



SETHNA FINANCIAL GROUP LLC, ZARIR J. SETHNA, CLU®, ChFC®, LUTCF®
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OFFICE 713-963-4229

SUNDAY SCHOOL

PLACE: ZHCC
8787 W. Airport Blvd.
Houston, TX 77071
Tel: 713-270-9339

TIME: Different timings for each group

DATE: March 10, 2024

Children's Session: The Sunday School session starts at **11:00 a.m. in-person and by Zoom**

Middle Group: The Sunday School session at **11:00 a.m. – in-person & by Zoom**



Youth Group: The Sunday School session at 10:00 a.m. **In person**



UPCOMING EVENTS

- Sunday, April 14, 2024 – Carnival after Sunday School
- Sunday, April 28, 2024 – Curry Cookoff Contest
- Sunday, June 2, 2024 – Maidhyoarem Gahambar
- Friday, July 12 - 14 - ZAH Z-Camp 2024
- Friday, July 12 – Offsite - Library Event, talk by Sarah Stewart
- Sunday, July 14 - ZAH Library/FIRES - Gen Z Survey Event
- Saturday, July 20 - Youth Fundraiser

REPORTS

LIBRARY REPORT
 By: Jango Mistry

An Exciting Library/FIRES Event Coming in July

On the evening of Friday, **July 12**, the ZAH Library has planned a very interesting event, in a new setting. The event will be in the restaurant “*Indian Summer*” in Sugar Land and include dinner followed by a talk from Sarah Stewart. Sarah is no stranger to ZAH having given us many discussions over the years that have been enlightening and interesting.

In her talk titled **The Path to Modernity: Zoroastrians in Iran speak about their Religious Lives**, Sarah will draw upon the research she carried out in many cities in Iran, including urban areas like Tehran, Kerman, Ahwaz, and Yazd, as well as rural Yazdi villages. She will examine how these places have adapted religiously since the Islamic Republic’s establishment.

Comparing their ways to the ways of the Parsi community in India and the diaspora overseas, Sarah will explore how people have managed to change from traditional to modern practices, particularly in their death ceremonies. She will look at the dismantling of the *dakhmeh* system in Iran, against the preservation of the *Towers of Silence* in India and the Brookwood cemetery.

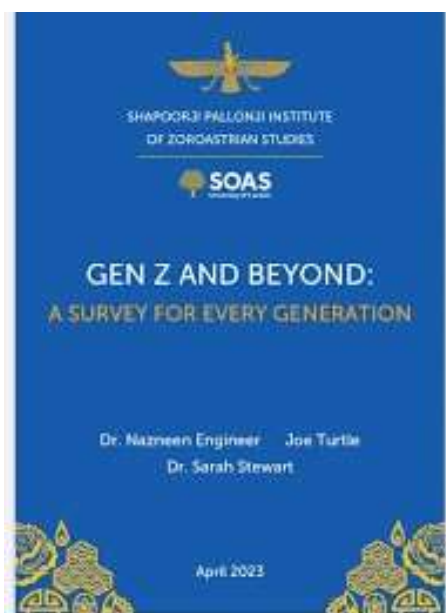
ZAH EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Aderbad Tamboli – Chairman
Percy Master – Secretary
Farokh Billimoria – Treasurer
Zia Anklesaria – Member
Nikita Gagrath – Members
Kershaw Khumbatta – Member
Fiona Setna – Member
Nazanin Sarkari – FEZANA Rep

OUR ERVADS (PRIESTS)

Boomla, Noozar
Buchia, Kyrus
Dastur, Barjor M
Dastur, Darius B
Desai, Farrokh
Firozgary, Bahrom
Gonda, Pervez
Kanga, Neville
Katrak, Rayomand
Katrak, Vispi
Khumbatta, Noshir
Kotwal, Zubin
Masani, Dara
Nariman, Khushrav
Pavri, Shapur
Sanjana, Bahmanshah
Sanjana, Kurush
Sidhwa, Kayomarz
Sidhwa, Maneck
Sidhwa, Yazad
Unwalla, Peshotan
Vimadalal, Freyaan
Vimadalal, Khushroo

GEN Z & BEYOND



Sarah Stewart is a distinguished academic, specializing in Zoroastrianism, holding the title of Reader Emeritus at SOAS. She previously served as the Shapoorji Pallonji Reader and co-chair of the SOAS Shapoorji Pallonji Institute of Zoroastrianism. Stewart's research focuses on the contemporary Zoroastrian living tradition, showcased in her collaborative works like Voices from Zoroastrian Iran, Volumes 1 and 2, based on extensive fieldwork and recorded interviews.

