



ISSUE 9

ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF GREATER NEW YORK

FEBRUARY 2003 NEWSLETTER

Chair, Newsletter Committee: *Arnavaz F. Patel*

ZAGNY_SECRETARY@LYCOS.COM

ZAGNY CELEBRATES JAMSHEDI NAVROZE

March 21st marks the celebration of Jamshedi Navroze. This day bridges the old year to the new year with the advent of spring. The resurgence of life takes place during this period with the symbolic victory of the forces of light over darkness.

Legend has it that the Jamshedi Navroze celebration dates back to the times of the legendary King of Persia, Jamshed. It is said that King Jamshed introduced solar calculations into the Persian calendar, and therefore set as the beginning of the year the date the sun enters the constellation of Aries. Also, legend has it that on this day King Jamshed forced the demons to carry him

on their shoulders from Mount Demavand to Babylon. This day came to be known as Navroze or Jamshedi Navroze day.

In ancient times, on Jamshedi Navroze, it was customary for the king to be weighed in gold and silver, and the money then distributed to the poor. People greeted each other by doing the Hama-zor (united in strength), and visited the Fire Temple.

Please join ZAGNY in the celebration of Jamshedi Navroze on Saturday, March 22, 2003. For additional details and to register, please turn to page 7.

HAVE YOU MAILED IN YOUR ZAGNY MEMBERSHIP?

If you haven't sent in your 2003 ZAGNY membership form, it is overdue. Your ZAGNY membership is an annual calendar-year membership, and runs from January 1st through December 31st. Members are therefore asked to send in their membership payment by January 30th of each year. In the past, membership renewals had been allowed through the Navroze function in March, but this practice created some problems with registration at the Navroze function.

For those of you who have already sent in your 2003 membership form and payment, thank you very much for your help. For those of you who have not registered yet, please renew your membership for 2003 as soon as possible. The first person to send it in will **receive a new BMW**.....ok, so perhaps that isn't true, but for a brief second, didn't you want to look for and

mail in your ZAGNY membership form right this second?! So, don't delay! Please fill out your membership form and mail it to us today. If you cannot find your membership form, you can download it from ZAGNY's website www.zagny.org.

Additionally, we would like to get all members' contact information correct and as up-to-date as possible in the new ZAGNY directory. We are striving to avoid any errors, so your cooperation in submitting your membership form on time would be appreciated. Once again, if you haven't already mailed in your completed membership form, please take a minute today to mail it in. All completed forms should be mailed, along with your check made payable to ZAGNY, to **Jasmin Kotwal**, 12 Park Hill Terrace, Princeton Junction, NJ 08550.

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NEW ANNOUNCEMENTS & DONATIONS



CONGRATULATIONS TO

Parynaz Firdosh Mehta and Khushroo Dinyar Vimadalal on the occasion of their marriage, December 7, 2002.

Shazneen and Hanoz Gandhi on the occasion of their marriage, December 29, 2002.



OUR CONDOLENCES TO

Armaity F. Patel and family on the loss of their beloved, Perin Nariman Taraporvala. Perin passed away in Mumbai, India, on January 7, 2003.

Farrokh Patel and family on the loss of their beloved Mehroo Rati Patel, who passed away at their home in Califon, New Jersey, on January 26, 2003.

Noshir Langrana and family on the demise of their beloved Ratamai Langrana. Ratamai passed away on February 23, 2003, in Mumbai, India.



CHANGE IN CONTACT INFORMATION

Vispi and Ignasha Cassod
462 Crawford St.
Shrewsbury Twp., NJ 07724



WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

Shereen Langrana
19 Brookfield Way
West Windsor, NJ 08550

Kaizer Bharucha
43-23 Colden Street, Apartment 18B
Flushing, NY 11355



Congratulations, **Rahul Bansal** (son of Percis and Rakesh Bansal)! Rahul received the Mahatma Gandhi Humanitarian Award for his selfless service and dedication in raising money for the March of Dimes. This award was presented to Rahul by the Indian American Civic Forum (IACF). IACF is a volunteer, nonprofit organization that fosters goodwill, harmony, and better understanding among the members of our multicultural community by encouraging civic responsibility and public service activities.

