SUNDAY SCHOOL

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

TIME:  11:15 AM.

DATE: December 13, 2009

Children’s Session: Vehishta will conduct the session.

Middle Group: Arnavaz Sethna and Pearline Collector conduct this session.

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

UPCOMING EVENTS

Sunday, December 13 – Christmas Party after Sunday School
Saturday, January 30 2010 - Jashn-e-Sadeh
March 20, 2010 - Fasli NoRouz

MEETINGS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ZARATHUSHTI INVESTMENT GROUP</th>
<th>Third Thursday of each month at 7:00 PM. Interested? Please call Yazdi Sidhwa 281-265-0589.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BUILDING CONSTRUCTION COMMITTEE MEETING</td>
<td>Third Thursday of each month at 6:00 PM. Interested? Please call Yazdi Sidhwa 281-265-0589.</td>
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<tr>
<td>GOLDEN GROUP</td>
<td>Fourth Sunday of each month. Interested? Please call Zarine Balsara at (281) 304-6611</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIBRARY COMMITTEE</td>
<td>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@coatingengineers.com">aban@coatingengineers.com</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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REPORTS

YOUR EXECUTIVE TEAM REPORTS

The EC thanks all the members who attended the annual General Meeting of ZAH, on November 8, 2009, at the ZHCC. A special speaker, Dr. V. Saroja Voruganti, presented the goals for her current research project – a genetic study of Parsi Zoroastrians in Texas. She is currently a postdoctoral scientist at the Southwest Foundation for Biomedical Research in San Antonio, Texas. Dr. Voruganti’s research is focused on (a) the identification of genes that influence the development and progression of complex diseases such as obesity, type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease, and (b) investigating the effect of gene x environment interactions on obesity, type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease in understudied populations. She is currently working on a genetic-epidemiological study investigating the genetics of complex diseases in the Parsi Zoroastrian community, and present the goals of her study, to solicit our members’ help in completing the study. Her project’s results would help identify genes that are influencing cardiovascular disease and other related conditions in the Zoroastrians, and would be beneficial to our entire community. Please watch your email for additional information if you are interested in participating.

Finally, the EC thanks all the members who were nominated to the EC. Nazanin Sarkari was nominated to the Treasurer’s position, while Kamalrukh Gandhi and Jehanbux Mehta were nominated to the open positions for members-at-large.

The minutes of the AGM, as well as reports of the various committees have been posted onto the ZAH website under the JUST NEWS link.

Remember to visit the JUST NEWS link on the ZAH website for the latest news on ZAH. Until next month, we, your EC, wish you the very best and look forward to seeing you at the Center. If there is anything you would like to discuss with the EC, please be sure to contact Percy Master (the ZAH secretary) by email at percy.master@hp.com, so that your issue can be added to the agenda for the next EC meeting.


LIBRARY REPORT – by Jangoo Mistry

On Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, October 16, 17 and 18, the ZAH Library Committee presented its annual Library gala, featuring Peter Clark. The well-known lecturer at several British Universities and the author of “Zoroastrianism: An Introduction to an Ancient Faith”, came from Wales for what turned out to be an extraordinary event. On Friday evening, at the informal meet-and-greet in the atrium of the ZAH Center, Aban Rustomji introduced Peter Clark, and outlined many of his distinguished accomplishments. Peter Clark remarked on how a Western scholar like him got interested in studying an ancient Persian religion like Zoroastrianism and spoke about the course on Zoroastrianism he teaches at Cardiff University in England.

In the more formal presentations on Saturday, October 17 Peter Clark drew similarities and differences among the teachings and principles of Christianity, Judaism and Zoroastrianism. Tracing the legacy of Zarathustra, he pointed out that the ideas that Jesus was preaching may well have come from Zoroastrianism and Judaism.

Speaking on rituals in general in the afternoon session, Peter emphasized the importance of rituals because they are the manifestations of faith. Since rituals can shed light and give meaning to religious doctrines, they are a source of religious insight and have the power to influence human behavior. Fire and water are the main stable components of any ritual, but our Zoroastrian rituals are unvarying, along with their associated sounds and movements that are specified and cannot be changed. The Sunday morning session was on Zoroastrian cosmogony and eschatology, tracing the wheel of birth, life and death in a fascinating presentation.

Due to the feedback we had received from previous events, more time was allocated for questions and answers after each session. It was obvious that the attendees had been fully engaged in the talks and asked wide-ranging questions that Peter graciously answered.

If you missed this event, please look for the next event sponsored by your ZAH Library. To listen firsthand and share ideas with renowned scholars is an opportunity that does not come often.

