The MANASHNI team wishes its readers Happy Holiday season and Best Wishes for the New Year !!

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:  December 14, 2014

Children’s Session: Sunday School starts at 10.30 am. Topics for this month -
- Gujarati words, colors, songs, letters
- Review the Rojs in a fun way
- Role of Zarathushtra in the Christmas story

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

Sunday, December 14, 2014, noon till 3 pm - ZAH Christmas Party. See attached Flyer
Saturday, January 31, 2015, 6.30 pm – Jashne-Sadeh
Friday, February 6, 2015 – Library event
Sunday, February 8, 2015, 1 pm – Car Rally

MEETINGS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOLDEN GROUP</th>
<th>Fourth Sunday of each month. Interested? Please call Zarine Balsara at 281-304-6611</th>
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<tbody>
<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@coatingindustries.com">aban@coatingindustries.com</a></td>
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REPORTS

EC REPORT
By the ZAH Executive Committee

YOUR ZAH MEMBERSHIP IS ABOUT TO EXPIRE!

We are truly blessed by Ahura Mazda to have such a beautiful Center, the home of ZAH, donated by the generosity of our fellow Zarathushtis. Our home cannot function without our support through ZAH membership dues and individual donations. So we urge all of you to renew your membership and also ask all of your Zarathushti friends
who are not members to join today. Annually, our Center’s total operating expenses far outstrip ZAH’s membership revenue, which is one of ZAH’s primary revenue generators.

All current ZAH memberships will expire on December 31, 2014. We request all members to please renew their memberships for Calendar Year 2015. Renewing your membership is easily done online: simply visit http://zah.org/events/zah-annual-membership-2015, or post your check along with a copy of the attached membership form to: The Treasurer, ZAH, 8787 W Airport Blvd, Houston, TX 77071.

Please recognize the need for your support and contribution and pay your membership dues by January 1, 2015. As in previous years, we will waive any surcharges for online membership payments if membership is renewed by January 31, 2015.

Those who have already renewed their membership, we thank you very much. It is only with your support that our Center can be maintained.

There are several important issues that the ZAH Executive Committee will need to discuss with the general membership in early 2015, such as the building of the proposed new Atash Kadeh and other important bylaw amendments. Under the Bylaws of the ZAH, only members with paid-up membership dues for the current year (i.e. 2015) will be eligible to participate in and vote on decisions related to bylaw amendments. Please ensure that your membership is current so that your voice can be heard!

**YEAR END DONATION APPEAL**

The Zoroastrian Association of Houston was registered with the State of Texas on August 22, 1977 with no more than forty members. Today, 37 years later, Houston has over 700 Zoroastrians. We have come a long way …

With the help of large and small donors, we successfully completed Phase I of the Zarathushti Heritage and Cultural Center at the end of 1997 and opened formally for public activities in April 1998. Two years later we completed Phase II that included three additional rooms (two Sunday School Rooms and a Library) and a beautiful atrium.

None of this could have been achieved without your dedicated support, your generous donations, your invaluable time and your amazing expertise. Thanks to you we have created an organization that is exemplary in its growth and the power of its reach.

Now, as the year draws to a close, ZAH calls upon your generosity once again. ZAH’s strategic 7 year plan, **Vision 2020** is underway. The plan includes raising money for the construction of a multi-media room and a classroom (Phase III-A), as well as the maintenance of the new Atash Kadeh and our existing Building which is 17 years old. As a key component of this comprehensive Strategic Revenue Plan, we have launched a program called “Commit For 5” where we ask you pledge a certain amount a month for 5 years. There are 5 levels of commitment:

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<th>Level</th>
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<tr>
<td>Diamond</td>
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<td>Bronze</td>
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We urge you to give serious thought to this Program. If you cannot commit for 5 years, we still urge you to make a one-time donation to ZAH this year.

We would like you to make ZAH your favorite charity. You can be assured that every dollar you donate will be used for worthy projects; but more than that your generous gesture will help to energize and benefit the community as a whole.

You can make your donations quarterly or yearly by sending your check to:

ZAH Treasurer
8787 West Airport Blvd
Houston, TX  77071

Thank you for your continued generosity and have a wonderful and successful 2015!
LIBRARY REPORT  
By Jangoo Mistry

Double Feature Library Event

On Friday, the ZAH Library organized a presentation of an online exhibition followed by a movie on the Parsis.

