



Issue 31 – September 2006 Newsletter

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UPCOMING EXCITING EVENTS

UDVADA ATASHBEHRAM LUNCHEON

This annual luncheon will be held at the Pomona Darbe Mehr on **Sun., October 15th**, at 11.30 AM starting with a jashan. All are cordially invited to attend this worthy cause. Please contact either **Erach Munshi** (212-865-6683), **Mehru or Lovji Cama** (201-569-7359), or **Kamal Davar** (732-549-5162) to register for this event since lunch is going to be catered. If you cannot make it but would like to donate toward this noble cause, checks can be made to ZAGNY Critical Assistance and sent to **Erach Munshi**.

ZAGNY HALLOWEEN PARADE

Our annual Trick or Treating **costume parade** will be held at our **Sun., November 5th** religion class. Come As You Aren't! Sure, you can stay at home and try to cast spells, but it's far more fun to party with us! So dust the cobwebs off those costumes and come dressed to have a blast!



ZAGNY VISITS ZAPANJ

On **Saturday Nov 11th** we have been invited to join the ZAPANJ group in their religious class in Voorhees, New Jersey. We will be meeting around 3 pm at Malton NJ (Directions to follow). The children will break out into appropriate age groups, and adults will also have an opportunity to have a discussion. Let us participate in this unique social event and make new friends! Please email **Nawaz Merchant** at vicepresident@zagny.org with the number of family members who will attend and the ages of your children.

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CHALO CARROM RAMWA

ZAGNY wishes to announce the **1st Arbab Rustom Guiv Carrom Tournament** commencing on **Sunday Dec. 3rd 2006** which also happens to be the death anniversary of our benefactor Arbab Rustom Guiv. The tournament shall continue on subsequent first Sundays of every month; these being the Sundays when Religion Classes are held. The tournament is open to all ZAGNY and IZA members, and there is no fee for participating in the tournament. There shall be awards for winners and runners-up.

Since at the current time, the number of participants for the tournament is not known, the end date cannot be exactly determined. However it is estimated that it will take a minimum of four Sundays to complete the tournament. Please also note that since lunch is provided at the Religion Classes, all participants and their families who are not part of the Religion Classes group are welcome to share in the lunch for a nominal fee of \$5 per person--Please email **Jasely Dukandar** (jdukandar@yahoo.com) and let her know how many will be having lunch.

The tournaments shall be as follows:
Adult Singles (Best of 3 games knock-out)
Adult Doubles (Best of 3 games knock-out)
Children Singles (Single game knock-out)-for children under 14.

Our volunteers **Gev Nentin** and **Viraf Commissariat** have offered to coordinate the competition and serve as judges. Your participation is absolutely essential in making this tournament a success. Please send in your registration to **Viraf Commissariat** at viraf@adelphia.net or **Gev Nentin** at GevNentin@optonline.net. The last date for registration is November 25, 2006 but we encourage you to send in your registration early so that the pairings of competitors can be made as soon as possible. Every consideration shall be given in cases where participants cannot attend the tournament on any given Sunday, so do not let that factor into your decision to participate.

SUMMER EVENTS

Summer's slipping through the door at an earlier time each day. We already miss her, though she is not yet completely gone. And although we know that she will return to us again next year, it is hard to see her leave. For us here at ZAGNY, it was a busy one as you can see from the highlights of our sizzling activities--annual picnic, Mukta prayers, Navroz function, and involvement in the World Gujarati Conference.

ZAGNY ANNUAL PICNIC

August 6, 2006

Submitted by Shahnaz Shroff

It wasn't a hundred degrees at the Ringwood State Park in New Jersey. What it was, was perfect! This was my first ZAGNY picnic and boy was it fun!

Vispi, Sheroo, Kerman and Shailendra were among the first few members who showed up early to reserve spots for the group. The rest of us, showed up late, of course, true Indians at heart, and as someone rightly said, "showed up in time for the food". And why not! The food was fantastic!

