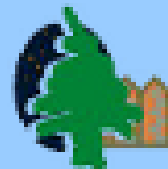




Marhaba



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

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President Elect

Lina Shair

Vice President

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Tony Asfour

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Joe Boulos

RCBC Website

www.rcbclebanon.org

RCBC Facebook Page

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

**Tuesday March 4, 2014 -- Guest Speaker Mrs. Ghada Al Atrache
Topic: "The Emir Hassan Al Atrache: A Glimpse Into History"**

Mrs. Ghada Al Atrache (see RHS photo below) is the daughter of the late Emir Hassan Al Atrache, member of one of the three prominent Druze families in the Middle East: The Atraches in Syria and the Jumblatts and the Arslans in Lebanon.

The Druze number about 1,355,000 of whom 300,000 in Central Mount Lebanon; 525,000 in the Djebel El Druze and the Golan Heights of Southern Syria; 100,000 in Galilee and the Carmel in North Palestine; and 30,000 in the Azraq region of Jordan. They profess an unconventional Islamic religion. The initiated among them become Sheikhs (males) or Sheikhas (females). The Druze are allowed only one spouse. The wife has the same rights as her husband and is allowed to file for divorce. The Druzes are free to decide each their own succession -- that they document in a will.



After World War One, the League of Nations established French mandatory rule over Greater Syria and France divided it into five mini-states: Aleppo, Damascus, Greater Lebanon, the Alawite State and Djebel Druze. The Atrache family was prominent politically around the turn of the 20th Century and beyond: Yehya Al Atrash, grandfather of our guest speaker was the Emir of the Djebel Druze when her father Hassan (his only son) was born in 1905; Emir Yehya was executed by the Ottomans in 1910. The Emir Salim Al Atrache served as Governor of the Djebel Druze from 1921 to 1923, whilst Sultan Pasha Al Atrash actively opposed the partition of Syria in 1922.

Hassan Al Atrache distinguished himself in battle when barely 20; was proclaimed Emir aged 21; entered Syrian politics aged 22 and was appointed Governor of the Djebel in 1934. He served as Minister in a number of Syrian cabinets during the 1940's and 1950's. Following a failed coup in 1956 he took refuge in Lebanon and later Jordan. In 1969 he was abducted by the Syrians and jailed in Damascus until his pardon by President Hafez El Assad in 1970 . The Emir Hassan Al Atrache married nine times (twice to his cousin Asmahan, the famous singer and actress). The mother of our guest speaker, Linda Joumblatt, was his last wife. He died in 1977.

**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 March 11, 2014 at 7:00 PM -- Business Meeting at The Phoenicia Hotel
Guest Speaker Ms. Nada Al-Nashif -- Topic "Social Justice in the Arab World: Jobs
and the Economy"***

Ms. Al-Nashif is the Regional Director of the International Labor Organization (ILO) for the Arab States, based in Beirut. She holds a BA in Philosophy, Politics & Economics from Balliol College, Oxford University in the UK and a Masters in Public Policy from the Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University in the USA.

Our guest speaker began by defining Social Justice as a set of values and goals that aim at human development and help ensure fair distribution of wealth and equality of opportunity; they include education, health care, social security, labor rights, public services, progressive taxation and market regulation.

Social injustice in our region is statistically well documented. Unemployment rates in the Middle East and North Africa regions are amongst the highest in the world. Some 20% of the Arab population live in poverty. More than 50 % suffer from a lack of social security coverage; and social security systems tend to be fragmented. Women are more penalized than men in these respects. Pressure region-wide on governments for reform led to a reform euphoria in 2011. But real change at the policy level and in practice requires concrete strategies and sustained interventions.

Within the region, Lebanon faces severe social, economic and political problems. These include high unemployment, especially amongst youth and particularly the most educated of these – which in turn has led to emigration. Access to social protection for those living in Lebanon is insufficient – whether whilst still employed or post retirement. A large majority live on remittances from family members abroad. Labour protests have increased – both amongst those regularly employed and those employed on a daily contract basis.

The Syrian crisis has worsened significantly the already critically ill Lebanese labor market. Overall unemployment rates are estimated to have risen significantly – particularly in the low-skill/low-wage labor segment. Furthermore, most of the Syrian refugees work informally. On the social justice front, the situation of the refugees is critical: Only about half those of working age amongst them are employed; less than one third of refugee children are attending school.

The situation calls for bold measures to stimulate job recovery and the creation of new jobs: Macro-economic policies that boost demand; public programs that strengthen public employment and create special youth employment opportunities; programs to boost entrepreneurial skills and vocational training; provision of regulatory and financing incentives to private and public enterprises, including cooperatives; provision of rural, agricultural and industrial infrastructure support.

