



Zoroastrian Association of California

December 2017

2016-2017 Executive Committee

President – Tehmi Damania Vice President – Perinne Medora Treasurer – Rooky Fitter
Joint Secretaries – Parvez Erani and Deelnavaz Tarapore Program Chair – Prochi Mistry
Youth Coordinator – Shirley Limath

UPCOMING EVENTS

LADIES CLUB: Sunday, December 10 at 2:30pm

Our next Ladies Club meeting will be held on Sunday, December 10, 2017. Our featured speaker is Dr. Maneck Chichgar. Maneck holds a Masters degree in Petroleum Geology from Tulane University and a Ph.D. in Geochemistry from Rice University in Texas. Maneck has worked as an Environmental Geologist for more than twenty-five years...first as the Director of Operations at Applied GeoSystems, an Environmental Consulting Company, then as Environmental Assessment and Remediation Manager at Northrop Corporation, more recently as Engineering Geologist for the State of California - Water Board. He will be talking on "The Environment and You". We as human beings are put on Earth to be stewards of this beautiful planet. We as Zoroastrians are especially responsible for keeping the elements around us clean as we respect and pray to them for our sustenance. Let us come together and discuss how we can achieve this. As always, we will have pot-luck lunch at 1:30 p.m., followed by the talk at 2:30 p.m. Please bring your favorite dish to share for the lunch. **RSVP: Lily Dastur at lilydastur@gmail.com or Vira Santoke at bvhm.santoke@verizon.net**

The following prayer ceremonies will be held from 12/21/17 to 1/1/18 at the ZAC Atash Kadeh.

Amardad Mahino Amardad Roj Parabh Jashan: Thursday, 12/21 at 4:00 PM

Maidyarem Gahambar/New year Jashan: Monday, 01/01/18 at 11:00 AM (sponsored by Jimmy Colabewala)

An RSVP at least a couple of days before each Jashan will be appreciated to zbhandara@gmail.com

New Year Eve Dinner & Dance: Sunday, December 31, 2017

SAVE THE DATE! New Year's Eve Dinner & Dance from 8pm - 1am on 31st December 2017. Come for delicious Persian food, lively music, fun and games! **More details to follow soon...**

PAST EVENTS

Pitishahem Gahambar

On Saturday, September 16th, ZAC community celebrated the Pitishahem Gahambar which was sponsored by Shahnaz Mavandi. The evening started with a Jashan performed by Zarrir and Zerkxis Bhandara along with Dr. Cyrus Dastur the grandson of the honorable late Vada Dastur of Iranshah Dr. Hormazdyar Mirza. After the Jashan a brief talk was given by Zarrir explaining the importance of celebrating Gahambar as one of our duties as a Zarathosti. Pitishahem, which literally means bringing in

the grains, is synonymous to imbibing/absorbing the blessings of Ahura Mazda. Achieved through His manifestation the fire by reciting our holy Mathravani 5 times a day as prescribed in our holy scriptures, which could be even as simple as performing a Kusti prayer or even simpler just reciting 2 Yatha Ahuvairyos and 1 Ashem vohu, if you cannot do any other prayers in all 5 different watches/ (gehs) of a day. The celebration concluded with scrumptious and delicious Vegetable Biryani, Dal, Lagan nu Stew, Kachumbar and Vanilla ice cream with Chocolate and Macadamia nuts cookies prepared by Zerkxis Bhandara.

