



Issue 34– March 2007 Newsletter

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NAUROOZ RECEPTION

March 21st, 2007

For the very first time all North American Zoroastrian associations attempted to celebrate Naurooz on the very day, March 21st itself--and we did it in New York as well!

A traditional Haft-Sheen table was laid out and prayers were performed at that table using an *afargaanyu*, *deevo*, fruits, flowers, *malido*, and nuts. Common prayers relevant for the Naurooz festival, which represents the Persian new Year, starting of the spring, and March of the Sun from the Southern to the Northern hemisphere.



We would like to thank **Ervads Pervez Patel, Dr. Darius Antia, Rohinton Dadina, Dr. Meheroz Rabadi, Poruz Khambatta** and **Karl Khambatta** for taking turns to recite the prayers in Avestan language and then immediately providing the English translation.

After the prayers, our children came up and explained the significance of each of the items on the Haft-Sheen table. **Tina Dukandar** did a great introduction after which **Shirin Dadina, Dara Adib, Garshashp Soroosh, Kaivan and Zal Shroff, Karl and Poruz Khambatta** came up and gave descriptions of various items. This was followed by a beautiful Spring poem, "Believe in Spring" by Moshiri, recited by **Armita Soroosh** in Persian with English translation. **Homi Gandhi** recited the **Daham Afrin** blessings. Thereafter, **Dr. Vijay Pradhan**, Rockland County legislator, presented a proclamation declaring March 21, 2007, as "A Day in Recognition of Zoroastrian Year 1376." Mr. **A. R. Ghanashyam**, Deputy Consul General of India, fondly remembered the "sugar in milk" story and invited New York Zoroastrians to celebrate the next year's event at the Consulate premises.

After this memorable ceremony delicious snacks contributed by dedicated volunteers were enjoyed by the congregation. Thanks to all our New York Zoroastrians who made the reception a major success by attending in large numbers.

NAVROZE CELEBRATION

March 24th, 2007

On Saturday, March 24th, ZAGNY held its annual Navroze function at the Pomona Darbe Mehr. The event drew over 260 people from our community—the first at Pomona! The evening started with an *Atash-Niyaesh* prayer ceremony performed by **Ervad Pervez Patel**, and our four young mobeds—**Farhad Ranji, Bejan Madon, Karl and Poruz Khambatta**. On behalf of the community, we'd like to thank them for their participation. The prayers concluded with everyone performing the Hamā Zor, Hamā Asho Bade.

Following the Jashan, our Annual General Meeting was called to order by **President Homi Gandhi**, and in his report he thanked the board and the numerous dedicated

Volunteers. He also acknowledged Mr. **Parviz Najmi and his family** for their continued support and generous donations to our Darbe Mehr. Next, **Khursheed Navder** in her secretarial report took all present on a journey over the past 12 months giving a pictorial presentation highlighting our celebrations, achievements, donation drives and youth activities. Treasurer, **Minoo Bengali** then presented the 2006 Financial Statements, which were unanimously approved by the members. All reports are available on our website at www.zagny.org.

Following appetizers, our guests were in for a surprise entertainment segment where for a change we had invited artists to give a middle eastern belly dance performance. Dancers, Mariyah and Darshan thrilled the audience with this ancient and intriguing art form. It was fun to watch the dancers pull guests in but our sporting *bawajis* made a good attempt to shake it in front of the clapping and cheering crowd. I bet even the most conservative guests enjoyed this joyous, colorful, creative, empowering female art.



Another big element of the evening was a raffle to collect money to sponsor Zarathushti Kids from Iran to attend the 4th World Zoroastrian Youth Conference in Australia at the end of this year. We would like to firstly thank our prize donors---**Yasmin & Jamshed Ghadiali** (donated a gold pendant and a silk shawl), **Sheroo & Vispi Kanga** (donated a Victoria's Secret cosmetic hamper, and a food basket) and to **Roshan Mountvala** (donated a beautiful large flower arrangement). Thanks are also due to all who generously purchased tickets to sponsor a Zarathushti youth from Iran.

DJ, **Dinyar Kalwachwala's** lively music kept an upbeat tempo and it was hard to find space on the dance floor. When the kids did not succeed in pushing the adults off--they had to get up on the stage to dance. One thing clear to all in attendance was that this board sure knows how to throw a good party and we ZAGNYites sure know how to have a great time!

