

FEZANA *bulletin*

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UPCOMING DATES

May 5, 2012

1st International Day of Service: Zoroastrians Stepping Out Initiative. For info visit <http://zoroastrianssteppingforward.weebly.com/>

June 2-3, 2012

Year 3750 Thus Spoke Zarathushtra Conference of Scholars of Zoroastrianism. University of British Columbia, Vancouver. For info, visit <http://www.3750z.com/conference.htm>

June 29-July 3, 2012

13th Zoroastrian Games Toronto, Canada. For info www.zso.org or zgames2012@yahoo.ca

August 2-5, 2012

16th North American Zoroastrian Congress Rye, New York. For registration or more info <http://nazc.zagny.org>

August 2, 2012

FEZANA 25th Anniversary Gala Evening; Rye New York; 7:00pm. <http://nazc.zagny.org>

August 3, 2012

25th FEZANA AGM; Rye, New York. To register or more info <http://nazc.zagny.org> or admin@fezana.org

AROUND FEZANA...

Interfaith Activities Committee

PURPOSE:

The objective of FEZANA's participation in the interfaith arena is not to proselytize. It is rather to provide a means where individual Zoroastrians can seek for themselves an avenue that enhances their own spirituality and their own identity as followers of the Mazdayasni faith. The purpose of interfaith participation is not of creating awareness of our faith community in the public square, though that may come as a side effect. Two effective avenues which work well, and which we endorse, are:

1. To participate in inter-religious dialogue to deepen understanding; and
2. To participate in action programs that promote social justice, religious freedom and world peace.

Last 30 years have produced a new religious diversity which is now a mainstream phenomenon in North America today, where almost every faith and its sub-sects have to take on the challenge of building a society of neighbors rather than strangers. Zoroastrian participation in Interfaith began before the birth of FEZANA. However, FEZANA's participation at the Parliament of World's Religions in 1993 in Chicago (and subsequently in 1999, 2004, and 2009 in Parliament meetings in Cape Town, S. Africa, Barcelona, Spain, and Melbourne, Australia, respectively) was the first major beginning. Religious diversity in North America is a reality. It is here to stay. Religious diversity comes with commitment to religious freedom in our society of religious pluralism.

The current Committee comprises of Co-chairs Rohinton Rivetna and Homi D. Gandhi, and Romy Mohta as a member. Interfaith activities and meetings are taking place all throughout the year. They do not wait for the organizational set up or announcements. They do not wait to begin for a special season of such meetings nor do they end with the end of the year. For us Zoroastrians, the interfaith activities include representation of our faith at many venues and meetings, a kind of cross-culture.

This Committee's role is to facilitate local associations, groups, families and individuals to subscribe to the idea of participating in Interfaith/Inter-religious activities from a sense of their own conviction that this is the right thing to do and in harmony with our own faith tradition; to take initiative, be creative and proceed with action programs they are most comfortable with, judging the local conditions and realities for themselves. To fulfill this objective, pertinent information is posted at appropriate intervals on www.fezana.org

The following are a few examples of our recent participation in Interfaith activities:

- Nazneen Spliedt represented the community at the Observance of World Religion Day on January 29, 2012. "Religion should be the Cause of Unity" Nazneen was one of the distinguished panelists on the occasion.



**Federation of
Zoroastrian
Associations of
North America
(FEZANA)**

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- Homi Gandhi represented the community at the United Nations World Interfaith Harmony Week 2012 event (Common Ground for the Common Good) on February 7. Homi was invited to participate in a tree watering ceremony, symbolizing unity and peace among the religions of the world.
- Kersi Shroff was invited by the Interfaith Conference of Metropolitan Washington to participate in a briefing on March 9, 2012, of international visitors, sponsored by US State Department's International Visitor Leadership Program Project on "Interfaith Dialogue, A Regional Project for North Africa and the Near East".
- Behram Pastakia represented at an international forum on Capitol Hill in Washington D.C, organized to bring the US Department of State to work in collaboration with international faith based NGOs on 28 March 2012. In a bipartisan approach, the speakers included elected representatives from the US House of representatives from Texas, Virginia and Arizona who responded to an academic report addressing the current status of religious freedom worldwide.

Additionally, we have been working on "Understanding the Swastika: Use and Abuse of a sacred symbol.". Known as the *Shalib-e-Shikeste* in Iran, the swastika symbol is considered a sign of good fortune and used at auspicious occasions in the religious ceremonies by Parsis at weddings and Navjotes. As a follow-up to the presentation made at the FEZANA AGM in April 2010, the background material is now available as a printer friendly brochure: <http://wp.me/p6TVE-2yj> A dialogue to deepen understanding of the Swastika, with panelists drawn from faith communities of Zarathushtis, Hindus, Buddhists, Jains, Jews and Christians is suggested as an ongoing activity in cities all across North America.

Zoroastrians interested in participating in local, regional, national or international interfaith events may contact;

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Homi D. Gandhi homidgandhi@gmail.com □

CELEBRATE WITH FEZANA

*FEZANA's Silver Jubilee Gala
An Evening of Dinner and Dance
Rye, New York*

August 2, 2012, 7:00pm



N.A. Zarathushti Congress 2012

Message to the Community

The Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York (ZAGNY) in partnership with the Iranian Zoroastrian Association (IZA) are proud to announce that they have been selected to host the XVIth North American Zarathushti Congress. The Congress will be held from Thursday, August 2nd to Sunday, August 5th 2012, at the Rye Town Hilton, Rye Brook, New York, about 30 minutes north of New York City.



The theme for the Congress is “Zarathushti Existence in the Contemporary World.” The Congress theme presupposes a common understanding of what we mean by “Zarathushti”.

Discussions will be held on our core beliefs, rituals & practices, youth and generational issues.

Over the years the Zarathushti Congresses have cultivated a strong sense of identity, awareness and belonging for our small yet vibrant community in the vast ocean of other religions and cultures. Moreover, it is a wonderful opportunity for Zarathushtis across the continent to interact and collaborate in building a strong vision for the future of our community.

In order to encourage as many participants as possible from all over the United States and Canada, we are taking steps to defray the registration fees by holding fund raising events, accepting donations and promoting sponsorships. One of the most popular fund raising vehicles is for businesses and individuals to advertise in the Congress Brochure. The Congress Brochure is provided to every registrant and includes the Congress Program as well as brief introductions of the panelists and speakers for each Congress session. Placing a personal message of well wishes or a commercial advertisement would serve as a public statement of your commitment to the Zarathushti community. Your advertisement can take any form and we welcome personal messages to the community.

We are reaching out to you for your support and would welcome your participation in this worthwhile endeavor by reserving a page in the Congress brochure or advertising on the Congress web site. For details, please visit <http://nazc.zagny.org/sponsorship/> **For all FEZANA associations and small groups, we are offering a discount of 10% for a full page ad.** We hope you will help make this event another great success for the North American Zarathushti community.

Congress Co-Chairs
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REMINDER: FEZANA's 25th Annual General Meeting (AGM), hosted by the Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York (ZAGNY), will be held on Friday, August 3, 2012 at the Hilton Rye Hotel, Rye, New York from 3:00-10:00pm. The AGM is open to the public however, delegates and attendees are requested to register. For details or more information contact: admin@fezana.org . Also, visit <http://nazc.zagny.org/schedule/> to see the full NAZC XVI schedule