As a reminder, we are planning to have a permanent exhibit of black-and-white old pictures of our community’s family members on one of the Library’s walls. Recognizing that these are precious and
irreplaceable memories, we are asking you to bring these photos with you when you come to the AGM meeting on Sunday, November 8, and we will return them to you the same day before you go home. So scour your attic and closets for those photographs of your ancestors dressed in traditional garb or otherwise, and make them come alive again through this permanent display we have planned.

MISCELLANEOUS

“CHAIYE HAME ZARATHUSHTI NIGHT” – AN EVENING TO REMEMBER
By Noshir Bhatena

Almost 250 fortunate souls turned out for the gala “Chaiye Hame Zarathushti Night” at the ZAH on November 7th, 2009. They returned home thoroughly entertained and well fed, having feasted on some really good Parsi cooking. Along the way, they could also feel good about themselves, having helped raise $17,483 for the Center.

The evening was kicked off by Roshan Sethna and Farrokh Firozgary with a welcome address and an overview of all the items that were to be raffled and auctioned during the course of the function. And a fine start it was, as only Roshan and Farrokh can turn a list of housekeeping and agenda items into entertainment. With the crowd warmed up, we eased into the main portion of the entertainment for the evening – a fashion and dance extravaganza put on by the talented, multi-dimensional members of our community and elegantly compéred by Pervin Sagar. The first event was a fashion showcase of Indian Saris with our lovely ladies parading the various styles, ranging from the Maharashtrian Nav-vari or “9-yarder” to the traditional Parsi style. As Billy Crystal would have said, they all looked “simply maah-velous”. Following the opening fashion parade was the first in a line of dance numbers presented by Arzan Gonda, a proud ZAH member and owner of the dance class “Rhythm India” and her troupe of young, energetic, and graceful dancers. Their first performance for the evening was a well choreographed Garba dance, which is a traditional Gujarati dance also popular amongst Parsis. The colorful costumes and synchronized swirling colors were a delight to watch and highlighted the eclectic nature of our cultural heritage. Following the garba, our fashionistas were back on the ramp, this time presenting the finest in traditional bridal wear. The dominant color was white and the beautifully embroidered saris were elegantly displayed by our models as they sashayed down the aisle. The bridal fashion show was followed by Arzan and company’s second performance of the evening – a Bhangra dance from Punjab. Again, the vibrant colors and rhythmic, pulsating movement characteristic of the bhangra were a treat to watch.

Three door prizes, beautiful gift baskets graciously donated by Natasha and Naushad Mehta were awarded next, and then it was the evening wear segment of the fashion show. The stunning garas, brightly colored “kor nee” saris, brocades, and elegant satin blouses made for a wonderful pageantry of traditional Parsi style, and our youngest participant of the evening, Mahtab Dastur flaunted her “kor nu jablu”. It clearly made the statement that our volunteers and participants take their leisure hours very seriously. The traditional was followed by the modern and the youth then took to the floor in their jeans, kurtis and kurtas and showed that they are ever ready and willing to redefine what it means to be fashionable, in their own inimitable way. Once again, it was back to the dance floor with our young dancers performing their rendition of “Desi Girl”.

Now was time for lucky members of the audience to win more prizes. It was back to Roshan and Farrokh and first up was the much awaited drawing for the two beautiful garas donated by Aban and Purvez Rustomji. The lucky winners were Roshni Umrigar who won the red sari and Mrs. Ashiqueali Poonawala who went home with the beautiful blue sari. Two more door prizes, for free hotel stays made available by Kamalrukh Gandhi were also awarded to lucky recipients. Finally, Arzan and her dancers were back on the floor for the last segment of the evening as they paid a tribute to Michael Jackson.

With appetites held at bay all evening, the call to dinner was music to everyone’s ears. The authentic and delicious Parsi cuisine was catered by gourmet chef Rieana Medhora with mutton pulao, Sali murghi, and cutlets in “taamota ni gravy”, served with rotlis. Lagan nu acchar courtesy of Ketu Tamboli, Cyra Kanga, and Kamalrukh Gandhi, and our traditional “lagan-nu-custard”, prepared by a number of volunteers (using
Arnaz Mistry’s recipe) made the menu 100% Zarathushti. With our hunger pangs well sated, we were ready for the 32” LCD HD TV raffle generously donated by Thrity and Kersi Engineer and a basket full of authentic, traditional Zarathushti goodies (daar ni poris, acchar, malido, ghari, tomato chutney, and such other items) donated by Shireen and Jehanbux Mehta. The lucky winners of the TV were Elvia and Ronnie Patel, and the winner of Sillie Aunty Zarathushti goodies was Ronnie Patel. The final giveaway for the evening were three gifts baskets of delicious, handmade, gourmet chocolate art by Avan Bhathena. One of the three chocolate baskets had a genuine stone sterling silver over gold pendant, and the lucky winner flaunting it around was our very own Freany Khumbatta. Silent auction items were handed out to winners by Yasmin Medhora and everyone got ready for the Live Band and Dancing.