THE GOOL KOTHAWALA ESSAY CONTEST

Our 2nd annual essay contest, founded by **Nawaz Merchant** in memory of her music teacher Ms. Gool Kothawala, once again invited children (15 and under) to write a 150 word essay on either, "NO, IN FACT I'M ZOROASTRIAN" or "WHAT I LEARNED FROM MY GRANDPARENT." The prize winners were announced at the Navroze function. **Tanaz Karai** was the winner in the 6-10 age group, with **Natasha Dusaj** taking the 2nd prize. **Neville Dusaj** won first prize in the 11-15 year category, and **Karl Khambatta** came in 2nd. We'd like to thank all children who participated—each contestant was awarded a certificate and each first place winner received a cash prize of \$50. We'd like to thank **Nawaz Merchant** for creating this contest and encouraging our kids to write. Our sincere appreciations also go to her mom, **Silloo Parekh** for judging the anonymous essays.



Winners of the ZAPANJ essay contest were also announced at our Navroze function. The topic was "WHAT GOOD THOUGHTS, GOOD WORDS AND GOOD DEEDS MEAN TO ME." We are extremely proud that two of our ZAGNY kids, **Farah** and **Friya Randelia** were the winners in the Junior category, each received a cash prize of \$100.

DASTURJI KUTAR AWARD

Congratulations to our three new mobeds--**Karl Khambatta (Martab)**, **Farhad Ranji** and **Bejan Madon**. Each of them received the Dasturji Dr. Sohrabji Hormusji Kutar award and were honored at our Navroze celebration on March 24th, 2007.

In the early 1990s a sum of \$5,000 was donated by Dr. Shirinbanoo Kutar in the memory of Ervad Dr. Sorabji Hormusji Kutar. Since its inception there have been only two navars who have received the awards prior to this event. This event reflects a resurgence of our young Zoroastrians in many of their activities for the benefit of our community.



PERSIAN PARADE FOR NAUROOZ CELEBRATIONS



For the 4th successive year many ethnic communities (Afghans, Azaris, Azerbaijanis, Kurds, Persians, Tajiks, Uzbeks, Zoroastrians), representing the area stretching from Turkey in the West to India in the East, paraded on the Madison Avenue in New York City on March 25, 2007 to celebrate NauRooz, the arrival of Spring. The parade floats and groups consisting of thousands of people marched from 41st Street to 27th Street on this beautiful sunny day. Many Zoroastrians came from distant locations like Long Island, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland and Washington DC to march in the parade. A group of seven Zoroastrians clad in the Mobed like dress, carrying the Asho Farohar emblem, was cheered throughout the route with the chants of "NauRooz Mubarak" and "NauRooz Pirooz". Thousands of New Yorkers and visitors watched the parade from the sidelines and welcomed the participants.

NEW YORK CITY MAYOR BLOOMBERG CELEBRATES NAUROOZ AT GRACIE MANSION

For the second year in a row, New York City **Mayor Michael Bloomberg** officially recognized the celebration of NauRooz in New York City with a reception on Monday, March 26, 2007 at Gracie Mansion, the official residence of the Mayor of New York. Mayor's home was celebrated with the display of a fully laid out Haft-Sheen table in the reception room. Many prominent members of various ethnic communities celebrating NauRooz, including New York Zoroastrians, participated in the event. In his welcoming address, the Mayor not only recognized the Parsis and Zoroastrians but also referred to Freddy Mercury's celebration of NauRooz in 1970s. The Mayor also acknowledged the contribution of food items by Double Tree Hotel (**Sam Bhadha**) and cash contribution by **Cyrus Mehta** LLC for the event celebration.



REVLON RUN/WALK EVENT

May 5th, 2007

The Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York will participate in the tenth annual Revlon Run/Walk for Women in the fight to help eradicate women's cancers.

Over the past five years, with the participation of ZAGNY members, their families and friends, we have raised close to \$25,000 for this worthy cause. Once again, we will be participating as a "team" for this event. The event is in New York City and participants can choose to run or walk this 5k race. It starts in Times Square and ends in Central Park. Our team usually meets at a specified location at 8:30 am. Exact location details will be sent to you via email 2 weeks prior to the event.

To register, please log onto <https://www.revlonrunwalk.com/ny> and click Register - Register online, on the tool bar to the left of the page. Please fill out the form, step by step, and as you get to the bottom of the page, make sure you enter our team no. 1109 to ensure that you are registered under our ZAGNY team. Our team name is Zoroastrian Association of Greater NY and the team number is 1109. The Registration fee of \$25 which includes your registration fee, a t-shirt, and a gift bag.

We encourage you, your family and friends to join our team to help raise funds for this very important cause and to support the thousands of women, who have fought this disease, are currently battling it, and the ones who have unfortunately lost their lives because of it. We thank you in advance for your support.