Online Exhibition
By way of background, UNESCO, New Delhi, has initiated the “PARZOR Project” entitled “Preservation of Parsi Zoroastrian Heritage - Campaigns and International Conventions.” Recently, Google requested UNESCO Parzor to create an introductory Virtual Exhibition bringing awareness of the basic history, religion and culture of the Parsi Zoroastrians. This exhibition, compiled by Dr. Shernaz Cama, Director of the UNESCO Parzor Project, was launched recently when Google opened its first India chapter.

Our event featured Meheryar Rivetna who took the audience through the virtual exhibition. The “exhibition” covered the huge topic of Zoroastrianism through text, pictures, film, music and chanting – starting with the Gathas and coming down through monajats till today. Meheryar’s commentary, clarifications and explanations on various aspects of the slides and videos brought the exhibition to life and made the experience educational and enjoyable for all. A record-setting audience of over 70 people had several questions and comments at the end of the presentation.

The incredible reach of Google is expected to create a lot of awareness and interest about our religion and culture. The virtual exhibition is online and can be viewed at:

www.google.com/culturalinstitute/browse/zoroastrianism

You will find “Parsi Zoroastrians: From Persia to Akbar's Court” under the EXHIBITS section on that page.

Movie
The second part of the evening program featured a movie, “Qissa-e Parsi: The Parsi Story”, a delightful documentary by Divya Cowasji and Shilpi Gulati that explores the history of the Parsi community and strives to understand the Zoroastrian faith. The two young women created this documentary film for their dissertations after shooting over 100 hours of footage and extracting a small fraction from it for this initial 30-minute movie, to be followed by more documentaries later.

The film presents an endearing portrait of the small Parsi community, its history, and its association with India and the city of Mumbai. It strives to understand the Zoroastrian faith, and its philosophy to live, laugh and love, which is the backbone of the Parsi way of life, and what makes it so endearingly unique and beloved. As the community is plagued with anxieties over its dwindling numbers, it looks at current debates on issues of inter-faith marriage, and presents opposing viewpoints. On the whole, it is an attempt to understand a community which has always been numerically small, yet culturally and socially formidable.

The movie was enjoyed by the attendees, with frequent bursts of laughter and excitement during the screening.

What made the screening unique was a groundbreaking live interview via Webex with the two young directors in India following the movie. The audience got to see and hear the ladies and ask questions about the movie and their plans for the future.

The evening’s success was thanks to tech savvy Zubin Vakil who seamlessly setup up the etour, the documentary show, and the web conference.

For those who missed the event, you can view the movie online. Go to YouTube, and search on “Qissa e Parsi”.

YOUTH GROUP REPORT  
By Freya Daroga, Secretary - ZAH Youth Group

We hope everyone had a great Thanksgiving! Our ZAH Youth Group definitely has a lot to be thankful for and we sincerely appreciate our outstanding Zoroastrian community.

Over the Thanksgiving break from November 28-29 the Youth Group drove to Dallas for a Lock-In with our fellow Dallas Zoroastrian youth. While in Dallas, alongside the Dallas youth, we prepared care packages for the homeless as a service project. With our joint efforts we produced 441 care packages. We thoroughly enjoyed our time in Dallas and want to give a special mention to the Dallas community for being excellent hosts!
In the month of December, the youth group is hosting a Christmas party, on Sunday December 14, 2014 at the Center (ZAH) for all ZAH kids. The party will include lunch, games, and activities. During the party our youth will be collecting canned foods to donate to the Houston Food Bank. We anticipate that the party will be lots of fun and a great success.

Later in the month, on December 28th, the youth group will be flying to LA to attend the North American Zoroastrian Congress. Our youth is anxious and excited to meet new people, learn about our religion, and enjoy California!

A massive thank you to our ZAH Community and sponsors, for your unconditional support.

