



AMERICAN LEBANESE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Winter 2016 Newsletter

U.S. - Arab Chamber Names Lebanon's Antoine Chedid "Ambassador of the Year"



The National U.S.-Arab Chamber of Commerce (NUSACC) named H.E. Antoine Chedid, Ambassador of the Republic of Lebanon to the U.S.A., as the 2015 "Ambassador of the Year." More than 100 business and government leaders participated in a luncheon and awards ceremony at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel in Georgetown. NUSACC began its "Ambassador of the Year" recognition ceremonies eleven years ago, and Ambassador Chedid is the first Lebanese Ambassador to receive this esteemed award.

"Let me thank NUSACC for hosting this event and for honoring me with the prestigious Ambassador of the Year Award, which I will cherish dearly; it will occupy an important place in my heart and in our home," said Ambassador Chedid. "On behalf of my country, Lebanon, I humbly accept this honor. It has been a privilege to serve for the last eight-and-a-half years as Ambassador in the greatest international capital, Washington."

In bestowing the award, NUSACC President & CEO David Hamod noted, "Lebanon has faced more than its fair share of challenges over the years, but Tony has met these challenges with grace, dignity, and aplomb. And for those of us missing the 'old country,' Tony's gracious hospitality – and that of his wife, Nicole – helped to bring a 'little bit of Lebanon' to Americans of all walks of life."

VIP Well-Wishers

The room was filled with dignitaries, including numerous current and former ambassadors. Many who could not attend sent their best wishes. A letter from Lebanon's Prime Minister H.E. Tammam Salam stated, "You have had a major contribution to the building, consolidation, and expansion of the trusted partnership we enjoy with the United States through your work with the U.S. State Department, Congress, and officials of many other key institutions. The credibility you enjoy has been instrumental in this accomplishment." The Lebanese Prime Minister went on to congratulate NUSACC and its members for the "thoughtful initiative they had in organizing this gathering to honor Ambassador Antoine Chedid on the eve of his retirement and to present him with the well-deserved Ambassador of the Year Award."

The Honorable John Kerry, U.S. Secretary of State, also sent a letter of congratulations to Ambassador Chedid. "Your personal advocacy on key issues has had a meaningful impact, from securing

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New Members



Lara Araoui Merhi
Business Development
Manager
Prevets SAL-Orkin
Tel: +961 1 333 446
www.orkinlebanon.com

Founded in 1901, Atlanta-based Orkin is an industry leader in essential pest control services and protection against termite damage, rodents and insects. The company operates more than 400 locations with almost 8,000 employees. Using a proprietary, three-step approach, Orkin provides customized services to approximately 1.7 million homeowners and businesses in the United States, Canada, Mexico, Europe, Central America, the Middle East, the Caribbean, Asia, the Mediterranean and Africa. Orkin is committed to studying pest biology and applying scientifically proven methods. The company collaborates with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and eight major universities to conduct research and help educate consumers and businesses on pest-related health threats. Orkin was established in Lebanon in 2010, in Erbil in the Kurdistan region of Iraq in 2013, and will be heading soon to Qatar in 2016.



Claude J. Bahsali
Chairman & CEO
ITG sal (Holding)
Tel: +961 1 595 500
www.itgholding.com

Information Technology Group (ITG) is a Lebanese holding. We combine an array of autonomous affiliates dedicated to providing a large portfolio of solutions in the MENA

region, in the areas of hardware, system software, and application software, in addition to building automation and office solutions.

ITG's professionals are specialized in numerous technological fields and business sectors. Strong with our established reputation, proven track-record, and solid partnerships with leaders in the ICT industry, we can offer the full spectrum of solutions ranging from office furniture to the full-fledged data center.

ITG derives additional strength and reach thanks to its affiliation with HOLCOM group which has a 50 year history in diligently serving clients in the EMEA with its 5,500 professionals.

American Lebanese Chamber of Commerce

Director Address	Paola Chakhtoura 1153 Foch Street Beirut Central District
P.O. Box	175093 Beirut, Lebanon
Phone/ Fax	+961 1 985330-1
Web	www.amcham.org.lb
E-mail	info@amcham.org.lb

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greater assistance to the Lebanese Armed Forces to your efforts in the coalition to fight extremism to supporting the communities in Lebanon hosting Syrian refugees,” he wrote. “This richly deserved award recognizes your outstanding efforts over the past eight years in advancing U.S. – Lebanese relations at a crucial time in the region.” Secretary Kerry concluded, “You and your family should be proud of all that you have accomplished during your exemplary service in Washington, and in the course of a broader career in the Foreign Ministry, dedicated to fostering strong relations with the United States.”



for the government and people of Lebanon. Tony, you are by far the strongest, best Ambassador to serve Lebanon in Washington. You always made yourself available to the U.S. Administration, Members of Congress, and communities all over America... including my hometown of Peoria, Illinois.”

