

FEZANA *bulletin*

August 2018 / VOLUME 8 • ISSUE 8



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UPCOMING DATES

August 22-23, 2018

67th UN DPI/NGO Conference at New York City U.N. Headquarters

September 16, 2018

Unity Walk 2018. Walk down Massachusetts Avenue, NW in Washington D.C. in a celebration of solidarity among different faiths. InterFaith Conference of Metro Washington.
<https://zamwi.org/events/1510/>.

November 1-7, 2018

[Parliament of the World's Religions](#), Toronto.

November 24, 2018

4th Annual Fundraiser for American Cancer Society and [ZAMWI](#). Boyds, MD.

(Dates continued on page 4)

Happy Shehenshahi Parsi New Year and Khordad Saal Mubarak

FEZANA, its Executive, and Zarathushtris in North America, wishes you and your families, loved ones and friends a very happy, healthy, peaceful and prosperous Shehenshahi Parsi New Year 1388 Y.Z.

May the coming year be a continuation of our collective efforts in nurturing and growing our communities and our faith and making a positive difference in our neighborhoods, cities and nations we live in, and call home.

We take this opportunity to thank all those who contribute their time, effort and money to make the Zarathushtri presence in North America stellar. May we all continue on the path of Asha.... Truth, Righteousness and in sync with the Divine Order.

Note from the FEZANA President

What a year this has been! Month after month you have read the achievements of our community members through these pages. New programs have been initiated, new centers have been inaugurated, new initiatives have been created. And you will be thrilled to read in this issue about the first retreat of our Zarathushtri women. And many of such instances have been repeated if you read the newsletters and review the websites of our member associations. Undoubtedly, there has been a resurgence in our North American Zarathushtri community. May we be blessed with Ahura Mazda's choicest Blessings!

Best Wishes,
Homi D Gandhi

First Zarathushtri Women's Retreat

By Artemis Javanshir

On the weekend of June 29, 2018, I was one of the lucky ladies to attend the 1st Zoroastrian Women Retreat. This retreat was organized with the vision and hard work of Dolat Bolandi and Armita Dalal in collaboration with Persian Zoroastrian Organization (PZO).

We gathered at Villa Maria Del Mar nestled in the city of Santa Cruz, right by the ocean. Hearing the waves against the sandy beach, and feeling the cool air against my skin, I was ready to have a new experience. I was not disappointed.

There were about 30 women participants from San Diego all the way to San Jose. The retreat accommodated both, English and Persian speaking ladies hence closing the gap between generations and nationalities.

Overnight, the wonderful ladies of the retreat, with compassion, strength and unity raised \$2700 towards the new Zoroastrian Center in the Bay Area.

We gathered together in meditation, relaxing our minds; savoring the sweet voices of Nooshin Jahangiri and Farangis Jahanian Pishdadi singing the Gatha's verses, Ashem Vohu and Yatha Ahu prayers in the Avestan language and pondering over



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Zoroastrian
Associations of
North America
(FEZANA)**

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NGO in consultative status (Roster) with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations



↑ **Top row- left to right:** Gordafarid Deyanat, Nahid Afshari, Mitra Pishdadi, Mandana Zomorodi, Kathy Hormozi, Fariba Soroush, Artemis Javanshir, Katie Zomorodi, Nirvana Anoosheh, Yasmin Kouchesfahani, Mahshid Darabi, Ellen Potts Jahanian, Paria Razavi, **Middle row- left to right:** Holly Farhangi, Mojdeh Sorooshian, Armita Pishdadi, Atousah Khoramdin, Fereshteh Mazdyasni, Armita Dalal, Nooshin Jahangiri, Dolat Bolandi, Homa Jahanian, Autra Namvar, Chehreh Golzar, Delbar Jahanian, Mehrnoosh Namvar. **Bottom row- left to right:** Farangis Ostowari, Azar Farjoodi, Firoozeh Javanmard, Shirin Nosrat, Farangis Jahanian Pishdadi.

their meanings by taking in the ancient and yet modern words.

Stretching our bodies as well as our minds through the yoga movements instructed by Armita Pishdadi, our certified yoga instructor, brought us closer to one another.