We spent a good part of the day going back to our prehistoric roots, by warming things up on a coal pit. It took a while, but the wait was definitely worth it. Like good Parsis we started with a pineapple upside down cake (*mithoo monu karva*), and followed that with cutlets (dozens of them), biryani, tandoori chicken, salads, *rotlis* and chaat. The virgin ZAGNY picnicker that I was, I made the mistake of bringing raw chicken, which took forever to cook. Lesson learned.



And bam! Out came the cricket gear. Everyone was quickly divvied up into teams, and started smacking the ball for everything they were worth. ZAGNY took over the playing field for the next two hours. Amid shouts and moans, claps and laughter, everyone bonded over the simple yellow tennis ball and bat. I watched from afar though, as I was hot and sweaty and wanted to relax under the cool green trees, taking a moment to stop and listen to the chirping birds. There were many like me; we sat there on the dry brown picnic benches occasionally picking at more food and cheering quietly for dear friends who were working up a salty appetite.

When our heroes returned, they were greeted with the moist welcome of a saffron flavored *shrikhand* - sweet, refreshing and only a spoonful each (probably in the hope of leaving us with a want for more). Definitely, the winner of the day!

In large troops, we

then headed for the boat house. Forewarned, we silently hoped that none of us would get stuck in the weeds, or for that matter the middle of the lake. We didn't. It was an hour of pure pleasure as we paddled through the calm waters, lost in thought and blinded by the beauty that surrounded us. I sometimes wonder what pleasure we derive from bicycling, riding, driving, flying and rowing. Is it the need to be in command of an object or is it the escape to a place more private and quiet? Whatever it was for each of us, we walked back to our group refreshed and more than ready for a *cuppa-chai* and some blood-red watermelon.

We bit into some succulent bits of heaven, drank some hot tea and were getting ready to leave, when low and behold, some of us were singing Parsi *geets*! I wondered whether it was the influence of the church group that had occupied the spot next to us, or if it was purely some substance mixed into the tea by Homi, so that we might compete with our neighbors in the spirit of Zoroastrianism. Whichever it was, it sure was fun and yes, completely appropriate.

So darn appropriate, that I ran all the way to my car and took off in full speed to the quiet sanctity of my home in the Himalayas. Just kidding!

All in all, it was a fun-filled day. Everyone left the park with a song in their hearts, presumably resonating from rounds of competitive *antakshari*.

If you woulda or coulda been there, then you shoulda been there too!

MUKTAD PRAYERS

August 19, 2006

Thanks to our gracious host families--- **Behroze & Astad Clubwala, Yasmin & Jamshed Ghadiali, Teshtar & Noshir Irani, ad Armaity & Framroze Patel**—we were able to offer prayer services on the first 4 gatha days at various places in our tristate area. Mukttad prayers were held at our Darbe Mehr on Sat., **August 19th**, the Vahishtoish (possessing best Spiritual Riches) Gatha and were attended by about 90 members. **Teshtar Irani**, a veteran at such events, ensured that all the *khumchas*, *katlis*, *karasyas* etc. were washed, and ready for the prayers. Our very special thanks to **Viraf Commissariat** for running out and bringing in extra flowers and fresh and dry fruits for the prayers. Thanks to our priests, **Darius Antia, Xerxes Antia, Rohinton Dadina, Poruz Khambatta, Karl Khambatta, Rohinton Madon, Jehangir Madon, Pervez Patel and Meheroz Rabadi** for offering special prayers for the fravashis of near and dear ones and recital of all the names. The hall looked somberly beautiful with the flowers on each side.