* DONATIONS

CRITICAL ASSISTANCE FUND	
Xerxes and Smita Antia	\$ 101
Kobad and Debra Malesra	\$ 60
Behram Buhariwalla	\$ 50
Tehmasp and Zarine Dotivala	\$ 50
Firoz and Piloos Mistry	\$ 50
Sheroo Contractor	\$ 35
Aspi and Khorshid Bharda	\$ 30
GENERAL FUND	
Dinshaw D. Mehta	\$ 1000
United Way (Virasp Davar)	\$ 165
Ashotad	\$ 152
Anonymous	\$ 100
Darius and Sherna Bharucha	\$ 60
Kersi and Khorshid Bellihomji	\$ 51
Farokh and Dominique Patel	\$ 45
Usheen Davar	\$ 25
Vispi Cassod and Ignasha Joshi	\$ 25
Friends of ZAGNY	\$ 20
Kavsy and Barbara Dastur	\$ 11
Keky and Khorshed Mistry	\$ 11
LIBRARY FUND	
Faruk and Daisy Presswalla	\$ 100
Tanaz Dutia and Michel Reid	\$ 50
Vira Saklatwalla	\$ 50
Eruch Nowrojee and Janet Immermann	\$ 20
NEW BUILDING FUND	
Pesi and Daulat Bavaadam	\$ 101
Kerman and Jeroo Bharucha	\$ 100
Tehmasp and Zarine Dotivala	\$ 100
Bomi and Nina Dinshaw	\$ 100
Khushru and Roshan Hakim	\$ 100
Darius and Manpreet Kapadia	\$ 100
Ruyintan and Monica Mehta	\$ 100
Jimmy and Goolcher Wadia	\$ 100
Rusi and Shernaz Sethna	\$ 51
Farokh and Dominique Patel	\$ 50
Rustom and Farangis Bhopti	\$ 25
SCHOLARSHIP FUND	
Anonymous	\$ 200
Donation from employees of Panasonic Industrial Company, in the memory of Perin Nariman Taraporvala	\$ 155
Nari and Dinoo Dastur	\$ 101
Jamshed and Yasmin Ghadiali	\$ 50
Sheroo Contractor	\$ 35
ENDOWMENT FUND	
Lovji and Mehru Cama	\$ 300
DONATION OF SANDALWOOD	
Rusi Gandhi	
Dilnaz and Malcolm Shroff	

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

MARCH 2003		APRIL 2003	
1	IZA Persian Language Classes	5	IZA Persian Language Classes
2	ZAGNY Religious Classes	6	ZAGNY Religious Classes
22	Navroze Function	19 - 23	Rituals Past, Present and Future Seminar (see below for details)
MAY 2003			
3	IZA Persian Language Classes		
3	2003 REVLON RUN/WALK! (see below for details)		
4	ZAGNY Religious Classes		
24 - 25	Annual General Meeting of the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America (FEZANA) in the Greater Boston area (details will appear in a future newsletter)		

✳ **RITUALS PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE SEMINAR - APRIL 19, 2003 (TORONTO)**

On April 19, 2003, in Toronto, Canada, the North American Mobed Council is sponsoring a very unique seminar that will focus on the history, practice, understanding and future of Zarathushti rituals. The views of Zarathushti clergy as well as the community on the importance and influence of the inner and outer liturgical rituals on the North American Zoroastrian community will also be discussed. For more information and a registration form, please visit www.persiandna.com/namc. Early Bird Registration is available until March, 15, 2003.

✳ **THE 10TH NORTH AMERICAN ZOROASTRIAN YOUTH CONGRESS - JULY 24-27, 2003 (TORONTO)**

The 10th Zoroastrian Youth Congress will be held in Toronto, Canada, from July 24-27, 2003. Anyone between the ages of 13 and 35 is encouraged to attend. Those who have attended previous Youth Congresses have found them to be a great way to learn about the religion and to interact in a vibrant social community.

The theme of this Youth Congress is NEXUS. There will be various social events and educational sessions to help enhance the meaning of NEXUS and its part in Zoroastrian communities. There will also be discussions focused on how EACH youth has the power to contribute to the structure of their community today and in the future.

