SUNDAY SCHOOL

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

TIME:   11:15 AM.

DATE:   June 14, 2009

Children’s Session: Vehishta conducts this session.

Middle Group: Arnavaz Sethna and Pearline Collector conduct this session. The theme for this year is “Ceremonies” – the children learnt about the purification rituals. Don’t forget – lock-in in July.

Senior Group: Sarosh Collector conducts this session

Adult Sunday School Classes – If you are interested in joining Adult Sunday School classes, please contact Nazneen Khumbatta, preferably at nazneekhumbatta@yahoo.com

MEETINGS

ZARATHUSHTI INVESTMENT GROUP: The Zarathushti Investment Group meets on a regular basis on the third Thursday of each month at 7:00 PM. Those interested please call Yazdi Sidhwa 281-265-0589.

BUILDING CONSTRUCTION COMMITTEE MEETING: The Building Construction Committee (BCC) meets on regular basis on the third Thursday of each month at 6:00 PM. Those interested please call Yazdi Sidhwa 281-265-0589.

GOLDEN GROUP: The Golden Group meets on the fourth Sunday of each month. To join this group, please call Zarine Balsara at (281) 304-6611

LIBRARY COMMITTEE: The Library Committee meets on a regular basis on the first Sunday of each month at 11:00 AM. If you are interested in helping, or would like more information, please call Aban Rustomji at 281-493-1275 or e-mail her at aban@coatingengineers.com.
UPCOMING EVENTS

Sunday, Aug 9 – Tuesday, Aug 18 - Mukhtad Prayers (Weekday mornings @ 7.00am, Weekends @ 11.00am)
Wednesday, Aug 19, 6:30 pm – Humbandagi
Saturday, Aug 22 – Shehanshahi New Year Function
Sunday, October 4 – Fasli Mehergan Gahambar
Friday evening/Saturday all day/Sunday morning – Oct 16, 17 & 18.
Library event with Peter Clark
Sunday, November 8 – ZAH Annual General Meeting
Saturday, November 21 – Dinner Theater
Friday, December 4 – Library Event
Sunday, December 13 – Christmas Party after Sunday School

REPORTS

Dear ZAH Members and Non-Members,

As you are all aware, our center is in dire need of several small and large repairs. Some members of your Executive Committee are working very hard to raise funds for these repairs and maintenance projects. An anonymous donor has generously offered to match combined donations up to $5,000 for ZHCC repairs. Donations in any amount for “ZHCC Repairs and Maintenance” projects may be combined as long as they add up to $5,000 or more. Your Executive Committee is requesting members to step up and take the challenge so we can collect $5,000 from this donor as soon as possible.

Please make your checks payable to ZAH and mail them to Jasmine Mistry, 14303 Sandy Ripple Court, Sugar Land, TX 77498. Please add “ZHCC Repairs” in the Memo, so we can account for them accordingly. For more details, contact Jasmine Mistry at jasmine.mistry@airliquide.com or (281) 265 4351.

Sincerely,

ZAH Executive Committee Members

LIBRARY REPORT – by Jangoo Mistry

As announced previously, the ZAH Library has been chosen by FEZANA to represent the North American resource center for Zoroastrian literature in all forms (sort of a national Zoroastrian Library). At the Annual General Meeting of FEZANA, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was approved unanimously by the members. This MOU was developed jointly by the ZAH and FEZANA, and spells out the mission, scope, and modus operandi, as well as the joint yet separate identities of FEZANA and ZAH that form the new organization. FEZANA also approved the name FIRES for the initiative which stands for FEZANA Information Research Education System. Also, a catalog of the entire collection of the ZAH Library is already on the web at www.libraryworld.com when you click on FIRES on the left-hand banner of the page.

