

FEZANA *bulletin*

April 19, 2013 / VOLUME 3 • ISSUE 4



UPCOMING DATES

April 28, 2013

ZAF Picnic. Tree-tops park, Davies, FL. www.zafonline.org

May 3-5, 2013

FEZANA's 26th AGM; Dallas, TX. Hosted by ZANT. Contact admin@fezana.org

May 3-June 14, 2013

Cyrus Cylinder Exhibit, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston

May 4, 2013

16th Revlon Run/Walk, NYC. Support the ZAGNY team. secretary@zagny.org

May 5, 2013

ZAMWI Music and Talent night

May 7, 2013

The Dalai Lama at Univ of Maryland. 10am. www.umd.edu

May 18-19, 2013

NAMC 2013 AGM, Montreal, hosted by ZAQ. kobadzarolia@gmail.com

May 26, 2013

Gahambar in Orlando. Hosted by WZCC--Central Florida. Out-of-town guests can reserve at Springhill Suites, Orlando. More info: dastur@comcast.net

June 20-Aug 4, 2013

Cyrus Cylinder Exhibit, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City.

June 30, 2013

Application Deadline for FEZANA P&CA Scholarship

August 1, 2013

Application Deadline for FEZANA EXISS Scholarship

(continued on page 4)

The Cylinder of Cyrus Exhibit Delights in D.C.

GALA LAUNCH

A Gala dinner to launch the tour of *The Cyrus Cylinder and Ancient Persia: A New Beginning* was held on March 5, 2013 at the Sackler and Freer Galleries at the Smithsonian Museum in Washington D.C. FEZANA was represented by Katayun Kapadia and her daughter, Zarin Kapadia, Tara Jamshidian with her parents Darius and Linda, and Behram Pastakia. The highlight of the evening was an interview between CNN's Christiane Amanpour and Neil MacGregor, Director of the British Museum, about the significance of the Cyrus Cylinder.



CNN's Christiane Amanpour interviews the British Museum's Neil MacGregor at the Gala Dinner for the launch of the Cyrus Cylinder exhibit at the Smithsonian. Photo by Hassan Sarbakhshian / IHF America

A video of the complete interview may be viewed [here](#): (19:57) [courtesy IHF America]. In addition, an introduction to the Cylinder by Christiane Amanpour with excerpts from the interview may be viewed [here](#). (5:40) [Courtesy IHF America].

ZAMWI VISIT TO SACKLER GALLERY ON APRIL 7

A field trip to visit the Cyrus Cylinder exhibit as a group was organized by Armita Soroosh for the children of the ZAMWI Religious Class and their parents on Sunday April 7, 2013. Ms. Soroosh created a handout and gave a short talk before the group went inside to see the exhibit. The group topped the day off with a Persian meal at a Bethesda restaurant.



ZAMWI members gather outside the entrance to the Sackler Gallery. Photo by Sima Bastani.



ZAMWI members peer at an Golden Ewer, which is displayed to complement the Cyrus Cylinder exhibit at the Smithsonian Museum. Photo by Armita Soroosh.

A Symposium: The Legacy of Cyrus the Great: Iran and Beyond

Saturday April 27, 9:30am-4:00pm

Freer Gallery, Smithsonian Museums, Washington, D.C.

Coinciding with the Cyrus Cylinder Exhibit in Washington D.C., this public symposium examines the legacy of Cyrus the Great. Scholars and experts contextualize Cyrus's achievements and human rights legacy. Brief talks, a roundtable conversation, and audience discussion are featured throughout the day. Supported through generous gifts from the Iran Heritage Foundation, Foundation for Iranian Studies and the Leon Levy Foundation. Visit <http://www.asia.si.edu/events/cyrus-symposium/default.asp> for details.



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(FEZANA)**

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United Nations



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FEZANA INFO

Iranian-Jewish Dialogue at George Mason University, Virginia: A Panel Co-Hosted by NIAC, CRDC, and FEZANA

By Homi D. Gandhi

On March 28, 2013, the Center for World Religions, Diplomacy, and Conflict Resolution (CRDC), Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America (FEZANA), and National Iranian American Council (NIAC) hosted a shared panel and celebration at George Mason University (GMU), Arlington, Virginia, in honor of the presence in Washington DC of the Cyrus Cylinder and its significance for the peaceful interaction of civilizations based on universal human rights and



Panelists, left to right: Dr. Marc Gopin, Dr. Ahmad Karimi-Hakkak, Dr. Fatemeh Keshavarz, Dr. Shaul Bakhash, and Dr. Trita Parsi.
[Photo courtesy of GMU website]

and his radical pragmatism which separated him from other rulers. With the cooperation of many people, including Kersi Shroff of Maryland, we were finally able to host the event.

