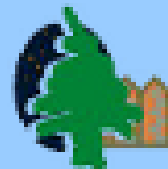




Marhaba



Club Charter Date

June 22, 1995

Club Number

30893

District

2452 Rotary Int'l

RI President

Ron D. Burton

District Governor

Jamil Mouawad

Deputy Governor

George Beyrouti

Assistant Governor

Yara Younes

RCBC Officers

2013—2014

President

Mounir Jabre

President Elect

Lina Shair

Vice President

Edouard Rassie

Secretary

Christine

Arzoumanian

Treasurer

Karim Naamani

Directors

Asaad Salhab

Tony Asfour

Habib Bassoul

Joe Boulos

**Tuesday February 4, Business Meeting at Le Vendome Hotel
Guest speaker Mr. Josef Hage -- Topic "Geographical Information Systems (GIS), a National Need"**

Mr. Hage, an Electrical and Electronics Engineer (BS from California State Polytechnic University) with vast experience in engineering design and management in the USA, founded NavLeb in Lebanon in 2006. The company provides services in Global Positioning Systems (GPS), Geographic Information Systems (GIS), Navigation, and Tracking & Fleet Management.



GIS capture , manipulate, analyze, manage, present and store geographic data. In the Lebanese national context, GIS will be most helpful in urban planning and in decentralising government services. Budgeting, data storage and processing for all sorts of government functions will benefit; for example street addresses, street lighting, sewage systems and water and electrical distribution systems -- both above ground and underground. The implications for municipalities is evident and all encompassing -- for example urban planning; emergency services; budgeting; tax collection; and street addressing. Navleb created and proposed an Addressing Standard to the Lebanese Telecommunications Minister who adopted it and had it approved by the Council of Ministers. The Standard ensures that every house or building has a number; every street has a name or number; and every town has a ZIP code. The ZIP code is a 5 digit number, the first 2 digits of which identify the Kadaa and the last 3 identify the city. An illustrative example follows:

House/Building Number	366
Street Name and/or Number	Makdissi St.
Floor Number F(-1), F0, F1, F2	F1
Apartment Number	A
ZIP Code	00034
Mohafaza	BE
Town, City Name	Hamra

NavLeb is working with municipalities that wish to implement addressing and other GIS services. Street addressing is already advanced in Hazmieh.

RCBC Website

www.rcbclebanon.org

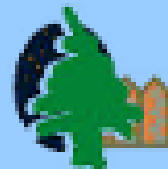
RCBC Facebook Page

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**

Marhaba Editor : Kamal Saad — e-mail knsaadrcbc@gmail.com

We welcome your comments and suggestions.



Tuesday February 11, Dinner Meeting at the Phoenicia Hotel -- Guest Speaker Mr. Marwan Salha, Vice-Chairman, Societe des Grands Hotels du Liban Topic " The Tourism and Hospitality Industry"

Mr. Salha, shown to the Right of RCBC P Mounir Jabre in the photo, is a prominent business magnate in Lebanon and the region. He chairs or sits on the Boards of Directors of a number of prominent companies in the hotel, hotel refurbishing, and the real estate development industries -- as well as the Board of Middle East Airlines. Mr. Salha also served in Lebanon as Mayor of the town of Ras El Metn and as President of the Federation of Municipalities of the Upper Metn. He holds a Law degree from the St. Josef University in Beirut.



Mr. Salha reminded us that the tourism and hospitality industry was but a fraction of its current size back in the early 1950's when the Hotel St. Georges and Bristol Hotel each had 75 rooms. The industry experienced ups and downs since then.

It "took off" between the late fifties and 1975. Then the Lebanese Civil War broke out -- and lasted 15 down years till 1990. The next 15 years were the "Rafic Hariri (up) years of large projects" that were followed after his assassination by a down period of five years until 2010 when demand picked up for a while -- only to decline again due to the poor internal security situation. Major hotel occupancy rates declined to 45% in 2012, plunged further to 30% in 2013 and currently stand at 15%.

Smaller hotels have been somewhat less badly hit due to (a) the surge in the number of Iranian tourists and (b) the influx of Syrian refugees -- albeit the wealthy amongst them use Lebanon as a "stopping point" from which they soon move themselves -- and their businesses -- to more secure locations.