Ayathrem Ghambar

On Saturday, October 14th, ZAC celebrated the Ayathrem Gahambar which was sponsored by the grandchildren and great grandchildren of Dr Minocher Kaikushru Contractor celebrating his 100th birth anniversary. He lived his life as a humanitarian, freedom fighter, and council member, trustee of the Surat Parsee Panchayat, and physician, who lived and practiced most of his life in Surat, India. Over fifty percent of his medical practice he provided free service. His legacy was founding the Surat Parsee Pragati Mandal which recently celebrated its 72nd anniversary where the yearly fee remains one rupee. He dedicated an almost 50 years in finding ways to honor Madame Bhikhaji Cama, whether it was having her face grace a stamp, renaming a road in Mumbai after her, and having her portrait placed in Parliament. The great grandchildren celebrated by dressing up in his favorite color red and having his favorite desserts celebrated his life with over 160 Zoroastrians. The celebration will continue in his hometown of Surat with a Gahambar for over 1000 people expected to attend. The evening started with a Jashan performed by Zarrir, Zerkxis Bhandara and Dr. Khushro Unwalla. After the Jashan a brief talk was given by Zarrir explaining the importance of celebrating Ghambars as one of our duties as a Zarathosti. Ayathrem, which literally means homecoming of the herds, is synonymous to bringing in the blessings of Ahura Mazda. Further, he explained that when one attends any religious ceremony that person progresses 1200 steps towards paradise. When one participates in a religious ceremony like any Jashan etc the vibrations and frequencies of the Mathravani helps you to fulfill the purpose of your birth in this material world citing the example of the Kusti ritual that, on reciting Manashni, Gavashni, Kunashni you make 2 loops, which are symbolic to the 2 worlds the physical and spiritual. You have come to the physical world to perform Good thoughts, Good words and Good deeds and when you leave this world that is what you take with you thus making this world a better place than when you arrived. Zarrir's talk was followed by Dr. Farhad Contractor's brief reminisces of his illustrious father which was summed-up by his daughter Dr. Laila Contractor. The celebration concluded with scrumptious and delicious Vegetable Biryani, Dal, Lagan nu Stew prepared by Reshma Rustomi and variety of desserts prepared by the 3 generations of the illustrious Contractor family.

Parabh- Khordad Mahino, Khordad Roj

On Saturday, October 21, Khordad Mahino and Khordad Roj Parabh Jashan was celebrated. The evening started with a Jashan performed by Zarrir and Zerkxis Bhandara along with Ervad Jal Birdy. After the Jashan a brief talk was given by Zarrir explaining the importance of celebrating the Parabhs as one of our duties as a Zarathosti. Parabh, which comes from a Sanskrit word Parva which means Holy day, just like holy days of Muktdad, Gathas, Ghambars and various other Jashan, which later on came to be known as holidays. He further explained the importance and significance of Khordad Amshaspand in our lives by saying Khordad or Haurvatat in Avestan is in charge of Waters, which signifies perfection, also giver of good health and reduces the vices of greed and lust, the next Ameshaspand is Amardad or Ameritat in Avestan who is in charge of plants and signifies immortality or long life. By reciting the short Khordad yasht on a regular basis can grant you good health and a long and illustrious life.

Advance Directive Presentation:

On Sunday, October 22 at 2:00 pm we had an informative talk entitled - Healing Hearts, Inspiring Trust, and Comforting Souls. Neil O'Connor started with a brief overview of the services offered by O'Connor's Mortuary. As our community is aging and we have learnt from experience that it is better to be prepared in every way. He passed on the presentation to Julie Correa their Advance Planning

Director who went into the details. Planning is important. But whether you make plans or not, in most cases decisions about what care you receive will still need to be made. Research has shown that: More than half of patients are unable to participate in end-of-life decisions at the time they are being considered. People are often too sick, suffering from dementia, or unconscious. The health system we have created supports treatment – we wouldn't want it any other way! Yet when healthcare professionals are uncertain about what the patient would want, the default is to treat, even if the patient wouldn't want the treatment. If they have not talked with the patient about his/her wishes, neither healthcare professionals nor even loved ones can reliably predict a person's wishes. It is recommended an Advance Care Planning process which includes the following steps: Think about what's important to you and what quality of life means to you. Consider your wishes for care – based on your experiences and your cultural and religious views and values. Select a person to make decisions for you when you are not able to make your own. Discuss your wishes with your decision maker and other loved ones. Document your wishes on an Advance Directive form. Give copies to your decision maker, MD, and other loved ones. Review and edit your Advance Directive if things in your life change. While some people may think that the most logical decision maker is the next of kin, this may not necessarily be the case. In your Advance Directive, you can: Designate a surrogate decision maker. Select an alternate in case the 1st choice is not available. Indicate if there is someone who you do NOT want to be your decision maker. What should you consider when selecting an agent? Who do I trust to make the decisions I want? Who is most familiar with my views and values? Who is most likely to be willing to take on responsibility? Would they be able to make these often-difficult decisions? It is important to tell your family members who you choose and why. It is not like a will. Don't lock it up in a desk or put in your safe deposit box.

POLST is for people with chronic, progressive, serious health conditions or for someone who is medically frail. It lists your wishes for specific treatments such as CPR and tube feeding. It is a doctor's order that is recognized throughout the medical system. It should be filled out in conversation with your doctor or medical team, and it should also be shared with your family.