The interaction of two ancient civilizations of Iran and Jews were reflected at the entrance of the Founders Hall at GMU where a joint table displayed the combined items of Passover and Haft-Sheen tables. Another aspect of the interaction was reflected in the members on the panel comprising of Dr. Shaul Bakhash, Professor of History and Iranian Studies, GMU; Dr. Ahmad Karimi Hakkak, Professor and Founding Director of the Center for Persian Studies, University of Maryland; Fatemeh Keshavarz, Professor and Director of the Roshan Institute Center for Persian Studies, University of Maryland; Dr. Trita Parsi, President, NIAC; and Dr. Gopin. Each speaker reflected on different aspect of Cyrus's legacy from personal viewpoint. A question-answer session followed thereafter. The event was followed by music and festivities.

Both the presentation and Q/A sessions are presented in the following video links:
Part 1 [click here](#)

Part 2: Q & A [click here](#)

Photos of the event can be viewed at <http://crdc.gmu.edu/iranian-jewish-dialogue-on-the-cyrus-cylinder/> .

While watching the videos, one should not miss Adi Davar's comment during Q/A session where he brought home the point that the freedom of worship implied in the Cyrus Cylinder was perhaps due to Cyrus's own belief in his own faith, attributable to Zoroastrianism. Although there was a general agreement on this point from all panel members, one wonders why the historians do not specifically restate that relationship. □



MORE TO KNOW

In Search of Cyrus the Great

The then Under Secretary General of the United Nations, Shashi Tharoor, discusses the symbolic significance of the replica of the Cylinder of Cyrus at the UN headquarters in New York.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YebB4nVw_Mg
approx 10 minutes

NA Zoroastrian Tele-Class Video

You can access the seven part presentation by Erv Soli Dastur [see article at right] from the North American Mobed Council, by clicking on the following links. (approx 1 hour in total)

[1. All NA Tele Class 12
Cyrus Cylinder 001](#)

[2. All NA Tele Class 12
Cyrus Cylinder 002](#)

[3. All NA Tele Class 12
Cyrus Cylinder 003](#)

[4. All NA Tele Class 12
Cyrus Cylinder 004](#)

[5. All NA Tele Class 12
Cyrus Cylinder 005](#)

[6. All NA Tele Class 12
Cyrus Cylinder 006](#)

[7. All NA Tele Class 12
Cyrus Cylinder 007](#)

Volunteers at the Sackler Gallery, D.C.

On March 16, 2013 ZAMWI members, Mahvash (Mimi) Agvald and her eighteen year old son, Frederik Arash Agvald, were among the volunteers at the Freer and Sackler Galleries of the Smithsonian Museum in Washington D.C. as part of the celebrations for Nowruz. This was the fifth year in a row that the Sackler Gallery hosted a celebration for Nowruz. Nearly 10,000 visitors attended this special program. It is becoming a tradition in the spring that many look forward to in the Nation's capitol. This year's celebrations were made extra special with the opening of the Cylinder of Cyrus exhibit from the British Museum.



Photo courtesy of Smithsonian Museum/ Freer and Sackler Galleries.

Here are their observations:

"I do appreciate the direction of the Sackler & Freer Gallery for the presentation of Nowruz to the very large and multicultural community of the Washington area of the very ancient and unique way of celebrating Earth's renewal of its turn around the sun, the vernal equinox. It was my pride and honor to explain it along with the 7 traditional items of Nowruz table to the visitors. The visitors also learned the Nowruz does not relate to any one particular religion, it is uniquely an Aryan agricultural tradition. "

— Mahvash (Mimi) Agvald, ZAMWI

"During my second year of volunteering for Nowruz I was working in the backgammon/chess exhibit. I had a good experience, but felt that it was crowded in a small space. Some visitors were very attracted to this area.... alas! very few knew how to play chess. "

— Frederik Arash Agvald, ZAMWI

North American Zoroastrian Tele-Class: Cylinder of Cyrus the Achaemenian

On 10 March 2013, Erv Soli Dastur, from Sarasota, Florida, broadcast a North American Tele-Class on the *Cylinder of Cyrus the Achaemenian*, a monarch from ancient Iran, known for his benevolence and kind treatment of people in his vast empire.