Notably, Stewart curated the acclaimed exhibition The Everlasting Flame: Zoroastrianism in History and Imagination at the Brunei Gallery, SOAS, in 2013 and later at the National Museum in Delhi in 2016. She has also developed an introductory online course on Zoroastrianism, available on the website, FutureLearn, offering accessible insights into the religion's history, beliefs, and practices.

Sarah Stewart has proved herself to be an eminent scholar and an invaluable asset to our community. It will be a privilege to have her with us and listen to her thoughts. This promises to be a memorable event and some of us can hardly wait to listen to her.
(More details to follow in future Manashni issues and emails).

Like they say in TV commercials: *"But wait! There's more!"*

Gen Z and Beyond: A Survey for Every Generation

That same weekend, on the morning of Sunday, **July 14**, we will be hosting Sarah Stewart at the ZAH Center, along with a team of people coming from New York, for a most interesting presentation. We have often had questions about Zoroastrians all over the world, their beliefs, how they practice religion, their social habits, and how they engage with others in their community. In addition, the survey also sheds light on attitudes towards intermarriage and children of intermarried Zoroastrians.

Many of us will remember filling out a worldwide survey and giving our input on these and many other fascinating questions. The Gen Z survey was an ambitious and comprehensive study conducted jointly by Shapoorji Pallonji Institute of Zoroastrian Studies, School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London. The 200-page report by Principal Investigator Dr. Sarah Stewart, Dr. Nazneen Engineer (Project Manager), and Joe Turtle (Analyst) provides tremendous information and insight to help us understand the current Zoroastrian populations worldwide.

We are indeed fortunate to have this informative, insightful, and thought-provoking session brought to us right here in Houston. This review and discussion of the *Gen Z and Beyond* survey results will be key in outlining a suggested roadmap to help Zoroastrian communities in North America flourish while maintaining their identity. Hear the report findings, discuss takeaways, and share your aspirations for the community to help answer the question, **"Where to, from here?"**

Come, listen, and make your thoughts heard during this unique and thought-provoking session.

ATASH KADEH – DECORATED FOR NOROUZ



NOROUZ HAMBANDAGI



AVAN YAZAD PARABH



JASHAN – MARCH 2024



Atash Kadeh News

By Persis Behramsha

What a wonderful Spring Season it has been with Wildflowers blooming earlier this year and in abundance! Don't miss the beautiful landscape on the ZAH/Atash Kadeh grounds either – thanks to **Jamshed Elavia**.

March began with the monthly Behram Roj Jashan sponsored by **Anahita Kanga**, who though fairly new to Houston has been a big part of the attendance, every chance she gets. Thank you to dear Anahita for your generosity.

What a perfect Navroze Humbandagi and celebration we all had on March 21st, starting with the traditional Humbandagi, thanks to our dear **Arnavaz Sethna**. Many thanks to **Ahura Mazda**, for the blessings that are bestowed upon all of us.

Shernaz and Feroze Bhandara with their generous support, provided plenty of sandwiches, chips and drinks to go with the Sev Dahi that our friends **Avan Bhatena, Nargis Cooper, Mahrukh Deputy, Farida Divecha, Zarina Elavia, Jasmin Katrak, and Yasmin Medhora** so lovingly made.

Navroze was a perfect day to thank **Yezdi Engineer** for the amazing job he does with the maintenance and repairs for both the ZAH Center and the Atash Kadeh. We could not help but include dear **Hoshang Sethna** for having done the same with a lot of passion, for many years before Yezdi joined. We much appreciate **Rustom Challa** for overseeing a lot of things that need to be tackled throughout the year.

The Avan Yazad Parab was enthusiastically sponsored the very next day by **Sam Bhadha, Nargis & Homi Cooper, Tehmi & Firdaus Dastoor, Mahrukh & Rohintan Deputy, Roshan & Yezdi Engineer, Yasmin & Rustom Engineer, Aban & Homi Erani, Hufrih & Jamshed Irani, Dilnar & David Menesse, Arnaz & Jehangir Mistry, and Shirin & Bahdur Sarkari**. What a lovely treat we had after the Jashan, with the Daar Ni Pori along with all the other delicious spread.

Our Atash Kadeh celebrated 5 years this March 21st. With all the volunteers, donors, supporters, and friends, our Atash Kadeh has flourished non-stop with its radiant flame since the day of inauguration. This is possible because of our most dedicated **Ervads Pervez Gonda and Maneck Sidhwa** who hold the Atash Kadeh dear to their hearts.

