



NEWSLETTER MARCH 2023

A MEMORABLE VISIT TO CYPRUS

A group of Lions Club Sliema members led by First Vice President Lion Victor Borg Barthet, (in the unavoidable absence of our Club President), travelled to Larnaca on the occasion of the charter of the new Lions Club Nicosia Pandora Cyprus. The new Club was co-sponsored by Lions Club Lefkosa Taskent of Nicosia and Lions Club Sliema, Malta. The co-sponsorship of the Club was in a way unique as the sponsors were two Clubs from different countries.

The idea of the co-sponsorship came about after Lion Berna Yilmazoglu Ozdoga, who was the 2021/2022 Club President of Lefkosa Baskent Nicosia had sent a message to our then President (Lion Margaret Frendo) who entrusted me (Lion Tom A. Restall) to communicate with the Cypriot Club. We exchanged several messages since then, which eventually led to our visit to Cyprus and the co-sponsorship of a new Lions Club. (See page 4)

On arrival at Larnaca airport our Club delegation was greeted by Lion Berna and Lion Fikret Sendil of “Young Professionals Cyprus Virtual Lions Club” and taken to the Grand Pasha Hotel – Lefkosa. Soon after arrival we had dinner at the Hotel’s Casino restaurant.

The following day we were taken for a tour of the Buyuk Han (Grand Han) and Nicosia within the walls. Here the ladies in our group had a “field day” going round the various stalls. Lunch was later taken at Rustem Bookstore’.

After a short rest we had to get ready for the main events of our tour, namely the ceremony to charter “Nicosia Pandora Lions Club” which was scheduled for the evening.

CHARTER CEREMONY OF LIONS CLUB PANDORA NICOSIA: The Charter Ceremony was held at the Grand Pasha Hotel Pool Salon and conducted by Past International Director Nesim Levi from Turkey. In his speech Lion Levi stated: "*The golden rule of Lions is the awareness of serving others as much as same in our daily work, professional and social life. If we treat our friends, colleagues and/or even our rivals as we would like to be treated. If we are addressing the matters of our society, our country, and our nation as we expect others to do, If we fully fulfill our civic duty, it means we truly live and practice Lionism*".

PID Levi also stated: "*The Lions Club of Sliema Malta, Magusa Kale and Lefkosa Baskent, the three sponsoring clubs of Nicosia Pandora Cyprus, are among the strong, dynamic, experienced, and well-established clubs of our Association, The three sponsoring Clubs are as excited and proud as you are about the chartering of Nicosia Pandora Cyprus Club*".

Lion Victor Borg Barthet also delivered the following speech.

"We are honoured to have been asked to co-sponsor Lions Club Nicosia Pandora Cyprus. Welcome to our great family of Lions. I have been a Lion for most of my life. I have witnessed the work of Lions in health, education environment, awareness and disaster relief in our community and beyond. Lions gave us the opportunity to understand other people with different cultures and traditions and paved the way to collaborate between clubs to the benefit of our communities.

We also contribute regularly to Lions Clubs International Foundation (LCIF) which provides funds to areas struck with natural disasters, a case in point, the recent earthquakes that hit Southern Turkey and Syria. Our Club has sent funds to the Foundation in support of the victims of this disaster. You can also find out more on the work of LCIF from which you can be helped in your projects.

I would like to thank our hard-working Lion Tom Restall for making this sponsorship possible, giving us this experience to sponsor a club away from our shores. I would also like to pass the greetings and congratulations from our Club President Lion Norman Wilson, who could not join us on this trip. I congratulate you all on forming this Club, which I am sure will be of great benefit to your community and Lions Club International. I also would like to convey our thanks for the warm welcome we have received".

At the end of his speech First Vice President Lion Victor Borg Barthet informed the gathering that the Sliema Lions present at the ceremony were donating a sum of money collected between them towards the project that the new Club was launching to procure a mobile classroom for children living in villages. The President of the new Club thanked the Maltese group for their generous gesture.

CULTURAL TOURS: On March 11 our Turkish Cypriot friends organised a cultural tour of Kyrenia Bellapais where we were able to see some of the old buildings. The following day was quite a busy one as the Lions of Lefkosa Baskent organised a tour of Famagusta where we visited the Salamis Ruins and Famagusta Old Town where there is the Othello Castle made famous by Giuseppe Verdi in his opera “Othello”.

