



**SUNDAY SCHOOL**

**PLACE:** ZHCC, 8787 W. Airport Blvd., Houston, TX 77071 Tel: 713-270-9339  
**TIME:** 11.30 a.m. – Different times for different groups.  
**DATE:** March 9, 2014

**Children’s Session:** Due to activities to be conducted at the Asia Society Center, there was no Sunday School session.

**Middle Group:** This group is for the children in the middle school. If your child falls in this age group, do please bring him/her to the Sunday School.

**Senior Group:** Sarosh Collector conducts this session.

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

- Friday, March 21, 2014 – Navroze Humbandagi*
- Saturday, March 22, 2014 – Navroze Function*
- Tuesday, March 25, 2014 – Avan Yazad Parab Jashan – Residence of Ronnie & Elvia Patel – See flyer*
- Saturday, March 29, 2014 – Outdoor Sports Track and Field – See Flyer*
- Sunday, April 6, 2014 – ZAH Special General Body Meeting – See Notice Below*
- Sunday, April 13, 2014 – 16<sup>TH</sup> ZAH Annual Carnival – See flyer*
- Sunday, June 1, 2014 – Maidhiayarem Gahambar (Shehanshahi Dae Mahino)*

**MEETINGS**

<b>GOLDEN GROUP</b>	Fourth Sunday of each month. Interested? Please call Zarine Balsara at (281) 304-6611
<b>LIBRARY COMMITTEE</b>	First Sunday of each month at 11:00 AM. Interested in helping? Or would like more information, please call Aban Rustomji at 281-493-1275 or e-mail her at <a href="mailto:aban@coatingindustries.com">aban@coatingindustries.com</a>

**NOTICE**

**NOTICE OF SPECIAL GENERAL BODY MEETING**  
**Zoroastrian Association of Houston**  
**Special General Body Meeting Notice**  
**Sunday April 6, 2014**  
**Lunch @ 1:00pm - Meeting @ 2:00pm**

The ZAH Executive Committee (EC) would like to call a special general body meeting on **Sunday, April 6th, 2014 at 2:00PM**, at the Zarathushti Heritage and Cultural Center (ZHCC). The meeting is to discuss and obtain vote from the general membership on one of the proposal mentioned below. We will also provide critical information for Phase III-A status and our strategic 7-year revenue plan.

The ZAH EC has been working on a Strategic 7-year Revenue Plan comprising of multiple aspects including Capital Projects as listed below:

### **1. Build an Atash Kadeh on ZAH property**

The ZAH EC has received a proposal from the President of the North American Mobed Council (NAMC) to help fund the construction of an Atash Kadeh on ZAH Property. The Donor is willing to donate the entire construction cost of the new Atash Kadeh which will be built as a standalone structure on existing ZAH property. The EC would like to put forward the proposal to the general membership to discuss and vote on the proposal. As per the ZAH Operating Guidelines, EC recommends 25% of the construction costs to be collected and set aside for future Capital Expenses. ZAH EC would like to propose raising an additional 10-15% funds to be collected for Maintenance and Operations for the first 3-4 years. ZAH needs to raise these funds which have been included as part of the overall Strategic 7-year Revenue Plan.

**Motion 1: The General Body authorizes the Executive Committee to collect funds, finalize plans, get bids and construct the Atash Kadeh on ZAH property.**

### **2. Building Phase III-A of the ZHCC**

In the Nov. 2010 AGM, the General Body passed the following Motion:

***Motion 1: The General Body authorizes the Executive Committee to collect funds, finalize plans, get bids and to construct Phases III AND IV (new classroom, game-room, new prayer room and expanded kitchen).***

The ZAH EC has received a pledge of \$200,000 from Aban Rustomji and Family to build **Phase III-A**, in the area between the Library and the Youth room, The new addition will include 1 multipurpose room to be named as the Purvez Shiavax Rustomji Room (PSR) and an additional classroom for the use by the Middle group. The Purvez Shiavax Rustomji Room may be used for multiple purposes, including for any religious or educational purpose, such as a classroom, auditorium, multi-media theatre, etc. The addition of these rooms will fill the needs of our growing community by providing a home for the middle group students. In addition, the PSR room will provide ZAH the ability to host seminars, conferences, and other similar events.

