

HIGHLIGHTS

2005 FEZANA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, Pittsburgh, PA

The 18th Annual General Meeting of FEZANA was held on May 28 and 29, 2005 at the SpringHill Suites by Marriott in Pittsburgh, PA. The Zarathushti Association of Pittsburgh (ZAPA), under the Leadership of President, Houtoxi Contractor and the ZAPA Executive team members is commended for hosting this event and for the hospitality and welcome bestowed on the 40 plus delegates representing Fezana Member associations and chairs and representatives of Fezana Standing and Ad Hoc Committees. President Houtoxi Contractor welcomed the delegates to Pittsburgh on behalf of the ZAPA Executive committee and pointed out that inspite of ZAPA being a small association, it was cohesive and felt that at the end of the day, it was worth having even a small association to give an identity. She was happy to host this AGM in Pittsburgh, a city that has been cleaned up and is not same as it used to be. The ZAPA teams wholehearted efforts with a spread of homemade Parsi food and a tour of the new cleaner Pittsburgh as just some of the highlights of this AGM. Thanks ZAPA!

Elections:

Vice President: Bomi Patel was elected Vice President beating his opponent, Noshir Jesung. Bomi Patel will serve his first term 2005-2007.

Secretary: Rita Engineer was elected unopposed and will continue for another term.

Allocations of Funds:

\$5000.00 was approved to setup an Escrow account for the Welfare Committee to use at the discretion of Chair, Houtoxi Contractor.

\$5000.00 was earmarked towards Sports Sponsorship and the committee requested to present a TOR at the next AGM.

\$3000.00 to be transferred from the Welfare Committee to the Education Committee
\$2500.00 approved to subsidize 10 youths to the upcoming Youth Congress in Miami, Florida, December 2005.

\$10,000 was approved and allocated to the Mehraban & Morvorid Kheradi Endowment Scholarship.

Officers' Reports

President Firdosh Mehta welcomed everyone present and thanked Houtoxi Contractor, Lily Dastur and ZAPA members for hosting the 18th Fezana AGM and contributing their time and resource to successful organize this event.

With the support and cooperation from President Homi Italia and all members of ZSBC and the ZSC committee, Chaired by Bijan Khosraviani, the Z-Games in Vancouver in July 2004 was successfully accomplished. The North American Congress in San Jose in December 2004 was a resounding success, thanks to the efforts of then ZANC President Bomi Patel and his very efficient committee comprising of the Ehlers, the Tarapores and

others. He thanked Dolly Dastoor, Farrokh Mistree and Mahrukh Motafram for helping put together a FEZANA Promo PowerPoint presentation. Thanked Sherezade Mehta and Negin Sharyari for moderating the Open Forum part of the session. He thanked Rashid Mehin for his Farsi rendition of the proceedings and acknowledged the hard work and efforts of Celeste Kheradi, Rashna Mehta and Afsaneh Mehin for looking after the Fezana Table top distribution and presentation. He thanked Ness Lakdawalla and his secretary Louise Pratt for preparing and shipping the new Rotating Trophies. He gratefully acknowledged the generous contribution to the Awards Committee Funds by the Joshi/Verahrami family and the family of Shirin Nariman Dastoor.

He noted that the UN-NGO continued to grow due to the untiring efforts of Homi Gandhi and Behram Pastakia. The worldwide community now recognized the Welfare and Critical Assistance Committee as Houtoxi Contractor and Hosi Mehta continued their tireless efforts in providing services. These donations are possible in part by private donations and partly from the proceeds of the Damkevala Endowment. He thanked Freyaz Shroff for setting up the 1-800 hotlines. He reported that the Fezana Academic Education Scholarships Funds Committee, chaired by Dolly Dastoor continued to award several scholarships to students along with the proceeds from the Mehraban and Morvorid Kheradi Endowment. He profusely thanked Jehangir and Celeste Kheradi for their generosity and their work on the Funds and Finance committee. Firdosh thanked and acknowledged all committee chairs for their active participation and hard work through the year and welcomed the new incoming Committee Chairs, Dr. Kia Kaviani for Small Groups, Farishtehtbanu Khatibi for Public Relations and Bomi Patel for North American Zarathushti Congresss. He commended the world-class publication the Fezana Journal under the leadership of Khorshed Jungalwala and Roshan Rivetna. Firdosh mentioned that since the World Body meeting in July 2004 there seemed to be a convergence on the World Body issues with representatives of FPZAI, ZTFE and WZO.