This year, thanks to all our volunteers (**Dilshad Todiwala, Jasely Dukandar, Kashmiri Karai, Khursheed Navder, Nawaz Merchant, Rashna Harda, Percis Daroowalla, and Sheroo Kanga**) we were able to offer our congregation a simple home cooked meal of *dhansak*, *kachumber* with *malido* and *ravo* for dessert. The combined pot luck *dhansak dar* tasted so good that even the worst food critics were heard raving and seen to line up for seconds. The delicious *malido* and *ravo* also quickly disappeared—not for the lack of it but I guess we bawajis seem to have a totally separate compartment in our stomachs for desserts--no matter how full there's always room for more! **Ferzin Patel** did a great job in organizing the event and ensuring that all went smoothly.

We'd also like to thank **Noshir Baria, Mehru, Lovji, Kaizad and Cyrus Cama and other volunteers** for painting the dining room area. It is typical for folks to clean up their houses before mukttad days and thanks to these volunteers, our Darbe Mehr was also clean and bright in preparation for these prayers.



WZCC NEWS

World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce, New York Chapter, hosted a seminar on Sept 17, 2006 at the Darbe Mehr on **Understanding Annuities and Social Security as tools for retirement income**. Thank you for joining us. The attendance of 63 members and guests was indicative of the interest and need for such information. We also thank guest speakers **Todd McGowan** of the social security office in West Nyack and **Jack Reich** of AXA Equitable. The valuable information provided will help us better prepare for our golden years.

The **NEXT WZCC MEETING** will be held at our Darbe Mehr on **Sun., Dec 10th**. Dinyar S. Devitre, Senior Vice President and Chief Financial Officer of Altria Group, Inc will speak on **"Climbing the Corporate Ladder."** His talk will be based on his experience in consumer products and financial services industries while working in Australia, Asia, Europe and the United States. All are welcome to attend. Lunch will be served at 12PM and meeting will start at 1PM sharp. **Please RSVP by Nov 30, to:** amanecksha@aol.com, or call Arnaz at +1 201.592.2566 or Persis at persispavri@hotmail.com or +1 732.940.8469. rusigandhi@gmail.com, noshd@hotmail.com, avan.p.patel@mhn.com, or kangavs@yahoo.com

NAVROZ CELEBRATION

Aug. 26, 2006

Our annual Shahenshahi New Year function was held on August 26th. The festivities began with two Ervad members of our congregation, **Dr. Burgese Turel**, and **Keki Dastoor** volunteering to do Atash Niyaesh prayers. Mouthwatering appetizers followed next, led by DJ Billy Drew starting the entertainment. He had numerous fun filled activities for the youngsters and even the tiny-tots seemed to have a great time with the hula hoops, balls etc.

Billy got the party really rocking with his music. He played such a wide variety of numbers—waltz, tango, jazz, rumba, cha-cha slide, macarena, etc., that every attendee was bound to be on the dance floor at least for some part of the evening. Good ole Parsi food was then enjoyed by all.

Some important announcements were also made that evening--With Sherazad Mehta's resignation the ZAGNY board had to fill a spot and they brought on board two extremely enthusiastic youngsters **Shahnaz Shroff** and **Kaizad Darbari**, who hit the ground running by helping at the bar all evening (Thanks also to **Sherally Munshi**, a new member for helping out at the bar!).

A bonus feature of the evening was a male vocalist, **Shashank Bhatt**—who had come as a guest with one of our ZAGNY members. He sang several blissful, timeless Hindi oldies and his *madhur sangeet* was thoroughly enjoyed by the old time *bawajis*. **Piloo Navder** (mother of yours truly!!) joined in accompanying Shashank in some fun duets and even gave a solo performance at the end singing a fun Parsi song about us *chhaktas* and our love for *daru*. All in all it was a great way to celebrate our Navroz.

Here is what our President, **Homi Gandhi** had to say about the evening in an email and I quote: "From the community satisfaction/enjoyment point of view, I believe that this was the most successful event for this Board. The 'post event *Mehfil*' of course added a little something for the *die-hards*."

