



Issue 37 – September 2007 Newsletter

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UPCOMING EXCITING EVENTS

UDVADA ATASHBEHRAM LUNCHEON

This annual luncheon will be held at the Pomona Darbe Mehr on **Sunday, October 21st**, 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), **Sheroo Kanga** (201 227 1890) 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 **Sunday, November 4th** 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!



PACHHA AAVO CARROM RUMWA

After the resounding success of our **1st Arbab Rustam Guiv Carrom Tournament**, we are glad to announce that we will be starting our 2nd season commencing on **Sunday November 4, 2007**. 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 unknown, the end date cannot be exactly determined. However it is estimated that it will take a minimum of six Sundays to complete the tournament. The tournaments shall commence with the Singles Tournament followed by the Doubles Tournament a few weeks later.

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** at jdukandar@yahoo.com and let her know how many will be having lunch.

The tournaments shall be as follows:

Adult Singles (Single game knock-out; Best of 3 games knock-out for Semi Finals and Finals)

Adult Doubles (Single game knock-out; Best of 3 games knock-out for Semi Finals and Finals)

Children Singles (Single game knock-out)-for children under 14.

Our volunteers **Gev Nentin**, **Viraf Commissariat** and **Shailendra Dusaj** 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@comcast.net or **Gev Nentin** at nentin@optonline.net or **Shailendra Dusaj** at s_dusaj@yahoo.com. 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.

ZAGNY BOARD:

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NEW YEAR'S EVE WILL BE HERE BEFORE YOU KNOW IT!!

December 31, 2007

ZAGNY invites you once again to celebrate Auld Lang Syne with your family and friends. Join us usher in another New Year as we prance n' dance and countdown to 2008 with fun, food, games n' music. More details will follow, but mark your calendars.

SUMMER EVENTS

Alas, another summer's come to an end, but for us here at ZAGNY, it was a lot of fun as you can see from the highlights of our sizzling activities--annual picnic, Mukta prayers, and Navroz function.

ZAGNY ANNUAL PICNIC

July 29, 2007

Submitted by Jasely Dukandar

Once again our ZAGNY annual picnic on July 29th was a great success. Even though the weather report had predicted rain showers for the afternoon, we had an enthusiastic crowd of fun loving young, old, restless, sporting and hungry members who showed up with all sorts of delicious food enough to share with everybody. We kicked off the picnic, as usual with food.....delicious Bhel, Sandwiches and other goodies. One adventurous young couple even bought their own personal grill to share delicious barbecue food with all of us. The kids and elders alike joined in the game of throw ball and Frisbee. Before we could indulge to play cricket, dark clouds and some drizzle kept us away from the bat.

Thanks to **Kerman, Jasely** and **Dinyar** who arrived early to reserve the area for the group. Grills were available for cook-out. ZAGNY provided watermelon, iced tea and charcoal for the cookout but had to take the box of 100 tea bags back to Darbe Mehr because Mother Nature threatened to soak us all if we continued with the effort of making tea. This did not prevent everybody from eating the *Bhakhras* which were meant to be eaten with a cup of tea. This year we had several young new members who attended the ZAGNY picnic for the first time who enjoyed and wanted to come back next year. All in all, it was a fun-filled day.



MUKTAD PRAYERS
August 19, 2007
Submitted by Ferzin Patel

Thanks to our gracious host families--- **Fali and Pervin Shroff, Nawaz and Hoshi Merchant, Yasmin and Jamshed Ghadiali, and Noshir and Teshtar Irani**—we were able to offer prayer services on the first 4 *gatha* days at various places in our tristate area. Muktab prayers on the 5th *gatha* were held at our Darbe Mehr on Sunday, August 19th, and were sponsored by **Yasmin and Jamshed Ghadiali**, in memory of a dear friend of ZAGNY's and a pillar of the Zarthushti community of North America, **Mrs. Khorshed Jungalwala**, mother of Ferzin Patel. About 100 members attended the prayers at our Darbe Mehr, and monies normally donated to the lunch were donated to the Khorshed Jungalwala Lecture Series, which is sponsored by FEZANA. The donations collected totaled \$697. Prayers at our Darbe Mehr were eloquently recited by our revered priests, **Xerxes Antia, Darius Antia, Rohinton Dadina, Jehangir Madon, Rohinton Madon, Pervez Patel, and Meheroz Rabadi**. We'd also like to thank **Adi Sidwa, Karl Khambatta** and **Poruz Khambatta** for reciting prayers on other muktab days. The main hall looked beautifully somber surrounded by flower arrangements and photographs, as the priests recalled all the names of the souls who have departed.

