Sacramento Zarathushtis Making History

By Darius Captain, FEZANA representative for Sacramento Zoroastrian Association

FEZANA's newest Member Association, Sacramento Zoroastrian Association, is getting ready to inaugurate the latest Dar-e-Mehr on the North American continent.

In early 2010, a group of Iranian Zoroastrian women got together to form a Zoroastrian Women's Organization for the purposes of providing religious education to children and celebrate and get together for picnics, Gahambars, Naoroze, Mehregan etc.

In early 2014, a suitable property in the former Mather Air Force area of Rancho Cordova, about 15 miles east of downtown Sacramento, was purchased for $550,000. In a couple of months, the Zoroastrians of the Sacramento area collected over $200,000 and with a loan of $350,000 provided by a generous out of state Zarathushti, the 10,000 sq. ft. property was purchased. The name of the association was changed to the Sacramento Zoroastrian Association and registered as such as a non-profit religious organization.

The property has parking spots for over 60 cars and, on the space adjacent to the Center, a Dar e Mehr of about 850 sq. ft. is currently being constructed with funds generously provided by the Trustees of the Hong Kong Zoroastrian Association. The construction is coming along well and should be completed by end of January/February 2017.

The Center building plans for upgrades needed to get the requisite City permits have been approved and work on the modifications should hopefully start in January 2017. We are also working for an additional Bank loan to help complete the building changes needed. We plan to have the official opening of the Dar e Mehr during week end of March 25/26, 2017 and hopefully, the Center also. Once the modification phase starts, we should have a good idea if the opening of the main Center can also be officially opened, and whether the function will be on Saturday night or Sunday morning. A new Board of Directors elected last November took office on Jan 1, 2017. Some of the previous members continue to serve on the Board.

We had to create and provide detailed architectural plans for both the Center and the Dar e Mehr, which was an arduous task and took a lot of time and costs to get the approval. We have already received an afarganyu from the Wadija Atash Behram in Mumbai, and with the other required implements, are awaiting installation in our new Dar e Mehr.

More information, plans and pictures are available on our web site at www.sacza.org You may also contact me if you need additional information.

Happy New Year
Preparations are well underway in Houston for the 2017 FEZANA Annual General Meeting (AGM). Hosted by the Zoroastrian Association of Houston (ZAH), the AGM will take place from April 28, 2017 through April 30, 2017 with a variety of pre-AGM activities planned for Thursday April 27 and a post-AGM museum tour slated for Sunday April 30 at the Museum of Fine Arts – Houston. In keeping with FEZANA’s yearlong celebrations marking its 30th Anniversary, a Gala Evening will be held on Saturday evening April 29, celebrating not only FEZANA’s 30th but also the 10th Anniversary of the ZAH Legacy Scholarship program. ZAH is very excited to host the AGM with their usual Houston-style extravaganzas in the works.

Representatives from FEZANA Member Associations and Corresponding Members, as well as FEZANA Committee Chairs are encouraged to attend. Please RSVP by March 15, 2017 to admin@fezana.org and secretary@fezana.org.

For further information, see flyers on page 7-10; also, check our AGM link on FEZANA website: https://fezana.org/annual-general-meeting-2017/. Further details are being finalized and will be announced shortly. Kindly visit this FEZANA AGM link regularly for updates.

**TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF AGM WEEKEND ACTIVITIES**

[More information on p. 7 (AGM); p. 8 (WZCC); p. 9 (Museum visit); p.10 (Cruise)]

**THURSDAY APRIL 27, 2017 / PRE-AGM ACTIVITIES**

9:30am-12:30pm  WZCC Program: Visit to Zarathushti owned Industrial facility (Coating Industries)

1:30-4:30pm  WZCC N.A. Regional Meeting – Panel discussion

7:00-10:00pm  An Evening with FIRES (Keynote speaker, Exhibit and dinner) [Contribution $15]

**FRIDAY APRIL 28, 2017**

9:00am-5:00pm  FEZANA AGM DAY 1

7:00 pm  FEZANA Showcase Dinner  [$; Details to come]

**SATURDAY APRIL 29, 2017**

9:00am-5:00pm  FEZANA AGM DAY 2

7:00pm  Gala Evening (FEZANA’s 30th Anniversary and ZAH Legacy Scholarship’s 10th Anniversary)  [$; Details to come]

**SUNDAY APRIL 30, 2017**

9:00am-12:00pm  FEZANA AGM DAY 3

2:00-5:00 pm  Post-AGM / Museum Tour  Museum of Fine Arts-Houston visit  $. Group rate info to come. Note, Museum visit will be completed no later than 5:00pm
FEZANA is pleased to announce a new endowment of $101,000 dedicated to the families of Zarathushti Cancer Patients established by Neville H. Sarkari in loving memory of his late wife. This endowment will be known as the Zarina Neville Sarkari Welfare/Critical Needs Endowment for Cancer Patients and the beneficiaries shall be financially deserving family members of Zarathushti cancer patients in USA and Canada faced with financial hardships resulting from their family member’s cancer illness.