The cylinder itself, which is a "Proclamation of Freedom" from antiquity, is on loan from the British Museum and touring five cities in museums across the United States in 2013.

In his Tele-Class, Erv Soli Dastur, starts his presentation with the discovery of the cylinder of Cyrus in present day Iraq by Hormuzd Rassam, an Assyrian-Christian who led an archeological expedition for the British Museum. He gives a detailed account of the message on the cylinder, which lifts up religious freedom, written in cuneiform script from Babylon, and shares how a replica of the cylinder came to the United Nations headquarters in New York. References to Cyrus in the Old Testament of the Holy Bible as the anointed one, a messiah, and the possible mention of Cyrus the Great in the Holy Quran are provided.

The last part of the presentation traces the influence of the life of Cyrus and his education, "*The Cyropedia*" on the third president of the United States, Thomas Jefferson, who was an avid reader of the Greek historians, Xenophon and Herodotus. [See sidebar for links to video of the Tele-class.] □



UPCOMING DATES

(continued from page 1)

Oct 10 - Dec 14, 2013

The Everlasting Flame. Brunei Gallery, London, U.K.

www.theeverlastingflame.com

December 27-31, 2013

10th WZC; Mumbai, India.

<http://www.wzcmumbai.com/>

MORE TO KNOW

Nebuchadnezzar's Destruction of Jerusalem, The Cyrus Cylinder, and the Building of the Second Temple: A Brief Historical Synopsis of Salient Elements

Christopher A. Rollston,
Visiting Professor of Northwest Semitic Languages and Literatures, George Washington University.

<http://www.rollstonepigraphy.com/?p=544>

FURTHER READING

Books published to accompany the tour of the Cylinder of Cyrus to the USA:

(1.) *The Cyrus Cylinder and Ancient Persia - A New Beginning for the Middle East* by John Curtis (2013)
The British Museum
[ISBN 978-0-7141-1187-2]

(2.) *The King of Persia's Proclamation from Ancient Babylon: The Cyrus Cylinder* Edited by Irving Finkel. I.B. Tauris
www.ibtaruis.com (2013)
in association with the Iran Heritage Foundation.
[ISBN 978-1-78076-063-6]

Cyrus Cylinder Exhibit: Houston Events



© Hasan Sarbakhshian / Courtesy IHF America

The Cyrus Cylinder and Ancient Persia exhibit moves on to Houston after its first stop in Washington, D.C. The exhibit will be displayed at the **Museum of Fine Arts, Houston from May 3 – June 14, 2013**. As in Washington D.C., the cylinder, alongside sixteen objects, will showcase the Persian ruler's innovations and how the proclamation of the Cylinder shaped the ethics of the ancient world. The local Zarathushti association, the Zoroastrian Association of Houston (ZAH) has been very active in programming special events in conjunction with the MFAH in honor of this exhibition.

Visit www.mfah.org for additional information and tickets. All events, unless listed otherwise, take place at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

Docent Education Session

Saturday, May 4, 2013 - 10:00 a.m.

Presented by John Curtis, Keeper of the Middle East Collections, The British Museum, and organizing curator of the exhibition *The Cyrus Cylinder and Ancient Persia: A New Beginning*, and Vesta Sarkhosh Curtis, Curator of Middle Eastern Coins, The British Museum. FREE - Open to ZAH members.

The Many Meanings of the Cyrus Cylinder –

Sunday, May 5, 2013 - 6:00 p.m.

Modest in scale and appearance, the Cyrus Cylinder is one of the most famous icons to have survived from the ancient world. The Cylinder was not discovered until 1879, but Cyrus's tolerance has inspired generations of philosophers, rulers, and statesmen—from ancient Greece to the Renaissance, and from the Founding Fathers to leaders in the modern-day Near East—and has made the Cyrus Cylinder a powerful symbol of religious tolerance and multiculturalism. In this enthralling talk Neil MacGregor, Director of The British Museum, traces 2600 years of Middle Eastern history through this single object. FREE but reservations required.

Cyrus the Great: "Friend of God" and Paradise Builder

Friday, May 10, 1:30 pm,

Saturday, May 11, 4:00 pm

Co-sponsored by Zoroastrian Association of Houston

In this lively illustrated presentation, Dr. Jenny Rose explores the ways in which, beginning with the Cyrus cylinder, the Ancient Persians were able to appeal to the "hearts and minds" of their various subject peoples in the Ancient Near East. She also considers whether Cyrus's diplomatic tolerance of local cultures and religions, alongside the quadripartite garden plan of his dynastic capital, may reflect a "Zoroastrian" understanding of the world. Dr. Jenny Rose teaches Zoroastrian Studies at the School of Religion, Claremont College, and is the author of *The Image of Zoroaster: The Persian Mage Through European Eyes*, *Zoroastrianism: An Introduction*, and *Zoroastrianism: A Guide for the Perplexed*.