MIDDLE GROUP REPORT

Middle Group Lock-In November 2014
By Zubin Master

About every three months the ZAH Middle Group tries to have lock-ins. This time we had a lock-in from Saturday November 8th and went onto November 9th. We usually start the lock-in between 6:00 to 7:00pm. In that time we play with each other, talk and do various activities until 7:00, when the lock-in actually starts. We played a game called Dog in the Bone. We love this game so much it is a big pleasure to play it also. We play until dinner is served which is around 8:30. After everyone was done eating we had a presentation about Persepolis by Yazad Sidhwa. After the presentation we had a great one hour talking about Persepolis, what it was and why it is so significant to Zoroastrians. The best part about it was that we had fun talking about it. It was not like a meeting, but a fun conversation. That lasted until 10:00 when we played Pictionary. It was a huge success. Zeeba Kayani had planned it with us. We played until 1:30 am when we had to do our prayers and go to bed.

When we do our prayers we stand in a big group and recite the prayers aloud. After we are all done reciting we go over the prayer and translate it to understand what the prayer means. Then once everyone is situated we turn off the lights and go to bed until we wake up the following morning at 8:00 ready and refreshed.

Middle Group Sunday School
By Natalya Mehta

On November 9th the middle group had a Sunday School session. At the beginning of the session we started off with our usual prayers. We start with two Yatha Ahu Vairyo and one Ashem Vohu. After the prayers Pearline Aunty started her session on the Amesha Spentas. We in particular talked about Spenta Armaiti. We talked about how she is the spirit of devotion and faith, how she protects the Earth, and guides and protects the believer. We also talked about the other 6 Amesha Spentas and how all of them protect something and represent a type of spirit. After we concluded the session about the Amesha Spentas we ended the Sunday School session with our prayers, which was two Yatha Ahu Vairyo and one Ashem Vohu.

MISCELLANEOUS

ZARATHUSHTIS INTERFAITH DINNER DIALOGUES (By Kaemerz Dotiwala)

November 13, 2014 as temperatures fell and a chill wind blew through the City of Houston, Zarathushtis of Houston and the Interfaith Ministries of Metropolitan Houston warmly welcomed at the Zoroastrian Association of Houston’s Heritage and Cultural Center a sold out audience of over 250 members of the interfaith community practicing a broad spectrum of faiths which makes up the diverse tapestry of a community of shared faiths in Houston.

The Dinner Dialogues provided an opportunity for people to people meeting of many faith traditions, to learn about the Zarathushti Faith and listen to the sharing of other faith groups, in a safe, respectful, and enjoyable environment.

These dialogues have been held for many years where members of various faith groups have hosted the program at their private residences. This time around a unique experiment was tried where a faith congregation, the Zarathushtis, hosted the dinner at their center (Home of Zarathushtis of Houston) with each table of 10 being hosted by a member of the Zarathushti community.

The evening started off with guests being exposed to an exhibit of Zarathushti religious objects, artifacts, books and culture set up by Yasmin Medhora in the atrium and in the library by Aban Rustomji, Pearline Collector and Vehishta Kaikobad with posters from Farrokh Firozgary. Shahnaz Sidhwa assisted that evening by explaining the various items to the visitors. Artfully photographed by Noshir Medhora the evening’s event can be viewed here
The program for the evening started with a welcome by Reverend Gregory Hahn, director of Interfaith Ministries. A simple but scrumptious dinner of Zarathushhti dishes was served. This was followed by a short but detailed overview of the uniqueness of Asho Zarathushtra’s message, its practice today by Zarathushtis as well as life cycle ceremonies, rituals and celebrations.

The evening then progressed to twenty-five individual tables hosted by Zarathushtis who answered questions in the personal way they practiced their faith on a daily basis. This was followed by the guests, members of various faith groups. The format of the dialogue was well received and the participants wanted to see more similar dialogues.

Kudos to the Interfaith Ministries for their vision of developing this program around shared beliefs which brings all faiths together to sit at a table, break bread and understand the faith of other religions while developing new friendships.

A special thanks to the executive committee of Zoroastrian Association of Houston for co-sponsoring the dialogues, the Zarathushti dinner Dialogue committee comprising of Aban Rustomji, Yasmin Pavri, Yasmin Medhora, Nazneen Khumbatta, Manek Nariman and Kaemerz Dotiwala. A very special vote of thanks to Yasmin Medhora who devoted immeasurable hours of her time to make sure that we met the budget, had sponsors arranged the seating and made sure that the evening ran flawlessly. It is due to such great volunteers that ZAH can have excellent programs. A special debt of gratitude to all our hosts without whose participation we could not have had a successful function.