The monthly Gatha sessions continue with **Meheryar Rivetna**. We encourage you to attend these sessions, either at the Atash Kadeh or via Zoom. Meheryar has compiled a lot of information with his research that he freely shares with anyone who is interested.

Khushrav Nariman, Feroze Bhandara, Shernaz Bhandara, Rohintan Deputy, Persis Behramsha.

As was discussed at the AGM, we will be posting the After-Life Prepaid Prayers Rates on the web site soon. We thank everyone for their input which we will take into consideration when we update the Atash Kadeh page.

NOROZ – YOUNG ENTERTAINERS



HAFT SEEN DANCE



YOUNG PERFORMERS WITH VEHISHTA



HAFTSEEN TABLE



Please feel free to connect with any of the Atash Kadeh Committee members if you have any questions.

Khushrav Nariman, Feroze Bhandara, Shernaz Bhandara, Rohintan Deputy, Persis Behramsha.

NOROZ FUNCTION

By: Entertainment Committee

Our Navroze Function was celebrated on 23rd March, 2024. It was attended by approximately 300 guests. The Beautiful Haftseen Table was set up by Natasha Atashband. We would like to thank her for stepping in so graciously and helping ZAH.

The Festivities started with our very own ZAH Youth Mobeds Yazad Sidhwa, Neville Kanga and Darius B Dastur leading the community through the Benediction followed by our Emcee Zubin Mistry leading a moment of silent reflection and gratitude.

Zubin started the evening with some jokes and got the audience laughing.

The first performance was a dance presentation of the Haftseen table, performed by Jidina Mory and Mahtab B Dastur. This was followed by the Fish and Coin dance for Good Luck and Prosperity performed by Natasha N Dungor and Mahtab B Dastur.

The Youngest children from Elementary Sunday School Class – Shanaya and Shayan Atashband, Ariana Bharucha, Sarosh and AshaLynnea Collector, Maya and Ruby Dastoor, Serena and Shawn Desai, Aaron and Ryan Engineer, Arshin and Rosha Felfeli, Pearl and Xerxes Gagrath, Zai and Ari Gonda, Niki and Asha Nadjmi, Neekon Namirian, Avita Parvizi, Ryan Vajifdar, Nurelle Vania with the help of middle group mentor –Jidina Mory and guided by moms – Serena Bharucha, Dilnaz Mory, Hufereh Vania put on a fantastic show of the Waltz of the Amesha Spentas. They ended the show with wishing everyone a Happy Nowruz. Our very special thanks and gratitude to our Sunday school teacher Vehishta Kaikobad who choreographed the entire program. Without her continued dedication and encouragement to our kids, this program wouldn't have been possible.

ZAH EC President and NAZC Co-chair Aderbad Tamboli informed the community about the upcoming NAZC 2024 Congress in December in Houston and encouraged everyone to register early when registrations open in May/June timeframe. He and Kayo Sidhwa (NAZC co-chair) urged guests to consider becoming a sponsor for the Congress and support the community. They also announced the raffle tickets that would be sold through July with results being announced during the August Navroze function.

Vispi Sagar (chair of the Legacy Committee) was invited to come on stage to hand out this Year's ZAH legacy Awards. Vispi started with a moment of remembrance and gratitude for our dear Late Homi Davier who was instrumental in the Legacy Scholarship space for so many years since its inception. He invited Thrity and Rohinton Desai on stage to give out the awards and requested Darius Tamboli to facilitate the award ceremony. Thrity Desai gave a beautiful speech

LEGACY AWARD WINNERS



remembering their late son Cyrus Desai in whose honor the Cyrus Desai Scholarship has been established. The Cyrus Desai scholarship for Academic Excellence, leadership and Community Service was awarded to Mahtab B Dastur.

The Legacy Scholarship Award for Academic Excellence, leadership and community Service was awarded to Neville Kanga and Natasha Kanga.

Mike Engineer was invited to give out the MNE Scholarship award. The youth who were proud recipients of this award were Mahtab B Dastur, Natasha Kanga and Neville Kanga.

MNE SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS



The ZAH community is very grateful for the generosity of Thrity and Rohinton Desai, Mike Engineer and ZAH Legacy and for their commitment to the future education of our ZAH community Youth. We congratulate the graduating students and their families.

Dinner was announced after the program concluded. It was very heartening to see our ZAH Youth group come forward to assist our senior community members in getting their food and beverages. We hope that this tradition initiated by the Youth this year continues for many years to come. Everyone enjoyed the delicious and scrumptious food catered by Aga's Restaurant.