An animated discussion followed during which the speaker made the following points:

- (1) When there is a political will, ways will be found to solve the problems;
- (2) The quality and the direction of the efforts made are far more important than the amount of money spent; furthermore, these efforts need to be better coordinated.





**Tuesday March 18, 2014 at 8:30 PM -- Dinner Meeting at The Phoenicia Hotel
Guest Speaker Mrs. Nora JOoumblatt -- Topic "The Beiteddine Festival"**

Our guest speaker (see Photo RHS) is the Chairperson of the Beiteddine Festival, its prime mover, and one of its principal founders. She holds a BA degree in The History of Art from the University of Paris and is a strong supporter of several social, cultural and environmental development initiatives in Lebanon. She is married to Mr. Walid Joumblatt, a prominent political leader, currently head of the Lebanese Progressive Socialist Party and a former minister.



The Festival is held in Beiteddine Palace that was built in the early 1900s and is considered an architectural masterpiece of its era (see Palace Inner Courtyard photo -- bottom RHS). It was declared a national monument in 1934 and today serves as the summer residence of the President of the Republic.

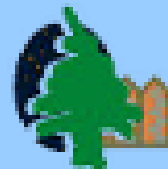
Launched in 1985 amidst the fighting and destruction of the Lebanese civil war, the Festival was an act of faith and a symbol of normalcy for the Lebanese – first for those living in the neighborhood, for whom entrance was free of charge. Later, as peace came in 1992, spectators came from all over Lebanon, the Festival was recognized as a non-profit organization, tickets were sold and taxes paid.

By the late 1990's, competition from the Baalbeck Festival prompted the development of a new Beiteddine strategy. The Festival is run by an Executive Committee of 17 and employs over 300 persons in-season. In addition to its principal purpose, it offers a host of economic and social benefits to its community and to the country at large. The Festival is financed essentially by the sale of tickets (60%) and contributions from sponsors (20%). The Ministry of Tourism, supposed to cover 33% of the budget of festivals under a law passed in 2002, has never contributed even half that amount – with a two-year delay at that. Moreover, the Lebanese Government irrationally collects a tax amounting to 36% of the price of every festival ticket sold.

In "uneventful" years, the Festival has attracted about 40,000 spectators during its two-month season. Unfortunately, uneventful years are few and far between; Lebanese Festivals have repeatedly faced serious challenges in recent years, which has required an expert hand in crisis management for survival.

This year, the Festival again faces a crisis situation related to security issues and is left to fend for itself as best it can. Mrs. Joumblatt calls this "Cultural Resistance" (Mukawama Thakafiya).





Visitor from RC Sudbury, UK -- Topic: "Home of Hope Project"

Ms. Lynda Sabbage visited RCBC on March 4. She is the first lady President of the Rotary Club of Sudbury -- chartered in 1962. Sudbury is an attractive market town of 12,000 inhabitants in Suffolk County, North-East of London. The Club currently has 41 members. She is in Lebanon with RT Glyn Jones to deliver clothes that her Club has collected in the Sudbury area for the Home of Hope, a non-profit organization that helps orphaned, abandoned and otherwise disadvantaged children. She is shown RHS presenting RCBC P Mounir Jabre and RCBC members with a book about Sudbuty's Ancient Common Lands



New RCBC Member Rabab Safieddine -- Classification Talk

RT Rabab Safieddine holds a BA degree in Business Administration from The American University of Beirut and has over 20 years of banking experience, all of it at the Arab Bank, and in which she rotated amongst almost all departments.

She is a Certified Documentary Credit Specialist and is currently Corporate Head of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) responsible for SMEs in all 13 branches of the Arab Bank in Lebanon. Prior to that she was Branch Manager of the Arab Bank in Saida.



Service Project Currently in the Planning Stage

This project would provide the Child and Mother Welfare Society (CMWS) with a computerized X-Ray film processing system for use in mammography and other applications. The system is both up-to-date and environment-friendly. The project falls under the Disease Prevention and Treatment area of focus of the Rotary Foundation.

The CMWS is a Non-Governmental Organization established in 1944 to provide health, education and vocational training, and community development assistance to underprivileged communities in Lebanon.

The total cost of this global project is estimated at US \$ 45,000. RCBC is cooperating on the project with a number of Lebanese Rotary Clubs and seeks contributions from interested clubs outside Lebanon as co-sponsors.

(RCBC Contact Person: President Mounir Jabre -- e-mail address "jabr@cyberia.net.lb".

Many Happy Birthday Returns to

Lina Shair March 5

Samir El Khoury March 10

Raouf Malak March 24