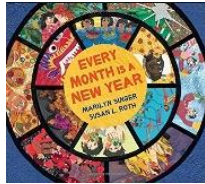
There were many unifying moments, including the Chakra blue stone I picked as a symbol of Earth and my part in taking care of it; the band wrapped around my wrist while reciting the ancient prayer of Ashem Vohu and Yatha Ahu to seal and carry my connection to my roots and the wonderful women around me. The anticipation of melting the candles imbedded in "esfand" which we made in the sand-dunes at the beach, a project organized and led by Delbar Jahanian, the joy of lighting it and having the smell of our "Atash-kadeh" at my home.

The connection I felt was extended through many generations of Zoroastrian women, felt by everyone in an elegant poem recited by the poet herself, Yasmin Kouchesfahani paving the way for sharing intimate stories of old, and new which connected us to our shared history and beliefs.

The best gift the 1st Zoroastrian Women's Retreat gave me was hope. In an atmosphere filled with fear of losing our youth to other beliefs; decreasing in number until extinction, I came home with the hope that my girls will join me and the other women of their community in strength and unity in similar retreats in the future. □



BOOK AWARENESS



Every Month is a New Year: by Marilyn Singer, celebrations around the world. NY, Lee and Low Books Inc., 2017

In many places around the globe, the New Year starts on January 1. But not everywhere! Chinese New Year is celebrated in January or February. Of course, Iranians celebrate Nowruz in March, and most Parsis observe the New Year next week.

Acclaimed poet Marilyn Singer has created a lively poetry collection that highlights sixteen of these fascinating New Year festivities including Nowruz, Parsi New Year, Enkutatash, and Songkran. Together with Susan L. Roth's captivating collage illustrations, the poems take readers to the heart of these beloved holidays. Every month of the year, somewhere in the world people celebrate with joy and good wishes for a happy new year. In the collection, enjoy the many cultural, regional, and religious observances. And be sure to look out for the charming poems for Nowruz and Parsi New Year!

Visit our website at <http://www.fires-fezana.org/>

Tribute for late Professor Farhang Mehr at ZAMWI



Photo credit: Navroz Gandhi

Members of the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Washington (ZAMWI) and friends paid tribute to the life and legacy of late Professor Farhang Mehr in an emotional gathering at the Kamran Dar e Mehr in Boyds, Maryland last month.

A video tribute specially created for the occasion, was followed by remarks from colleagues who had worked with Professor Mehr at the Pahlavi University in Iran, and were with him during the early days of founding of the World Zoroastrian Organization in the United Kingdom*. Guests had flown in from Los Angeles, Atlanta, New York, and Montreal.

Parichehr Mehr, wife of the Late Professor Farhang Mehr who came for the occasion, served as the honored chief guest, at the *Fourth Annual Kamran Lecture*, with **Professor Wouter Henkelman** from Paris, France providing fresh insights into the Religions of the Achaemenid Empire, from research conducted on the Clay Fortification Tablets found in Persepolis, Iran.

* See cover story *Dr. Farhang Mehr, A proud Zarathushti, Patriot and Visionary*, in **HAMAZOR** magazine, a publication of the World Zoroastrian Organization, Issue 2, 2018. □

Welcome to the New ZSO Board,

We congratulate and welcome the newly elected Board for the **Zoroastrian Society of Ontario (ZSO)** and look forward to future collaborations.

President: Mitra Jam
Vice President: Rohinton Kiash
Asst Treasurer: Kersi Khambatta
Asst Secretary: Mashya Amroliwalla
Executive Officer 2: Russi Surti

Executive Vice-President: Afreed Mistry
Treasurer: Artadner Farhadi
Secretary: Khushnuma Dubash
Executive Officer 1: Roozbeh Farhadi



UPCOMING DATES

(continued from page 1)

March 11-22, 2019

United Nations 63rd Commission on the Status of Women Conference (CSW63).

