



Volume 28: Issue 9

September 2015

SUNDAY SCHOOL

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

TIME: 11.30 a.m. - Middle Group/ 10:30 a.m. - Children's group.

DATE: September 13, 2015

Children's Session: Sunday School will be held in the Main Hall at 10:30 a.m. Review the Gathas with activities.

Middle Group: This group starts at 11:30 a.m. and is for the children in the middle school.

Youth Group: Sarosh Collector conducts this session. Age group – Senior school

UPCOMING EVENTS

Sunday, September 27, 2015 – Indoor Sports at ZAH

Sunday, October 4, 2015 – Mehrgan and Maedizarem Gahambar – See attached flyer

Friday, Saturday, Sunday, October 9, 10, 11 – Annual Library Gala event (See library report)

Saturday, October 24, 2015 – Natak: Love is in the Air – ZAH Fund Raiser

Sunday, November 1, 2015 – ZAH Picnic

Sunday, November 8, 2015 – Annual General Meeting

Frisday, December 4, 2015 – Library event

MEETINGS

GOLDEN GROUP	Fourth Sunday of each month. Interested? Please call Zarine Balsara at 281-304-6611
LIBRARY COMMITTEE	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 aban@coatingindustries.com

REPORTS

REPORT FROM CHAIRMAN, EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
Aderbad Tamboli

Atashkadeh Update:

Over the last 7 months, the ZAH Atashkadeh design team has been working with our architect Cyrus Rivetna on planning the new Atashkadeh. At the Navroze function on Saturday August 22, Cyrus Rivetna unveiled the new design for the Atashkadeh. The new design was very well received, and we had a lot of good feedback at the meeting on Sunday, August 23. Some of these ideas will be incorporated into the design.

The beautiful new design is a blend of traditional and modern architecture. The floor plan of the Atashkadeh follows the traditional elements of the Agiaries of India/Pakistan and Iran, such as a Prayer hall, Jashan/Mukhtad hall, Paadyab Kusti areas. The Atashkadeh also has two bedrooms, kitchen and bath providing the ability to hold Navar training in the future. The Atashkadeh will also have the traditional garden.

The Prayer hall is very traditional, complete with the raised floor for the Atashgah (Kebla) and a Ghumbad tower to vent the smoke. It will be large enough to hold 100 people standing. Next to the prayer hall, is the Jashan/Mukhtad hall, with a capacity of 120 seats. Adjacent to the Mukhtad hall is the Urvishgah, which is used to perform the Paav Mahel Kriyas.

The exterior of the Atashkadeh is a classic timeless design with very traditional elements that will easily identify it as a Zoroastrian building, as well as using modern materials and finishes to create an elegant and monumental building. We are very excited about this design and are looking forward to its completion.

The next step in the process is to complete the detailed architectural and engineering drawings, as well as the MEP drawing. Next getting the permits from the city of Houston. Once the permits are obtained, we can start construction.

The ZAH Atashkadeh Design team: Shernaz & Feroze Bhandara, Sarosh Collector, Rohinton Deputy, Rustom Engineer, Yazdi Engineer, Farokh Firozgari, Sheroy Haveliwala, Jehanbux Mehta, Khushrav Nariman, Vispi Sagar, Hoshang Sethna & Aderbad Tamboli

SEE PICTURES AT THE END OF THE NEWSLETTER

LIBRARY REPORT

By Jangoo Mistry

Our Annual Gala

The ZAH Library is in the final stages of organizing its annual gala function on October 9, 10 and 11. The theme: ***“Survival of Zoroastrians in North America: Potential for a Positive Outlook”*** is hotly debated these days in India as well. The dwindling population of Parsis in India has raised serious concerns, leading to *“Jiyo Parsi”*, a scheme supported by the Government of India to arrest the decline in population of the Parsi Zoroastrian community there. Our focus, however, will be primarily on how the diaspora in North America can thrive and remain a vibrant force for decades to come

We are fortunate to have two outstanding experts who have studied the issues and can present viable alternatives to address this important topic. Dr. Rashna Writer, author of several books and recognized speaker, will present the strategic planning required to ensure a thriving Zoroastrian community in the North American diaspora. Our second speaker, Roshan Rivetna has studied and researched this issue for several years and will present data on population trends, etc. that will highlight the problem before us. She will present action items that will inspire us to action, especially the younger generation.