Secretary Kerry’s letter was read aloud by Ambassador Gerald Feierstein, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs. Feierstein added some appreciative words of his own: “Thanks to Ambassador Chedid’s dedication and work, the relationship between Lebanon and the United States has never been stronger. And I am sure that the strong foundations he has laid here in the United States will allow our two countries to make further strides together, particularly as Lebanon faces enormous external and internal challenges.”

And Salim Zeenni, Chairman of the American Lebanese Chamber of Commerce (AmCham Lebanon), sent these accolades from Beirut: “You have worked so hard for Lebanon and the United States, and dedicated valuable time to strengthening the bond and relationship between both countries... Thank you for your perseverance and support and, above all, for your confidence and faith and for always being there at the right moment, especially during this very crucial period for Lebanon and the United States.”

The Honorable Ray LaHood, former U.S. Secretary of Transportation, noted, “Many thanks for your extraordinary service to our beloved Lebanon as Ambassador, diplomat, and advocate

Highlights of Ambassador Chedid’s Remarks

In his acceptance speech, Ambassador Chedid highlighted the longstanding, historical relationship between Lebanon and the United States: “The first American to go to Lebanon arrived there 180 years ago, and the first Lebanese to come to the United States landed on these shores a quarter century later.”

The two peoples share many values, he suggested: “Americans and Lebanese admire freedom and tolerance, democracy, the right of free expression,





and the support of civil rights. The partnership between Lebanon and the U.S. dates back many years and continues to grow... Our meeting today is yet another manifestation of the strong partnership and shared values and aspirations between the U.S. and Lebanon.”

The Lebanese people are known for their innovation and business savvy, Ambassador Chedid pointed out, “The Lebanese are farmers and fishermen, bakers and builders, professors and processors, actors and attorneys, poets and especially politicians. But if you scratch a Lebanese, you will find our real identity as bankers, and especially merchants. It is as such that our international role can be understood, a role for which Lebanon has received world renown... Our commercial and entrepreneurship roles are still our trademark.”

Lebanon has its challenges, Ambassador Chedid admitted, but he made the case for the country’s bright future, highlighting its well-educated, capable and innovative population; a strong banking sector that has outperformed all other sectors of the economy; an economy primarily based on services; a free-market economic environment; a resilient private sector, including expatriate Lebanese communities. “Like the legendary Phoenix,” Ambassador Chedid concluded, “Lebanon has always emerged from the ashes and has steadily regained its former vitality.”

The Last Word Goes to Khalil Gibran

This is the eleventh year of NUSACC’s “Ambassador of the Year Award,” which began in 2004. Previous recipients have come from Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia and the United Arab Emirates.



The award, the only one of its kind, recognizes Arab ambassadors for their outstanding service in support of U.S.-Arab commercial relations.

Final tributes highlighted the durable, yet very animated, bridge that connects Lebanon to the United States. Amin Salam, Vice President of NUSACC, accentuated Lebanon’s distinctiveness, saying, “Lebanon is neither measured nor defined by size or population; Lebanon is measured and defined by the resounding success of its people across the world – in every continent and in every trade.” He continued, “Ambassador Chedid, you are one of those people who reflect the Lebanon of which we are all proud. You served Lebanon in some of its most difficult times with absolute dedication, commitment, and a strong command of some very challenging issues.”

In closing the award ceremony, NUSACC President & CEO David Hamod drew upon Khalil Gibran, Lebanon’s most famous native son. Gibran sought answers to this question: “What is it to be a good citizen?” According to Gibran, “It is to stand before the towers of New York and Washington, Chicago and San Francisco, saying in your hearts, ‘I am the descendent of the people that built Damascus and Byblos, and Tyre and Sidon, and then Antioch, and I am here to build with you, and with a will.’ It is to be proud of being an American, but it is also to be proud that your fathers and mothers came from a land upon which God laid His gracious hand and raised His messengers.”

Mr. Hamod congratulated Ambassador Chedid and his wife, Nicole, for their success as “messengers for Lebanon.” He concluded, “As messengers, as you prepare to travel back to Lebanon to begin a new chapter in your already rich lives, please promise to carry us in your hearts as you begin the long journey home.”



Member News

AmCham Members Encouraged to Support New Entrepreneurs at the AMIDEAST

Entrepreneur Institute



The AMIDEAST Entrepreneur Institute has welcomed a new manager, Ms. Mirna Shidrawi, who brings more than fifteen years of expertise in performance improvement, capacity building, and development. The Institute was launched in 2010 in partnership with Cisco, before it was rebranded in 2014 as the AMIDEAST Entrepreneur Institute.