ZAH EC also plans to present a proposal to FEZANA to enhance FIRES at the next FEZANA AGM in May and the multi-media functionality of the PSR room will be a critical element of this proposal.

The cost of the new addition including the 25% for capital expenses recommended by EC as per ZAH Operating Guideline is estimated to be approximately \$375,000. ZAH has already collected/got pledges for \$225,000 but needs to raise the remaining funds which have been included as part of the overall Strategic 7-year Revenue Plan.

The EC believes it's time to initiate the construction of Phase III-A, and we will present our plan for collecting the additional funds, and proceed with the construction of this addition.

### **3. Vision 2020 - Strategic 7-year Revenue Generation Plan**

The ZAH EC has created a Strategic 7-year Revenue Plan keeping in mind the two Capital projects mentioned above. We have to build adequate Maintenance and Operations reserves for ZHCC and the proposed Atash-Kadeh in order to support future Capital and Operational Expenses, in addition to our other Community needs. The ZAH EC will communicate the entire plan to the general membership in full detail including the duration, methodology, revenue expected, etc. at the meeting before beginning execution of this strategic plan.

We need the votes of the general membership to guide us on Motion 1 stated above. We will also be sharing pertinent information to all regarding the other two equally important topics listed above. We therefore request all members to spare some time and please attend this special general body meeting to cast their vote.

**Voting will be restricted to members who have paid 2014 dues, all checks must be received by the Treasurer before March 31, 2014. Voting via secret Ballot. Members must be present to vote, no proxy voting.**

***Lunch will be served from 1:00PM to 2:00PM. Although the ZAH is hosting this lunch, donations are always welcome. Please RSVP to Diana Balsara at [dibalsara@comcast.net](mailto:dibalsara@comcast.net) by March 31, 2014 to get a proper headcount.***

## EC REPORT



From the Treasurer's Desk

### DID YOU KNOW?

**Did you know that our utilities amount for approximately 22-24% of our annual operating expenses?**

We would like to request you to please use the lights, A/C, water, etc. very sparingly, sensibly and with utmost care to assist us in our endeavor to keep the costs down.

### "ADOPT A UTILITY A MONTH" PROGRAM

As you all know by now, we have launched a new initiative called **"Adopt a Utility a Month" program** where you can adopt a utility or utilities for one or more months and defray the utility costs, or even for general maintenance, thereby supporting our "Center". We are so pleased to inform you that we have started getting a very favorable response and we would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to all the donors for their tremendous gesture.

Donations/pledges received so far are:

- **General Maintenance**
  - \$100 per month from Mar 2014 to Feb 2015 by **Roshan & Zarir Sethna**
- **Gas - \$60 per month**
  - Feb 2014 by **Naushad Mehta**
  - Mar to Dec 2014 by **Parvin & Mehraban Dinyarian**
- **Water - \$300 per month**
  - Feb 2014 by an **anonymous donor**
  - Mar 2014 by **Corporate match** of anonymous donor
- **Telephone - \$230 per month**
  - Feb 2014 by an **anonymous donor**
- **Security - \$80 per month**
  - Feb 2014 by **Avan & Noshir Bhatena**
  - Mar to Dec 2014 by **Parvin & Mehraban Dinyarian**
- **Electricity - \$1,200 per month**

Thank you very much again to all the donors and to all others who are thinking to adopt, please keep them coming !!!

## LIBRARY REPORT

*By Jango Mistry*

### ***North American Mobeds Council Seminar***

As we have done in past years, the ZAH Library Committee sponsored a day-long religion education seminar on February 15. The third NAMC seminar, organized by the North American Mobeds Council, was attended by about ninety people who heard with great interest lectures presented by four eminent Zoroastrian Mobeds from the USA and Canada on a variety of interesting topics.

The session opened with Mobedyar Khushroo Mirza from the ZSO, Toronto speaking on "Zarathushti Core Principles in Our Daily Lives." Back home, he said, we "absorbed our religion through osmosis". In his fascinating talk, Mobedyar Mirza expounded on the importance of rituals. Rituals provide a continuity of core principles; to dismiss rituals is to forget the core principles. The take-away message from his talk was that while Zoroastrians have migrated to different parts of the world which may lead to adoption of different habits and cultures, the religion can still flourish if the faithful adhere to the core principles of the religion. As he said: "Habits and rituals change, but our principles remain the same".