We are planning to have a “Meet and Greet” for the speakers on Friday, October 9 in the evening. For the potluck dinner, please bring with you a homemade dish to share and enjoy with others. The main program follows on Saturday, October 10. The two talks in the morning session will be followed by a panel discussion featuring four younger members of our community in the afternoon. The panelists: are Zia Anklesaria, Nozer Dungor, Tannaz Machhi and Toshar Mondegarian who will share with us their perspective of the future of Zoroastrianism in North America. The next day, Sunday, will be a 2-hour informal question-and-answer session.

This event is expected to generate an unusual amount of interest and avid discussion. So please send your RSVPs to Arnavaz Sethna (ahsethna@yahoo.com, or 281- 499-1832) as soon as possible. Your early confirmation will also help us in planning for meals and seating accommodation.

Please refer to the flyer for more information on the event, and put these dates on your calendar for an informative and exciting event that is not to be missed.

See attached flyer for RSVP and other details



From the Trea\$urer's Desk
Kayomarz Sidhwa

DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know that you can assist ZAH acquire donations at NO COST to you?

As you all know, we always try to look for innovative ideas/avenues to raise funds and acquire donations for our Center. As you know, we have started an initiative by introducing **AmazonSmile** to y'all.

AmazonSmile is a simple and automatic way for you to support ZAH every time you shop, at no cost to you. When you shop at smile.amazon.com, you'll find the exact same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience as Amazon.com including the Prime feature, with the added bonus that Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price to ZAH. **The AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the purchase price from your eligible AmazonSmile purchases.**

So dear community members, whenever you think of shopping on Amazon please remember to shop on AmazonSmile at <http://smile.amazon.com/ch/74-1945923> or <https://smile.amazon.com/> and support ZAH. This is a really quick and easy way to take full advantage of what we are eligible like other 501 © 3 organizations.

YOUTH REPORT

By Freya Daroga

President, ZAH Youth Group

August was the start of a new year for our Youth Group. New officers have been elected, and the new youth calendar has been set. We welcome our new members who have moved up to the Youth Group for the 2015-2016 year.

This year we would like to continue to raise funds for our Center and for our youth group. We will also keep a strong focus on volunteering activities for the ZAH and for the community at large. Of course our priority is to attend our Sunday School sessions every month.

August 9th marked the first Sunday School session of the new Youth Group. On that day, the Youth started to repaint our white board in our Sunday School room. This has been a project that we have wanted to do for some time now, and have applied the first coat onto the board, and will be finishing the second coat at our upcoming Sunday School session in September.

Last year we had organized a very successful blood drive at the Center, so we decided to do another one this year. The blood drive for this year will take place on October 4th. Along with the blood drive, we will be having a food drive on the same day. We are hoping that all ZAH members donate food that we can then take to a food bank. Please look out for more information regarding the blood drive and food drive, which will be sent out soon!

A massive thank you to our ZAH community and sponsors for your unconditional support. We look forward to a successful and exciting year!

ENTERTAINMENT COMMITTEE REPORT

By Yasmin Medhora

The Navroze function held on Saturday, August 22, at the ZAH Center was attended by 320 people. ZAH received estimated \$2K plus (includes 22% on expenses) from this event. Thanks to all our wonderful attendees in making our function a great success.

Our emcee for the evening, Farrokh Firozgary did a great job of starting the program on time and welcoming the guests. The Entertainment Committee had invited Polynesian dancers from a dance school in Houston. Their musicians played melodious songs and the dancers were very graceful. Next, Homi Davier coordinated the 2015 Congress 2000 Legacy Award distribution. The recipients were

commended for their excellence in the Academic Arena and their contribution to the ZAH center through community service, both, within the ZAH community and mainstream America. The High School graduates were also given awards by Aderbad Tamboli on behalf of ZAH. Later Aderbad introduced Architect Cyrus Rivetna who presented the Atash Kadeh Plans to the community. The program concluded with a lovely Hindi song by our talented Ervad Bomanshah Sanjana, followed by our energetic young performer Jesil Bharucha who danced to a Bollywood song.