Don't get me wrong, it was not only the 40 and 50-something generation who had fun, read what our teenage youth member **Jasmine Dukandar** had to say: "It is always such a pleasure to see everyone decked in their Parsi garbs at these functions. The appetizers were scrumptious, and the DJ did a great job with entertainment and ensuring that folks had built themselves a big appetite. The full spread Parsi "*bhonu*" was awesome--both the *Sali boti* and *farchas* seemed to be a hit by general consensus. All in all, the Pateti function's jubilation far overpowered the gloomy weather outside. I hope that everyone enjoyed as much as I did and I look forward to attending many more of these."



ZOROASTRIANS AT WORLD GUJARATI CONFERENCE 2006

Submitted by Homi Gandhi

ZAGNY has written a new chapter in the history of the new Diaspora in the new millennium. Over 1300 years ago, our forefathers looked for shelter and got it in Gujarat. We, on this continent, have our own Associations, Federation and have been involved in the North American Zoroastrian and the World Zoroastrian Congresses for almost second half of the last century. But this is the first time that we have been invited by another community on this North American Continent to join in the celebration and showcasing our community. And that another community happens to be the Gujaratis, who have renewed our contacts and have rejoiced in our achievements over these long years.

A phone call in May 2006 through the contacts of our Framroze Patel led to a meeting with Sunil Nayak and Dhiraj Parekh of the Association of Indian Americans of North America (AIANA) in the following month. Messrs. Nayak and Parekh said that the AIANA is hosting a World Gujarati Conference on Sept. 1-3, 2006 at the Raritan Center Expo Hall in Edison and invited us Zoroastrians to participate in this venture. With the help of Dr. Lovji Cama and Framroze, ZAGNY Board of Directors was encouraged to participate in this event and the Board decided that our community would participate.

For this invitation and welcoming us at many subsequent AIANA planning committee meetings leading up to the event, I would like to sincerely thank Dr. Navin Mehta, Sunil Nayak, Dhiraj Parekh, Pankaj Brahamabhat, Sanjeev Pandya, Mukesh Kachiwala and many others in making us feel at home throughout the period and helping us in more ways than one. When Dr. Navin Mehta thanked all the participants during the last Conference session, he concluded by saying that this is the first time that they were able to share this Congress with "Parsi/Zoroastrian community participation with the help of ZAGNY", it made us all very proud of our contribution.

And there followed a drive to prepare for this event. We tried to obtain information and panels from India, North America and everywhere and finally had a very successful participation at the Conference by holding a exhibit of our history and Parsi contribution to Gujarat and India, performing a true "Parsi Gujarati" play, and showcasing our attire in a fashion show. For this, we have many to thank; Noshir Kassad for making beautiful panels, Arshish Pastakia and Mehru Medhora for making innumerable contacts, Ervad Hathiram, Dasturji Dr. Peshotan Mirza, Dr. Ratan Marshall, and Prof. Kaikhosrov Irani for delivering and recording the video messages, and Ajay Agarwal for bringing all these materials from India safely, expeditiously and without any charge.

And throughout those three days of Conference and days before, a band of willing volunteers helped to make this event a real success. As these names are already covered in an earlier article, I will not repeat them here once again but I say here one more time "a big thank you to all volunteers" as without your help, this whole effort would not have been so successful. Please allow me here to say my personal thanks to three individuals, Framroz Patel, Dr. Lovji Cama and Nawaz Merchant, who worked diligently each day to make this as their personal event. I cannot thank them enough.

The dedication and sacrifice over these long hours during the Conference, and many months before that, for showcasing our community is the testament to our community's strength and that is one of the main reasons that our miniscule community has survived and prospered for these long number of years. **And I truly believe that the best of this community is yet to come!**



THE WORLD GUJARATI CONFERENCE—ZAGNY INVOLVEMENT

Submitted by Mehru Cama

The World Gujarati Conference organizers contacted **Framroze Patel** indicating their desire to have Parsis participate in the Conference. ZAGNY took the opportunity to showcase our Parsi culture by participating in the fashion show, performing a Parsi Gujarati Natak "Tehmulji in Turmoil" and displaying our cultural artifacts, books and posters in the exhibition booth.