**ZAH PICNIC REPORT (By the Entertainment Committee)**

ZAH was extremely fortunate to have a sun shiny cool day for the Annual Picnic held on Sunday, 11/23/14 at the Sugar Land Memorial Park. The picnic was attended by more than 100 adults, children and pets that were ready to enjoy a fun day outdoors.

The Entertainment Committee had reserved a spacious shelter which had lots of tables and seating. People started coming around 12:00 noon and of course shortly thereafter the zoros started nibbling on some snacks followed by the potluck lunch which was a huge success. Every family had brought a dish to share starting with a large variety of sandwiches and snacks to full-fledged tasty dishes. Then all the cheerful kids went to the playground to have a fun time. The adults went for a walk around the lake enjoying the crisp weather. They also visited the Memorial to the fallen heroes of our Armed Forces from the Fort Bend area.

Tea time goodies comprised of batasas, bhakhras, yummy jalebi, fruit cake and mithai. Then most of us played a variety of Bingo games. Later the well-nourished zoros tested their strength playing tug-of-war which was a lot of fun.

Thanks to all of you for attending the picnic in large numbers; ZAH for paying the shelter fee for 5 hours (booking made by Roshan); Yezdi Engineer for taking pictures; volunteers who helped set up and clean up; our youngest helpers were Shireen and Ariana Anklesaria. A big thanks to the Entertainment Committee members of 2014 for organizing the picnic and their donation of table cloths, sodas, ice, water bottles, tea, parsi snacks, cake, jalebi, 2nd & 3rd prizes for Bingo – Fiona, Gary, Nozer, Roshan, Tenaz and Yasmin. The paper products were used from our previous functions. Yezdi will put the pictures shortly on the ZAH website.

**Team Member Update:** As mentioned by Yasmin at the recent AGM, the ZAH Entertainment Committee would like to give a warm welcome to our newest team members Tehmi Dastoor, Zia Anklesaria and Arzin Italia. As he steps down from the Committee we would like to profusely thank Fred Bhader for his tremendous help to our team and community over the past years and wish him continued good health and Tandarosti!

**Wishing All Our Community Members a Happy and Safe Holiday Season with Your Love Ones!**

Zia Anklesaria, Tehmi Dastoor, Nozer Dungor, Roshan Engineer, Farrokh Firozgary, Arzin Italia, Yasmin Medhora, Fiona Setna and Tanaz Sunavala.

**SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITY FOR OUR YOUTH**

Connecting Cultures - Building a Global Community - The U.S. Department of State’s Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study Abroad (YES Abroad) program, provides competitive merit-based scholarships for U.S. secondary school students (age 15-18.5) to study for one academic year in select countries. The 2015 – 2016 program application deadline is January 7, 2015. Click [http://www.yes-abroad.org](http://www.yes-abroad.org) to start a 2015 - 2016 program application or to access your application already in progress.

**NAZC 2014 MEGA RAFFLE** - 11 Great Prizes to win for only $20 per ticket

North American Zoroastrian Congress (NAZC) scheduled in Los Angeles is running a fantastic raffle – see flyer below. Due to time constraint, the NAZC organizers are selling the tickets in books of 5 at $20 per ticket to avoid accounting nightmare of selling single tickets nationwide. Families, friends and neighbors can pool in and buy the books of tickets. Prizes will be drawn on December 31 Gala Night. You don’t have to be present to win. Please
contact either Roshan Engineer at ryengineer@comcast.net or Arnavaz Sethna at asethna@comcast.net. For more information, please visit the NAZC 2014 website.

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**Christmas Party!**

Join the ZAH Youth Group for lunch and a fun filled afternoon with games and activities

Hosted by ZAH Youth Group for all ZAH kids

When: Sunday December 14, 2014  
From 12:00 PM to 3:00 PM  
Where: Zoroastrian Association of Houston  
8787 W Airport Blvd,
Houston, TX 77071

Please RSVP by December 10, 2014 to freyadaroga@gmail.com

Parents please bring a wrapped "surprise gift" with your child's name on it for your child to receive "from Santa" during the party.

We would appreciate donations of canned foods which our youth group will donate to the Houston Food Bank.

Any monetary donations to offset the cost of the event would also be welcomed :)

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