The prayers were followed by a simple home cooked lunch of *chicken dhansak, kachumber, and vegetable* prepared by **Kashmira Karai, Daisy Randelia, Dinaz Bengali, Meher Hodiwala, Ferzin Patel, Nawaz and Roda Merchant**. This year's delicious *Malido* and *Ravo* desserts were donated by **Sheroo Kanga** and **Dilshad Todiwala**.

This event could not have taken place without the *behind the scenes* help of members like **Dinyar** and **Meher Hodiwala, Teshtar Irani**, and **Kashmira** and **Zarir Karai** who committed themselves to assisting the priests with the fruits and religious items that were carefully and properly presented, as well as helping the ZAGNY board prepare for the lunch after offering prayers.



THANKS FOR YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS...from ZANZ (The Zarathustrian Association Of New Zealand)

*We take this opportunity to thank all the lovely kind hearted people at ZAGNY for having sent a most generous amount towards the medical needs of little **Khushru Mehta** and to support the Mehta family of Auckland in their uphill struggle to get medical treatment for their son who suffers from a number of serious medical issues.*

Today this little boy with the blessings of all his well wishers, is making slow but steady progress towards some semblance of a normal life. Khushru has had his Cochlear implants in both ears and has been for his first rehabilitation programme to Sydney. It is still a very long journey, but there appears to be a bright light at the end of the tunnel.

The ZANZ MG Committee cannot thank you all enough. You have indeed lived up to and exhibited the true Zoroastrian values of "Good Thoughts, Good Words & Good Deeds."

*God Bless & Warm Regards, **Rashna Tata** – President, On behalf of the ZANZ MG COMM*

NAVROZ CELEBRATION

Aug. 25, 2007

Pateti function held at our Darbe Mehr drew in record numbers—touching the 300 mark! Celebrations began with the recital of the Atash-Niyaesh prayers by **Ervads Dr. Burgese Turel, Pervez Patel and Shahvir Vimadalal**. After a brief welcome announcement by President **Homi Gandhi**, and the cocktail hour, the stage was set for our children to start the entertainment session with a play, "Landing in Sanjan." Despite some technical glitches (just one working microphone and malfunctioning speakers at the back of the hall) our children did a wonderful job. Our audience also got to see a Bollywood dance performance by **Dilshad Patel**, a dance therapy major. Then came dancing to live music by DJ Alan Kohn, followed by a dinner of Parsi delectables catered by our very own Mehernosh Daruwalla of India on the Hudson.



Other ongoing events that evening included a bone marrow drive organized by **Yasmin Ghadiali** and the SAMAR organization. The Sudreh/Kurti Sale raised \$490 which will be donated toward our Critical Assistance Fund. Many thanks to **Nawaz Merchant** for donating sadras/kurtis and to **Percis Daruwala, Roda and Savak Merchant** for helping with the sale. The raffle that evening also brought in \$520. We'd like to thank **Vispi Daruwala**, and **Viraf Commissariat** for handling the raffle, and to **Percis Daruwala** for donating a sari for the raffle.

Dilshad lives in Mumbai, India and has been performing and instructing professionally for the past 15 years. She has performed in Bollywood Indian movies and has worked with the foremost choreographers of the Bollywood dance industry. She has intensive training in the Indian Classical dance form of Bharat Natyam and has several national awards from India to her acclaim. She is currently here in New York to pursue her studies in dance and dance therapy.



Technology to the Rescue: Youth Play at ZAGNY's Pateti 07 Event By Nawaz Merchant

This January, when **Homi Gandhi**, our President requested that we co-ordinate a children's play in August, I wasn't sure we'd be able to do it. The families that attend our religious classes are spread over a 400-mile area! Many parents drive an hour and a half to the community center- would they make the extra trips for practices? The three class teachers **Shiraz Antia, Avan Patel** and **Pearl Satarawala** also loved the idea of re-enacting the play, "The Landing in Gujarat" written by **Viraf Ghadially** about a pivotal moment in our history. Still, they were very concerned. How would the kids perform on stage without sufficient practice? When I suggested using FreeConference.com, they were intrigued.