Meet and Greet Jenny Rose

Friday, May 10, 7:00pm

Zarathushti Heritage and Cultural Center

Co-sponsored by Zoroastrian Association of Houston

Jenny Rose is an Historian of religions, who teaches Zoroastrian Studies at Claremont Graduate University in California. She holds a doctorate in Ancient Iranian Studies from Columbia University and has authored significant works that



MORE TO KNOW



See Cheryl Braganza, Cover Artist for *FEZANA Journal*, Winter 2012, as she discusses her "Healing Cloak" painting and talks about the Women's Art Society of Montreal.

<http://globalnews.ca/video/446491/womens-art-society-of-montreal>

**In Search of My God**

Available now as a FREE download at

www.insearchofmygod.com

Don't wait to download your copy of this beautifully illustrated book that explores the Zoroastrian religion complete with a fully interactive table of contents and integrated audio files of our prayers. This well written book spans the Zoroastrian story from its history to its rituals and prayers. As a *bonus*, all donations received for this e-book will support the *FEZANA Critical Assistance Fund*.

have been favorably reviewed. Jenny lectures extensively at other academic institutions, museums, and leads study tours of some of the most important archaeological and cultural sites in Iran and Central Asia.

Artful Thursday: Cuneiform in Context
Thursday, May 16, 2013 - 6:30 p.m.

At this month's Artful Thursday, Dr. Sarah Kielt Costello, Instructional Assistant Professor, Department of Art and Art History, School of Art, University of Houston, provides a richly-illustrated talk about one of the world's earliest civilizations, the structure and decoding of the world's first known written language, and the significance of the *Cyrus Cylinder*. Free.

Cyrus, the Anointed of the Lord: The Cyrus Cylinder and the Bible
Sunday, May 19, 2013 - 3:00 p.m.

Cyrus II of Persia, victorious over the Babylonian Empire in 539 B.C.E., is mentioned over 20 times in the Hebrew Bible. The prophet Isaiah praises the Persian king as "anointed" by the God of Israel, as Cyrus liberated the Israelites (along with other subjugated peoples), and encouraged them to return to their homeland and to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem. In this richly illustrated talk, Dr. Matthias Henze—the Watt J. and Lilly G. Jackson Chair in Biblical Studies and Professor of Religious Studies, and Founding Director, Program in Jewish Studies, Rice University—compares the words of Cyrus from his famous cylinder with what the Hebrew Bible records of the Persian monarch, to show why the remarkable legacy of Cyrus the Great remains so strong.

Ancient Persepolis in Blue – New Research on Colors, Gilding, Painters and Monuments in the Achaemenid Persian Empire, c. 520 to 330 BCE
Sunday, June 2, 2013 - 2:00 p.m.

Much of what we know of ancient Persia's history has been informed by studies of the magnificent site of Persepolis, the capital of the Achaemenid Persian Empire from the 6th to the 4th centuries BCE. A UNESCO world cultural heritage site since 1979, these well-preserved ruins in Southwestern Iran constitute the most important examples of Achaemenid dynastic architecture in Iran. Although it has long been known that these monuments and reliefs were painted, Dr. Alexander Nagel, Assistant Curator, Ancient Near Eastern Art at the Freer Sackler Galleries in Washington, D.C., shows us what new research in the fascinating field of polychromy has revealed about the role of color in the ancient world. □

Innovative Canadian Zarathushti Scientist Honored in China



Nowruz 2013 brought a great gift for Shahrokh Khanizadeh, Ph.D., an innovative scientist who has made seminal advances in strawberry culture.

Originally from Iran, now settled in Canada, Dr Khanizadeh was the recipient of a well deserved award at the 16th North American Zarathushti Congress, held in New York 2012 for his career achievements and his continued service to the North American Zarathushti Diaspora.

Dr Khanizadeh's well regarded book was translated into Chinese and distributed to delegates attending the Eighth China Strawberry Culture Festival 2103 in Beijing, China where he was felicitated for his seminal contributions and innovative research in Plant Breeding and Physiology. □