Benefitting over 500 rising entrepreneurs in diverse sectors throughout the country over the past five years, the Institute builds entrepreneurs' capacity through public and customized training programs. It also provides technical support through coaching, mentoring, and management consultancy services, in addition to providing other types of support needed by SMEs. In

addition, the entrepreneur alumni are provided opportunities for exposure, to network, meet potential investors, and connect with accomplished business leaders.

In parallel with these public programs, the AMIDEAST Entrepreneur Institute manages the Citi Foundation's Arab Women Entrepreneurship Program (AWEP), which serves 20 underprivileged Lebanese women each year, with a total of 80 women in Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and Morocco served annually in this regional initiative.

"AmCham members experience daily the challenges of Lebanon's current economic situation, and also understand the importance of growing successful companies which can offer jobs in Lebanon to the talented youth graduating each year," noted AmCham Board member and AMIDEAST Country Director Barbara Batlouni. She encourages AmCham members and other prominent business leaders in Lebanon to contact the Institute to discuss how they can join this effort to support the rising entrepreneurs in Lebanon.

START: Furniture for Startups by Crown House

START is the fruit of years of experience as the leaders in the office furniture industry, and a passion for helping the Lebanese start-up ecosystem. It was created with the same ambition and determination with which Crown House started more than 30 years ago. START is the one-stop shop that provides a complete solution to help redefine the way start-ups furnish their workspaces, in order to enhance collaboration, increase productivity, foster creativity and drive innovation.

In December, START by Crown House participated in "BDL Accelerate" as the official furniture sponsor. In our booth, we displayed different workspace areas suitable for startups that enhance collaboration, leading to an increase

in creativity and innovation in the workplace. In addition, Crown House furnished several areas, including the Governor's office, the BDL VIP Lounge, the Media Lounge, and the two conference podiums.



PwC's Academy Middle East



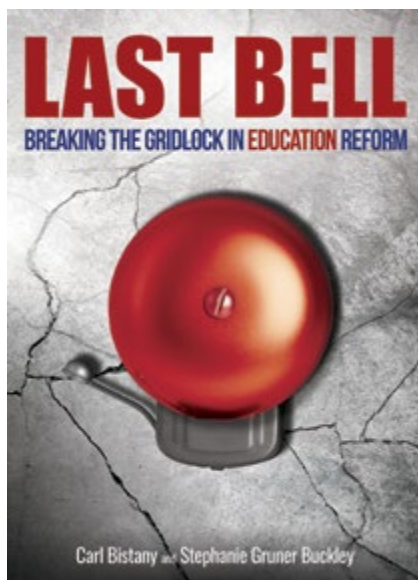
2015 ended on a high note for PwC's Academy as the winner of Excellence in Training and Development of Finance Professionals at the fifth annual Middle East Accountancy and Finance Excellence Awards by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW). The awards, held under the patronage of HE Sheikh Nahyan Bin Mubarak Al Nahyan, were held on November 25, 2015 in Dubai. PwC

was recognized for its commitment to continuous professional development and its contribution to individual and team performance through delivery of exceptional learning and development activity led by industry experts from across the global PwC network, supported by fit for purpose premises and innovative learning methodologies.

In December, PwC's Academy also launched the Effective Board Member, a leading program for corporate governance practitioners in the region. A certificate program accredited by Edinburgh Napier University, it is designed for those people who want to learn more about corporate governance and raise their profile to ensure they stand out when applying for board positions. It covers the skills, knowledge and behavior needed to improve competence in governance. The 4-day program also entitles the attendees to membership in the Association of Corporate Governance Practitioners (ACGP)

New Book: "Last Bell"

Carl Bistany, president of SABIS®, a global education network rooted in Lebanon, recently co-authored a book that challenges legislators, school officials, and education reform leaders in the U.S. to do better by the nation's children by taking a free market approach.



In the book, Bistany and co-author Stephanie Gruner Buckley portray the alarming state of U.S. public education, examine thirty years of failed reform efforts, and argue that the failure to significantly improve public education is a real

threat to the long-term competitiveness of the U.S. economy. They conclude that the U.S. must attract the best public education providers, including for-profit companies, to boost achievement and secure America's future. Offering a solution through the expansion of charter schools, many of which have long waiting lists and have shown promising results, particularly for disadvantaged students, the book explains why the tax status of education providers is irrelevant and outlines the advantages that for-profits realistically bring to the table.