After dinner, our own DJ Gary got the music started with kids and adults on the dance floor, dancing the night away. Apro DJ Gary always does such an excellent job of DJ'ing, with a perfect match of Desi, Persian and Western music. We appreciate him for his generosity and continued service to our community.

The Entertainment Committee conveys their sincere gratitude and appreciation for all the hard work put in by numerous volunteers and youth as well as the adults towards making the function successful and enjoyable.

DR. FEROZE Y. SIDHWA TRAUMA SURGEON



MISCELLANEOUS

DR. FEROZE SIDHWA

By: Aban Rustomji & Yasmin Pavri

We are proud to share the incredible work of **Dr. Feroze Y. Sidhwa**, a Trauma Surgeon from California who recently volunteered at the European Hospital Khan Younis in Gaza, Palestine. Dr. Sidhwa's dedication to providing medical aid and care in a challenging environment reflects the values of compassion and service that are dear to our community.

Dr. Sidhwa, the son of our esteemed ZAH members Yazdi and Shahnaz Sidhwa, was in Gaza as a volunteer with the Palestinian American Medical Association and the World Health Organization to offer vital assistance to those in need. Before departing for Gaza, he shared his commitment to peace and humanitarian aid, emphasizing the urgent need for support rather than violence and destruction.

FEROZE WITH PARENTS



Amy Goodman, an acclaimed American journalist, has highlighted Dr. Sidhwa's efforts. In a recent communication with Ms. Goodman, Dr. Sidhwa described the dire conditions in Gaza, where basic necessities like shoes and proper medical facilities are scarce. He shared updates on his work, including performing critical surgeries and navigating the presence of armed conflict near the hospital. Feroze also gave his service in war-torn Ukraine. His courage and dedication to saving lives in the face of adversity inspire us all.

As a community, we join parents like Shahnaz & Yazdi Sidhwa and countless others in praying for the safe return of volunteers like Dr. Feroze Sidhwa, who risk their lives to provide such humanitarian services.

Ed Note: As of writing this article, we are happy to announce that Feroze and the WHO Team have returned home.

GOLDEN GROUP GROUP PICTURE AT THE FARM



GOLDEN GROUP - A RELAXING DAY AT A FARM

By: Jehanbux Mehta

Over 70 guests, including 56 Golden Group members, gathered on the fresh green grounds and inside the beautiful spacious house at the farm of Khurshid and Noshir Challa the afternoon of Saturday, March 30. What a memorable day it was! The weather was perfect: a bit cloudy but that made sitting outside in the open, surrounded by tall trees and with fresh green grass under our feet, relaxing and refreshing, away from the humdrum of city life.

GOLDEN GROUP FOOD AT THE FARM



Golden Group members arrived at the venue in 20 cars. Ten opted to meet in the parking lot of Kroger Supermarket on Sweetwater Blvd, Sugar Land from where they drove to the venue and the other 10 drove directly to the farm as it was more convenient for them to do so. Nobody strayed as Helping Hands had circulated the directions suggested by the hosts to avoid the road repair work being carried out in the area. A map of the route, courtesy Helping Hand Jamshed Dudha, attached to the directions was of additional help. On arriving, we were all in awe to see the spacious lush green grounds with the picturesque red house on it. Welcomed warmly by the hosts, we made ourselves at home. A good many walked around to the barn with game tables, gazebo and swimming pool, taking in the pleasant surroundings.

RELAXING AT THE FARM



With no prodding needed from Noshir, we helped ourselves liberally to the impressive selection of beverages from the drinks trolley. Whether it was ice cold beer or a Scotch or rum, gin, vodka or whatever, there was no hesitation on our part to raise a glass in *tandarosti*. For the lazy ones, like me, a generous plateful of delicious appetizers was served by the maids. One could truthfully say "aah, this is the life".

Lunch was announced, giving me the opportunity of conveying in the presence of all thanks to our gracious hosts, Kay and Noshir, for opening their place for us to have a lovely time. As is customary, new members – 10 this time since our last function – were introduced. The announcement that the total number of Golden Group members had

**GOLDEN GROUP
ENJOYING THEIR GOLDEN YEARS
FROM A PREVIOUS GET TOGETHER**



ZAH CURRY COOK-OFF



NATASHA AT PODIUM



now reached 92 was greeted with great applause. A line formed for lunch of Thai cuisine winding its way steadily for the several dishes laid out on the counter. From salad and crispy fish with peanut sauce to fried rice, red shrimp curry, pad Thai and more. A veritable feast, indeed. Could see several brave souls applying the hot sauces, knowing there was more cold beer at hand to assuage their palates. Multiple choice dessert followed by a lovely cake in honor of birthday boy Jehanbux.