Secretary, Rita Engineer, thanked the Executive team for their support in her role as Secretary and thanked the Fezana Member Associations for their support in the execution of her duties. She urged everyone to take a moment to put the subject matter in the subject line while responding to emails to enable track responses. The magnitude of incoming emails just forwarded made it difficult to track. Members were also urged to respond and acknowledge information sent to them.

Assistant Secretary, Farrokh Mistree reinforced with Rita Engineer had stated with regards to acknowledgement and using the subject header while responding. He informed the group that Fezana web has been in consolidation mode and that there were lots of links from the Fezana Website and everyone should take a look. He touched on the topic of search engines, specifically coining the word, “googling” to get a sleuth of information from the internet.

Treasurer, Rashid Mehin’s report was presented by Firdosh Mehta thanked Sarosh Collector and Framroze Patel for their assistance to Rashid Mehin. The Financial Statement for January 1 through December 31, 2004 was presented and approved.

ASSOCIATION REPORTS:

Delegates of the associations made brief reports on their activities. All associations continued to report having religious classes, social events for celebrations of Fasli and Shenshai Nouruz, Jashn-e-Sadeh and picnics and outings. Youth participation was encouraged and highlighted within the associations as well as in Fezana activities. Associations also reported successful fundraisers and a greater participation in events from their members. Yet others were happy to report the growing number of kids bringing home the need of having a strong culture base for their growth as a Z in this part of the world.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Academic Educational Scholarships Committee; Chair Dolly Dastoor reported that during the academic year 2004-2005 the FEZANA Academic Scholarship Program Committee received 40 applications for the FEZANA scholarships and the Mehraban Kheradi Endowment Scholarship. This was a 100% increase from the previous years. The growth in demand has been exponential. Mehraban Kheradi Endowment Fund Scholarship was awarded for MERIT (\$5000) and the recipient named the FEZANA SCHOLAR. (This is for Academic Merit PLUS involvement in the community services. Financial need is factored out). The \$5000 Kheradi Endowment Scholarship for Merit was awarded to Minoee Modi, a graduate of Cornell U, Harvard U and now majoring in Moral and Political Philosophy at Tufts University.

FEZANA scholarships (\$1000 each) were awarded to the first 10 candidates:

Rodabe Amaria, Colorado, Medicine Col Health Sciences Center.

Fariborz Farahmand* Iran/Atlanta, Computer Sc; Georgia Int of Technology
Nina Godiwalla, Houston, Business Wharton School of Business; Anahita Dua, Chicago, Medicine/Masters in Public Health St. George School of Medicine, NH;
Noushin Isadvastar, Iran/California, Industrial Engineering; San Jose State U; Tushna Soonawalla, India/Alberta, Engineering Management, U of Alberta; Arya Goudarzi, Iran/California, Engineering, U of California; Parendi Mehta, Florida, Economics/Intl Relations, Brown U; Kaiser Cooper, India/Colorado, Accounting, CPA , Colorado State U; Ayesha Dua, Chicago, Chemistry, U of Wisconsin; Zebalda Bamji , India/Washington, Human Genetics and Genetic Counseling, Howard University, Washington DC

Declined*

Awards Committee, Chairman Yasmin Pavri thanked Firdosh Mehta for the Awards Banquet at the Congress. She expressed her thanks to the families of Dinshaw Joshi and Shirinbai Dastoor for the trophies. She welcomed two new members to this Committee, Thrity Purbarani and Arnavaz Sethna and expressed a need to have one more from Canada to have a well-rounded representation on the committee. The TOR was circulated and she urged that nominations be sent in by the deadline.