Additionally, for those who would like to extend their stay and tour around Toronto and the surrounding areas, there will be some planned activities after the Congress. Many Zoroastrian families in the Toronto area have also signed up to host Zoroastrian youth for their post-Congress visit. For more information about the Youth Congress and the post-Congress activities, please visit www.nexus2003.com.

✳ **SAVE THE DATE!!!! - ZAGNY PARTICIPATES IN THE REVLON RUN/WALK - MAY 3, 2003 (NEW YORK)**

Join your ZAGNY team for the 2nd Revlon Run/Walk for Women. This event is being held on Saturday, May 3rd. We will be walking 5 km, from Times Square to the East Meadow in Central Park. Last year, 25 ZAGNY members participated and raised over \$2000. Let's double our participation and the amount we raise this year!

This fun-filled, yet poignant, fundraising event benefits women's cancer research and we would like to have a big team come out and show their support for this great cause. We, the Zoroastrian community in general, have a high incidence rate of cancer, so what better way to show your care, support, and desire for a cure than to participate in this event. Both men and women are welcome.

The team captain for this year's ZAGNY team for the Revlon Run/Walk for Women is **Usheen Daver**. If you're interested in being a team member, please register at www.revlonrunwalk.com. On this website, first click "New York" and then click "Register Now" on the left-hand menu. Next, fill in your details. The ZAGNY team number is 1109, and the team name is "Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York". For more information, contact Usheen Daver at usheen.daver@dowjones.com.

**ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS
NOW AVAILABLE!**

Applications are now being accepted for the **FEZANA scholarship** and the **Mehraban Dorab Kheradi Endowment scholarship**.

Applicants for these scholarships must be Zarathushti students who have been granted admission at institutions of higher learning (accredited degree-granting colleges or universities) in either the USA or Canada. Two scholarships for the academic year 2003-2004 will be awarded in September 2003. In order to be considered for these scholarships, an applicant must complete the application form and submit the following documentation:

1. Proof of residency in the USA or Canada (a minimum of one year is required)
2. Past academic records and accomplishments
3. Acceptance letter granting admissions to the applicant at an institution of higher learning (as described above)
4. Description of the annual costs of the program
5. Description of financial assistance received by the applicant, including but not limited to any financial aid package given by the institution to be attended and any scholarships from charitable institutions or foundations.
6. Description of financial assistance available from family and friends
7. Description of applicant's community service, including contributions to Zarathushti functions and organizations
8. Three (3) letters of reference

Based on the application and documentation, each applicant will be evaluated according to four criteria: Scholastic Achievement (40%), Financial Need (40%), Extracurricular Activities (10%), and Community Service (10%).

Application forms can be downloaded from www.fezana.org/about.scholarship.fezana.htm (Fezana's website), or can be obtained by contacting **Dolly Dastoor** at dastoor@total.net. Completed applications need to be signed and post-marked by August 1, 2003, and should be mailed to:

Professor Mehraban Khodavandi
Chair, FEZANA Scholarship Committee
P.O. Box 359
Sheboygan, WI 53082-0359

**NY CHAPTER OF WZCC HAS A SUCCESSFUL
SEMINAR ON LONG TERM CARE INSURANCE**

The WZCC (World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce), which encourages and promotes the spirit of entrepreneurship amongst Zarathushtis, held its chapter meeting for the benefit of the ZAGNY and IZA congregations, on February 9th. This was the first WZCC seminar to be co-sponsored by ZAGNY and IZA.

WZCC members **Edul Daver**, **Rusi Gandhi** and **Arnaz Maneckshana** felt that the subject would have wide appeal to the members of ZAGNY and IZA. They were absolutely correct; the meeting was attended by 35 individuals.

Arnaz Maneckshana is a Financial Consultant for AXA-Advisors, LLC. Her focus is on Executive Benefits, Individual Financial and Estate Planning. She met her goal of educating those in attendance on the fundamentals and considerations of Long Term Insurance, by not only providing all the essentials for a wonderful lunch, but also access to a perfect speaker cum educator.

The topic was presented by **Albert Shikiar**, President, AccessCare, Inc., which was founded after a personal tragedy in 1991. AccessCare provides information and other resources to help improve the understanding of, and access to, high-quality, long-term care for those who need assistance with daily living activities, regardless of their age.