A band of volunteers came the evening before the opening of the exhibition, to set it up (**Lovji and Mehru Cama, Kerman, Jasely, Jasmine** and **Tina Dukandar, Homi Gandhi, Arnaz Maneckshana, Navaz Merchant, Roshan Mountvala** and **Framroze and Armaity Patel** and our two little helpers **Cyrus and Ashish**). We toiled until the early hours of Friday morning to setup the exhibition "Parsis of Gujarat and India". We thank **Kerman** for working nonstop, climbing up and down the ladder tying down over 30 five foot long posters to most unstable rods on the perimeter of the cubicle. We had everything one ever needed to set up an exhibition, thanks to **Roshan** for bringing her well equipped flower shop tool box.

The entrance to the exhibition cubicle looked grand with two 8 ft. Persepolis Pillar mock ups. The façade printed on vinyl was sent from India which **Noshir Baria** attached to deftly carved wood. The hall looked lovely with posters lined against every inch of the cubicle "curtained walls". In the center stood an Afarghan placed on a high pedestal made by **Noshir Baria** and a Dasturs "jama" courtesy of **Pervez Patel**. Along the inside were five long tables each beautifully adorned with the most exquisitely embroidered old Garas, blouses, saree borders and jablas, and a wedding sari with all its trimmings. To depict our Parsi culture, we displayed different types of head coverings - feta, pugree, men and women's prayer caps, also sandalwood, Kusti etc. One table just displayed some beautiful "torans" and silver vases. Most of the display items were courtesy of **Armaity Patel**. Other contributors to the display were **Navaz Merchant, Meher Hodiwala** and others. One table displayed books on Parsis and our culture.

The majority of posters dealt with "Parsi Greats". Framroze was responsible for getting the posters and writing the narratives along with Lovji. Posters on Parsi customs etc. were developed by **Nawaz**. Our thanks to the **Dukandar family** for each evening taking all the exhibits home for safe keeping and coming early in the morning to set it up, and to the many volunteers who manned the booths.

For the three days there was a constant trickle of the curious. The women gravitated to the exhibits on the table especially the garas. They marveled at the exquisite embroidery and could not believe that some of them were over hundred years and in such perfect condition. Despite the "Do Not Touch" signs, some women would sneak in a quick touch turning the cloth and were amazed to see the embroidery at the back was as perfect as the right side. The men quickly scanned the posters. Field Marshall Sam Maneckshaw garnered the greatest recognition as did Feroze Gandhi (Indira Gandhi's husband), though some were surprised to know that he was a Parsi. A few stopped to chat with our volunteers recounting their very positive experiences with the Parsis in India. One gentleman in particular talked of always having a picture of J.N.Tata in his father's house who worked for Tata Iron and Steel Co. in Jamshedpur. Several individuals were intrigued with the history of our coming to India and the story of our encounter with Jadav Rana.

K. and R. represented Parsis in the fashion show twice. First, in a morning scene R. with her glamorous smile dressed as a Parsi lady strutted the stage along with K. dressed in a dagli. The second time, R. dressed in a beautiful gara complimented with glittering diamond jewelry and accompanied by K. in a suit, took the bow to the applause of thousands. Parsis were well represented by this couple.

In all, the exhibition, Natak and the fashion show were very successful in showcasing our Parsi culture to the many Hindus who may or may not have had previous exposure to Parsis.

R. & K.
showing
off our bawaji
attire



A Glimpse from "Tehmulji in Turmoil"

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Congratulations

Navjote Mubarak

•To **Ariana Rudina**, daughter of **Villoo and Solee Rudina**, on her Navjote ceremony performed on July 22, 2006, in Basking Ridge, New Jersey.