We held three "in-person" practices at our Darbe Mehr, and five tele-conference practices. We decided the conference schedule ahead of time, and then I emailed the invitations from Freeconference.com. On the appointed times, all of us called into the assigned number. Since our 'actors' ranged from age 5 to 9, this was a unique experience for many of them. The parents and play coordinators figured out sets and props, and assigned responsibilities, all by phone. At first the children read their parts in turn on the conference calls. Then, they spoke their parts by rote, in sequence. The actual positioning of the actors on the stage was done in one of our "in person" practices, held to coincide with other community events such as the Mukhtad prayers. The sets, designed and created by parents, included a large cutout of a boat made by the **Vimadalal** family.

Natasha Dusaj introduced the play, and took a role as one of the Zarthostis as well. **Cyrus Merchant** played the role of Head-priest Naryosang Dhaval, while **Pearl Bengali** and **Jamshed Davar** played the two wise vazirs, and **Tiraza Bhote** played Gujarati King Jadav Rana. **Carina Daruwala** and **Peri Vimadalal** played the other Zarthostis. **Farah Vimadalal, Shirin Dadina** and **Noshir Eduljee** played the Gujaratis. The backstage team, **Shawn Bengali, Sam Merchant** and **Neville Dusaj** arranged mikes, backdrop, props, lighting and even sound effects!

Technology to the Rescue: Youth Play at ZAGNY's Pateti 07 Event (contd)

Parents and kids alike embraced the concept of teleconferences. Here's what one parent wrote: *"Through this experience my daughter has gained an understanding that she belongs in our community, and that she has friends with whom she learns about our religion. Taking part in this play has brought all this together for her. I had no concept of a teleconference at the age of 4, when I was growing up. Let's do a WebX with screen shots for the next play!"*

The play was performed on Aug 25th at the Pateti Event at our Darbe Mehr, and was a resounding success. When the kids realized that they could not be heard at the back of the hall, our young actors improvised to share the microphone without missing a beat. They were confident, well practiced, and said all their parts clearly. After the play, the actors received awards (in the shape of three shooting stars) from the coordinators for their excellent performance and commitment. And we all agreed: Technology had enabled us, the new Zarthosti community, to overcome the barrier of distance. *Where there's a will, there's a way!*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Congratulations

BIRTH:

- To **Priya and Farzad Damania** on the birth of their baby boy **"Shrey"** on August 17, 2007 in New York City.
- To **Eric and Armin Karanjawala** of New Jersey on the birth of their baby boy **"Daarian"** on July 14, 2007.
- To **Pashang and Khushnuman Patel** on the birth of their baby boy **"Rayomand"** on September 9th, 2007. Congratulations also to the grandparents, **Framroze and Armaity Patel** and aunt **Arnavaz**.

WELCOME:

We are always excited about getting more kids to join our monthly religion classes. A hearty welcome to- **Farah Pavri, Tara Irani, Arya Irani, Rayan Daruwalla, Adina Mistry, Maya Mistry, Jeh Mory & Zaal Mory**.

Matrimonial:

A 35 year old professional girl from Mumbai, India is looking for a like minded soul mate (preferably between 35-38 years). For details please contact Mrs. Yasmin Pavri on (201) 943-1875.

Apartment for Rent:

Wanted a single male or female to share a large apt with a big living room, two bed rooms, two bathrooms and a large kitchen in Kew Gardens, Queens, NY. If interested call (646) 243-6267.

Change of Address:

Nina and Adil Mistry have moved back to the US. Their new address is 28 Crossway, Scarsdale, NY 10583. Tel: Home (914) 722-0229; Cell Nina (914) 355-0705; ninamistry@hotmail.com.

Thanks:

To **Shazneen and Hanoz Gandhi** for donating a much needed Epson Projector and an Oreck Vacuum cleaner for the use of the community. Thanks to your generosity we will no longer have to beg-n-borrow a projector for our functions.

ZAGNY Members Near and Far:

On Wednesday, October 3, 2007, the Asian American Society of Central Virginia held its First Asian American Gala in the Marble Hall of Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in Richmond, Virginia. **Daisy Presswalla** was awarded the Humanitarian Award for her services to the local community in Richmond area. Daisy and her husband, Farouk, are long standing ZAGNY members although they now reside in Richmond. Congratulations Daisy, for a well-deserved award.

Table Tennis Tournaments to Begin Soon:

Upon popular demand from kids and adults alike we are going to start our first table tennis tournaments shortly. Thanks to **Darryl Lobo** (Lobson@lobson.com) and **Dinyar Kalwachwala** (dknynj@gmail.com) for volunteering to coordinate these games. More details to follow.

