout the year. Most members favored the preparation of a weekly agenda that would include the different subjects that were to be discussed during each meeting, as opposed to just a weekly e-mail announcement of speaker and topic. There was an urgent plea (by the editor of our monthly publication) to ensure that the RCBC website and our Page on the Wall on Facebook should be duly updated as these are important tools that help us communicate with other clubs and Rotary friends around the world.

Finally, there was a general consensus that there should be more emphasis on fundraising and on public image. It was suggested that there should be close cooperation between the Public Image Committee and the other committees concerned in order to achieve the best outcome.

The session was followed by a fellowship lunch at the hotel.



RCBC members brainstorming

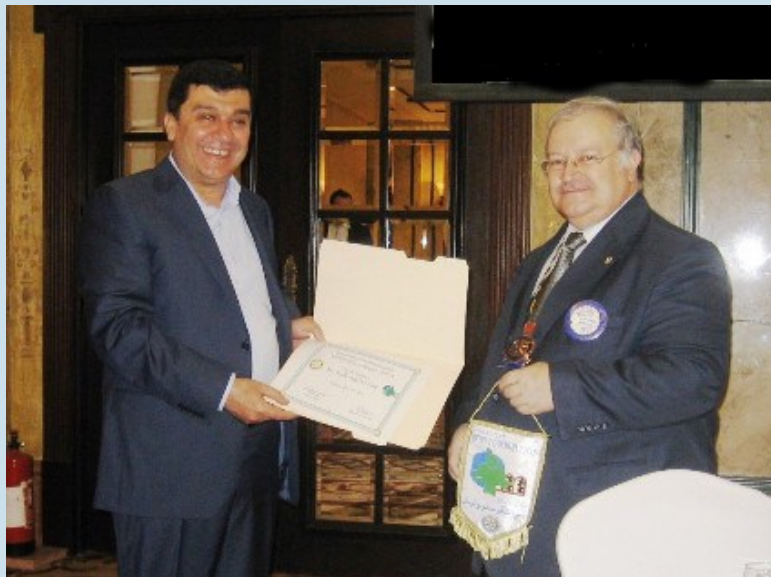
RCBC Inner Wheel members also participated



**Tuesday May 27, 2014 – Dinner Meeting at the Phoenicia Hotel
Guest Speaker Mr. Mohamad El Hout, Chairman and Dir. General, Middle East Airlines**

Mr. El Hout has been the Chairman and Director General of Middle East Airlines (MEA) since 1998. He is credited with the restructuring of the airline and its return to profitability after two decades of heavy losses. Before MEA, he had a distinguished career at the Central Bank of Lebanon

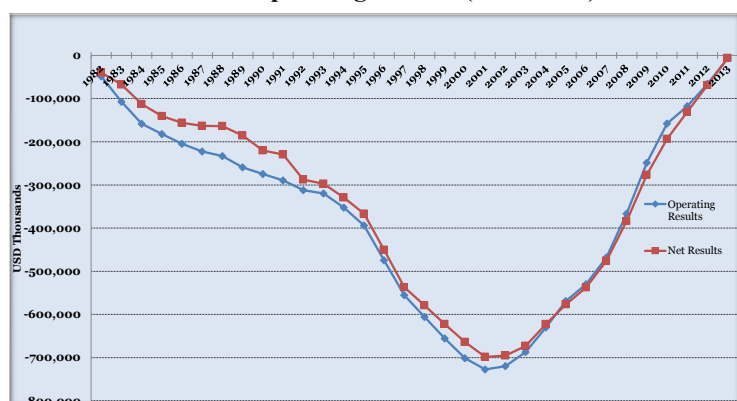
Mr. El Hout has been awarded several decorations, among them the Lebanese National Order of the Cedar with the rank of Commander; and the French National Order of the Legion d'Honneur with the rank of Chevalier -- later Officier. He holds a BA in Economics and a MBA, both from AUB.



Established in 1945, MEA had become a regional leader by 1974. The Civil war which broke out in 1978, changed all that; losses from 1980 to 1997 amounted to US \$ 590 million and share holder value reached a net negative US \$ 44 million. The restructuring plan designed and implemented after Mr. Hout took over the airline resulted in a new focus on profitable destinations, a modernization of the fleet, a mutually beneficial cooperation with other airlines and improved fleet utilization, as well as a improved staff efficiency and marketing and management effectiveness. MEA was back in the black by 2002. However, the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri in 2005 dealt a severe blow to political stability and with it to the economy, as did the 2006 war with Israel.

Nevertheless, the decision was taken in 2008 to buy 10 new Airbus and in 2011 to join Sky Team to improve its customer service flexibility. MEA now has a net worth of US \$ 1 billion. It has increased weekly frequencies on the routes it serves in the Middle East and to Europe and thus its market share of important routes. MEA summarizes it all as "Back to Black". And then to add: "The world at your fingertips".

Cumulative Net & Operating Results (1982-2013)



"BACK TO BLACK"

The world at your fingertips

- Mobile App on Android and IOS operating systems.
 - Main functions:
 - Book, Buy, and check-in.
 - Check My trip
 - Time table
 - Baggage info
 - Cedar Miles activities