LIONS MEETING: The final and very interesting event was “The Lions Meeting” held at the Nicosia Merit Hotel, during which Lion President Gulcin Erkman, of Lions Club Lefkosa Baskent. and our First Vice President signed the “Friendship

Certificate”. In their speeches both officials emphasised that Lions Clubs should work closely together for the benefit of our societies.

During this session I was asked to say a few words. It was quite emotional for me to speak after having been showered with praise for what I did together with Lion Berna Yilmazoglu Ozdoga to organise the visit to Cyprus and bring about friendship between the two Clubs.

At the invitation of our First Vice President, I spoke about the important projects undertaken by our Club during the last 48 years mentioning also recent projects, namely the donation of a car to the Hospice

Movement, the future acquisition of a boat for the parlympics and a guide dog for a blind person. I urged our fellow Turkish Cypriot Lions to work together in the spirit of true understanding and the motto: “WE SERVE”.



Toasting the friendship of Sliema and Lekosa Baskent

FRIENDSHIP CERTIFICATE: The certificate signed by Lekosa Baskent and Sliema states: “The International Association of Lions Clubs” One of the Clubs registered in the ident 5787 in District Area Malta and of the Clubs registered, in the ident 5855 in District Region of Cyprus of the International Association of Lions Clubs, the World’s largest Non-Governmental Organisation have agreed: To extend the limits of community service activities for humanity. aTo respect human rights, regardless of race, religion and language and work in line with decisions of Lions International.

To come together to build, embrace and further strengthen Lions bridges between Malta and Northern Cyprus.

Lions Clubs of Sliema and Lekosa Baskent declared that they abide by the above.

Memorandum of Understanding by signing the Friendship Document on March 12, 2023

Lion Norman Wilson – President Lions Club Sliema

Lion Gulcin Erkmen – President Lions Lekosa Baskent

Email from Lion Berna

Dear Margaret Frendo. Firstly I would like to congratulate you as the new President of Sliema Lions Club. I am the current President of Lefkosa Baskent Lions Club of Northern Cyprus. We both became Presidents during difficult times but I hope we will overcome this with our effective and well targeted activities. The reason I contacted you is because we are two neighbouring island countries that have a lot in common. I am a retired supervisor and in the past I had the opportunity to visit your beautiful island twice, thanks to the British Council's Connecting Classrooms Project. When I became President of my Club this year I wanted to start a friendship with a Club in Malta which I hope will render a strong bond of friendship and brotherhood in the future. If you share the same feelings with me, we can also undertake joint activities in the future. Last year we distributed food packages to the families in need simultaneously with our twin Club Roma Arpacia and we also held a joint event with the Alzheimer Club in Australia. I hope to hear from you soon.

LIONS CLUB LEFKOSA BASKENT

March 2023 was a time of happiness and honour for Lefkoşa Başkent Lions Club who hosted members of Lions Club Sliema from Malta whom we consider as brothers and sisters.

While I was preparing for the next term presidency of 2021, many projects went through my mind and I took note of them. Among these, one of them that excited me the most was contacting a European Lions Club, building a bridge of friendship, and taking part in joint projects in the future. Without thinking too much, I concluded that Malta, an island country like us, was the right choice for us, and as a result of my research on social media, I determined that the club which impressed me the most was Lions Club Sliema. I was heartened by the positive response in a very short time to the first message I sent to the club's website address in July 2021. My excitement was shared by all the club members, and our bond was fostered with the kind and informative writings of Tom A. Restall, External Affairs Officer of Lions Sliema Club, and the newsletter he sent every month to let us know more about your club. Then I felt that it was time to meet face to face in order to take this relationship to the next level. Both clubs sent an invitation to each other and in the end we reached the decision that Lefkoşa Başkent Lions Club would visit Malta first and then Sliema Club would come to North Cyprus the following year.

In April 2022, twelve members of the Lefkoşa Başkent Lions Club visited Malta, where they had the pleasure of meeting with the Sliema Lions Club President and members. Over the course of four days (24-27 April), we visited museums and other historical places and had the opportunity to taste the local delicacies. The visit left Lefkoşa Başkent Lions Club members with a lot of memories that we cherish.