If you would like to announce an event that will occur within the next 3 months or to make a general announcement in the ZAGNY newsletter, please email us at secretary@zagny.org

FEZANA TEAM PARTICIPATES IN UN CONFERENCE ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Submitted by Homi Gandhi

More than 1,700 representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other civil society organizations from more than 60 countries gathered in New York for the sixtieth Annual UN Department of Public Information/NGO Conference. The three-day event, entitled "Climate Change: How It Impacts Us All", took place at United Nations Headquarters from 5 to 7 September 2007. The Conference reviewed the scientific evidence on climate change, including its consequences on indigenous peoples, water security, land use and the politics of energy.

Five Zoroastrians (including one youth) represented FEZANA at this conference-- **Houtoxi Contractor** and **Cyrus Cama** (Pittsburgh), **Meher Amersey** and **Niloufer Randeria** (Mumbai, India), and **Homi Gandhi** (New York).

Determined to raise awareness of Zoroastrians, our delegation dressed in traditional Zoroastrian attire, with the men proudly wearing their *Daglees* and *Pagrees* and the women looking elegant in gara sarees. Our appropriate dressing has always raised crowd's curiosity and this gives us a chance to network and to provide information on the Zoroastrian faith.

For the first time since FEZANA was registered as an NGO at the United Nations, this year we were invited to participate in a conference workshop entitled, "Faith Responses to Climate Change," Homi Gandhi was invited to present the Zoroastrian faith's point of view at the workshop along with the Abrahamic faiths. Homi discussed the evolution in ecological practice, the theology of Zoroastrianism, and their relevance to the current environmental crisis. A large gathering of the conference participants attended the Workshop and was very happy to learn about the Zoroastrians' reverence of the nature and its surroundings.



Those who would like to join the FEZANA UN Team in the future, please contact Behram Pastakia: Phone: 301.493.9131; E-mail: BPastakia@aol.com or Homi Gandhi: Phone: 201.445.3917; E-mail: homidgandhi@gmail.com

WZCC NEW YORK CHAPTER INVITES YOU TO ITS 3Q FALL MEETING IN BOSTON ON INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP FOR INDIANS IN NORTH AMERICA October 27 & 28, 2007

Distinguished Panel:

Firdosh Bhatena: an outstanding entrepreneur and recipient of the 1st WZCC award

The Mody Family: a successful family with an interesting entrepreneurial business story

Sushil Bhatia: Professor of entrepreneurship

Saturday, Oct. 27, 8:30 am

Departure from Pamona Darbe Mehr. Drive to Boston as a group by rented van, bus, or car pools.

Lunch on your own (will stop at a fast food place)

Check into Summerfield Suite Hotel, Burlington, MA around 2 pm.

Quad Room rate \$99+taxes (4 adults). Checking on double occupancy rates.

Jimmy Mistry is working to get the best possible rate & hold a block of rooms

Many Boston Zoroastrians would welcome people to stay in their homes. So we hope at least 6-10 can be easily accommodated, and probably more.

Additionally, please advise Arnaz, if lodging is a financial hardship (e.g. seniors or students) and they will be given first preference in hospitality.

Agenda: Meeting will start at 4 pm at a local party hall.

4:00 – 5:00 pm: Tea, Informal Net Working

5:00 – 5:30 pm: Professional Net Working Exercise

5.30 - 7.30 pm: Panel Presentation on Successful Entrepreneurial ventures

8:00 pm: Catered Dinner hosted by ZAGBA for the NY participants

Sunday Oct. 28, in the am

Visit Rockport by the Ocean (artistic fishing village) and the beautiful Halibut State Park (quarry, cliffs, trails and ocean). Lunch will be as a group in Essex, at a famous rustic seafood restaurant, "Woodmans". Cost approx. \$15/PP. By 2 pm depart for drive home.

Action Item: RSVP by October 12, to reserve your bus seat or/and participation at wzccny_news@yahoo.com,

Questions: Contact Arnaz Maneckshana (201) 592-2566, Arnaz.Maneckshana@axa-advisors.com

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Submitted by Nawaz Merchant

This Summer, many individuals in our community participated in the Zarathushti Oral History Project, a grassroots project to collect personal stories and anecdotes, to record our own living history as Zarathushti immigrants in North America. This project was founded by a group of youth, **Dinyar Patel** and **Hormuzd Katki** with myself. It was structured to enable young men and women (from 13 +) to interview established community members to hear their perspective, their stories, ask them questions, and record and preserve their unique commentary. Other members were invited to contribute articles as well. The whole, about 40 interviews and articles will be compiled in the upcoming Fall 2007 issue of the FEZANA Journal.