A retreat is being planned by the ZAH Library and the Sunday School teachers of the middle and youth groups for students and parents of ZAH on July 31 through August 2. The goal is to bring the groups together in an informal setting away from Houston to promote bonding, learning and sharing in a fun, interactive, but educational manner. Students at the Sunday Schools and their parents will be given more details about this event that is eagerly awaited by the youngsters and their parents alike.
Remember to mark your calendars for the upcoming gala annual Library function planned for the October 17/18 weekend. Peter Clark, the well-known author of “Zoroastrianism” has agreed to come from the U.K. for what promises to be an extraordinary event. An informal meet-and-greet with dinner is scheduled with the author on Friday evening, October 17. We are also working with Peter Clark to plan out the more formal presentations for the morning and afternoon of Saturday, October 18.

Ervad Soli Dastur of Florida, who recently visited us as speaker at the NAMC event, has presented us with a valuable and rare book called “The Khorda Avesta and Yast Codex E1” by Firoze Kotwal and Almut Hintze (also a recent speaker at a ZAH Library function). It is the oldest Khordeh Avesta (1601 AD) manuscript and is a significant addition to our Library’s collection.

Nergish Patel of Dubai has donated a delightful Gujerati book, “Mara Mamai ni Musafri”. The silver-haired amongst us will remember this story as it was serialized over months in newspapers and became a very popular cultural presence in Parsi households.

Dilshad Hormazdi has donated Zubin Mehta’s biography in memory of her dad Behram Irani. It is an interesting account of a full and accomplished life told in a surprisingly candid manner.

Thanks to Nazneen Khumbatta for a cash donation to the ZAH Library, and a special thank you to her son Ervad Noshir Khumbatta who generously donated the cash from the prayer ceremonies he performs for the community. What a splendid example he sets for the youngsters who will follow him.

**MISCELLANEOUS**

**KUSTI WEAVING PROCESS**

View step by step complete process of weaving of the Zoroastrian kusti. This 20 minute video is a must for all households as you can see how a kusti is woven from 72 threads of lamb’s wool representing the 72 Haas starting from “chantri”: to the finished kusti.

Directed by Cyrus Dastoor of Farohar Films
Sponsored by The Religious Education Committee of FEZANA
Donation $10
Place order with Arnavaz Sethna (ahsethna@yahoo.com)

This DVD was shown to the Middle Group Sunday School children. As a part of their homework they were asked to write their thoughts on the kusti weaving process. A couple of essays are produced below as they are quite noteworthy.

**Kusti Weaving – Sean Kavina** (14 year old – Middle Group Student)

Every day and night, as Parsis/Zoroastrians we tie our kustis to ensure that we are protected from the evils of our world. For centuries, all of our past ancestors have continued this wonderful tradition; someone should keep this going, but whom and how?

The art of kusti weaving is dying and I hope this is never lost. Until now, I never realized how vigorous and time-consuming kusti weaving is. These women must be spending days just to
make one, and on top of that they are not being paid very much for their hard work. They barely
make enough to support themselves. As a result, the next generation may not want to keep this
going. First of all, I think we need to come to an agreement with the Parsi community, and
increase the kustis to a reasonable price. Then, encourage people to give donations to the Agiary
or ZAH, and send 50% to all the kusti weavers. They should also be given free health care from
the local hospitals. Once that is done, more young Zoroastrians should begin learning how to
weave kustis. If everyone could see all the work put into each kusti, then I think they will all
appreciate it more and want to help out.

The Zoroastrian beliefs express who I am and who I some day want to be. I am proud of this
special part of my life and want it to live on in all of us. We shouldn't let go of this part of history,
because it must be in our blood. That's why I think Kusti weaving should never stop. These
dedicated women should get all the help they deserve.

**Kusti Weaving - By Friyana Sidhwa – 11 year old Middle Group Student**

Before we discuss this let us discuss what a Kusti or Kushti is. As I understand, a Kusti is a part
of our ritual dress along with the Sudreh. My dad mentioned that the Kusti is made of 72 fine
woollen threads which represent the 72 chapters of the Yasna.