As explained at the meeting, long-term care insurance provides benefits for those who need assistance with daily living activities caused by physical or mental ailments. Those who purchase this insurance do so to: (1) avoid being a burden on their family; (2) preserve their independence; (3) choose where they want to be taken care of; (4) avoid Medicare; and (5) protect their assets. This insurance helps individuals, of any age, maintain control over their life should they need assistance with their daily activities.

ZAGNY member, **Gul Sarkary**, said that she has attended a few information sessions on this type of insurance and that she found this one to provide her with the most information.

A special thank you to:

- WZCC for providing such a valuable topic;
- Arnaz Maneckshana and her friends for their successful coordination of the day; and
- Albert Shikiar for educating us on such a valuable and personal subject.

Written by : **Farishta Dinshaw**

The Traditional Sofreh Haft Seen

1. **Samanu** - a sweet pudding made from wheat germ, symbolizes wealth.
2. **Seer** - (garlic) represents health.
3. **Seeb** - (apple) represents beauty
4. **Somaq** - special berries that represent the color of the sun rise,
5. **Serkeh** - (vinegar) represents maturity and patience
6. **Sonbol** - the hyacinth flower with its strong fragrance heralds the coming of spring
7. **Sekkeh** - (coins) represent prosperity and wealth.

The New Sofreh Haft Sheen

This "modified" table has items beginning with the Farsi letter "sheen". The spirit behind it is the same as that of the traditional *sofreh* - to celebrate the bounties of Nature - but these items are more easily available in the West.

1. **Sherab** - (wine)
2. **Sheer** - (milk)
3. **Sherbet Naranj** - (orange juice)
4. **Shagufeh** - (buds)
5. **Shama** - (candle)
6. **Shakar** - (sugar)
7. **Shahed** - (honey)

Ten thousand years ago, King Jamshed Peshdadiyan founded the festival of **Navrooz** (meaning "new day" in Persian) to celebrate the coming of spring after the cold, dark winter. If you recall that in those times Iran was a pastoral community, you can appreciate that this festival marks the triumph of good over evil with light literally defeating darkness as Navrooz falls on the Vernal Equinox, when night equals day, and subsequently the hours of daylight increase.

Today, Navrooz is celebrated the world over by people influenced by Iranian culture, notably the Zarathushtrians (Parsis), Shi'ite Muslims, Bahais, and Kurds. What makes Navrooz unique is that it is the only holiday celebrated by several religious communities.

Among the best-known customs of Navrooz is the "**sofreh haft-seen**" - or tablecloth with seven gifts of Nature with names beginning with the Farsi letter "seen" (see box). A week or so before the holiday, grains of wheat and lentils are placed in bowls to sprout into a mass of greenery, symbolizing growth. The table is also laden with fruit, nuts, sweets and snacks, candles, and the holy book (the Avesta for Zarathushtrians, the Quran for Muslims). A bowl with goldfish and a basket of colored eggs, indicating new life, are also placed on the table. Custom dictates that visitors who come to share the holiday with you should be sprinkled with fragrant rosewater and asked to look into a mirror to make a wish. Some say that this ritual symbolizes that you smell as sweet as roses and shine as bright as a mirror throughout the new year.

The Haft Seen table symbolizes the holiday spirit in much the same way the Christmas tree promotes a special festive mood and the table is kept replenished for thirteen days. To the ancient Zarathushtrians, the sixth day was called the **Novrooz Bozorg** or "greater Navrooz" as it was celebrated as the birthday of Asho Zarathushtra. The Fasli Zarathushtrians still celebrate this day, but it has lost its significance for the rest of us. Nowadays in Iran, the celebrations end on the thirteenth day with people going for a picnic by streams and rivers. The sprouted lentils are thrown into running water, carrying away the bad luck of the previous year.