The industry has already diversified to some extent; the restaurant sub-sector is an example. It has also tried to develop new markets: The wedding-package market for instance was beginning to attract Turkish customers when the kidnapping of Turkish Airlines personnel put a stop to it. The development of our offshore gas resources should create new demand for hotel facilities but our deficient infrastructure will limit the benefit.

For the longer term there is huge potential to be exploited in a number of new (for Lebanon) segments such as "Wellness Centers", "Saints", "Good Weather".



**Tuesday February 18, Business Meeting at the Phoenicia Hotel
Guest Speaker RT Samir El Khoury – Topic: “Anecdotes From Diplomatic Career“**

Currently Chairman of the Programs Committee of RCBC, RT Samir El Khoury is a former Lebanese diplomat who has served the country as Ambassador to a number of countries including Japan, Belgium, Luxembourg, Italy, and the EU. In between foreign postings, he served the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in a number of capacities, including as Director of Overseas Lebanese and Director of Political and Consular Affairs. He holds a MA in Philosophy, Politics and Economics from Oxford University in the UK.



Responding to the description of his career by P Mounir Jabre as "illustrious", RT Samir said it was his uncle who was illustrious and that the choice was not his own but one of "famille oblige". His father, a diplomat, wanted him to follow his example, which he did, at age 21.

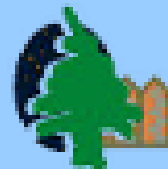
In retrospect, diplomatic life was demanding and trying -- both for the family and for himself. For the family, the challenge was to adapt to frequent changes in environment; for himself, the challenge was to tow the official line when otherwise convinced and to avoid being bored by routine work. As for the mementoes that fill the diplomat's home , they often gather dust.

RT Samir reminisced about the sunny early days of his career as a single diplomat during the golden years of Lebanon: The 1960s and early 1970s. Then came the stormy days of the Civil War upon his return to Lebanon in 1978; then his visit to Australia in 1979 to represent Lebanon at its Centennial celebrations during which he discovered how divided the Lebanese had become -- even in the Diaspora. The early 1980's were brightened by his marriage to Lolitta and his posting to Brussels, unfortunately for too short a time. The resumption of the Civil War and the rivalries within Lebanon and within the Lebanese community in Belgium led to his "exile" in 1985 as Ambassador to Japan for almost 10 years. He returned to Lebanon in 1994 and retired from the Diplomatic service in the year 2000. To conclude, Former Ambassador Samir Khoury put himself the question: "Do I regret my diplomatic career?" His answer was an emphatic NO. "But neither I nor Lolita wanted the same career for our son Samy -- and nor did he".

Tuesday February 18 — Visit of Ms. Marisa McLennan

Former Ambassadorial Scholar to France, Juris Doctor McLennan is currently Legal Officer at the United Nations Office of Staff Legal Assistance, Office of Administration of Justice in Beirut, Lebanon. She is shown in the photo to the RHS shaking hands with RCBC P Mounir Jabre. Originally from California USA, she has traveled widely and acquired proficiency in a number of languages including Italian; Intermediate French and Spanish; and Basic Arabic and Japanese. She is also a former competitive tennis player.





Tuesday February 25, Dinner Meeting at the Phoenicia Hotel – Guest Speaker Mr. Riad Kahwaji, Founder & CEO, Institute for Near East and Gulf Military Analysis – Topic: "The Regional Situation, Its Impact on Lebanon, and the Way Ahead"

Mr. Kahwaji (first from the left with RCBC P Mounir Jabre in the RHS photo) holds a M.A. degree in War Studies from King's College, London University, and is a well known researcher, writer and speaker on his topic for the evening.



Mr. Kahwaji began his talk with an overview of the events that followed the Cold War, when the USA, leading the Capitalist Camp, tried to make the world "look like us" by promoting the concept of a worldwide Free Market in which global corporations had free reign. At the same time, the US tried to pacify the Arab Israeli conflict that had erupted into the Gulf War. The US put economic pressure on the few Arab countries that resisted and rewarded Syria for its support by giving it a key role in Lebanon.