It is a very important and religious element in our religion. I was really amazed when I heard that
it takes 25 hours to prepare ONE Kusti. I asked my grand-mom and she said sometimes it takes
a bit more if the Kusti is very thin (for navjotes or Weddings). My Dad's grand-mom used to make
Kustis but I had never seen one and the video was very interesting.

The Kusti makers as we saw in the video are decreasing in number around the world because of
the lack of time and money as the main reasons. Besides that people who weave these Kustis
should have a steady mind with a lot of patience, as this work requires a lot of skill and artistry.

This is something really sad and the skill must be revived as this is a very important part of our
religion and gives livelihood and monetary help to our fellow Zoroastrians from villages who are
quite poor and struggle to live.

We can help in many ways for example:

- Have an event and raise charity by creating awareness about these Kusti weavers
- Create a group who can help and donate money from the U.S to that group to give away
  these donations at places in India.

Due to various reasons, as there is a shortage of these Kusti weavers, we must think about things
that can revive this kind of art and skill by either:

- Paying them a good amount and attracting them to the profession
- Get help from other people who have never been in this trade before by training them
  and paying them well
- Create co-operative societies which would help these people sell at a better price
- Teach them how to make machine woven Kustis as well as donate some machines if
  they don't have time

In conclusion, I would like to thank you Arnavaz Aunty, very much for doing this for us and giving
us the opportunity as this video was very interesting and informative as I had never seen
something like this before and I will tell my parents and my brother to watch it as well.

**APPEAL FOR DONATION** – Jasmine Mistry – Member of the Executive Committee

As you are aware our center is in dire need of repairs, one of our major priorities being the
replacement of the ZHCC roof. Some members of your executive committee are working very
hard to raise the needed funds. An anonymous donor has agreed to match a dollar for a dollar in donations collected from ZAH members and non-members up to a maximum of $5,000.

We would like to thank the following members who have pledged/donated to this worthy cause

Aban and Purvez Rustomji
Farzin Dinyarian
Friends of ZAH
Jamshed Dudha
Jasmine and Yazdi Mistry
Jimmy Kumana
Nargis and Homi Cooper
Nazneen and Kershaw Khumbatta
Nilufer and Darius Surveyor
Rashna and Niraj Oak
Roshan and Zarir Sethna
Shirin and Bahadur Sarkari
Sweta and Minoo Sethna
Yasmin and Noshir Medhora
Yasmin and Rustom Engineer
Yasmin and Shapur Pavri

At this time we are requesting all members, non-members, who are considering sending out a donation to mail their checks made payable to ZAH to Jasmine Mistry, 14303 Sandy Ripple Court, Sugar Land, TX 77498. Please include "ZHCC Repairs and Maintenance" in the memo. If you have any questions/concerns about this effort, please contact Jasmine Mistry via email jasmine.mistry@airliquide.com or by phone (281) 265 4351.

Your ZAH Executive Committee

SUMMER ENRICHMENT CLASSES

Vehishta Kaikobad will be holding her annual Summer Enrichment Program at the Center. A limited number of places are reserved for children of ZAH members. Interested parents of children 8 years and above can contact her for further details.

MAIDYAIRYEM GAHAMBAR

Your Executive Committee would like to thank everyone who attended the Shehanshahi Dae Month Gahambar on Sunday, May 31, 2009. We would like to personally thank all our volunteers who helped with setup, serving of food, and cleanup afterwards.

We would also like to thank our Ervads who performed the Jashan, three anonymous donors and the following ZAH members who partially sponsored this Gahambar

Khushru & Prema Dastoor
Kersi & Thrity Engineer
Jehangir & Vera Jamshedji
Kershaw & Nazneen Khumbatta
Jasmine & Yazdi Mistry
Ronnie & Elvia Patel
Hoshang & Dilnavaz Sabawalla
Nazneen & Mehelie Warden
As always we appreciate your support in making ZAH gahambars an affordable community event.