WZCC Guest Speaker Mr. Yazdi Tantra

The World Zoroastrian Chamber of Commerce (WZCC) meeting followed after tea on the same day. Mr. Yazdi Tantra, VP of Global WZCC based in Mumbai made a flying visit to the ZAC Center for this event. Mr. Tantra gave a very interesting presentation on "How to make and revive our connections with other Zoroastrians worldwide in terms of our Roots, Culture and Businesses/Professionals through the Internet" He also informed us of the various websites which he has created specifically for Zoroastrians which we could make use of to connect with our brethren worldwide. Kavasji Dadachanji - President of WZCC Southern CA Chapter, introduced the Speaker and gave a brief overview of the Chapter's current activities.

Halloween

Once again it was time to dress up and enjoy the festive season of Halloween

All the young ones and some young at heart dressed up in their favorite hero/princess costumes and got together for an evening of fun and games. From the highly creative costumes to the 'easy to guess' costumes about 20 children from age 2 to 12 had a ball playing games which were arranged by our young moms Dilber Mistry and Cyra Contractor Morena in the Arjani Hall. Outside in the open the other young parents got together to show their talent for barbecuing which was spearheaded by our ever helpful and talented Xerxis Commissariat. The parade for all the youngsters was conducted by our VP Perinne Medora who got the children to answer to the questions posed to them and drew a lot of applause from the audience. All the participants were honored with a medal of participation and a bag of yummy candy. The atmosphere was relaxed yet buzzing with lot of activity and awesome barbecue stirred up by Xerxes and his team of helpful sous chefs ably overseen by our Program Chair Prochi Mistry.

General Body Meeting

The meeting was held on November 11, 2017. Before the meeting started ZAC felicitated Drs. Cyrus & Freny Mody. The president Tehmi Damania, presented them with a bouquet of flowers and a gift for the yeomen services rendered by both of them to the members of community over the years.

The General Body Meeting and the Election of the next Executive Committee started at 6:50 pm. For the very first time in maybe the history of ZAC there was a quorum for this meeting. We have 355 voting members and 168 voting members were present at the meeting. Before the meeting started the candidates who were standing for election were given some time to address the general body and members were able to ask them questions regarding their concerns.

The meeting started with the minutes of the June AGM which were mailed to all members being approved followed by the President's report by Tehmi Damania and the Treasurer's report by Rooky Fitter. The Executive Committee thanked all the volunteers of the different subcommittees and presented them with bouquets. The volunteers acknowledged were - Xerxis Commissariat (Maintenance and help organizing any function), Ruzbeh Daruwalla (Finance), Khushru Dubash (Maintenance & Landscaping), Mahnaz & Parvez Erani (Navroze Table), Firouz Felfeli (A/V), Noshir Irani (Maintenance), Meher Irani (Library), Phiroze & Yasmin Gundevia (Sports Day & Movie Night), Katy Khambatta (Walk-a-thon/Picnic), Roda Mistry (Library), & Hanoz Santoke (Webmaster). ZAC Executive Committee wanted to set up a \$50,000 Congress Legacy Fund and put up a proposal for approval by the general body. Many members were not in favor to set up such a fund at present so the proposal was not approved. The spending limit for the 2018-2019 was proposed as \$20,000 which was approved by the general body. Next, Xerxes Commissariat from the playground subcommittee gave a report and a power point presentation as to the progress regarding building a playground for the children. At present it is still in the planning stages so the approval has been postponed till the June 2018 AGM.

Next on the agenda was the election of the New Executive Committee. Zarrir Bhandara, the election officer along with his team of volunteer members then counted the votes for the position of president & program chair.

The following was the tally of total votes counted.

| <u>President ZAC</u> | In-Person | Absentee | Total Votes |
|-----------------------------|------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| Houtoxi Contractor | 79 | 46 | 125 |
| Firouz Felfeli | 85 | 35 | 120 |
| Cyrus Khavarian | 8 | 1 | 9 |

| <u>Program Chair</u> | In-Person | Absentee | Total Votes |
|-----------------------------|------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| Lily Mistry | 49 | 25 | 74 |
| Zubin Taraporevala | 123 | 54 | 177 |

Zarrir also confirmed that he had only received one set of nomination forms for the position of Vice President, Joint Secretaries, Treasurer, & Youth Coordinator.