If you cannot participate in the actual event but would like to make a contribution, you can log onto the website address given above, and click Teams - Search for a team - and enter our team no. 1109 and then select a participant to sponsor.

If you have any questions, please call team captain **Sheroo Kanga** at 201-227-1890 or via email at kangavs@yahoo.com. **Join us this year, and walk among thousands united by the power of the human spirit.**

THE IVY GANDHI ZOROASTRIAN YOUTH SUMMER CAMP-June 8th —10th , 2007

- What:** Join your Zoroastrian friends for a weekend of late nights and shaving cream fights
- When:** June 8th, 6pm through start of June 10th Sunday religious class
- Where:** Darbe Mehr 106 Pomona Rd, Suffern, NY 10901
- Who:** You! (KG through 12th grade)
- Cost:** \$40 per child. Please make checks payable to Anahaita Kotval (not ZAGNY or IZA) as we will purchase food and supplies directly from this money. Any excess will be donated to the DMZT.
- Needed:** Parents to chaperone (at least two to stay over each night) and parents to drive to Bear Mountain on Saturday (number will depend on how many kids we have/size of overnight chaperone's cars). If you are willing to chaperone please note in RSVP
- RSVP:** Email: kotvala@gcm.com **PLEASE RSVP PROMPTLY: SPACE IS LIMITED AND STUDENTS FROM OTHER COMMUNITIES ALSO WANT TO COME**



Activities:

- Team skits
- Saturday Morning Discussion (kids email us with suggested topics)
- Hike, Picnic, Boating at Bear Mountain
- Soccer, Basketball, Volleyball, Badminton

These are some of our traditional activities – kids email us when you RSVP if you have other ideas

Bring:

- Clothes appropriate for the above activities (with enough change of clothes for if you get wet)
- Sleeping Bag, pillows, tooth brush, towel
- Tents optional
- Music
- Water guns
- Sports Equipment: Volleyball, Soccer, Basketball, Badminton
- Favorite Board Games: Chess, Checkers, Trivial Pursuit etc.

ANNOUNCEMENTS



CONGRATULATIONS:

WEDDING

•To **Semoneel Tarapore** (daughter of Dr. Farokh and Khursheed Tarapore of Baldwin, NY) and **Dr. Zubin Bamboat** (son of Mickey and Shaynaz Bamboat of Dubai) on their marriage on January 6th, 2007 in East Meadow Long Island. The couple currently reside in Boston, MA.

•To **Rusi Gandhi** and **Natalie Vania** on their marriage in Chicago on March 17th, 2007.

NAVJOTE MUBARAK

•To **Ashish**, son of **Percis Daruwala** on the joyous occasion of his Navjote in New Jersey on Nov. 19, 2006.

CONDOLENCES:

Homi Dhalla's wife, Kamal, passed away in Mumbai in March 2007. May her noble soul rest in peace.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS: **Neville, Paula Udwadia & son Nicholas** have moved to 4747 Sea Crest Drive, Seaside CA 93955. Neville has started his medical practice in Monterey, CA, specializing in Rheumatology.

THANKS:

•To **Sam Bhadha** and **Percy Amaria** for graciously donating snacks for appetizers provided for our congregation to enjoy at the NauRooz day celebration on 3/21 at the Darbe Mehr. The kebabs and patrel were thoroughly enjoyed by all.

•To **Pallan J. Katgara** and **Farokh Daruwala** for donation of *Sukhad* for the Darbe Mehr.

APPEAL FOR EGG DONOR:

A parsi couple from New Jersey is seeking an egg donor, aged 20 to 32. Please contact vicepresident@zagny.org or call 908 927 3713 in confidence.

ZOROASTRIAN NOVELIST BOOK READ—April 26th, 2007

ZAGNY will co-host a book reading of **Thrity Umrigar's** most recent novel "The Space Between Us" (HarperCollins) with South Asian Journalists Association (SAJA). The book is recently released in paperback and, as part of her book tour, Ms. Umrigar will be in New York City. The book read will take place on Thursday, April 26 at 6.30 PM, at Tamarind Art, 142 East 39th Street, New York, NY 10016. Please show up in large numbers to welcome a very successful novelist of our community. All her novels, *Bombay Time*, *Space and the upcoming*, *If Today Be Sweet*--as well as her memoir, *First Darling of the Morning*—feature Parsi protagonists and are mostly set in Bombay. It was a #1 pick for BookSense and has been published in over 12 countries, including India. For additional information and questions, please contact Shahnaz Shroff at Shahnaz@zagny.org.