Prizes with farm theme were awarded to the winners of guess-the-number of Easter eggs in the basket and the several rounds of Bingo, which Helping Hands Anita and Diana conducted. No chance of a discreet nap after the big meal. How could one with the jovial chatter in the air. After stretching out our legs for the rest of the afternoon and having had a nice hot cuppa tea, we reluctantly got up to make our way back to our homes with pleasant memories of the relaxing and enjoyable day at the farm. Many thanks once again, Kay and Noshir, for your hospitality which knew no bounds. This day will be remembered.

ZAH CURRY COOK-Off

Join us for the inaugural ZAH Curry Cook-Off Fundraiser, where culinary creativity meets flavorful competition!

Come indulge in a delectable array of homemade Parsi Curry dishes, each crafted with passion and spice by our talented contestants. From mild to fiery, there's a style to tantalize every palate!

Event Details:

- **Date:** April 28, 2024
- **Time:** 12 pm – 4 pm
- **Venue:** ZAH Center

Come taste and celebrate the art and creativity of Parsi Curry with us. Don't miss out on this sizzling event! RSVP in the link below to secure your spot!!! [Register here for 2024 ZAH Curry Cook-Off](#)

An Experience of a Lifetime – Attending the United Nations’ 68th Commission on the Status of Women

By: Natasha N. Dungor

Thousands of people, each one representing different governmental, religious, and social entities, gathered over the course of two weeks to collaborate and work towards a common goal – promoting gender equality and empowering women. This event brought together world leaders (e.g., Heads of State, Vice-Presidents, and Ministers) as well as representatives of civil-society organizations, and a contingent of around 17 Zoroastrians represented our faith at the United Nations’ 68th Commission on the Status of Women.

The 68th Commission on the Status of Women (CSW68) was held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York City from March 11 – March 22, 2024, with the theme *Accelerating the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls by addressing poverty and strengthening institutions and financing with a gender perspective.*

FEZANA DELEGATES AT UN



FEZANA GROUP AT THE BOOTH



NATASHA IN THE UN



CSW68 is the largest annual UN gathering on gender equality and this year marked the second-highest attendance in CSW records. This year, FEZANA participated with a large delegation consisting of individuals from different life stages and unique backgrounds. The attendees were, *Amy Vatcha, Anushe Irani, Katayun Kapadia, Marina Batliwalla, Nazneen Engineer, Sabrina Billimoria, Parinaz Dastur, Peenaz Irani, Yassna Khosravi, Zynah Kharoliwalla, Afreed Mistry, Dr. Behram Pastakia, Della Dastur, Minaz Dungor, Freddy Kharoliwalla, and myself, Natasha N. Dungor.*

In addition to attending countless sessions hosted by various UN Member States and intergovernmental organizations, our members ran the FEZANA exhibition booth showcasing the work that FEZANA does along with how Zoroastrians are working towards fulfilling the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Exhibit material was produced by Nazneen Engineer, Anushe Irani, and ArZan Sam Wadia. We also took this opportunity to promote and sell Zarathushti cultural items such as hand-embroidered headscarves and gara purses. The booth was managed by our delegates who explained the religion to and answered the questions of all those who stopped by the table.

Finally, our FEZANA Delegation hosted a parallel event at the CSW68 titled, *Strengthening Women's Independence: Investing in Financial, STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics), and Health Education*, and our intrigued audience, our fellow delegates of other participating governments and organizations, filled the room to the brim. The panel, moderated by Katayun Kapadia, covered how early education of girls and women in areas of finance, technology, and health can alter the trajectory of their lives in their later years along with providing actionable items for wider implementation and real-life examples.

Following the introduction of FEZANA and our panel, Amy Vatcha opened the presentation by touching on the topic of gender equality in the workplace and the representation of women in senior leadership roles (C-suite positions). She highlighted the importance of empowering women to reach professional heights as leaders and decision makers. Taking this discussion a step forward, Sabrina Billimoria address how gender disparity stemmed from primary education and how our education system overlooks girls due to stereotypes such as "girls mature faster than boys." She adds how girls face unique challenges including adultification biases and menstruation.