The New Executive Committee for the Year 2018-2019 is:

President: Houtoxi Contractor Vice President: Nauzer Commissariat Treasurer: Hilla Machhi,
Joint Secretary: Sheila Madon & Manek Dustoor Program Chair: Zubin Taraporevala and
Youth Coordinator – Roxanne Unwalla.

First Salgireh of Our Atash Kadeh

The first Salgireh of our Atash Kadeh was celebrated by the ZAC community on Monday, November 13, 2017 at the ZAC Center. For the Salgireh a Vandidad Sadeh was also performed at the Atash Kadeh by Mobed Zarrir Bhandara. Around 60 members & non-members attended the Jashan which was performed by Ervad Jal Birdy, Ervad Arda-Viraf Minocherhomjee and Mobed Zarrir Bhandara. After the jashan Zarrir gave a talk on the significance of the FIRE to the gathering and then Arda and Zarrir read out the congratulatory messages received from Vada Dasturjis Firoze Kotwal and Khurshed Dastoor. This was followed by Chasni and a delicious dinner of Vegetarian Biryani, Malai Kofta, & Raita prepared by Zarrir Bhandara and his team. A celebration cake was brought by Dolly Malva and another dessert was contributed by Katy Alamshaw. Thank you all. ZAC also thanks all members who brought Chasni and helped to celebrate our Atash Kadeh's 1st Salgireh.

Tirangan Jashan

On Monday, November 27th in the evening we celebrated the Tir Mahino and Tir Roj Parabh Jashan (Tirangan). The evening started with a Jashan performed by Zarrir Bhandara. After the Jashan a brief talk was given by Zarrir explaining the significance of Tirangan with the following talk: In the Zoroastrian religious texts, Testar-Tir is venerated as radiant, glorious and invoked in order to bring rain, enhance harvest and keep the demon of draught at bay. Little wonder that it was originally meant to be a rain or monsoon festival and still celebrated according to the Fasal or seasonal calendar in the month of July. Around 30 members/non-members attended the celebration and enjoyed the dinner which was sponsored by an anonymous sponsor.

NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Messages for the First Salgireh of the Atash Kadeh from Vada Dasturjis

On the auspicious occasion of the First Salgireh of the Atash Kadeh, May the Light of the Sacred Fire strengthen our ancient faith and bring Peace and Harmony to our Parsi Iranian Zoroastrian Community. May the Blessings of the Padshah Saheb, be on the community and may the community seek enlightenment to preserve its ethnicity, and history and May they gain knowledge about the Religion and find the strength to preserve our ancient rituals. May every effort be made towards this noble cause.

I wish the community Exalted Life (us-jīti) a Good Life (vohu -jīti) and a Long Life (dareghem- jīti)
Atha Jamyāt Yatha Āfrināmī 'May it come about as I Bless'

Yours in his Service

Dastur Firoze M. Kotwal

Dear Zarir and all my beloved Hum dins of California,

It is a matter of pride to rejoice on the occasion of the 1st Salgireh of the ZAC's Atash Kadeh at California. I am sure that this Atash Kadeh will be the guiding force behind the minuscule but devout Zoroastrian community in California. The fire is considered to be the son of Ahura Mazda and represents Him in all our Zoroastrian ceremonies. While praying during day or night, when we stand before the altar in a Fire temple, the blazing fire reminds us of the radiance and glory of Ahura Mazda. It was with this vision our ancestors built Agiaries and Atash Dadgah wherever they settled in India. Today, these places of worship are a great source of deep faith, high inspiration and unbelievable courage of conviction to us. May the zeal and enthusiasm with which you are showering your devotion on this Atash Kadeh continue for centuries and may you keep the fire of our community's faith alive in our noble Zoroastrian religion. On this auspicious occasion, we offer our sincere prayers with a wish that may the Holy Fire blaze in its glorious radiance, conquering evil and showering its blessings on the universe.

Atha Jamyaat Yatha Afrinaami

I remain in HIS Service,

Dasturji Khurshed K. Dastoor

High Priest "IRANSHAH"

Book shelf in the Atash Kadeh

We have a new bookshelf in our Atash Kadeh designed and built by a friend of Sohrab Charna - Pheroze Loveji Tengra of Arlington, Texas. He is a retired engineer who does woodworking and also gives wood working class on weekends to Parsi kids, When Sohrab mentioned that he was involved in the ZAC Atash Kadeh and that we needed a bookshelf he immediately volunteered and got it done.