Individuals interested in attending the conference as FEZANA representatives are requested to send their resume and letter of intent by October 20, 2018 to:

Behram Pastakia (bpastakia at aol.com and Afreed Mistry (mistry.afreed at gmail.com)

May 1-5, 2019

WZCC AGM hosted by Central Florida Zoroastrian Community in Orlando. www.wzcc.org in conjunction with FEZANA AGM. Details to come.

July 1-6, 2019

[7th World Zoroastrian Youth Congress](#). Los Angeles, CA.

August 20-23, 2019

10th World Assembly, Religions for Peace International in Lindau, Germany

December 29-31, 2020

North American Zoroastrian Congress hosted by ZAH (Houston)

Welcome to the New ZSBC Board

We congratulate and welcome the newly elected Board of Directors for the **Zoroastrian Society of British Columbia (ZSBC)** and look forward to future collaborations.

President: Dineyar Buhariwala

Secretary: Aurash Yazdgerdian

Treasurer: Percy Billimoria

Director (Seniors): Behin Kavooosi

Director (Infrastructure and Maintenance): Yezdi Daver

Director (Socials and Education): Pervin Buhariwala

FEZANA Supports the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations

NEW YORK, July 14, 2018 – FEZANA participated in the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development at the United Nations Headquarters from July 9-13, 2018 in New York. The theme of the Forum was, "Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies". The set of Sustainable Developmental Goals that were reviewed in depth are:



Goal 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

Goal 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

Goal 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

Goal 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.

The participants representing FEZANA were from USA, Canada and UK:

Armita Behboodi is an Economics and Global Development student at Queen's University. At a very early age, Armita developed a passion in working towards the betterment of the global community. Being raised amongst the Zoroastrian community is what ultimately sparked her passion, as the philosophy behind the religion is built upon the empowerment of self and others. At Queen's University, Armita has dedicated her time utilizing the tools and gaining the knowledge needed to be able to contribute to the common goal of sustainable development.

Bijan Kavooosi is a computer engineering student at California State University, Fullerton. He has experience in tutoring all ages of students from elementary school to college. He is interested in Sustainable Development to better his understanding



L to R: Karl Desai (London, UK), Armita Behboodi (Toronto, Canada), Bijan Kavooosi (California, USA), Bitu Kavooosi (Colorado, USA), Parivash Khosraviani (California, USA), Sohrab Gheibi (New York, USA) and missing is Vaishnavi Krishnan.

of the interconnectedness of sustainable development and STEM fields. He hopes to explore ways in which his engineering skillset can be applied to sustainable development careers and how he can use his STEM interest to benefit marginalized communities and the Earth.

Bitu Kavooosi is studying International Political Economy at Colorado College. She is interested in working in Environmental Protection in the future. Bitu is interested in migration as a result of climate change and wants to assist climate change refugees. Bitu attended the UN Framework for the Convention on Climate Change in Bonn, Germany with her class.

Karl Desai has a Bachelor's degree in Architecture and a Master's degree in Sustainable Development. Karl promotes best practices in the operation and construction of sustainable buildings and has worked for the Australian and New Zealand Green Buildings Councils. He works as a Sustainability Manager with a multi-national property management company in London, UK.

Parivash Khosraviani* is an engineer working for Santa Clara Valley Water District, a government agency responsible for providing safe and reliable water to the 1.9 million residents of Santa Clara County in Northern California. She is passionate about sustainability, preserving valuable resources such as water and environment which has been ingrained in her through her Zoroastrian heritage. ***[See page 8 for Pari's full write up about her experience at the U.N. HLPF Meetings.]**

Sohrab Gheibi is an avid financier and capital markets professional with international experience across Singapore, Australia and the USA. His current role at the bank's New York City office sees him advising clients across the infrastructure, utilities and gaming sectors on raising capital in the US market.

Vaishnavi Krishnan is a student at Forest Hills High School in Michigan, USA. She has always been inclined towards Social Sciences and Model UN is one of her favourite classes. Vaishnavi has researched the Sustainable Development Goals extensively and has taken a course on Environmental Sciences this year. She is interested in how society can practice greater sustainability. □



Celebrating Our Youth: Anahita Verahrami



FEZANA supports our youth in a myriad of ways. As an accredited NGO (Non-Governmental Organization) with the United Nations, FEZANA can offer Zarathushtis, and Zarathushti youth in particular, an incredible opportunity to participate at the national and international level in areas of their interest.