Next, Marina Batliwalla spoke regarding the importance of financial literacy for girls and young women, why they suffer from gender wealth inequality, and the reason why early financial literacy education is so crucial for future independence and financial security. This was followed by a personal and practical anecdote by Zynah Kharoliwalla of how early finance education impacted her life and how it can completely transform the lives of young girls. This was followed by Parinaz Dastur's discussion on exploring gender inclusion in technology by unlocking the potential of girls in fields of STEAM. Thereafter, the problem and extent of maternal mortality was examined by Yassna Khosravi, and she showcased some solution that help expectant mother, especially in rural, underdeveloped area, and bring communities together. Lastly, I spoke on the importance of education, with a focus on healthcare, for girls and women through a case study in which I spotlighted the journey and achievements of two young

**KATAYUN KAPADIA
MODERATOR AT THE
UN 68TH COMMISSION ON THE
STATUS OF WOMEN**



UN BUILDING



**VANCOUVER RETREAT
GROUP PICTURE**



women from underserved and underdeveloped regions from the Bel-Air Hospital and Nursing College located in Panchgani, India. These success stories ended our session on a positive note by proving how bringing about change is very possible and how it can impact all aspects of society. The session was concluded by our moderator, Katayun Kapadia, by opening the floor for Q&A.

The United Nations' 68th Commission on the Status of Women has taught me that individuals from all around the world, no matter the background or origin, share a common goal making our world a better place by closing the gender gap and achieving gender equality. By uniting to find and implement solutions to ensure that even the young girl in the remotest of areas is empowered and has access to the necessary resources and support, we are inching closer to our joint objectives.

I know that the journey has just begun and there is still a long way to go, but I know that individuals make families, families make communities, and our communities are uniting across borders and boundaries to combat differences and create a world where freedom, opportunity, education, and happiness are part and parcel of life. I appreciate being able to participate in this experience of a lifetime and have truly taken in so much. I hope to implement the numerous solutions presented and ideas pitched within my daily life and surrounding community.

My heartfelt thanks and gratitude to FEZANA and the FEZANA UN NGO Subcommittee Co-Chairs, Afreed Mistry and Dr. Behram Pastakia, for this spectacular opportunity and especially for allowing our young Zarathushti Youth (15 – 17 year olds) to take part, to Aban Rustomji and ArZan Sam Wadia for believing in my abilities and encouraging me to attend, to my parents for supporting me throughout the entire journey that began in August of 2023, and lastly, to my fellow delegates for the wonderful memories and life-long connections.

VANCOUVER ZYNA LEADERSHIP RETREAT

By: Mahtab B. Dastur and Natasha N. Dungor

As we walked into the hotel lobby, we were greeted with tight hugs from the “welcoming committee” consisting of our incredible ZYNA Co-Chairs and local Vancouver youth. Our first introductions were to our roommates, Yasna and Parmis, who just like us, were inseparable best friends. After settling in, we gathered downstairs in the lobby for the “meet and greet” where we answered “getting to know you” questions depending on what color M&M we had selected (some of us ate the M&M before we realized that it wasn't given to us to eat!). Following the icebreakers, we went bowling which was an...interesting experience to say the least (let's just say most of us found out that we are unable to bowl without bumpers), during which we had one-on-one discussions, and got to know our fellow peers, as well as locals from Vancouver who had joined us for a night. Our evening ended with hot pizza, wings, and chats lasting late into the night back in the hotel lobby.

The next morning, we went to the local Dar-e-Mehr. Before entering the Dar-e-Mehr, we each were welcomed by the sprinkling of rose water from a Gulabaz, saw our reflection a mirror, and given a cookie

VANCOUVER RETREAT IN A CLASS



MAHTAB B DASTUR GIVING A TALK



SUMPTUOUS FOOD



in true Persian Zarthushti tradition. After attending the Jashan performed by Mobed Dr. Ardeshir Behi and paying our respects, we all filed into the main room of the Dar-e-Mehr for coffee and Persian tea to kick-off the events of the day!

Next up were activities led by the ZYNA sub-committees. To start, the Professional Development Committee played a name game, in which how fast you could recognize and state the name of the person in front of you, was key. Next, was the Outreach and Communications Committee who led a leadership activity. This activity included self-reflection, during which we listed leadership qualities in order of personal importance, as well as which ones we believed to be our strengths and weaknesses, followed by roundtable discussions regarding the order we chose and why.

Afterwards, one of us led the Religion and Culture Committee activity, for which we created large Zoroastrianism mind maps. Encouraging everyone to make connections from their everyday lives to Zoroastrianism, conversations erupted about everything from climate change to Cyrus the Great.

