

Cedars Of Lebanon Grove Dunedin Botanic Garden



Presidents Report AGM
June 2015



Cedars Of Lebanon Club Inc Dunedin

9th June 2015

As I write this report, I cannot help but think of the contrast between the peaceful life style New Zealand provides in contrast to the mayhem that the people of the Middle East are having to endure. I am forever thankful our forebears had the courage and wisdom to immigrate to such a peaceful country.

The 2014/15 financial year enabled the committee to lay the final plank in our strategy of leaving a legacy to our community by establishing the Dunedin Lebanese Community Digitisation Centre. This was achieved by gifting the City of Dunedin, in particular the Dunedin Public Library, the sum of fifty five thousand five hundred dollars (\$55,500.00). As a result of that gift, the library has offered for our community to be the first ethnic community to have its history digitised. There has been a lot of effort put into recording our history over the term of my presidency, so the committee thought it a logical progression to preserve that history (our legacy), permanently.

A major advantage of having our community's history preserved by the library is, they will upgrade the storage platforms to ensure that it will always be accessible and never rendered obsolete. Furthermore, they will catalogue, index, label and cross reference the entire collection, something only a professional organisation with a high level of skill, knowledge and experience is capable of achieving. A working party comprising representatives from our club and the library is soon to be formed to get things under way.

Michael Nidd re-wrote and changed a number of clauses in the original contract put forward by the library and closely vetted the final contract to ensure it reflected our terms and cannot ever be changed, irrespective of any changes that may occur within the Dunedin City Council. I am very thankful to Michael for all the time he willingly dedicated to the above.

The attached collage of pages provides a visual reminder of some of the things we have achieved as a club over the past fifteen years. I'm sure you are as proud of them as I, and the various committees who achieved these milestones, are. In addition to leaving a legacy for our community, I feel we have now also achieved our second major objective (post sale of our clubrooms) of positioning and honing the club for the 21st century.

The club continues to tick along at the level of interest shown in it. The two events we have each year are the senior citizens lunch and the Christmas party. This year, of her own accord, Suraya Langston organised a fund raising evening for the displaced people of Syria. Unfortunately I was unable to attend but from all accounts it was a huge success with over 180 people attending and in excess of five and a half thousand dollars (\$5,500.00) being raised. Congratulations to Suraya and all those people who were involved in mounting that event. The committee was pleased to donate a couple of hundred dollars towards the cause.

We are constantly on the lookout for stories about members of our greater community's achievements. I understand people's reluctance in letting us know of such things as they may be seen to be bragging, but we certainly don't see it that way. Quite by accident last year I learned that Matthew Farry won a very prestigious award called the International Racial Equity Leadership Award. He won it for his outstanding contribution to advancing an important conversation about race in contemporary New Zealand. For those of you who have heard Matthew speak or have read the brief history of our community he wrote for Scattered Cedars, will agree the above award is only the start of many more to come.

Another outstanding achievement was by Ben LaHood. I may well find myself in strife for mentioning this achievement because Ben is a very humble and self-effacing young man whose modesty is only surpassed by his academic brilliance. Ben graduated as an eye surgeon earlier this year. The degree of difficulty for the final exam is set extraordinarily high for this area of specialisation, consequently only a handful of people throughout Australasia gain a pass. Ben was one of only two doctors from New Zealand who passed. He has won numerous other prizes throughout his young life that are too numerous to mention here. Any time I ask him if we can post an achievement on to our website he

replies that he would rather that we didn't. Well this time I have taken the bull by the horns and as I stated earlier, I may well find myself in strife.

Another impressive and humble young man in our community is Joseph Nidd. Last year Joseph took over the running of Nidd Realty. For those of you who remember, Joseph designed and built the first website for our club. He then administered it for a number of years. He did all of that in his own time and free of charge to the club. With that sort of intelligence, capability and acumen, I have no doubt that Joseph will build on and further develop the already successful Nidd Realty.

Lyn and I had dinner with Denis Betro and his lovely companion Jane in London a couple of weeks ago. Denis has developed a very successful international career in music with his compositions being played all over Europe by some of the most famous symphony orchestras on the Continent. He asked to be remembered to the community and hopes to visit later in the year.

Please alert me or any members of the committee to achievements by our people because we get great delight out of trumpeting them to the world via our website and face book.

In keeping with the level of activity, the club is running very lean in terms of expenditure. We no longer have a storage unit, the coordinator's salary is fully subsidised, our website hosting costs have been reduced from \$79.95 per month to \$49.95 per month, with no reduction in services provided. Later this evening I will be moving that the president's honorarium be abolished. Consequently the thirty thousand dollars we have on term deposit, after the above mentioned gift has been made to the city, will see us through for a number of years to come.

I had a call from the General Manager of Parks, Gardens and Reserves at the DCC last week to tell me that the Cedars of Lebanon Grove escaped any damage following the heavy rains last week. He said it fared much better than other gardens, many of which experienced extensive damage.

Unfortunately the cedar tree that John and Pamela Farry planted on the weekend of the Gathering isn't doing too well and has had to be taken away for some special attention. Fingers crossed it will survive.

For my part I'm satisfied that I have achieved all I set out to do as president and am happy to continue in what will be a caretaker role going forward. We are always keen to hear any ideas you might have that we can adopt for the betterment of the club.

Thank you and God bless



Richard Joseph

President

Cedars of Lebanon Club Inc, Dunedin.

Website



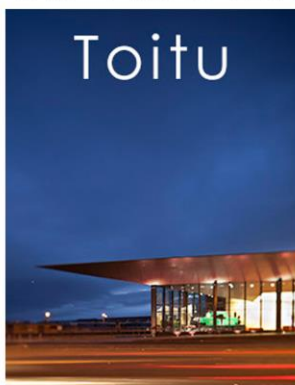
Facebook



Dunedin Lebanese Community Digitisation Centre



Otago Early Settlers Museum 'Our Voices' Auido/Visual





Street Plaque - Cnr Carrol St & Hope St
(Bell Tea cnr)



Bert Reid



Frank Coory



John Farry



Annual occurrence - Lebanese Flag flying from Civic Centre balcony to Celebrate Lebanon Independence day



Joe La Hood



Oral History

Cedars Of Lebanon Club Inc Dunedin



Diana Kearns



Alan McDonald



Phillip George



Adele George



Richard Joseph



Leila Taylor



Street Plaque - Stafford St



Plaque - St Joseph's Cathedral