The guests enjoyed nuts, pakoras and other goodies for appetizers. For dinner the yummy mora dal chawal and patio with lots of large shrimps prepared by Naushad Mehta was a treat. The karai chicken and bhindi from Aga's were relished by all. The warm mixed mithai halva from Aga's and ice cream for dessert were delicious. Thanks to Naushad and Aga's for giving ZAH a very reasonable rate and ample quantity for dinner. Thanks to Kaizad & Freny Rajkot for donating many bottles of the famous mango pickle from the mandir which goes very well with the mori dal.

We very much appreciate the free DJ service by Farrokh Firozgary who kept the music rolling with a variety of songs all evening.

The Entertainment Committee (with help from their families) organized this function – Zia Anklesaria, Nozer Dungor, Farrokh Firozgary, Arzin Italia, Yasmin Medhora, Fiona Setna and Tenaz Sunavala. They would like to thank all the volunteers who helped to serve the food and pitch in for various chores. Thanks to the Web Team for making the RSVPs and Online Payment easy for our community. Special thanks to Rustom Anklesaria and Sorab Italia for getting the food from Aga's.

MISCELLANEOUS

SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

congress2000legacy



It gives us immense pleasure to announce that we have our three winners for the **2015 congress 2000 legacy awards**.

We at ZAH recognize and honor our youth going off to college in order to recognize their excellence in the Academic Arena and their contribution to the ZAH center through community service, both, within the ZAH community & mainstream America. This Legacy Scholarship was established in 2006 as a result of the funds generated from the success of World Zoroastrian Congress 2000 & the additional grants received thereafter.

This year, again, the applicants were just spectacular, and it took careful deliberation for the selection committee to come up with our winners. All applicants went through the full award selection process set by an executive judgment of the Legacy Planning Committee Team and acknowledged by the ZAH-EC.

IT IS A TREMENDOUS HONOR TO BE THE RECIPIENT OF THESE GRANTS THE 2015 OUTSTANDING WINNERS ARE:

Rohan Chakraborty - the congress 2000 legacy award

Rohan is a quiet boy with impressive academic achievements. He is the son of Tannaz Machhi and Debasish Chakraborty. He graduated in the top 1% of his class from Seven Lakes High School, an excellent, large high school in Katy. Two of Rohan's many academic achievements include: National Merit Finalist and National Chemistry Olympiad Champion. Rohan has been a regular at ZAH Sunday School, has tutored other students and is an Eagle Scout. His essay on how the Amesha Spentas helped him in his tutoring, research and life showed his Zoroastrian values will be the firm base for his future achievements. Rohan is a freshman at University of California- Berkley studying Chemical Engineering.

Friyana K Sidhwa - the congress 2000 legacy award

Friyana is the all-around girl with outgoing personality. She is the daughter of Kayomarz and Farzana Sidhwa. She graduated from Harmony School of Science in Sugarland. Two of her several awards include: 1st Place in News Writing and 1st Place in Social Studies at the district level. Besides keeping up her academic achievements, she participated in many activities at ZAH and in her community. From entertaining us with her dancing to organizing blood drives to working with Youth in Philanthropy Program, Friyana always gives her all. In her essay Friyana commits to living by the adage "Zarathushti thy name is charity." Friyana is a freshman at Texas A&M studying Business

Ervad Vispi P Katrak - the Cyrus Rohinton Desai award

Vispi is an ordained priest with the mega-watt smile. He is the son of Percy and Jasmin Katrak. Vispi graduated from Langham Creek High School in Houston. He is a Navar and a first degree black belt. Vispi participates in many religious ceremonies at the ZAH. He worked tirelessly on youth programs including choreographing dances and writing the scripts for performances. Among his community services he participated in the iLead program and Peer Assistance Leadership (PAL) program. Even outside the ZAH, people who know Vispi hold him in the highest esteem for his work and community service. In his essay, Vispi indicates how the Yatha Ahu Vairyo prayer is influencing his life and that he brought alive the concept of Asha by participating in the PAL program. Vispi is a freshman at UT at San Antonio studying Management Information Systems.