Census & Survey Committee, Chair Noshir Jesung. In his absence Farrokh Mistree informed the group that the census form was made and sent for the approval of the executive committee. The form and its programming were completed a year ago. After getting the approval from the FEZANA executive committee, it was finally sent out in 2005. Their goal was to get as many Census forms to be filled out as possible to provide correct information.

Zoroastrian Sports Committee, Chair Bijan Khosraviani; Shahram Gandeharizadeh informed the group of the upcoming 3rd Unity Soccer Games in September 2005 as well as the hosting of the 10th Zarthushti Games in Los Angeles in July 2006. In addition, ZSC has also provided the youth sport organizations of Iran and the North American youth chapters with financial assistance towards purchase of equipment and pulling events together. It was decided to create a Zarathushti Sports Sponsorship and a TOR will be presented at the next AGM in 2006.

9th Zarathushti Games report by Homi Italia: The 9th Zarathushti Games, organized by The Zoroastrian Society of British Columbia, were held in Vancouver, British Columbia from July 1 to 4, 2004 at The University of British Columbia. Process of preparing for the games began almost two years ago. On March 17, 2003 formal document was signed. The opening ceremony was held on July 1, Canada Day, at the War Memorial Gym. It began with a prayer recited by mobbed Firdosh Balsara. National anthem of Canada was sung by Vista Pourbahrami. The president of ZSBC, Homi Italia welcomed everyone and thanked the executive committee members Behramsha Mizan, Kouros Edalati, Nooshin Kiani, Sharook Kapadia, Adi Desai, Ardeshir Behi, Farhad Mistry and Pouya Bastani for their tremendous contribution in organizing this event. He also thanked Bijan Khosraviani of the Zoroastrian Sports Committee for their guidance and cooperation in bringing these games to fruition. **In conclusion,** the 9th Zarathushti Games was a great success. It brought the whole community together specially our youth. We appreciate ZSC's guidance throughout the planning stage and during the games. Details on the Fezana website.

External Affairs Rohinton Rivetna; There have been a large and growing number of interfaith and outreach events and activities by Zarathushti associations and individuals, throughout North America. Last year's initiatives by many FEZANA associations include (see "*INTERFAITH-INTERALIA*" section of *FEZANA Journal*): involved with the "Parliament of the World's Religions" in Barcelona, Spain, July 7th to 14th and the Assembly of Religious and Spiritual Leaders, in Montserrat, Spain, July 4th to 7th. Zarathushti participants gave over 10 presentations, 3 morning prayers, and a 10-minute "Zoroastrian Blessing" at the Closing Ceremonies. Provided text and photos for the Zarathushti page of the **Interfaith Calendar** produced annually by NCCJ. As an NGO, it is incumbent upon FEZANA to participate in UN activities and to report major events in our Journal. Many thanks to Behram Pastakia (president, ZAMWI) and Homi Gandhi (president ZAGNY) for making this happen. They have mobilized a team of Zarathushtis, including a large number of youth members, to participate in conferences at UN headquarters.

World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce, President Rohinton Rivetna informed the group of the rise in membership from 400 last year to 800 members worldwide this year. There are 15 worldwide chapters: 6 North American chapters, Iranian Chapter, Middle East Group, 4 India Region chapters, UK, Australia and Pakistan Chapters. **New WZCC Journal, "SynergyZ"** produced by WZCC-ME was launched at a gala function in Dubai in March 2006. Sponsors include Mr. Pallonji Mistry and Alayar Dabestani. **WZCC Recognitions:** Outstanding Entrepreneur, Outstanding Professional, and Outstanding Young Entrepreneur/Professional and this year the Outstanding Entrepreneur Recognition was bestowed on Hosi Mehta of Chicago.