An amount determined by FEZANA’s Welfare and Critical Needs Committee from the annual income earned on investments minus inflation (a minimum of 3%) shall be used for CANCER ILLNESS including hospital related costs, treatment procedures, medicines, and drugs), other patient care including transportation, patient’s and immediate family’s routine expenses including food, clothing, and education. Funeral expenses of a deceased cancer patient will also be considered for disbursement.

This new endowment reiterates the faith of the North American Zarathushti community in FEZANA built over the past 30 years. FEZANA and the North American Zarathushti community are grateful to Neville H. Sarkari for his generosity.

The Spring 2017 issue of the FEZANA Journal will be a special commemorative issue for FEZANA’s 30th Anniversary. This issue, titled “Challenges of sustaining the Zoroastrian Creed, Community and Culture in the diaspora” includes overviews of the diaspora in England, Hong Kong and Australia. Articles by Jehangir Patel, Berjis Desai, David Rahini and Daryoush Jahanian reflect on the progress of the community. Young presidents and youth leaders share their hopes in "Voices for the Future", "Looking Back to Look forward", and "Events which have shaped the North American diaspora" demonstrate how our community has evolved. Continuing our commitment to promote our youth, the 2016-2017 FEZANA scholarship winners are profiled. Aban Rustomji follows the Zoroastrian Field Service students who were sponsored for the 2000 World Congress in Houston to highlight their journeys over the last 15 years.

This commemorative issue offers a rare opportunity for Zarathushti Associations, businesses and non-profits to advertise. Reasonable rates and full color pages are still available. Contact dollydastoor@syrmpatico.ca to discuss cover advertisements, full and half page ads. (The Journal staff can print your advertisement or create one for your business.) Advertisers receive a complimentary copy. To subscribe ($35/year in North America) or request additional copies visit https://fezana.org/publication/fj/
A New Navar in New York

Erv Porus Pavri, the youngest priest in the Metropolitan New York area (ZAGNY) was felicitated on his accomplishment of successfully completing the requirements of being ordained a Navar at an acknowledgement ceremony held at the new Arbab Rustam Guiv Dar-e-Mehr which was opened last year.

Above: Lovji Cama, Dean of Religious Studies at ZAGNY and Chair of Fezana’s Religious Education Committee gifts a copy of the book “The Divine Songs of Zarathushtra - Translation of the Gathas into English”, the opus by Irach JS Taraporevala, to Erv Porus Pavri, newly ordained priest in New York, as a token of appreciation from the community to the young man, for his commitment in preparing himself in perpetuating our faith in the Western Zarathushti Diaspora.

Photo Credit: Edul Daver

North American Mobeds Council (NAMC) Seminars Ready

NAMC conducts seminars on various topics that are of interest to mobeds as well as laity. Seminars are conducted in different cities in North America every year. This helps to evoke awareness of our rich history, culture and religious heritage. NAMC has formed a speaking group of four to five knowledgeable Mobeds who visit various Zoroastrian Associations upon their request, to educate the local congregation and perpetuate the faith. Local associations are encouraged to invite NAMC Mobeds at least once a year.

This year, the following seminars are prepared:

“Concept of God in Zoroastrianism” -- Khushroo Mirza

“Green Zoroastrianism” (i.e. Zoroastrianism on Environment) -- Tehemton Mirza

“Zoroastrianism Influence on other Religions” -- Soli Dastur.

“Practical Aspects of Following the Faith” -- Behram Panthaki

Please contact Ervad Kobad Zarolia (kobadzarolia @ gmail.com) for more information, or to book a seminar for your local association.
FEZANA is proud to announce Mr. Arzan Lali as the new co-Chair of FEZANA’s Information Technology Committee. Arzan Lali will work with our Vice President, Arzan Sam Wadia, who is also Chair of Information Technology Committee and Coordination and Planning Committee.

From product development to product delivery, Arzan has a wide spectrum of expertise. Successful and innovative Software Developer with over 15 years of IT experience in web application development, project management, system integration, implementation, and support. Arzan enjoys being at the intersection of Technology and Business.

Arzan serves as a Technical Project Lead in Phone.com. Prior to his current role, he was a Technical Program Manager at Donnell Systems, Inc for 15 years.

Arzan holds an M.S in Computer Science from Central Michigan University and B.E in Computer Engineering from University of Mumbai, India. He also holds an MBA from Indiana University specializing in Management Information Technology.