The ZAH Legacy Awards recognize young ZAH students who are studying at the University level and who have achieved excellence in their scholastic studies, in extra- curricular activities and who have made substantial contribution to community affairs

The "**Cyrus Rohinton Desai Award**" was set up by the Desai family in memory of their son, a courageous young Houstonian who lost his battle with cancer. It was Cyrus's ardent desire to go, even for a day, to college but sadly this was not meant to be. **That is why this award is given exclusively to the person who is going off to college for the first time!**

Let us not forget our distinguished panel of judges who are selected by Dr. Farrokh Mistree from major learning institutions across the USA. **This year the judges were; Dr. Beheruz N. Sethna; Dr. Poras T. Balsara; Dr. Tinaz Pavri; Dr. Farah Shroff; and our ZAH Youth representative on the committee Mrs. Pearline E Collector.** We at ZAH are fortunate to have such a dynamic panel of judges from across North America and who care for our kids!

The ZAH Executive Committee and the **congress 2000 legacy** Committee congratulate our winners. We believe these students deserve to be recognized as innovators and leaders for tomorrow's global community. By supporting the next generation of great minds we pay tribute to the success of the World Zoroastrian Congress we had in 2000 from which the initial funds were generated!

In ending we would like to seriously identify and locate new funds by requesting families and corporations who would like to bequeath funds and have an award set up in the memory of a family member and/or an institution.

With our best wishes,

The legacy committee

**Homi Davier - Chair
Dr. Farrokh Mistree
Pearline Collector
Vispi Sagar
Percy Behramsha**

The congress 2000 legacy is an award program of the Zoroastrian Association of Houston

AWARDS & ACCOLADES

Isabelle Irani, 11 years old, represented Texas at the State Games of America in Nebraska this August 2015 in swimming. She qualified for this national amateur athletic event by winning medals in Texas' state amateur swimming competitions both in January 2014 and January 2015. At the state games of America, amateur athletes from across the USA compete in all genres of sports.

In Nebraska, Isabelle won a gold medal in the 50 yard butterfly and the 100 yard individual medley. She also won silver medals in the 50 meter back stroke and 200 yard freestyle relay.

Isabelle has been swimming since the age of 7. She loves swimming and competing. She lives in The Woodlands, Texas. Her favorite events are butterfly and the individual medley

Zerses Kermani received an award for exemplary customer service by Houston Airport System. Zerses works at a restaurant *Real Foods* which is located at Terminal C at Houston Intercontinental Airport.

Feroze Bhandara received an award for his contribution as the Director on the Board of Southwest Management District. He was instrumental in getting a monument of Mahatma Gandhi put up at the Mahatma Gandhi District at the intersection of Hillcroft and U.S. 59 on Sunday, August 16.

Bapsi Sidhwa was given a Lifetime Achievement Award by Pakistan American Council of Texas (PACT) at the Pakistan Independence Day.

IRS ISSUES

by Sarosh Collector

Your personal information and tax data is NOT secure with IRS. Tax information on 104,000 filers was stolen by scammers this past spring. According to IRS, the fraudsters tried to steal the data of almost 200,000 individuals. This was done through the IRS's get your transcript website. The scammers took the stolen information and filed approximately 36,500 fake returns and received refunds totaling \$39,000,000. That website has now been shut down, and more stringent requirements are used including paper filings to request the transcripts. Additional methods are being implemented to strengthen the IRS web portals. However, the moral of the story is FILE PAPER RETURNS. Do NOT TRUST Your Computer, OR the IRS Computer. 😊

SOME GOOD NEWS:

Individuals will have a few extra days to file their 2015 tax returns. Even though April 15, 2016 falls on Friday next year, it is a holiday in Washington DC (emancipation day) [the day we are free from our IRS debt] (joke). So, the due date is April 18, 2016. EXCEPT in Maine and Massachusetts, since they observe Patriot's day on April 18, and therefore are entitled to file on April 19. (Go figure).