The second speaker was Houston's very own Ervad Faraidoon Pundole. Ervad Pundole galvanized the audience with his talk titled "Concept of Sin in Zoroastrianism." Declaring that "sin is anything that causes mental agitation", the talk engendered a lively debate. His provocative scenarios, like what may be sin in one context but may not be so in another, provided for a lot of animated discussion and questions.

Ervad Tehemton Mirza was the third speaker with a very attention-grabbing title: "Concept of Heaven in Zoroastrianism." A fascinating subject which can be rife with cynicism was deftly handled by the Ervad from the

ZSO, Toronto. Ervad Mirza took the audience on a journey to what *may* lie beyond the end of physical life. He used the *Arda-e-Viraf Nameh* as one source to lend an understanding of the concept of heaven, hell and purgatory in Zoroastrian eschatology. The book allegorically embodies the core principles of Zoroastrianism. Ervad Mirza, using the Gathas as a source, explained that Zarathustra was the pioneer in introducing the concept of heaven. What is heaven? Ervad Mirza asked the audience. How do we know what heaven is like? Ervad Mirza emphasized: Heaven is the best existence; it is a joyful place.

The final speaker of the day, Ervad Poras Balsara from ZANT (Dallas), gave an absolutely spell-binding presentation titled "Persepolis: Rising from the Ruins." With expertise gained from several years of intensive study, he presented an archaeological study of the recreation of Persepolis with some very interesting historical nuggets. Persepolis was the ceremonial capital of the Persian Empire, with three other capitals located at Susa, Babylon and Ecbatana. What was fascinating about Persepolis was its imposing architecture. The city boasted of aqueducts long before the Romans used this mode of water supply for their towns and cities. Construction of this architectural splendor was started under Darius I and completed by his son Xerxes. The talk was an interesting excursion to a glorious history of which all Zoroastrians must be proud.

It was gratifying to recognize that the books and DVDs that the Mobeds referred to in their presentations are already in the ZAH Library collection. Also, for the first time, the entire program has been video recorded and will be accessible through the FIRES web site shortly.

Ervad Kobad Zarolia from Toronto, President of the NAMC, concluded the day calling all Zoroastrian priests in Houston to coalesce in building harmony within our community.

Following up on the interesting day was an informal session on the next day (Sunday) with the priests. Ervad Zarolia also took advantage of the occasion to approach the ZAH Executive Committee with a proposal to build a new standalone Atash Kadeh on ZAH property. This topic is to be discussed in detail at a special ZAH General Body meeting on April 6.

### ***Oral History Project***

We have been telling you for some time about an ambitious and much-needed endeavor to document and preserve the rich backgrounds and experiences of fellow Zoroastrians in Houston. Previous write-ups in *Manashni* have talked in detail about this important effort.

In this project of Rice University, we will begin collecting oral histories among first generation Zoroastrians. Houston Zarathushtis have moved here from different places, with different backgrounds and experiences. It is in our interest to record your stories, especially while our elders are still with us.

On Saturday, February 8, about 24 volunteers attended a 6-hour training session conducted by Rice University. These were primarily younger members of our community who will interview elders and develop audio recordings that will also be transcribed and entered into the Zoroastrian Archive at Rice.

We are encouraged by the positive response we have received for this project. We now have enough volunteers to conduct the interviews, as well as enough people willing to be interviewed – for now. We have people ready to interview those who are willing to share their interesting experiences and recollections of personal, religious, and historic events, as well as their daily lives dating back to early years in their homeland, and as immigrants to the U.S.

Our kick-off is on May 3 at the Center when we will set up interviews with an initial batch of twelve senior members of our community in 2-hour segments beginning at 10 am and ending at 4 pm.

But this will be an ongoing process for some time, and we are always open to accommodating other participants in any capacity who want to be involved. You can participate by calling Pervin Sagar ([pervinsagar@yahoo.com](mailto:pervinsagar@yahoo.com), or 713-436-0518).