Finally, and what makes this book a genuinely interesting read, they chronicle the battles over education reform, which are more often about adults protecting spheres of influence and pots of money than about the needs of children and the U.S.'s economic future.

Last Bell is available on Amazon.com, Barnesandnoble.com, and Amazon.co.uk.

Fransabank Participates in COP 21 Conference

Fransabank, represented by its General Manager Mr. Nadim Kassir, participated in the side event “All around the world, financiers and contractors act for the climate” that took place during the COP21 conference near Paris. Regarding the situation in Lebanon, Mr. Kassir stressed the lack of clear and well-defined laws that regulate environmental aspects. However, he insisted on the role of the private sector to take urgent action.

In this context, Mr. Kassir stressed Fransabank’s “Green Strategy” and shared the Bank’s experience in offering financing for energy projects, explaining that convincing clients to take loans or financing for green loans was not an easy task. Mr. Kassir pointed out that Fransabank partnered with the IFC to train over 150 employees at the bank, and provided them with necessary expertise to promote sustainable energy finance products. “Today,” Mr. Kassir added, “Fransabank boast about its specialized dedicated team to make financial contributions

to environmental organizations and projects.” He added that major upcoming projects would include electricity, water treatment and waste management projects.

Mr. Kassir concluded that Fransabank has integrated into its commercial prospecting and follow-up with existing clients an approach to enquire about their energy use and their environmental and social impacts.



Launching of the New Ritello “Renaissance Edition”

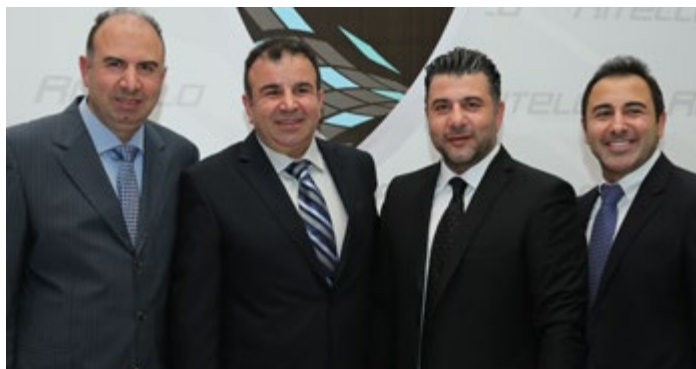
Librex Holding Inc. is the worldwide manufacturer and distributor of the home cleaning system known as Ritello.

In 1987, Mr. Sam Bechalani (the founder) and later including his brothers who joined forces, began their careers reselling high end vacuum cleaners in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada. Then, in 1998 they relocated their headquarters to Lebanon. The company’s growth sky-rocketed due to the determination and efforts invested by the Bechalani brothers who expanded their distribution network to over 13 markets in the Middle-East region.

By 2004, Librex decided to bring to the market a more advanced and attractive looking product, with the design of the new Ritello Vacuum Cleaner. The secret of Ritello is trapping dust and dirt into its water-basin, so dust can never fly back out of the machine, which is very helpful for people who suffer from allergies and asthma,

in addition to its multi-functional use, such as cleaning the air, and aromatizing the ambient air.

From November 30 - December 4, Librex held its biggest Distributors International Meeting at the Le Royal Hotel & Resort for the launching of its all new Ritello “R2 series,” the “Renaissance Edition,” that will be completely manufactured in Switzerland and Germany. Over 200 delegates from over 30 countries convened for this memorable event.



Citi Names Elissar Farah Antonios as CEO of Citi UAE

Citi recently appointed Elissar Farah Antonios as Chief Executive Officer of Citi UAE. Mrs. Antonios transfers from Citi Lebanon where she has been the Bank's CEO since 2012, and an active member of the AmCham Lebanon Board of Directors.

Mrs. Antonios is a seasoned banker with extensive experience in Wealth Management. She started her career in 1990 in London and had served at several global banks with a focus on Arab private banking clients. She joined Citi in 2005 as Head of Private Banking in Abu Dhabi and later across all the UAE before assuming her Lebanon role.

Mrs. Antonios will report to Atiq Rehman, Head of Citi's Middle East and Africa Region. Mr. Rehman's responsibilities were recently expanded to include leadership of the bank's business in Sub Saharan Africa in addition to Middle East and North Africa. He will continue to be based in Dubai.

"The UAE is Citi's largest and most diverse franchise in the Middle East and Africa regions, and a key market for Corporate & Investment Banking as well as Wealth Management businesses," commented Mr. Rehman. "I am confident that Elissar's leadership will add material value to our clients in the UAE, and help the firm develop more growth opportunities in the country."