BIRTH

Baby boy, Zai, 6.14 lbs, 20 inches long, born to Arzan & Ruzbeh Gonda on Tuesday, August 4, 2015. Proud and ecstatic grandparents are Viloo & Pervez Gonda (Houston), and Meher & Khushru Patel (Mumbai).

WEDDING

Raymond, son of Pearlina & Sarosh Collector and **Sarah**, daughter of Ron and Karen Erickson, were married on August 8, 2015 in Galveston.

Wedding bells rang for **Minoo Bomi Gazdar**, son of Roshan and Bomi Gazdar and **Karina Heelas**, on Saturday, August 22, 2015 at Stoke Place Hotel, Stoke Poges, Buckinghamshire SL12 4HT, England



FASLI MEHRGAN AND MAEDIOZAREM GAHAMBAR

WILL BE CELEBRATED ON SUNDAY OCTOBER 4 , 2015

JASHAN STARTS PROMPTLY AT 11:00 A.M.

If registered by 9/28 midnight, charges: \$10 for adults

Children up to 3 years gratis.

Ages 4-10: \$7

Starting 9/29 thru 10/3 charges for all \$15

[CLICK HERE AND RSVP](#)

We request you RSVP and pay online for this event



For questions please call
Zia Ankleseria at
(832) 646-0510 or email
at zsankles@gmail.com

SPONSORED BY:
BOB & CAROLYN YAZDANI

Donations to ZAH for
the Gahambar are
welcome. Thank you!!

**ZAH COMMUNITY GRATEFULLY THANKS OUR ERVADS
FOR PERFORMING THE GAHAMBAR JASHAN**

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 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.

Organized By: ZAH Entertainment Committee

ZAH Library Presents

Survival of Zoroastrians in North America: Potential for a Positive Outlook



Decades Hence: Whither North America's Zoroastrians ?

Rashna Writer

Dr Rashna Writer is the author of *Contemporary Zoroastrians: An Unstructured Nation* (1994), co-author of *The Memoirs of Keikhhrow Shahrokh* (1994), and *The Reshaping of Iran from Zoroastrian to Muslim* (2013). She will discuss the strategic planning it requires to ensure a thriving Zoroastrian community in the North America diaspora. Considering the long-term future of the community in its new settings, she will provide analysis of the micro Houston community and the macro North American Zoroastrian



Demographics Determines Destiny: Charting our Course in North America

Roshan Rivetna

Roshan Rivetna is deeply committed to perpetuating the Zarathushti religion and traditions of the diaspora. Roshan will present FEZANA's recent demographic study of worldwide Zoroastrians with a focus on North America. The study has interesting observations on population trends, births, deaths, marriages, conversions and immigration patterns. She will present action items to address current concerns, to inspire our next generation and to strengthen our community on this continent.

Zarathushti Heritage &
Cultural Center
8787 W. Airport Blvd

Do not miss this unique and exciting opportunity to participate in issues that will define our future—issues that are vital to our survival.

Contact: Arnavaz Sethna
Phone: 281 499 1832 or
<ahsethna@yahoo.com>
Lunch—\$10.00
Lectures are FREE

With cooperation of Society of Scholars of Zoroastrianism

PROGRAM

Friday Oct. 9

6:30 pm— Meet & Greet

7:00 pm—Welcome

Rashna Writer

Roshan Rivetna

Rohinton Rivetna

8:00 pm—Potluck dinner

Saturday Oct. 10

9:30 am Tea

10:00 am Roshan Rivetna

12:00 pm Rashna Writer

1:00 pm Lunch

2:00 pm Youth Panel &
Discussion

Zia Anklesaria

Nozer Dungor

Tannaz Machhi

Toshar Mondegarian

Sunday, Oct. 11

1:00 pm Informal session

Rashna Writer



LIBRARY



Front View



Front View of Entrance



Gates of Persepolis used as inspiration



Close up of Entrance



Example column and cornice details from other Agarians



Front: Looking from Prayer Hall side



Front: Looking from the covered entrance side