Funds and Finance Committee, Jerry Keradi, President informed the group that the year 2004 was indeed a better year for the Funds and Finance committee compared to the response in 2003. Last year at the AGM in May the Thousand Points of Light campaign had just reached the goal of 1000 points totaling \$100,000. The Thousand Points of Light Campaign 2 was started in May of last year and by the end of March 2005, collected second \$100,000, which brings this project to the Thousand Points of Light Campaign 3. Since the inception of the Thousand Points of Light Campaign 3 1/2 years ago, a grand total of \$215,000 has so far been collected. The wonderful idea put forth by Houtoxi and Hosi last year to have a special fund raising for the Welfare Committee in Chicago was very successful in bring approximately \$30,000 into that fund. FEZANA was also very fortunate to receive a large donation of \$15,000 from Dr. & Mrs. Hoshedar and Anahita Tamboli of Tampa, Florida as the first installment towards an endowment fund to be named in honor of his father. Also, the Kheradi family made a donation of \$18,000 in memory of his mother Morvorid, towards the Kheradi Endowment Scholarship Fund.

Information & Receiving and Disseminating Committee. Chair Khorshed Jungalwala(*) stated that each issue of the Journal has shown a remarkable improvement in display of pictures (colored and otherwise), presentation of innovative formats and highlighting of new topics. There has also been a considerable increase in the number of pages. The Legacy of Zarathushtra (Introduction to the Religion, History and Culture of the Zarathushties) edited by Editor-in-Chief Roshan Rivetna, was first published in Summer 2002. Three thousand copies of the first edition have already been sold or distributed and we are now offering the second edition. Thanks to Jehangir Patel of Parsiana for his help in printing the Legacy Book and distribution of the Fezana Journal in India. Complimentary navjote and wedding copies have kept increasing in 2001, 2002, 2003 and 2004. The Committee is working on a brochure on the history, culture and customs of Zarathushtis for mass distribution starting in summer. It will provide concise information about our faith and its followers for Zarathushtis and non-Zarathushtis. Roshan Rivetna informed the Committee that she wished to phase herself out of the Journal production over the next 4 issues. One cannot put a monetary value on the monumental work, which we all know and acknowledge, that Roshan has performed with total dedication all these years. The entire Group present gave her a standing ovation for absolute dedication to the Fezana Journal and for the level of excellence in the production of the Journal. The Five Phases of the Fezana Journal Production was presented to the Group.

Religious Education Scholarship Committee Kayormarsh Mehta (*). In his absence Firdosh Mehta, President informed the Group of the recipients of the 2004-2005 Moobed Faridoon Zardoshty Religion Education Scholarship: Zartosht Atropatene, studying Zoroastrianism and Avestan Language, University of London; Susan Karani, Ph.D in Old Iranian Studies, Univ.of Michigan; Mandana Moavenat studying Ph.D in Zoroastrianism, University of London; Bahman Moradian studying Ph.D. in languages and culture of Ancient Iran, University of Paris; and Burzine K. Waghmar Ph.D. in Iranian & Central Asian Studies, University of London. Outside of the activities of the Religion Education Committee of Fezana, the Mehta family in Chicago has formed an independent organization “Zarathushti Learning Center of North America”. Its goal to serve as an independent Zarathushti Religion Educational organization.

Small Groups Committee, Hoshedar Tamboli, Chair announced that Dr. Kia Kaviani has agreed to take over the Chair of this committee for the next term and wished him well. He then stated that this year was relatively quiet for all the small groups in the North America. Some organizations continue to question the nominal yearly fee and have asked justification for it. Others ask for financial support from Fezana for their own groups. He strongly urged more small groups to enroll themselves with Fezana to facilitate their participation in Z-activities in North America.

Strategic Planning Committee, Dolly Dastoor, Chair: The Groups focused remained on getting youth participation at their own association level and with Fezana at large. The need to raise more funds was emphasized. Generate more fun activities to get the youth involved and then blend in religious doctrines into the activities. The question that yet remains to be answered is what means to be a true Z? What does it means to all.