Century 21

In response to an invitation from the Real Estate Association of Kuwait, Mr. Ahmad Al-Khatib, the General Manager of Century 21 Lebanon, participated in a panel discussion open meeting for several property owners and those interested in the real estate sector. Entitled Owner's Union Law, this meeting was held on December 8, 2015, and received distinct media coverage.

In addition, Mr. Al-Khatib was one of the speakers in the workshop titled, "Growth and Success, No Matter What," that was organized by Lebanon Opportunities at its annual conference at the Phoenicia Hotel in December 2015. The

subject of the discussion was mainly about the situation of the real estate sector in Lebanon given the prevailing economic and political situation in the region. The speakers also answered inquiries and questions from the public.





Interact 2016

Interact is intended to promote business between AmCham members and to stimulate intra-AmCham business relationships. The program allows you to inform fellow members in Lebanon, as well as members of the AmCham MENA Regional Council (AmCham Abu Dhabi, Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Palestine, and Tunisia) of any business offers or benefits you are willing to give them exclusively. AmCham members are privileged to benefit from other MENA AmChams' offers, making this an opportunity for members to present each other with products and services at favorable terms and conditions, hence increasing business between them.

Send your offers for 2016 to info@amcham.org.lb... and begin to interact!

AMIDEAST

AMIDEAST, a regional leader in training and assessment, offers all AmCham members a 10% discount on the following services in Lebanon:

English Language Testing and Training

- Test the real English skills of potential new hires and current employees to save time and money on training. The Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC®) is the global standard for measuring workplace proficiency in English language.
- Are the English skills of your employees as good as they need to be in this global market?

We offer Public English Language Courses and Private Business English Courses for Companies.

Training Workshops

AMIDEAST offers many public and sponsored training workshops each year. Upcoming topics include:

- Project Management Professional
- Social Media
- Communication & Negotiation
- HR Series Workshops
- Sales Team Development
- Presentation Skills
- Certified Associate in Project Management
- Project Management Series Workshops
- Grow Your Own Business
- Start Your Own Business

To discuss your company's training and assessment needs, and how AMIDEAST can help:

**Call: Raya at +961-1-989901, ext 132
Email: rkalash@amideast.org
Visit: www.amideast.org/lebanon**



Hilton

Featuring 380 guestrooms, Hilton Beirut Metropolitan Palace and Hilton Beirut Habtoor Grand are located in the heart of the Lebanese capital, offering a world-class range of business and leisure facilities. Pamper your palates in one of their exquisite restaurants ranging from French fine dining to Italian cuisine. For those who wish to unwind, the 3,500sqm Elixir Spa & Health Club, offers an extensive selection of therapeutic treatments and an innovative gym to de-stress your mind and restore your sense of well-being.

Hilton Beirut is happy to grant AmCham Members with an exclusive discount of 15% at the Elixir Spa as well as in all its restaurants including Le Ciel, Jazz Bar and Venezia. Amcham members can also benefit from special corporate rates on any room booking.

For more information, contact Georges Karam, Director of Business Development, at georges.karam@hilton.com or +9613874849

Terms and conditions apply. This offer is valid until the end of April 2016.

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**For more info call: Ms. Rita Fahed
on 961 1 256290 Ext: 209**

US Trade Fairs

Listing for International Buyer Program (IBP) 2016

http://www.export.gov/eac/show_short_trade_events.asp?CountryName=null&StateName=null&IndustryName=null&TypeName=U.S.%20Trade%20Fair&StartDate=null&EndDate=null

Event	Location	From	To
Natural Products Expo West/Engredea 2016	Anaheim, CA	3/10/2016	3/12/2016
2016 NAB Show	Las Vegas, NV	4/16/2016	4/21/2016
Fire Department Instructors Conference - FDIC	Indianapolis, IN	4/18/2016	4/23/2016
Offshore Technology Conference 2016	Houston, TX	5/2/2016	5/5/2016
2016 AIA National Convention and Design Exposition - IBP	Philadelphia, PA	5/19/2016	5/21/2016
The National Restaurant Association restaurant, Hotel-Motel Show (NRA) 2016	Chicago, IL	5/21/2016	5/24/2016
WasteExpo 2016	Las Vegas, NV	6/7/2016	6/9/2016
InfoComm International 2016	Las Vegas, NV	6/8/2016	6/10/2016
International Franchise Expo 2016	New York City, NY	6/16/2016	6/18/2016
Fancy Food Show 2016	New York, NY	6/26/2016	6/28/2016
Annual Meeting&Clinical Lab Expo of the American Association for Clinical Chemistry (AACC) 2016	Philadelphia, PA	7/24/2016	7/28/2016