What better way to round off an evening of fun and food than to burn those calories away dancing to the music of our favorite Zoro band – Generation 1? With Farrokh Firozgary on the keyboards, Rustom Challa on lead guitar, Aspi Jamshedji on base, Jamshed Dubash on the drums, Eddie Behrana doing the vocals and talented and lovely Ziba Colah on the guitar and vocals, the dance floor filled up very quickly. These accomplished entertainers had everyone gyrating on the dance floor and covered a lot of territory to appease a lot of different tastes. It can’t be easy switching from Pink Floyd’s “Another Brick in the Wall” to “These Boots are Made for Walking” to satisfying the slow dancers with Besame Mucho, but they did it. All in all, it was great fun!

Where there is a successful event, there is a horde of volunteers and participants who worked tirelessly to make it happen. From Aderbad Tamboli and his “A Team” (Affraz Boomla, Noozar Boomla, Aspi Colah, Farendun Bhader, Khushrv Nariman, Viraf Nariman, Neville Divecha, and others) who built a new stage, Cyra Kanga who helped with RSVPS and seating, Arzin Italia who helped with Saree Raffles, Arzan Gonda, Kamalrukh Gandhi, Lyla Daroga, and Farrokh Firozgary, their back stage helpers, participants, and band members, who made the entertainment possible, Yasmin Medhora and Nargis Cooper who put together some exciting silent auction items (donated by ZAH members, Kershaw Khumbatla’s clients, Kian and Khodadad Pashootanizadeh), Persis Buchia, Nazneen Khumbatta, and Lyla Daroga who decorated the tables with Persis’s handmade ses’s and banana leaves, Arnaz Mistry, Farzana Sidhwa, Yasmin Medhora, Nargis Cooper, Khursheed Dastur, Minaz Dungor, Jasmin Katrak, Roshan Behramsha, and Roshan Engineer who made the “lagan nu custard”, Ketu Tamboli and Cyra Kanga who made the “lagan nu acchar” (ingredients donated by Kamalrukh and Minoo Gandhi), Farendun Bhader who helped with the food service, and last but not least, Jasmine Mistry who planned and organized the entire event. To them and all the rest who made it happen (if I missed out any names) – THANK YOU.

OUR ZAH MEMBER IN IRAQ

Life in Iraq….by Anosh Gonda

Upon landing from the KBR Chartered Boeing 737 flight into Baghdad, Iraq, in March 2006, the fear of “what the heck am I doing here” sets in…and sets in quick. As I walked through the abandoned Baghdad International Airport I only saw the shady armed guards with automatic weapons staring me down. A large armored bus awaits our arrival along with 4 other Humvees equipped with 50 cal weaponry to transport us to the main Military base…the fear remains and the reality of the danger sets in. After a 45 minute ride, I arrived at the base and was pleasantly surprised at what I was seeing. The sheer magnitude of the base, the facilities, the amount of people, and the sight of a Taco Bell stand brought over a strange calmness, and I realized I was not alone. I instantly began meeting other KBR workers that had been there for some time and experienced the life of working in Iraq. I began to walk the massive military base and saw thousands of containerized housing units, fast food shacks (i.e. Burger King, Taco Bell, Pizza Hut) and a store equivalent to the size of Walmart. All of a sudden, I realized the magnitude of the operation here and the billions of dollars that had already been spent in support of the troops…well this didn’t look too bad from where I was standing…right?

There are over 100 bases that KBR operates within Iraq to support the troops. When hired, they don’t tell you that you would be stationed in one of the most dangerous bases in Iraq, they just tell you that you could be stationed in an area more dangerous than the other…little did I know, I happened to draw the short straw.
on that one. I was transported over to a little Military base in the town of Rustamiyah (southeast Baghdad) to work as an Administrative Specialist at one of the most dangerous Military bases at that time.

For several months I went through what could only be described as bitter-sweet terror. I developed some of the best working relationships in my career but also had to endure the sheer fright of the incoming rockets and mortar fire which landed inside the base. There is no way to really describe what you feel when hearing the impact of a rocket...you just freeze up, go temporarily deaf and when it's all over, you laugh hysterically with the people around you and thank God that you survived...that particular base took incoming fire like that almost daily, and all I can say is that most of us were fortunate to avoid injury and/or death. The first couple of times you go through that you feel afraid but as time goes by, you get used to it and it becomes a part of life, and as it continues your complacency turns into anger and finally your nerves become shattered and even a closing door would make you jump.