Arzan Uncle (Wadia) then gave a brief speech about the overuse of a catchphrase we all know, "Good Thoughts, Good Words, Good Deeds" and challenged us to give a 30 second elevator pitch explaining Zoroastrianism without using those words.

Up next was Fish Oil Shark Tank, in which we were divided into groups and each group was given 2 random words, one from the FEZANA glossary, and the other a random word so that together they created an arbitrary product (e.g. Divo Bowl, Farohar Oil) and pitch the product to a set of judges. Throughout the scrumptious lunch, we brainstormed all the ways we could pitch our product to the judges. It was announced that the most convincing team would be awarded 5 million Canadian dollars to advance their product.

Following the pitches, we cleared the room for a Bollywood dance lesson taught by Vancouver's own Shiraz from Shiamak, after which we went to play laser tag! After 2 lively games, smelly and tired, we all headed to feast on a Persian dinner, buffet-style. Naturally, we turned the restaurant into a dance party and partied till closing. Following the taste-exploding dinner, we headed to the hotel to go to sleep (or hangout like majority of us did).

The next morning, we stayed in the hotel and listened to some very captivating speakers. Our speakers were, Firdosh Mehta who spoke about the history of FEZANA, ZEDF and WZCC; Arzan Wadia who presented on several interesting findings from the Gen Z and Beyond survey; and Persis Ahrestani who discussed her professional journey (she is currently the CFO and interim CEO of Habitat for Humanity Greater Vancouver), immigrant struggles, and how finding love and support from her Zoroastrian community impacted her life. Right before lunch was served, we gave a short presentation on the North American Zoroastrian Congress in Houston, (December 29-1, 2024) especially highlighting the specialized youth track and many activities, especially for the youth!!

Following a delicious lunch, Benafsha Shroff (AKA B\$ Denver) kicked off about 1.5 hours of deep conversations. In a 3-round format, we took 5 minutes to quietly reflect on the thought-provoking questions for the

MAHTAB & NATASHA



round, and then in groups discussed a variety of questions and our answers. The final session of the day was a relationships workshop hosted by Kimiya Shahzadi! The workshop included learning relevant relationship facts, in a Q&A manner, and we received small packages with goodies and a cheat sheet about how to initiate and/or politely decline someone's approach (if necessary).

Finally, it was time for the masquerade ball at the transformed ZSBC Dar-e-Mehr which was beautifully decorated according to the theme. Hours of dancing and delicious food later, we celebrated 4 birthdays in the month of February - Anaheez Karbhari, Ava Daruwala, Yazdgard Daruwalla, and Kayishmand Chothia. Around 2:30 am, the last of us partiers left the Dar-e-Mehr and returned to the hotel.

Monday was a day of traveling back home for most, and for others, it was a last day of exploring the city. As for the two of us, surviving on barely 3 hours of sleep, we left the hotel at 6 am, to catch our flight home.

The ZYNA Retreat was an unforgettable experience filled with new friends for life and new memories for eternity. We hope to see all our youth members ranging from 15-35 at the next one!

SANJAN STUMBH



MUSLIM AGGRESSION ON SANJAN PARSIS FOUGHT FOR THE HINDU RAJA AND MANY LOST THEIR LIVES

(Excerpted from Kiss-e-Gulistanbanoo)

Our forefathers happily lived in Sanjan for several centuries, when Sanjan which was ruled by a Hindu Raja was invaded by a Muslim Captain, Alp Khan. There is a controversy in the history about Alp Khan – one side says that Alp Khan was sent by King Alauddin Khilji whereas the other party seems to think that he was sent by Sardar Mohammad Begdo, in 1444 AD.

At this time, there is no need to dig deep into the controversy. Suffice it to say that Kiss-e-Sanjan which was written in 1600 AD states that when Sanjan was invaded, the Raja asked for Parsis help. A brave young man, Ardeshir gathered a contingent of Parsis and went to war and won for the Raja of Sanjan in the first war. However, the second time the enemy army came in with more soldiers and Sanjan was defeated.

UDVADA ATASH BEHRAM



Due to the above defeat, the Parsis took their Atash with them and hid in the caves of Mount Bahrot but they could not stay there in peace. After 12 years once again they took their Atash Iranshah and stayed in the jungles of Vansda. Even there they didn't have any peace, when a distinguished Behdin ChangaAsha took them to his place in Navsari from where finally in 1742 AD, they established their Paak Iranshah in Udvada. And, there the Atash still exists. Parsis from all over the world go to Udvada to pay homage to the Iranshah Atash Behram.