He currently resides in San Diego with his wife Delnaz and 5-year-old son Kyan. Prior to San Diego, he spent fifteen years in South Bend, Indiana where he was actively involved in the Zoroastrian Community in Chicago.

In 2002, he designed and deployed online registration system for participants at XII NAZC at Chicago. He was an executive board member at Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago, served as Secretary and Information Management Committee Chair. In 2012, Arzan was a recipient of Community Service Award presented to him by Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago. In 2014, he implemented a registration system that provided a seamless experience to delegates at the XVII NAZC at Los Angeles.

Arzan is a founder of Zoroastrian Calendar Services (www.zcserv.com), a website that allows Zoroastrians around the world to view and convert Zoroastrian dates in Shenshai, Kadmi, and Fasli formats. The site also provides other useful utilities and desktop apps. He is currently working on developing an iOS and Android apps for Zoroastrian event date reminders. Arzan has been a proud recipient of President Scout Award and likes to hike and camp.

ZAMWI Continues to Make Interfaith Connections in Washington D.C.

A Zoroastrian ‘Prayer-Teaching-Reflection’ was recited by ZAMWI member, Kersi Shroff, at an Interreligious Prayer Service, organized by the Archdiocese of Washington, Office of Cultural Diversity and Outreach, and Interfaith Conference of Metropolitan Washington held at the St. Patrick Catholic Church, Washington DC, January 11, 2017 as part of 2017 National Migration Week. The service was attended by several ZAMWI members and the reading was well received by all. [Forwarded by Farzad Aidun]
Sadeh is mainly celebrated on 10th of Bahman. We encourage communities to gather and celebrate it on January 24, 2017. Please check your association’s calendar or plan to host an event for Sadeh! Sadeh is a mid-winter celebration observed by Zoroastrians. It includes preparing a large bonfire and is therefore also known as Adur-Jashan (Feast of fire). The bonfire is to drive back the winter in defiance of Ahriman (satan). It is a deeply religious festival. Sadeh has a complex history, and two different traditions are to be noted.

- **By Yazd tradition**, it is observed on Ashtad ruz, Adur Mah. This is the 100th (“sadeh” in Persian) day before Noruz. According to the Fasli calendar, this would be on **December 11**.
- **The Kermani Zoroastrians** observe it on Aban ruz, Vohuman Mah (hundredth day after the gahambar of Ayathrima, held to be the beginning of winter) **January 24**.

The chief preparation for this festival is the gathering of wood, and everyone in the community is expected to contribute:

- ShAx-e shAx-e (h)armanI 'A branch, a branch...!
- Har kas shAx-e be-dehad Whoever gives a branch,
- odA murAd-esh be-dehad! May God grant his wish!
- Har kas shAx-e na-dehad, Whoever does not give a branch,
- KhodA murAd-esh na-dehad! May God not grant his wish!

**HOW TO CELEBRATE SADEH:** People begin to gather an hour before sunset, and a spot near a stream seems to be preferred. The lighting of the fire is properly preceded by an Afrinagan-e Do Dahman, a ceremony of blessing for the whole community, and Atash Niyayesh (fire litany). (Perhaps there is some connection here with the custom of wishing on candles at birthdays.)

**REFERENCES IN LITERATURE:** Sadeh is mentioned in the Qissa-i Sanjan. The prolific Parsee writer Dr. J.J. Modi makes a brief note of it in his *Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsees* (1922, p. 464). He gives the date as ruz Aban, mah Deh (December 25 by Fasli reckoning!) He says the fire is to symbolize the approach of winter which necessitates the kindling of fires. Sadeh is discussed at length by Mary Boyce in *A Persian Stronghold of Zoroastrianism*, chapter 7, and her article ‘the 2 dates of the feast of Sada’ (Farhang-e Iran-Zamin, xxi. 4 (1976), 25-40).
2017 FEZANA AGM / HOUSTON / APRIL 28-30, 2017

THURS APRIL 27, 2017
Pre-AGM Activities
10:00 am – Site Visit
1:30pm – 4:30pm
WZCC Regional Meeting
7:00-10:00 pm
An Evening with FIRES [$]

FRI APRIL 28, 2017
9:00 am – 4:30 pm
FEZANA AGM
7:00 pm FEZANA
Showcase Dinner [$]

SAT APRIL 29, 2017
9:00 am – 4:30 pm
FEZANA AGM
7:00 pm Gala Dinner [$]

SUN APRIL 30, 2017
AGM continues until Noon
Post-AGM Activity:
MFAH visit [$]

RSVP By March 15, 2017 to FEZANA SECRETARY, Percy Master at secretary@fezana.org or FEZANA Administrative Office admin@fezana.org
Details are being finalized. Visit https://fezana.org/annual-general-meeting-2017/ for regular updates