Thank you Sohrab for giving us the bookcase for the Atash Kadeh. Pheroze Loveji Tengra of Arlington, Texas is indeed a master craftsman. It was very sweet of him to offer to make it for us and we are grateful for the hours he spent working on this labor of love. Thank you Pheroze, ZAC appreciates your hard work and detailed finish.

Change of Address

Jamshid & Nadia Kharas Mistry and Cyrus & Thrity Kharas

Please see printed version of newsletter.

Condolences

Homey Writer passed away peacefully on July 9, 2017. He was the loving & beloved husband of Bacchi Writer, dearest father of Kayleene Writer & Rukshana Cowasjee, dearest father-in-law of Minoo Cowasjee and a loving Grandfather of Shanaia Cowasjee. He will be greatly missed by his family & friends.

Our heartfelt condolences to the family. May his soul rest in eternal peace.

Soonu Birdy passed away on October 6, 2017. She was the beloved wife of Ervad Jal Birdy, dearest mother of Meher Afshad Mistri and dearest grandmother of Tasha & Jamsheed Mistri.

May her soul rest in eternal peace. Our sincere condolences to the family.

Ruby Majaina (ex Karachiite), mother of Yasmin Sohrab Mirza, Diana Ardeshir Elavia, Daisy Hasan Abbas, Grandmother of 8 and Great Grandmother of 13, passed away around 11:00 pm on Saturday, October 28, 2017.

Our sincere condolences to the family. May her soul rest in eternal peace.

Dr. Nergesh Surti passed away at 1:27 PM on November 1, 2017. She is survived by her brother Dadi Surti, nieces Vera Parekh and Niloofer Rommell and nephews Neville Surti and Yazdi Shroff. According to her wishes, her body has been donated to the UCSD School of Medicine for research.

May her soul rest in eternal peace.

Purviz Batliwalla, wife of Daraius Batliwalla, passed away on Nov 28, 2017. She is survived by her children Armaity, Rohinton and Behram, Son-in-law Alec, Daughter-in-laws Marukh and Kashmiri, Grandchildren Sherazade, Cyrus, & Zeenia and her siblings Noshir & Shehrnaz in California and Villie, Godafriid & Pesi in India.

Our sincere condolences to the family. May her soul rest in eternal peace.

ZAC Upcoming Events at a Glance

All functions at the ZAC Center in Orange

LADIES CLUB: *Sunday, December 10 at 2:30pm*

Amardad Mahino Amardad Roj Parabh Jashan: *Thursday, December 21 at 4:00 pm*

New Year Eve Dinner & Dance: *Sunday, December 31, 2017 @ 8:00pm*

Maidyarem Gahambar/New year Jashan: *Monday, January 1, 2018 @ 11:00 am*



Zoroastrian Association of California

Membership Form

January to December, 2018

| Quantity | Please Select Type Membership(s): | |
|-------------------------------------|--|-----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Life | Husband/wife & children under 18 (DOB Req'd) | \$3000 ** |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family | Husband/wife & children under 18 (DOB Req'd) | \$125 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual | Adult (over 18) | \$60 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Senior | Over 65 Years of Age | \$40 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student | Full time Student (under 18) | \$40 |

*** Effective immediately*

All members MUST complete this form accurately – To be used for Directory information.

TITLE _____ FIRST _____ LAST _____

ADDRESS _____ CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE (____) _____ - _____ DOB ____/____/____ EMAIL _____

NEWSLETTER BY EMAIL _____ MEMBERSHIP TYPE: ___ life ___ family ___ individual ___ senior ___ Student

TITLE _____ FIRST _____ LAST _____

ADDRESS _____ CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

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ADDRESS _____ CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE (____) _____ - _____ DOB ____/____/____ EMAIL _____

NEWSLETTER BY EMAIL _____ MEMBERSHIP TYPE: ___ life ___ family ___ individual ___ senior ___ Student

DONATIONS are IMPORTANT

Maintenance _____ General _____ Youth _____ Education _____

Life Members please contribute towards the Center's maintenance.

Why not donate at least \$60 a year (only \$5 per month) to ZAC? CHOOSE to help.

(If additional space is needed, please use another form)

Please mail this form along with your check payable to ZAC: Hilla Machhi, Treasurer
Zoroastrian Association of California, 1424 E. Walnut Ave, Orange, CA 92867

or complete this form online and pay with credit card at www.zacla.org



1424 E. Walnut Avenue
Orange, CA 92867

To