Your Executive Committee

YOUNG DONORS – By Jasmine Mistry

I just wanted to draw everyone’s attention to one of my very young donors - Farzin Dinyarian. Farzin graduated from college last year and moved to Houston. Even though he has barely started working and has not participated in a lot of our activities at the center, he really wanted to contribute towards the repairs of our center. He called me last night with a lot of questions about this effort and other ZAH fundraising efforts, and at the end of our 30 minute conversation, he told me he would send a check for $1000 from his earnings.

On a much smaller scale Cyrus, my son who was listening to my conversation with Farzin volunteered to donate $11 that the tooth fairy gave him over the weekend. He said he wants us to use it to fix the hole he saw to the right of the side door at ZHCC. I need to get the $11 from him before he changes his mind!!!

AND YET ANOTHER YOUNG DONOR

Eleven year old Serena Setna woke up Sunday morning with a thought of helping the needy. Since she and her family are planning to go to Karachi, Pakistan next month, she thought of none other than the Parsi General Hospital as the beneficiary. She thought for a while and decided to make muffins and sell them at the Center, where people had gathered for the Gahambar. With a smile on her face, she took the tray of muffins around to the people. In a short while the muffins were gone and she had collected $280.00. She will personally hand over the amount to the hospital trustees when she visits Karachi.

This is not her first act of charity, Serena has donated her hair for the wigs for cancer patients, a couple of times.

*Thank you Serena, Farzin and Cyrus, you all are a great source of encouragement to other young folks like you. Manashni and its readers are proud of you.*

CONGRESS

The North American Zoroastrian Congress preparation has started and is rolling. The Committee ran a competition for the theme for the Congress and we received 45 entries. It was a difficult task to choose the best entry as each one had its own merit. The Committee ranked the entries and has decided on *Preserve! Protect! Perfect! – Preserve the past, Protect the Present, Perfect the Future.* This has a great potential for developing interesting program sessions around it. We will keep the community informed and involved as the Congress planning progresses.

WZCC – HOUSTON CHAPTER – JUNE PROGRAM

WZCC-Houston presents Mr. Tony Elavia, Phd. for an investment seminar entitled "INVESTING IN TURBULENT TIMES". Mr. Elavia is chief executive officer and chief investment officer of Madison Square Investors, a division of New York Life Investment Management. Mr. Elavia, Phd. is responsible for setting investment strategy and building or acquiring new investment management expertise. Prior to joining New York Life Investment Management, Mr. Tony Elavia, Phd. was managing director and senior portfolio manager at Putnam Investments in Boston, MA, managing more than $25 Billion in assets.
The venue is Madras Pavilion on the lake, in Sugarland at 6:30p.m. on June 25, 2009. Cost - $15 per person. For further information, please contact Zarir Sethna at zarirs@sbcglobal.net

MORE GRADUATES

High School

Naomi Bhappu is graduating Magna Cum Lade from Cypress Falls High School. Naomi was President of Executive Student Council, Parliamentarian for National Honor Society, Vice-President of the Future Business Leaders of America, as well as President of our ZAH Youth Group her senior year. As an underclassman she served on Student Council for three years as well as being a member of Key Club International. She will be attending the Cockrell School of Engineering at the University of Texas at Austin and plans to study Civil Engineering. Hook ‘em!

Zaine Karanjia graduating from Cinco Ranch High School. Will be going to the University Of Houston for further education.

Graduates:

Shirin Izad graduated from University of Texas – Dental Hygiene.

Manashni and its readers extend their heartiest congratulations to all the graduates. You make us proud!!

NEW ARRIVAL/MEMBER

Danesh and Dr. Nalli Desai, along with their two young children have relocated from Iowa. Their address is:

11634 Highgrove Dr.
Houston, TX  77077
832-295-3716
Farida Desai, mother of Danesh Desai has also relocated with them.

MANASHNI and its readers welcome the Desai family