Several months later I was promoted and had to depart that little base of terror to head up the Business Operations team which works in conjunction with the Department of State. This new position operates within the Green Zone at new American Embassy Compound (the most expensive American Embassy in the world). Since my first arrival in 2006, the hostile activity had reduced significantly, however, every so often we still do take the rocket and mortar fire, but rather than this occurring daily, we find it occurring over couple of months or so. The Green Zone is also unique because it's not like other Military bases, it’s an Embassy Compound which is heavily fortified with armed guards and entry control points in the middle of downtown Baghdad. So right now, I am pretty much living as a civilian in the city. Additionally, the Green Zone is the area which is targeted mainly by vehicle born improvised explosive devices (car bombs)...fortunately we haven’t had an incident where a car bomb has gone off in this area, but several still do occur just outside the perimeter wall.

So I guess the question readers must be asking at this point is, why would I put myself at such risk for a job? Do I really believe in this controversial war on terror, this peace keeping mission as some would call it? Other than the fact that I actually like my job, and the politically correct answer would be to say, “I believe in supporting our troops, and as an American I feel honored to back my government no matter how controversial the decision.” But the cold truth is, we’re here for the money! We put ourselves in danger, roll the dice on life and death in Iraq and Afghanistan, to work and support our families at home, pay off debts, save for early retirement, or to get a head start in life...whatever the reason may be...the root cause will inevitably be...“high $$$$.”

AN APEAL FROM CINCINNATI

Dear Executive Committee Members of the Zoroastrian Association of Houston,

Greetings to all of you from our small but very active community of the Zoroastrians from the tri-state area of Kentucky, Ohio, and Indiana. We celebrate our festivals, have jasans, muktad prayers, religion classes and summer camps. Now we have been working conscientiously since the past few years towards our united dream of having our own Zoroastrian Religious and Cultural Center in Cincinnati, Ohio, which is our central location for meetings and celebrations.

We need to raise at least half a million dollars to make this happen. We have not yet raised even 5% of that amount yet. Our first step is to collect about $100,000 to buy land for our Center. Our efforts are constant, and we don't shy away from even the most modest fundraisers no matter how hard we have to work for it. We are reaching out to you, our fellow Zoroastrians of the ZAH area, during this - our 2009 year end Donation Drive for our Center Project, to please consider sending a donation for our Center Fund. No amount is too small for us. We will accept it most gratefully. We are a non-profit, tax exempt organization, so your donations to our Center Fund will be tax-deductible to you.

If you will be so kind as to help us out, please make your checks payable to “ZAKOI Center Fund” and
please mail them to Bakhtavar Desai, 6383 Jamesfield Court, Fairfield, OH 45014

Any donation you send will help us out tremendously. If you need any more information about our organization please feel free to contact me at 513-829-7818, or email bfdesai@aol.com, or please visit our website at www.zakoi.com

Upon receipt of your donation we will immediately send you the receipt for it either via email or mail. With best wishes to all of you on behalf of all of us here from ZAKOI,

Yours Sincerely,
Bakhtavar Desai
Zoroastrian Association of Kentucky, Ohio, and Indiana (ZAKOI)

HOME COMING KING !

Bahrom Firozgary was elected "Home Coming King" On October 24, at Stratford High School 's homecoming dance; and to the student council earlier in the semester. His third college choice, amongst other things, personifies his abundant sense of humor. See link below, where he is pictured next to the Home Coming Queen, Sarah Bowman and school principal, Christopher Juntti.


Congratulations and Best Wishes to Bahrom from the Manashni readers

A LIMCA RECORD IN AEROBICS (THE HINDU reports on October 16th)

Hyderabad, Oct. 16 : - Mrs Dinaz Vervatwala of Dinaz's Fitness Studio Private Limited, has successfully completed an attempt into the Limca Book of Records, by conducting a continuous aerobics class for 12 hours overnight, Prashanti of the Studio informed in a press note here today.

This was the first step towards the preparation for the Guinness World Record to be set in January 2010. She is the first woman in India and the world to attempt today's record. She is being assisted by a team of doctors, dieticians, physiotherapists; and she would be continuing her training sessions in the coming months to come.

WE HAVE MOVED
Aban (Abby) and Homi Erani have moved to:

27922 Bracken Hurst Dr.
Katy, TX 77494
Phone: 281-392-2082 (Same as before)
Mobile: 281-723-4319
Email: hkerani@gmail.com

Rustom and Nasreen Khosravian have moved to:

7402 Antrim Trail
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(281)265-1056 Home
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