Zarathushti children are seeking their heritage. They are seeking their roots. And in this nameless seeking, the Zarathushti Oral History Project was born. Once clearly defined, two associations came forward to hold their own independent formats – ZANC coordinator **Annahita Jasavala** decided to engage the religious class students to interview their family members, while CZC coordinator **Mandana Pishtadi** chose to hold an interview event, where youth and elders sat around tables, their stories told and heard, simultaneously. **Hormuzd Katki** from ZAMWI held interviews locally, while **Dinyar** traveled across the globe to send us his research into our roots and what remains. The busy youth of the ZAGNY chapter posed a logistical challenge to share a single camcorder over a number of locations and places. **Aanika Lal** (ZAPANJ) and **Farah Minwala** (Las Vegas) also conducted telephone Interviews.

What did we hope to gain? In asking our youth to preserve these life stories, we shared the hope that our youth can build upon the foundation of our common culture and forge their own identity with confidence. Children of immigrants are acutely conscious of their own difference from the mainstream (usually Caucasian) children at school. Often our children will refuse to speak Gujarati, and demand Peanut-Butter sandwiches for school lunch. However, meeting others in their own circumstance, perhaps, brings a sense of normalcy to their situation, and they begin to feel less alone as 'outsiders'. In time, they may recognize that each of their peers possesses a uniqueness which makes them 'different'. Our children may then gain both empathy toward others, as well as broad-mindedness, borne of confidence. Given sufficient breadth of experience, this generation gains a true international perspective, and can traverse the world, feeling equally at home in a college campus as on the crowded "gullis" of Mumbai.

My husband and I met a just such a pair of young men last year. With some delight, we plied them with questions about their upbringing. For my husband and I, this discussion filled us with both relief and surprise. These young men were no less 'Parsi' for all that they had been raised entirely in the US. Both individuals were utterly 'their own man', uniquely distinct personalities and yet undeniably, and lovably, "Bawajis". Children of Zarathushti immigrants, born in the US as US citizens, have a unique challenge, to carve out their identity. This generation also has a unique opportunity. A strong sense of identity and pride in their heritage frees youth from the narrow constraints of peer pressure and the need for peer approval. Their independence of thought is hard-won. We parents must trust that this very independence will be paired with good judgment, and that the intent that inculcated such independence of thought in our youth will be valued, and our power to persuade will remain undiminished.

One of the first Oral-History interviews brought this issue to the front. *"We followed our parent's direction without question – youth today do not. They think for themselves."* said one Senior, with rueful admiration. If so, aren't our youth following the mandate of Zarathushtra, who demanded that each one of us use our own reason and judgment?

"Good Words" says **Dr Kaikhosrov Irani**, Prof and Dean of Philosophy, *"are not platitudes- how are you, how nice you look! Good words consist of open and honest communication."* With our children, more than anyone else, communication must span the cross-generational differences of perspective.

What changes might occur with this self-knowledge? With growing inclusiveness, our actions are more productive, more creative, and more cohesive. Associations all over North America report strong membership and growing community cohesiveness. Zarathushti philanthropy sends thousands of dollars back to aid good causes in India and Iran. Zarathushti businesses network and help each other grow through associations such as WZCC. Parents no longer feel the need to return to India to perform their child's Navjote, preferring to hold it in their adoptive country, their new home. Two Zarathushtis have stood for election in State or Federal House or Senate – perhaps you already know a youth who will be the first Zarathushti Senator! Regardless, through projects like the Oral History Project or our own efforts, if our children are better equipped to realize their potential, we will have succeeded.

If you would like to announce an event that will occur within the next 3 months or to make a general announcement in the ZAGNY newsletter, please email us at secretary@zagny.org

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CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

OCTOBER

10/7 ZAGNY RELIGIOUS CLASSES (1 PM)
10/21 UDVADA ATASHBEHRAM LUNCHEON (11:30 AM)

NOVEMBER

11/4 ZAGNY RELIGIOUS CLASSES (1 PM)
11/4 HALLOWEEN PARADE
11/4 ARBAB RUSTAM GUIV CARROM TOURNATMENT COMMENCES

DECEMBER

12/2 ZAGNY RELIGIOUS CLASSES (1 pm START)
12/31 NEW YEAR'S EVE FUNCTION (DETAILS TO FOLLOW)



To everyone's delight, daylight saving time ends later this year. Instead of the 4th Sun in Oct, time reverts to standard time at 2:00 a.m. on Sunday, Nov. 4th. The mnemonic "spring forward, fall back" helps us remember how to reset clocks!

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at:

www.ZAGNY.org