### **YOUTH GROUP REPORT**

*By Zal Daroga*

Since the last edition of the *Manashni*, we have begun working on our annual youth show, which we have planned for the summer. More details on our show will be coming soon. Also, we recently had a lock-in on the February 15th-16th, during which we had the opportunity to interact with and learn from the NAMC speakers. Later this month, on March 9th, most of the youth will be volunteering at the Asia Society Center. March 9th is the second Sunday of the month of March, and therefore we had Sunday School planned for that day at the usual time, however, we have moved the start time for the youth group's Sunday School session for that day to 10 A.M. Lastly, the youth is still

selling calendars with the following prices: 1 for \$15, 2 for \$25, and 3 or more for \$10 each. For example, 3 for \$30, 4 for \$40, and so on. They're selling out quick so be sure to purchase one soon. Thank you.

## **SPORTS COMMITTEE NEWS**

*By Farrokh Firozgary*

**Saturday March 29, 2014 – Outdoor Sports Day - Track & Field plus Basketball/Volleyball:** The ZAH Sports Committee is actively planning your first event of the year, ZAH Outdoor Sports Day – Track And Field plus Basketball/Volleyball scheduled to be held on Saturday March 29, 2014. We encourage you to actively participate at this event with your friends and family and enjoy quality time outdoors. In order to make it more competitive and a fun experience we have included Basketball and Volleyball in addition to our existing activities. We will have the following activities for you, with winners awarded for first and second place:

- Track and Field, Shotput, Sprints, Long Distance running, Basketball, Volleyball, Long Jump, Lemon & Spoon race, Shot Put, Three-legged race, Sack Race.

**[PLEASE CLICK HERE TO SIGN-UP](#)**

Charges will include lunch, drinks and tea/snacks. If you would like to volunteer that day please contact any of our committee members. **[We encourage you to sign-up today!](#)**  
Please **[CONTACT](#)** any of our members for sponsoring towards an event or for additional information.

## **MISCELLANEOUS**

### **NOROUZ DAY AT ASIA SOCIETY**

Asia Society had NoRouz celebration as a Family Day event on March 9, 2014 from 1 pm to 4 pm. Vehishta Kaikobad, who works as the Educator at large at Asia Society Texas Centre had the opportunity to help represent ZAH by planning and coordinating the event filled with art and craft activities that included Persian Miniature collage, Near Eastern architecture, egg decoration and book marks. Avan Bhatena's floral painting activity was extremely popular! The day was filled with melodious Iranian music played by Behzad and Kameh Keyghobadi and family. People were greeted by Giti Darayan's spectacular display of Haft Seen table and visitors were greeted by Lyla Daroga with a stem of flowers, sprinkling of rose water and a mirror to see one's own smiling face to further capture the joy of event! Next to the Haft Seen table, was a most valuable Shahnameh displayed in a show case. The Shahnameh was graciously loaned by Darioush Vafadari. The Persian atmosphere was further enhanced by the free-standing banners of Persepolis reliefs loaned to us by the Library Committee, thank you Aban Rustomji and Farrokh Firozgary. Thank you Aspi Colah for assembling them.

The ZAH youth under the guidance of Arzan Gonda highlighted the event with their beautiful dancing.

With the help of the spectacular team of ZAH youth group and parent volunteers the ZAH got a commendable exposure at the Asia Society and consequently to the Houstonians at large. It was truly a beautiful sight to see our Zoroastrians there ranging in age from infants to seniors. Hope we can continue to further enhance the ZAH identity in other city- wide events!

### **DAR NI PORI BAKE-A-THON**

*By Roshan Engineer*

We had our 6th Dar Ni Pori Bake-a-thon @ ZAH on Saturday, March 8.

We started this yearly event at ZAH in 2007, to observe our Avan Mahino Avan Roj - the auspicious Avan Nu Parabh tradition of making dar ni poris as a community project for all age groups in an effort to learn and teach making this delicacy, while raising funds for our Center through the sale of our poris by this totally volunteer activity. We held our 5th bake-a-thon in 2011- then had a break in 2012 and 2013 due to different factors.

This year, we had approximately 40 participants and made around 124 poris... our total contribution towards the ZAH Maintenance Fund will be around \$850 once all proceeds are received, including donations and pori sales.

As always, all ingredients and lunch items were contributed by our enthusiastic and supportive volunteers.