For Further Information or Questions Contact
Homi D. Gandhi       FEZANA President       homidgandhi@gmail.com
Aderbad Tamboli       ZAH Chair           axtamboli@windstream.net
Zeeba Kayani         AGM Coordinator (281) 610-6593   zeeba.kayani@gmail.com

ACCOMODATIONS:
Home2 Suites by Hilton: 11121 Fountain Lake Drive, Stafford, TX. 77477
Group Rate is $95.00 - breakfast included.
Special Group Name: FEZANA-AGM

Reservations by: Phone directly at (346) 309-2240 (If needed, ask for Ms. Nicki Richardson for assistance)
Reservations must be received by 04/14/2017. After this date reservations will be accepted on a space and rate available bases only. 30day cancel policy and $50.00 will be applied for early departure.
Please Note: Rooms are available from Wednesday, April 26, 2017 to Monday, May 1, 2017.

TRANSPORATION:
Super Shuttle Houston Intercontinental Bush Airport (IAH) (800) 258-3826 Roundtrip Rate: $ 49.99
Houston Hobby Airport (HOU) (800) 258-3826 Roundtrip Rate: $ 54.00
Special Group Code: Special Discount Rate to be announced

Things you can do in Houston
• The ‘GO TEXANS’ city with its museums, theaters & restaurants.
• Visit NASA...now operated by the Disney Group
• The Kemah Boardwalk & Galveston
• 6 Day / 5 Night cruise from Galveston with fellow Zarathushtis (see page 10 for details)
• Take a tour to San Antonio
WZCC invites you to Houston to participate in the Annual North American Regional Meeting to be held on Thursday, April 27, 2017. As per past meetings, it will be held on the day before the FEZANA AGM, where many of our members are active participants. Our meeting is planned to provide valuable information to entrepreneurs, business owners, professionals and anybody with interest in various aspects of business, finance and industry.

10:00 AM to 12:30 PM: Visit a Zarathushti owned industrial facility, Coating Industries Inc, CII that provides serious corrosion protection for substrate to shipbuilders, chemical companies, major oil companies and industrial plants. We will also visit their adjacent J R Manufacturing facility, a fabricating plant for piping, skids and packages. (Lunch included)

1:30 PM to 4:30 PM - (ZHCC): A panel discussion with focus on the financial resources available to new and existing businesses. The panelists will be from the Federal Government agencies like Small Business Administration (SBA), academic institutions, private financial institutions, venture funds, etc. The discussion will cover traditional and non-traditional methods of raising funds. The second part of the afternoon session will be led by WZCC Global President Edul Daver, covering the progress made during 2016, the status of specific objectives and game plan for 2017 & 2018 and beyond. Comments, Suggestions and Participation from all our members, friends and supporters is welcome.

VENUE: Zarathushti Heritage & Cultural Center (ZHCC)
(Home of the Zoroastrian Association of Houston - ZAH)
8787 West Airport Boulevard, Houston, Texas 77071, USA

REGISTRATION FEE: Complimentary to WZCC members, friends and supporters
Due to limited capacity and advance transportation arrangements, Registration is required by April 15, 2017

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON WZCC INDUSTRIAL VISIT & MEETING SESSIONS:
Contact Regional Director - Rustom Engineer rustom47@hotmail.com
RSVP for WZCC By: April 15, 2017 wzcc-houston@outlook.com
POST-FEZANA AGM TOUR: REFLECTIONS OF THE SILK ROAD

The Museum of Fine Arts Houston provides a venue for our FEZANA visitors to go on a visual journey glimpsing at works of art that reflect the world wide trade along the famous Silk Road. View artifacts from areas around Gandhara, India, Central Asia and the world of antiquity extending into arts of the western world. This guided tour will provide a great opportunity for our community members to savor their cultural influence on the rest of the ancient world.

1). Date: Sunday April 30th, 2017
2). Tour: 3:00pm
3). Tour Duration: Approximately 1 Hour
4). Total # of people: 35-50
5). Group rate to be announced

DETAILS ARE BEING FINALIZED. Due to limited capacity and advance transportation arrangements, RSVP will be requested by March 15, 2017
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MAY 01, 2017 - MAY 06, 2017, MON - SAT

YOUR 5 DAY ITINERARY

DAY 1
GALVESTON
DEPART 4:00 PM

DAY 2
FUN DAY AT SEA

DAY 3
COZUMEL
ARRIVE 9:00 AM - DEPART 6:00 PM

DAY 4
YUCATÁN (PROGRESO)
ARRIVE 10:00 AM - DEPART 6:00 PM

DAY 5
FUN DAY AT SEA

DAY 6
GALVESTON
ARRIVE 8:00 AM

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