•**Pearl Bengali** (right), daughter of **Dinaz and Minoo Bengali**, on her Navjote ceremony performed on July 16, 2006, at the West End Hotel, in Mumbai, India.



BIRTH: To **Anahita and Amit Mantri** on the birth of their daughter **Namya** on August 31st 2006.



Pearl Bengali at her Navjote

Condolences

•To Gool Sachinwala on the death of her husband, Dinshaw Sachinwalla who passed away on Sunday, September 24, 2006, father of Nozer, Zarin & Rohinton, grandfather of children Diana & Cyrus and father-in-law of Villy.

•To Jasmin and Maneck Kotwal on death of Jasmin's mother Gool Avasia (age 85) who passed away on August 15th, and Jasmin's father Boman Avasia (age 88) who joined her on September 2nd, grandparents of Natasha Roselli and Zarina Kotwal.



May the Almighty grant their respective souls eternal peace.

Message from Jasmin Kotwal and Family: We wish to thank the community for their support and sentiment during this difficult time in our lives. My parents are at peace and with each other. We will miss their physical presence, but they will forever live in our hearts. In the words of Rabindranath Tagore, "The candle is snuffed out, for the dawn has come." Their dawn has begun in Ahura Mazda's presence.

Thanks

•To **Fereidoon Demehri** for 2 CDs of Zoroastrian Prayers sent with Compliments of FEZANA. They will be used at our various functions and will be kept in our Library at Arbab Rustom Guiv Darbe Mehr in Pomona.

•To **Kashmira and Zarir Karai** for donating *Agarbattis* and tea lights for our Darbe Mehr prayer room.

•Our grateful thanks to ALL the gentlemen listed below who donated *sukhad*, especially the non-Zoroastrian ones who grew up with Parsis back home in India and who feel blessed by bringing this precious gift for our Atash Padshah--Mr. **Ajit Mahtani** of Network International, Mr. **Behram Shahparast**, Mr. **Piran Erachshaw** of 1947 Production, Mr. **Sunny Aurora** - Mortgage Broker, Mr. **Vijay Agarwal** of EZ Mailing & Office Supplies.

Message from Vispi Kanga

Dear Friends: Many thanks to all of you who have called, emailed and visited me at the hospital and at home during my knee surgery and for all the food and beautiful flowers and the help in bringing me home. We are very grateful for all the help and support we received from the ZAGNY community and even from as far as Florida. We wish you all the very best of health and happiness with your loved ones. Amen.

Translation and Notary Services: Translation of commercial letters and official documents (identity cards, marriage certificates, school records) from Persian to English, and for notary services—contact Nasir Sedaghatpour, Sedaghtpour Translation and Notary Services, 11 Middle Neck Rd., Great Neck, New York, 11021. 516-829-2939; 516-484-8847; Fax: 516-829-7783.

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CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

<u>OCTOBER</u>	
10/1	ZAGNY RELIGIOUS CLASSES (1 pm START)
10/15	UDVADA ATASHBEHRAM LUNCHEON (11:30 am)
<u>NOVEMBER</u>	
11/5	ZAGNY RELIGIOUS CLASSES (1 pm START)
11/5	HALLOWEEN PARADE
11/11	ZAGNY MEETS ZAPANJ AT CHERRY HILL
<u>DECEMBER</u>	
12/3	ZAGNY RELIGIOUS CLASSES (1 pm START)
12/3	1 ST ARBAB RUSTOM GUIV CARROM TOURNATMENT
12/10	WZCC MEETING—"Climbing the Corporate Ladder"
12/31	NEW YEAR'S EVE FUNCTION (DETAILS TO FOLLOW)



Daylight saving time ends and time reverts to standard time at 2:00 a.m. on the Sunday, October 29th. The mnemonic "spring forward, fall back" helps us remember how to reset clocks!

ZAGNY

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