VISIT TO EXHIBITION ON ART OF SASANIAN IRAN--May 12th, 2007

New York Zoroastrians are arranging to visit The Asia Society on Saturday, May 12th to see the exhibit on art of the Sasanian Iran. Those desiring to join the group, please send your names with tel #s to vicepresident@zagny.org. We will inform you the time and place of the meeting via email.

UPCOMING GHAMBHAR—JUNE 10th, 2007

On June 10th ZAGNY will hold a Ghambhar instead of the usual Barbeque, (BBQ will be held in September). This Ghambhar will be held between 1.30 and 4 pm, followed by traditional Ghambhar lunch. Your donations will fund the Parsi General Hospital Fund and the Udvada AtashBehram Funds. Please join the Ghadiali family, the Nentin Family and Erach Munshi in supporting these noble causes. Erach's goal is to collect \$30,000 by June 30, and we are only at the 25K mark. Come enjoy the Ghambhar, support a good cause, and enjoy some tasty food as well! Please RSVP to Shahnaz@zagny.org or (530) 902 4436

PRESERVATION AND MAINTENANCE COMMITTEE: A committee for the preservation and maintenance of ZAGNY records has been appointed under the leadership of Gev Nentin. All in possession of past records please contact Gev Nentin at Nentin@optonline.net. For more information visit our website at www.zagny.org.

ZAGNY SCHOLARSHIP: We invite applications for financial assistance (Scholarship/Loan) for the academic year 2007-2008 from members who are studying at accredited institutions in the United States. Applicants should be full-time students. The last date for filing an application is **June 30, 2007**. Application forms and information can be obtained from the scholarship committee chairperson: **Kaizad Darbari**, 200 E. 89th St. Apt 21G, New York, NY 10128. Email: Kaizad@zagny.org.

ZOROASTRIAN ETHICS: A DISCOURSE BY PROFESSOR KAIKHOSROV IRANI

March 5th 2007

By Nawaz Merchant

On March 5th while the children's religious classes were underway, the adults at the Darbe Mehr enjoyed listening to Prof. Irani. In his charming manner, he made simple and understandable even the intricate logical precepts of the Greeks! To paraphrase Prof. Irani, Ethics dictate our conduct, and this is implicitly tied to our belief in a divinity. What does Zoroaster say about the ethics that people should be governed by? Prof. Irani set the stage with the perspectives of Greek philosophers in his distinct peaceful and contemplative style. Piety, Socrates believed, is the way Man and Gods do business with each other - People pray for assistance, the Gods are satisfied and provide the things that people request (good harvests, etc). Therefore, even in ancient times, it was acknowledged that our relationship with the 'divine' dictates to how we conduct ourselves.



Zarathushtra implicitly raised these questions in his teachings, and writings. He recognized that Piety had done no good, in itself, in keeping the peace between people. Prayer, and rituals did no good if you did not live by some greater purpose. In the Gathas, he asked: What does Ahura Mazda want? He responds with the concept of Vohu Manu: Good thoughts, an insight into "Asha", the ultimate order in the Universe. Zoroastrianism is not prescriptive. There is no set of rules. The rules must evolve from constant use of reason. We must uncover the right path in our decisions, such that we uncover the vision of Asha. *You*, said Prof. Irani, *must discover what to do in each situation*. This fundamental religious choice, says Prof. Irani, is at the root of Zoroastrian ethics. It places an enormous responsibility upon the individual. This choice is repeated by the Navjotee in the prayer Jasame Avenghe Mazda, a prayer which appears in the Yasna, where the individual declares in the presence of witnesses, that he or she makes the choice to live by Good Thoughts, Good Words and Good Deeds.

For those who attended the discourse, the feeling was one of great matters made simple and intuitive. In his easy, gentle and yet compelling manner, in just a brief hour, Prof. Irani took us through a history of moral thought. Our convictions are firmed, our feet seem steadier in this confusing world. Thank you, Prof. Irani, for nobly leading us through this path. We are indebted to you.

WORLD ZARATHUSHTI CHAMBER OF COMMERCE--NEW YORK CHAPTER NEWS

March 11, 2007

The first 2007 meeting of the **WZCC-New York Chapter** was a big success with over 45 attendees. Chapter Chair **Arnaz Maneckshana** started the meeting by thanking the retiring Chair **Rusi Gandhi**, Advisor **Edul Daver**, her Committee members **Noshir Dutia**, **Persis Pavri**, **Keki Dadachanji** and Members at large **Meher and Dinyar Hodiwala**, **Sheroo** and **Vispi Kanga**.