Culinary Legacy: Kairasp Lashkari's Journey from Himalaya to Education

By: Aban Rustomji



In the bustling culinary landscape of Houston, one name stands out as a beacon of South Asian flavors and culinary excellence – Kairasp Lashkari, the mastermind behind Himalaya Restaurant. For over two decades, the Himalaya has been a beloved destination, offering a tantalizing array of diverse, flavorful, and affordable dishes that showcase the vibrant tapestry of South Asian cuisine.

Alison Cooke, the esteemed food critic at the Houston Chronicle, repeatedly recognizes Himalaya among the year's top restaurants, a testament to Lashkari's unwavering dedication to quality and innovation in the culinary arts. However, amidst this well-deserved acclaim, Kairasp Lashkari finds himself at a pivotal moment in his illustrious career – reflecting on his journey and contemplating retirement.

Kairasp's story is one of resilience, passion, and a relentless pursuit of culinary perfection. Born in Karachi, Pakistan, over four decades ago, his path diverged from his parents' expectations when he chose to follow his passion for cooking instead of pursuing a medical career. This decision began a remarkable journey that would shape Houston's culinary landscape.

In 1992, Kairasp took a leap of faith and opened his first Kaiser's Restaurant. Despite initial challenges such as financial constraints and limited space, his determination and culinary talent propelled Kaiser's Restaurant to succeed. One dish, in particular, became synonymous with Kairasp's culinary prowess—the famous chicken hara masala. Its vibrant flavors and meticulous preparation draw accolades from both patrons and critics alike, establishing Kairasp as a culinary icon in Houston.

However, his journey wasn't without its hurdles. Critics occasionally aimed for Kairasp's management style, describing it as abrasive. Yet, amidst the noise, Kairasp remained steadfast in his beliefs, emphasizing the importance of high standards and authenticity in every dish that graced Himalaya's menu.

As Kairasp reflects on his decades-long culinary odyssey, he turns his gaze towards a new endeavor – the launch of a culinary school. This decision demonstrates his deep-rooted commitment to education and desire to pass on his vast knowledge and expertise to the next generation of chefs.

(Excerpted from H.Chron <https://www.chron.com/food/article/houston-himalaya-chef-culinary-school-18685179.php>)



25th ANNUAL ZAH CARNIVAL
SUNDAY, April 14, 2024
12:30 to 2:30 p.m. at the ZHCC



It's time for our ever popular ZAH Carnival. All items are limited and will be sold on a "First Come First Serve" basis until stocks last.

All money collected goes to ZAH
(except the rental tables)

Donations are always welcome. Please bring cash or checks to buy the goodies. Please bring Ice Coolers to store the food purchased

Youth and Middle groups will sell Goat Chops, Kabobs, Patties, Kheema Samosas, Chicken Samosas, Kheema Rolls, Hot Dogs, Akoori & Toast, Dhoklas, Cookies, Brownies, Tea, Soda and Water. Also handmade Candles by Delna Surveyor

Bhel, Sev and Dahi Poori; Grilled Chicken Tikka; Chicken Farcha; Chicken Dhansak & Rice; Fish Sas Khitchri; Beef Mayo Rolls; Turkey Pattice; Paatra Chutney Fish; Turkey Cutlets; Goat Meat Kabobs; Masoor; Turkey Kheemo; Chana Dal; Scotch Eggs (egg chutney pattice); Jardaloo Gos; Sali Margi; Potato Poori; French Beans & Fish; Paapri; Chana Dal; Pora Sandwich; Akoori Sandwich; Dahi Vada; Falooda; Batasa; Sev & Dahi; Parsi Custard; Pista Kulfi; Mango Kulfi; Miscellaneous food items. Also sale of Table Mats, etc.

There will be games like Cake Walk, Guess the Weight of the Cake, Hula Hoop, Darts and Bingo for everyone. Tattoo, Pinata, Fish pond, Egg Hunt, Egg coloring and fun games for the kids. Music will be provided by our favorite DJ Gary.

Rental table of Rashna Oak - handmade envelopes, fancy gift bags, etc.
Delna - Dhansak & Curry masalas, jams, achars, etc.
Yezdi Engineer - Chutney, Patlas and Plants
Banafsheh Mondegarian – Flower center pieces, headbands, etc.
Nazanin Sarkari – Scentsy fragrance products

If you have any questions, please call Arzin Italia at 713-679-4998 or Yasmin Medhora at 713-301-1521