The next phase was triggered by Lebanese Prime Minister Hariri's attempt, with US support, to engineer an economic recovery in Lebanon that would then spread into Syria and merge with the US-led recovery in Iraq. Fear on the part of both Syria and Iran that this domino effect would succeed caused these two nations to join forces to oppose it. Furthermore, the 180 degree change in US foreign policy that followed the end of the Bush presidency, coupled with the slump in the home economy, resulted in a US pull-out that led to the "Arab Spring", the weakening of Saudi Arabia, and the exacerbation of the Sunni-Shia sectarian strife.

With Syrian influence in Lebanon reduced by virtue of its internal strife, Hizbollah (Iran's foreign legion) took over the Syrian role in Lebanon, thus further increasing the influence of Iran in the region.

For a long time, fear that Iran could become a military nuclear power has been a key concern of the US, a concern shared with Israel. US policy viz Iran has for quite some time vacillated between putting economic pressure on it and trying to win it over to get it to give up nuclear power for military purposes. The recent changes in the power structure in Iran have re-awakened the dilemma.

Meanwhile, in so far as Lebanon is concerned, its long-time devotion to the principle of a free-enterprise economy, together with its recent-time oil and gas potential, explain why both the Western political camp and the multi-nationals favor its recovery.



February 19 Visit to Rotaract Club of Beirut Cosmopolitan

P Mounir Jabre, IP Lina Shair and Honorary Secretary Christine Arzoumanian of RCBC attended a presentation by Mr. Afif Tabsh on Peace Building and Conflict Resolution at a meeting organized by the Rotaract Club of RCBC.

They are shown in the RHS photo surrounded by Rotaract members: P Jabre (second from Left, middle row); HS Arzoumanian (Center, middle row); IP Shair (Left, front row); and Rotaract P Christina Asfour seated next to her.



Exchange of Visits in Beirut in February



On February 27, the Deputy Commander of the German Joint Forces Command, Rear Admiral Rainer Brinkmann requested the company of RCBC at the change of command ceremony from Commander Christoph Otto Ciliax to Commander Jens Grimm at Beirut Port. Shown in the LHS photo are (from Left to Right) RT Samir El Khoury, Rear Admiral Brinkmann, PP Tony Asfour, Commander Ciliax, RT Nabil Challah, P Mounir Jabre, and Honorary Secretary Christine Arzoumanian.

Earlier that month on February 4, RT Christoph Otto Ciliax of RC Kiele, Germany, outgoing Commander of the Naval Task Force of the United Nations Interim Force In Lebanon, visited RCBC and presented P Mounir Jabre with a commemorative plaque (see photo to RHS).



RT Mimi Hamam of RCBC Visits Rotary Clubs in the UK during February 2014



Mimi is shown above (LHS photo) exchanging banners with Vice President Urs Halter of RC Chelsea and (RHS photo) with President Elect Chris Wyatt of RC Putney. In the Center photo, she is shown sharing a lunch table with Rotary International Past President Frank J. Devlyn and his spouse, who were also visiting RC London.

Service Project Currently in the Planning Stage

This service project would provide solar lighting for the entire grounds of Schneller School, located in Kherbet Kanafar in the Bekaa Valley in Labanon, thus reducing electricity bills. It falls within the "Basic Education and Literacy" Rotary area of focus.

Schneller School is an academic as well as vocational school that caters to some 320 orphans and socially under-privileged boys and girls. Its vocational training facilities currently include four workshops: (1) Carpentry, (2) Electrical, (3) General Mechanics, and (4) Auto Mechanics. The school is run by a board comprising members of the Schneller Association in Germany and members of the National Evangelical Church of Beirut.

The total cost of the project is \$92,000. The RC of Wasserburg, our sister club in Germany, will co-sponsor the project. The RCBC Service Project Committee members overseeing the project are PP Tony Asfour, PP Edouard Rassie, and RT Mimi Hamam.



The photo to the RHS shows a joint group of Rotarians from RC Wasserburg and RCBC together with the Principal of the School and some of its Board members on the occasion of a prior project handover.

Many Happy Birthday Returns to RT Hussam Rinno