We shared unforgettable memories during our visit to your beautiful island last year, and once again we were pleased to observe that you are a friendly, hospitable club that is deeply committed to the Lions philosophy. Throughout the year 2022, the whole club awaited your visit with enthusiasm and excitement as well as the Friendship Certificate Signing ceremony, which would reinforce our friendship.

We were happy to hear from Tom that you would visit us in March not for one but for two great causes. One was to sponsor a newly formed Lions Club

named Nicosia Pandora Lions Club and the other was to sign the Friendship Certificate with Lefkoşa Başkent Lions Club



After you fulfilled your duty as the sponsor club we were able to spend time together visiting historical sites. As Lefkoşa Başkent Lions Club we planned a visit to Famagusta starting with the St Barnabas Icon Museum. St

Barnabas was a Jew working as a teacher in Salamis. He believed in Jesus and was a Christian, which was not taken nicely by other Jews, who murdered him. He was buried in the temple built by his students. He had written one of the eight Gospels accepted by the İznik Council. The Bishop of Cyprus found the Gospel after his death and took the sacred Gospel to the Byzantine Emperor in Constantinopolis (İstanbul). The Bishop was rewarded with a baton and red ink for his signature by the Emperor. The temple has been restored as an Icon Museum and is frequented by visitors of all faith. We continued on to Salamis, five km from FamFamagusta, which served as the capital of the island in the past. The antique city was built by settlers from Promete Kingdom in Western Anatolia around 294 BC. The remains include baths, columns, an abacus, the column road, some agora, and most notably the amphitheatrethe amphitheatre – which is still the desired location for concerts. Upon drinking our coffee enjoying the antic city and breath-taking views of crystal clear Mediterranean sea, we continued on to old town Famagusta.

Our first stop was the Othello Castle an inner castle. The tragedy Desdemona written by William Shakespeare is based on Othello's life. Shakespeare's tragedy is a combination of jealousy, revenge, slander, greed and death. Othello believes the rumours of her beloved Desdemona was cheating on him with the commander of the castle and commits suicide after murdering her.

Taking a short walk from the Othello Castle, we visited the St Nicholas Cathedral, built by the Lusignans between 1298 and 1312, and consecrated in 1328 as a Catholic cathedral. The Cathedral, a prime example of gothic architecture, was home to the coronation of the Lusignan kings as Kings of Jerusalem. When the Ottomans took over the island in 1571, the Cathedral converted to a mosque with the addition of minarets.

The square where the Cathedral is named Namık Kemal square. Namık Kemal is a protest poet, who is the author of some the best poetry in Turkish Literature. His favourite topic to write on was freedom, which ended his own freedom when the Sultan exiled him to Cyprus. His dungeon, where he was imprisoned for 38 months, a short walk from the Cathedral. Turkish Cypriots named the square after him to express their desire for freedom. Over the course of the years the square has been home to concerts as well as demonstrations.

We ended our visit to Famagusta with lunch at Aspava, a beautiful authentic restaurant serving traditional Turkish and Cypriot cuisine with views of the square and the Cathedral. We returned to Lefkoşa after lunch.

Every moment we spent with you was special and precious, and on your last night in Northern Cyprus, we took our partnership one step further with the magnificent Friendship Certificate Signing Ceremony where we crowned this friendship. Finally I can say that our club sincerely believes that our friendship will deepen in the coming years and that we will be looking for ways to working with you more closely in several global services.

The above article was co-authored by Lion President Gulgen Erkmen and Lion Secretary Berna Yilmazoglu Ozdogo who will be Club President in 2024/25.