We started shortly after 10:00 a.m. and finished around tea time. We had "Shandy" with chips, then lunch for our hard working volunteers comprised of khichri-kheemo-papad-achaar - followed by tea, batasas, pound and King

cake. Yezdi Engineer had a collage of pictures from our previous DNP bake-a-thons - these fun memories captured in photos will have an addition with the pictures taken this time!

More than the money raised, is the joy of community gathering together and having fun through the day in a joint effort for our Center! This year, we had some new faces join us and we hope to count on them again next year! Many thanks to each and everyone who contributed in any way and participated with us. Many thanks to our generous donors who could not attend but yet sent in their share of help! Hats off to y'all!

See y'all for our next bake-a-thon in 2015!

## **XVII NORTH AMERICAN ZOROASTRIAN CONGRESS – LOS ANGELES**

Mark your calendar - XVII North American Zoroastrian Congress will be held in Los Angeles from December 29-31, 2014. The Congress is hosted by the Zoroastrian Association of California (ZAC), in coordination with the California Zoroastrian Center (CZC).

Our volunteers are working hard to create a fantastic, memorable and worthwhile experience for our fellow Zoroastrians from North America and around the world. With your support, we can get a great turn-out and engage Zoroastrians of all ages with a passion for their religion, culture and community.

Our website is now LIVE. It contains information about our program, discounted hotel rates, local LA attractions, advertising options and much more. Check it out at [www.nazc2014.org](http://www.nazc2014.org)

## **RETIREMENT**

*By Homi Davier*

**This educational article is provided as a courtesy by Homi Davier, Agent, New York Life Insurance Company.**

Twenty years ago, retirement was a time to look forward to and savor. But, today, we live in uncertain times. So, for most working adults, retirement has become very complex—requiring years of planning, a well-thought-out strategy, and a phase to be put off as much as possible.

### **We're living more years in retirement.**

Why? Company-sponsored pensions have all but become extinct. Thanks to medical advances and healthier lifestyles, people are living longer. In the early 20th century, life expectancy was 47.3 years vs. today's life span of nearly 79 years.<sup>1</sup> According to data from the Social Security Administration, a man who lives to 65 will live on average to age 84, while women of the same age should live to age 86.<sup>2</sup> Or course, this is good news; but we need to be prepared for it.

### **The truth about Social Security.**

And if you believe that Social Security will be there to support you, think again. For retirees in 2013, if you retire at the full age of 66, your maximum monthly benefit is \$2,533<sup>3</sup> — not enough for many of you to live comfortably.

While there are no easy solutions, life insurance can guarantee<sup>4</sup> the protection of your loved ones and also supplement your retirement savings<sup>5</sup> if the death benefit is no longer needed.

### **Leaving a legacy.**

Life insurance's primary purpose is to deliver death benefit protection, which can provide a generally tax-free legacy to your loved ones. But permanent life insurance also carries "living" benefits. Your policy earns cash value that accumulates tax deferred. This means you do not pay taxes on any of the accumulation within the policy. Additionally, you can access that money generally tax-free through policy loans.<sup>5</sup> This cash value can be used to fund college expenses, a small business loan, or any other anticipated or unexpected event.

In addition to the death benefit protection, the cash value of permanent life insurance can also be used to supplement your retirement income. As such, it can be a vital piece of the complex puzzle of retirement planning.

#### **NOTES:**

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Deaths: Preliminary Data for 2011," Donna L. Hoyert, PhD, and Jiaquan Xu, MD, October 10, 2012.
2. <http://www.ssa.gov/planners/lifeexpectancy.htm>
3. U.S. Social Security Administration, "Maximum Social Security Retirement Benefit," March 9, 2012.
4. Guarantees backed by the claims-paying ability of the issuer.
5. Loans against your policy accrue interest and decrease the death benefit and cash value by the amount of the outstanding loan and interest.