Gool Thakarar was the inspiring speaker. The subject of her talk was "**Effective Resumes and Interviewing Skills**". She gave insight into the purpose of various steps in the process, such as cover letter, resume and interview. Her presentation was sprinkled with personal experiences and humor, and was highly interactive.



Our next WZCC meeting on **June 3rd** will cover another important topic—"LIFE IN RETIREMENT." A number of WZCC members are either retired or approaching retirement. Their jobs have given their lives structure and security so far. Retirement can raise anxiety about security. The lack of structure of a retired life can also make us reflect on how we should spend our time. For most of us, a fourth of our life remains when we retire from our "job", and those who have been on this path before tell us these can be the most glorious years of our life. So join us at noon on **June 3rd** for an interactive session with a panel of members who have examined challenges of retirement, and explored different ways of making life in retirement the most fulfilling part of our life.

FEZANA EAST COAST ASSOCIATIONS TEACHERS WORKSHOP REPORT SUMMARY

By Lovji Cama

The East Coast Religion Class Teacher's Workshop was held on Jan 14th, at the Arbab Guiv Darbe Mehr in Pomona, New York. Twenty teachers from ZAQ, ZABGA, ZAMWI, ZAPANJ and ZAGNY attended the workshop including Farrokh Mistree from Atlanta. The full day program started with a description by each association on the status of their religion classes, including a report of their strong points and their deficiencies. As associations described their problems, others who had handled similar problems suggested solutions. A common problem of inconsistent attendance seemed difficult to handle since it was related to parent commitment.

Defining a core curriculum was divided into three sections, History, Religion topics and discussion topics on present day issues. There was a broad agreement on what should be taught but the details of what should be taught and how, at different age levels, was not discussed because of lack of time. During the lunch period (an excellent lunch was catered by **Sheroo Kanga** and managed in the kitchen by **Mehru Cama**) educational material brought by different associations was exhibited. A list of the books exhibited, their sources and brief comments on their usefulness will be sent to the participants and will be available generally. **Pearl Satarawala** then gave a talk on using the Montessori system for teaching children in religion classes. This was followed by **Farrokh Mistree's** talk and demonstration of how a one room class room school involving parents and children of all ages can be made to work by the use of games, story telling and special teaching material. Both methods are hands on methods and require the teacher to prepare special materials and themselves to be successful.

In a session on on-line resources, suggestions for using the internet for religion classes included--A web-site for placing downloadable material accessible to all teachers, starting a G-mail group for discussion by teachers, making material available to parents who do not have access to religion classes, on the internet, an online bibliography of useful books, their source and a brief note on the age-group suitability, video lectures, and a basic catechism on the internet.

The topic of developing and encouraging new teachers was not delved into deeply, but it was pointed out that youth interested in teaching should be actively encouraged by employing them as teacher's aides to start with, providing them with resources and then giving them the independence to teach. The workshop was a good chance to exchange experience and resulted in a broad agreement on what should be taught at religion classes, reviewed alternate methods for teaching. Teaching material from different associations was exhibited and an agreement was arrived at to put teaching material on a website and to start a web-group for teachers.



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CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

<u>APRIL 2007</u>	
4/26	THRITY UMRIGAR'S BOOK READ "THE SPACE BETWEEN US"
<u>MAY 2007</u>	
5/5	REVLON RUN/WALK
5/6	DMZT AGM (11:30 AM)/ZAGNY RELIGIOUS CLASSES (1 PM)
5/12	VISIT TO EXHIBITION ON ART OF SASANIAN IRAN
<u>JUNE 2007</u>	
6/3	WZCC NY CHAPTER MEETING---LIFE IN RETIREMENT (12 PM)
6/8-10	IVY F. GANDHI ZOROASTRIAN YOUTH CAMP
6/10	ZAGNY RELIGIOUS CLASSES (1 PM)/GHAMBHAR
<u>JULY 2007</u>	
7/29	ZAGNY ANNUAL PICNIC (DETAILS TO FOLLOW)
<u>AUGUST 2007</u>	
8/19	MUKTAD PRAYERS AT THE DARBE MEHR (DETAILS TO FOLLOW)
8/25	PATETI FUNCTION (DETAILS TO FOLLOW)

RENEWED YOUR ZAGNY MEMBERSHIP FOR 2007?

A big "THANK YOU" to those who have already renewed your 2007 membership. For those of you who have not renewed or paid, please revive your membership as soon as possible. The membership form can be downloaded from our website: www.zagny.org

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