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. 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.

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.

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)
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 human dignity. It was a gathering to celebrate and reflect together during the Jewish Passover, and immediately following Nowruz, demonstrating the peaceful interaction of two ancient civilizations united in their common devotion to the legacy of Cyrus the Great.

Ever since I had watched a video on YouTube by Dr. Marc Gopin, Director, CRDC, GMU, relating Cyrus’s legacy to the present day world, I thought that it would be wonderful to invite Dr. Gopin to explain the genius of Cyrus’s culture 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 and 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.
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.

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 Achemenian

On 10 March 2013, Erv Soli Dastur, from Sarasota, Florida, broadcast a North American Tele-Class on the Cylinder of Cyrus the Achemenian, 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 archaeological 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.]
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](http://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.

**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
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.

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**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.