**16<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL ZAH CARNIVAL**  
**SUNDAY, APRIL 13, 2014 AT 12:45 P.M.**  
**(After Sunday school) at ZHCC**

**Bring your FAMILY and FRIENDS**

Enjoy the fun and festivity, variety of food to-go and eat at the event.  
**Egg Hunt and Piñata by Vehishta's Sunday School; Games in the Atrium by the Middle Group; Sodas, Pizza, Hot Dogs, etc. for kids by the Youth group; Games for adults & kids in the hall, Tarot Card reading, Cake walk, BINGO, Plant Sale and a lot more.**

Enjoy freshly grilled chicken tikkas & kabobs, yummy bhel poori, dhansak, curry rice, haleem, paapri, potato poori, sali chicken, meat sandwiches, green chutney, etc. Delicious lagan nu custar, dahi, shrikhand, faloodo, calinger juice, tea, kulfi, etc.

**ALL PROCEEDS GO TO ZAH**

Visit the Rented Tables for home cooked meals, parsi snacks and other items.

If you wish to rent a table for display or sell items, the rates per table are:  
Members \$35; Others \$100/-

**Contact: Yasmin Medhora at 713-466-3908**  
to rent tables, donate food items and prepare to-go food  
Donations are always welcome  
See ya'll there!

**AND**

**Go home with a clean car by supporting our Youth for their**  
**CAR WASH (proceeds for Youth group trips)**



# ZAH NoRouz Celebration Saturday March 22, 2014



At the Zarthushti Heritage and Cultural Center

[CLICK HERE TO RSVP](#)

Doors open at 7:30 p.m.  
Entertainment Starts at 8:00 p.m. sharp

Dance the night away!!  
Foot Stomping, Hip  
Swaying music!!!

Sumptuous Dinner!!

BYOB

## RSVP (Deadline 3/16/2014)

We request you RSVP and pay online for this event.

If paying by check, your check payments must be received by 3/16/2014, at :

ZAH  
Attn: NoRouz Function 2014  
8787 West Airport Blvd.  
Houston, Texas 77071

If you have any questions please contact:  
Tenaz Sunavala: 832-335-0075 (after 7 p.m.)

## RATES

ZAH Member\* : 11 years and up - \$25  
ZAH Non-Member : 11 years and up - \$40  
Member Children (3-10 yrs) : Pizza - \$7; Regular food - \$14  
Non- Member Children (3-10 yrs) : Pizza - \$11; Regular food - \$16

### IF PAYING BY CHECK: PLEASE WRITE (IN THE MEMO FIELD):

- No. of ZAH members/non-members (11 yrs and up)
- Number of children (3-10yrs) for Pizza or Regular food
- Please write "NoRouz 2014" on the envelope

## PLEASE NOTE

- Non-member rates apply for all RSVPs and payments received after March 16<sup>th</sup>.
- Non-member rates apply to all attendees who have not paid their ZAH membership dues by March 16<sup>th</sup>.
- Kids over 18 years must have separate membership from their parents
- Member rates apply to out-of-town house-guests of members (if payment received by March 16<sup>th</sup>)

Our goal remains to keep these functions as affordable as possible so you as a ZAH member can attend and enjoy. However if you feel that you are unable to attend solely due to the cost increase please let us know. We have donations in place to subsidize your cost and we will guarantee confidentiality. Financial ups and downs are a part of most families life cycles. In a way, they are a blessing because they allow innovation, dedication and hard work to take root in oneself. Please use this facility and in better economic times, there will be plenty of opportunities to remember and help your own community members and your own association a thousand times over. Please note this is only available to current ZAH Members in good standing.



# ZAH OUTDOOR SPORTS DAY

**Track & Field – Pre-Lunch**

**Volleyball & Basketball – Post-Lunch**

**Day & Date:** Saturday, March 29<sup>th</sup> 2014

**Time:** 9:30 am onwards

**Venue:** ZAH Center - 8787 W. Airport Blvd. Houston, TX 77071

**Events:** Sprints, Long Distance running, Basketball and Volleyball (Ages 12 & Up), Long Jump, Lemon & Spoon, Shot Put, Three-legged race, and more fun filled events

**Feature Event:** TUG-O-WAR!!!!

**Prizes:** First 2 places in every event

**Age-Groups:** 5 to 12, 13 to 30, 31 to 49, 50 and over

**Lunch, Drinks and Tea:** Included in entrance fee

**Charges:** Members - \$10  
(Under 3 yrs – Gratis) Non-Members - \$15  
Late RSVP's/Walk-Ins - \$15  
Spectators Welcome - \$10

**RSVP:** [\*\*CLICK HERE\*\*](#)