NAVROZE INFORMATION

DIRECTIONS TO THE POMONA DARBE MEHR

**106 POMONA ROAD, SUFFERN, NY 10901,
TEL. NO. 845-362-2104**

FROM THE NORTHBOUND PALISADES PARKWAY

Take Exit 12 on the Palisades Parkway Northbound.
Make a left at the end of the exit ramp.
Go to the first traffic light; make a left onto Route 45 South.
Go straight and make a right at the second traffic light onto Pomona Road.
Go straight for about one mile; you will see Minisiengo Country Club on the right (large white building).
The Darbe Mehr is on the next block on your right (opposite the Middle School on the left-hand side).
Please park in the Middle School Parking lot and walk across the street to the Darbe Mehr.
The Darbe Mehr is at the end of the driveway and is not visible from the road.

FROM THE TAPPAN ZEE BRIDGE

After crossing the bridge into New Jersey continue on the Northbound New York State Thruway (I- 87)
Take Exit 13N for the Northbound Palisades Parkway.
Follow the directions to the Darbe Mehr from the Northbound Palisades Parkway (above).

FROM THE GEORGE WASHINGTON BRIDGE

Take the upper level of the George Washington Bridge into New Jersey (DO NOT TAKE THE LOWER LEVEL)
After crossing the bridge into New Jersey, take the exit on to the Northbound Palisades Parkway.
Follow the directions to the Darbe Mehr from the Northbound Palisades Parkway (above).

FROM THE NORTHBOUND NJ TURNPIKE

Take Exit 18 on the Turnpike; after paying the toll stay on the right for access to the local exits.
Take Exit 72 for the Northbound Palisades Parkway.
Follow the directions to the Darbe Mehr from the Northbound Palisades Parkway (above).

PARKING AT THE POMONA DARBE MEHR

Please remember to utilize the parking lot located across the street from the Pomona Darbe Mehr. It is for everyone's safety that we ask you to keep the cul-de-sac in front of the Darbe Mehr clear for emergency vehicles and the drop-off and pick-up of guests.

We appreciate your cooperation.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

We have postponed distribution of the new ZAGNY telephone and address directory until the Papeti function in August. We had originally hoped to give it to you at the Navroze function. Unfortunately, we did not receive enough membership forms in order to validate the information that was to be published. Please help us meet our goal of providing accurate and up-to-date information about you in the directory by sending in your membership form **today**.



PAGDI & PHETA
Custom Made for
Navjotes and Weddings

CONTACT
Armin Pooniwalla
12 - Gulnar, Hill Road,
Bandra, Bombay
arminfarrokh@hotmail.com
Phone # Daytime : 24475656 or 24472541
Phone # Evening : 26415656 or 26423026

REGISTRATION: NAVROZE FUNCTION 2003

The Navroze Function will be held on March 22, 2003 at the Pomona Darbe Mehr

4:45 P.M. *REGISTRATION*
 5:00 P.M. *OPENING PRAYER*
 5:45 PM *ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING*
 6:45 P.M. *ENTERTAINMENT*
 7:00 PM *COCKTAILS FOLLOWED BY DINNER AND DANCING*
 11:30 PM *LAST DANCE*

	<i>NUMBER</i>	<i>AMOUNT</i>		
	<i>ATTENDING</i>	<i>(\$)</i>		
<i>ADULTS</i>	-	<i>\$25.00</i>	_____	_____
<i>NON-MEMBERS</i>	-	<i>\$35.00</i>	_____	_____
<i>CHILDREN 5-15 YRS</i>	-	<i>\$15.00</i>	_____	_____
<i>SENIOR CITIZENS</i>	-	<i>\$15.00</i>	_____	_____
<i>DONATIONS:</i>			_____	_____
		<i>TOTAL:</i>	_____	_____

NAME: _____

ADDRESS 1: _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP: _____

TEL. NO. HOME: _____ *BUSINESS:* _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS: _____

Reservations must be received by March 7, 2003.

Registration will be non-refundable.

A SURCHARGE of \$15.00 per person or \$25.00 per family will be applied to any registration made at the function or within 48 hours prior to the function.

Kindly mail your reservation form with your check made out to ZAGNY to:

Jasmin Kotwal

12 Park Hill Terrace

Princeton Junction, NJ 08550



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WE'RE ON THE WEB!
SEE US AT:
www.zagny.org

**Zoroastrian
Association of
Greater New York.**

This newsletter will be made public on the ZAGNY web-site. If you do not want your personal information to appear on the website, please do not submit it to the newsletter for publication.