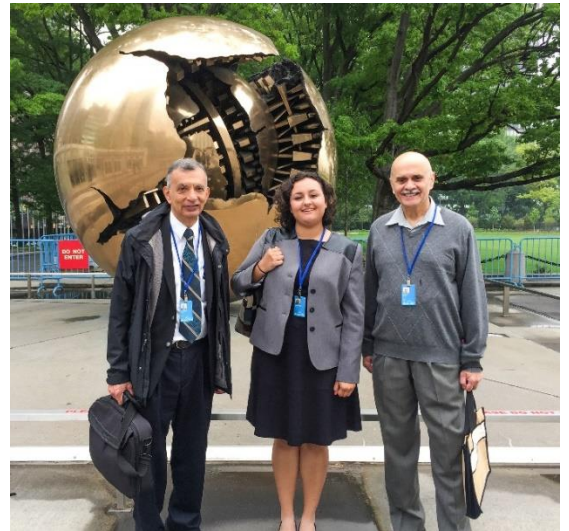
Anahita (Ana) Verahrami attended the United Nations' Ocean Conference last summer which was established to help achieve Sustainable Development Goal 14: The conservation of our oceans.

"I want any Z-Youth who happen to read this (or whose parents read this and tell them about it) to apply to be a FEZANA delegate," she says. "This is SUCH an incredible opportunity and I hope each and every one of you takes advantage of it."

Ana is a conservationist, photographer, and dog-mom who runs her own photography business. Presently, she is working for the Office of Marketing and Communications in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Cornell University. In addition, she is a research assistant for the Elephant Listening Project at Cornell, and will be continuing her research on forest elephants and bioacoustics in the Central African Republic.

Ana studies bioacoustics and wants to focus on how human behaviors affect our ecosystems and the specific organisms that reside in them. Specifically, she wants to use bioacoustics as a conservation tool.

We asked Ana why conservation is so important to her. She responded: "Being a Zoroastrian means we are environmentalists (at least that's how I see it). We're taught from an early age to respect those around us, and that includes the Earth. We are supposed to cherish the elements, including the water. The protection of our Oceans is not only ethically imperative, but is also crucial for our species' survival. Life below the Ocean's surface epitomizes the beauty of our planet's diversity. Let us protect and cherish it."



Ana is passionate about individual responsibility, a Zarathushti core value. She says, "I want everyone reading this to take a moment and think about how his or her decisions impact our environment." She encourages each of us to educate ourselves so we can make good decisions, whether it is purchasing a single use water bottle, or taking a more environmentally-friendly cruise, so that we can protect the environment in everything we do.

We asked this dynamic young Zarathushti "Is there a motto or mantra you live by?" Inspired by the poem "Invictus" by William Ernest Henley, Ana lives by the phrase "Invictus Maneo," which when translated from Latin means, 'I remain unconquered'.



FEZANA commends this brilliant young achiever and passionate conservationist, and wishes her much success in these worthy objectives. □

[Consider a donation to help FEZANA support Zarathushti students like Ana to grow professionally, to be passionate about their careers and our planet, and to use all the resources we can provide, in their effort to change the world for the better. Donate to FEZANA to fund our UN-NGO presence and participation in this program. Please encourage any Zarathushti youth you know to avail of these wonderful opportunities at the United Nations.]

Summer Issue of the FEZANA Journal is Coming Soon!



The Summer issue of the *FEZANA Journal* has as a theme, “Passing the Baton to the Next Generation”. The issue is very ably guest edited by Sanaya Master of New Zealand who spearheaded the World Zoroastrian Youth Leaders Forum at the Asha Centre in England. At this event, twenty young adults met, discussed, bonded for ten days and came up with an action plan. Read about their personal experience as related by them.