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BECOMING A LION: LOUISE CUTAJAR DAVIS

My journey towards Lionism began about four years ago, when my sister Doreen became a Lion in the Sliema Lions Club, and my husband and I started attending Lions events as her guests. These events were truly enjoyable, and I was struck by the camaraderie among Lion members. Lions, I thought, really knew how to enjoy their food and drink, raffles, dancing and so on! But what do Lions do when they are not socialising and enjoying themselves? What is really their raison d'être? I must admit that although I had heard about Lions

as philanthropic clubs with a long history, I knew very little about how they worked. I have only been a Lion for a few months now, but I have managed to obtain valuable insights into how Sliema Lions Club is administered and operates. Here is a Club with members coming together from different walks of life, but sharing the same objectives in championing the causes of people in need. On 7 September 2022 I attended my first meeting. I immediately felt at home, not only because I was among people, I had already met several times before, but also because I was warmly received. I was officially inducted on November 19, 2022, a date I will always remember because it coincides with my mother's birthday! I am proud to be an active member of such a highly esteemed international organisation, which spans over 200 countries and boasts a membership of some 1.4 million! The word active is especially significant to me because I was never content to sit on the side-lines but always feel the need to involve myself as best I can in whatever context I find myself. "They also serve who only stand and wait" is not a maxim that I subscribe to, unless of course I happen to find myself in John Milton's circumstances when he wrote his poem On His blindness! Consequently, barely a month had passed since I started attending meetings before I found myself accepting the responsibility of coordinating the monthly talks on the retirement of Lion Chris Borg Cardona from the role. This is a rewarding task because I get to meet many interesting people who volunteer some of their time to educate, enlighten as well as entertain us by sharing their knowledge and experience. Before long, I also took on the role of coordinating the dinners which occur after the talks. I also have the honour of working with seasoned, senior and respected members of the Club on the partial revision of the Club's Constitution. I feel very privileged to be working with them as they have indeed taught me a great deal about Lions in general and Sliema Lions Club in particular. So far, personal circumstances have prevented me from joining in trips abroad to collaborate with our foreign counterparts, experiences which used to be highly enriching for me when I was Education Officer for International Relations. But I hope to be able to participate in these encounters in the near future, meeting like-minded people, divided by geographical location but united in their passion and dedication to be of service to the community. I am proud to be a member of Sliema Lions Club. Who knows what opportunities to share my time, skill, and experience, to

make a positive impact on the lives of others, will present themselves in future.

Lion Louise Cutajar Davis

Editor's Note: It is hoped to include other profiles of new members in later editions of our newsletter. This is a means to get to know new members better. Hence new members are asked to agree to my request.

CLUB NEWS

APRIL CLUB MEETINGS: The next meetings are scheduled for Wednesday 5th and 19th. Meetings will be held at the Victoria Hotel. Further details will be forwarded by our Club Secretary.

TA' SAWRA VISIT: The visit and party to" Ta' Sawra Old People's Home at Rabat is scheduled for Friday April 21. Further details will be sent nearer to the date.

MERIDIANA WINERY: A fund-raising event at the Meridiana Winery at Ta' Qali is planned for Friday June 16. The Winery will be accepting more persons than the previous visit. Details will be sent nearer to the date. Other events are being planned for the months of May and June. Detailed information on these events will be sent in due course.

AFTERNOON TEA AND CONCERT: An afternoon tea and concert with professional musicians (flute and harp) of the National Orchestra will be taking place on Saturday May 20 at around 2.30 p.m. (time to be confirmed) at the Hotel Phoenicia, Floriana. This is a unique occasion not to be missed. Further details nearer to the date. Keep this date free and join the party for a unique fund-raising event.

RAFFLE: Tickets for the fund-raising raffle with several attractive prizes are now available. Three (3) tickets cost Euro ten (10) while one (1) ticket costs Euro five (5). You can choose your numbers from 1 to 200. If the numbers chosen have already been allocated, members will be asked either to select other numbers or else you may ask Lion Tom Restall, who is organising the raffle, to allocate other numbers. Members are reminded that cheques for Euro 20 or less are not accepted by banks. Payments may also be made by

**bank transfer to the Club's Philanthropic Account at BOV SLIEMA BRANCH,
BANK BIC - VALLMTMT and the IBAN is:**

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A few tickets have already been sold. Our aim is to sell all available tickets. In the meantime, get your tickets now. Do not wait until the last moment to get your tickets. There are several attractive prizes for this raffle. Members can augment our Philanthropic Funds since we always have demands to help worthy causes. Raffle prizes will be drawn during the Tea Party at the Phoenicia on May 20.



Lion Victor Borg Barhet with the President of Lions Club Nicosia Pandora Giiveng Asciogillka and her two daughters who are also Lions.

“WE SERVE”