This issue includes narratives of the participants of the third Return to Roots program. We read of their amazement and disbelief, of the transformational experiences they had in visiting Mumbai, and parts of Gujarat where it all began for the Parsis who came to India fleeing persecution from the Muslims. These youth visited Udvada and Navsari, including the Senior Citizen’s residence and infirmaries, and came away with life changing experiences. Their stories tell of their emotions during this journey.

Read as well, about the 11th World Zoroastrian Congress in Perth, Australia, where Zarathushtris from Kurdistan gave us a first hand impression of the hard life for a Zarathushti in a Muslim dominated Kurdistan. These and other stories are available to subscribers. Subscribe today, or gift a subscription at www.FEZANA.org □

CALLING ALL 14-17 YEAR OLD ENTHUSIAST THINKERS AND WRITERS

Wondering how you can have a fun and productive winter break?
Get connected with Zoroastrian religion and have a chance to win a cash prize.

Essay contest

Topic:

Is it ever okay to lie? If it is, when and in what situations? How does it relate to Zarathushtra’s teachings (in the Gathas)?
Not to exceed 900 words

First Place: \$300
Second Place: \$200
Third Place: \$100

The winners will have their essay published in
Chehreh Nama Magazine

For complete information
and questions?
zessay@yahoo.com or
<https://www.czc.org/essay-contest>

Sponsored by:
Ms. Parimarz Firoozgar
Endorsed by: California Zoroastrian Center
in Los Angeles (CZC_LA and
Chehreh Nama Magazine



Water Connects

Water is the connecting thread that underlies the achievement of all SDGs.

FEZANA
Supports the United Nations SDG 6
Clean Water and Sanitation for all



Pari Khosraviani is an engineer working for a Water Agency in Northern California. She is passionate about sustainability, preserving valuable resources such as water and the environment which has been ingrained in her by her Zoroastrian heritage.

FEZANA representatives from all over the world attended the United Nations High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Goals Development (HLPF) at the United Nations, in July 2018. See Page 5 for more details on the FEZANA participants.

844 million. That's how many lack access to the basic Water services today. Access to water and Sanitation for all. That's is the goal of the 2030 Agenda adopted by the UN in 2015 for a Sustainable Society.

The UN HLPF on SDGs, which was held at UN headquarter in NY, in July 2018 reviewed the global progress made towards meeting Sustainable Development Goals. Over a thousand delegates from across the world came together to share their progress, lessons learned, achievement and what needs to be improved. Forty-six countries reported on their achievements. Although significant progress has been made unfortunately:

The world is not on track:

- Millions of people still lack basic services
- Water pollution is worsening
- Capacity is insufficient
- Water and sanitation lack funding
- Agriculture places enormous stress on water
- Ecosystems is in continuous decline
- Governance structures are weak

Proposed Solutions:

- Understand the interdependency of the (SDGs)
- Monitor more and better data
- Adapt to country contexts
- Create multi-stakeholder partnerships and strengthen regional integration
- Implement integrated water resources management
- Eliminate inequalities
- Finance water and sanitation through a new paradigm
- Ensure public participation
- Develop capacity
- Use smart technologies

Development is not only a conflict-prevention tool, but fosters conditions for resilient societies and a peaceful world. Multilateralism is the only way to tackle the complex, inter-connected and long-term challenges we are facing.

**Secretary-General
António Guterres.**



Opening session, from left to right; Karl Desai, Armita Behboodi, Pari Khosraviani

The set of goals reviewed in depth at the meetings:
Goal 6. Water and sanitation for all;
Goal 7. Affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all;
Goal 11. Inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities;
Goal 12. Sustainable consumption and production patterns;
Goal 15. Protect, restore terrestrial ecosystems, and environment

Attending the UN HLPF had a great impact on me [Pari Khosraviani]. It made me even more proud to be a Zoroastrian. It is moving to see how the teaching of Zoroaster, thousands of years ago, for the happiness and prosperity of mankind is gaining momentum and is resonating with UN Sustainability Goals for a prosperous civil society. Protecting water, fire, air and earth has been always an integral part of Zoroastrian beliefs.

Learning about the worldwide struggle of accessing water, makes me even more aware of the value of water. It is imperative to raise the awareness and educate the public. Water is the essence of life, and a matter of survival. □