UN-NGO Committee, Homi Gandhi & Behram Pastakia Co-Chairs informed about the Committee’s involvement in the Millennium Development Project. The 49th Session of UN committee on women was well attended and represented. Dinya Patel working with Shernaz Cama to bring UNESCO exhibition to the UN in 2006. The committee is working on setting up a Fezana UN-NGO website and urges greater Z-youth involvement. Behram Pastakia enumerated the various ways the ZAMWI youth were involved at local levels – World environment Day, Clean up projects, bike rides to raise funds, etc. He informed of the successful Operation Eyesight project. The eyeglasses were all sorted by power and labeled for easy distribution and this was done in a penitentiary in Calgary. This Operation has reached as far as Hong Kong.

Welfare Committee, Co-Chairs Houtoxi Contractor and Hosi Mehta thanked Jerry and Celeste Kheradi they were able to raise \$36,000 at the Chicago Gala in September 2004. She urged all associations to advertise the 800 confidential hotline. She thanked all the working professionals who were actively involved in this project. The committee is now looking to working closely with the Scholarship committee to assist those in need versus merit. The Committee has offered assistance to a number of people with domestic violence issues, some with counseling; On another front a Zoroastrian

social worker volunteered three weeks of her time to help a group of fishermen rebuild their lives and livelihood in South India; financial support for given to her to enable her help people in need after the Tsunami tragedy. The Committee received approval for \$500.00 to ten students and at their request an escrow amount of \$5000 has been approved.

Historic Research & Preservation Committee Chair Jehan Bagli; Work on the book "Understanding and Practice of Obsequies" has been completed and reviewed by Dastur Kotwal in December 2004, who also contributed a 'Foreword'. As soon as his comments are all incorporated, it will go in for printing. Contributed "Plant life in Zarathushtrian Liturgy" for FEZANA journal (Jehan Bagli) Continued posting (4th year) of Shah-nameh couplets in Farsi, and Gujrati with English translation, and of Epistles of Adurbad Mahraspand (3rd year) in Pahlavi and Gujrati with English translation on the Z-net for the. (Manek Bhujwala). Pursued and widely publicized the quest of Zubin Mehta for misuse of Fravahar emblem in the announcement of movie 'Alexander'. (Manek Bhujwala)

Zoroastrian Youth of North America (ZYNA) Co-Chair Afreed Mistry gave an update on the upcoming Youth Congress December 2005 in Miami. The website was up and running and registration was open. A budget of \$2500 was approved to subsidize 10 youths to attend this congress. The TOR was presented and after discussion decided that the TOR be presented to Fezana again in 3 months. ZYNA held an open discussion session for youth at the California Congress to get feedback from the youth on activities and youth congresses. The session was very informative and helped the Co-chairs in putting the next congress together.

Creative and Performing Art Scholarship, Chair Sherezade Mehta informed the group of 4 awards presented this year of 1000 each to: Shahnaz Shroff, Farah Bala, Kayhan Irani and Dinyar Vania. Next year \$6000.00 will be awarded. The deadline for receiving applications is March 31 and judging will occur during the October to December months as noted in the TOR.

Other Reports

The 2000th Anniversary Celebrations, Chair Dolly Dastoor thanked every association for the marvelous job done. A CD has been circulated of all the celebrations, which was put together by Aban Rustomji. The Committee now stands dissolved.

North American Congress, Bomi Patel Chair reported an impressive 538 participants to the Congress with a 50-50 blend between Iranians and Parsee Zoroastrians. There was a perfect blend of religion and social activities and not one complaint was received. In the words of Farhang Mehr, this was the best congress he had ever attended. Fezana Award presentation was well attended. The next Congress in Australia in 2007, and Afreed Mistry presented to the group that support was needed from North America to send youth to Australia. Trying to keep cost low to get maximum participation. ZSO will take into consideration of working with OZCF.

North American Mobed Council, (NAMC) Jehan Bagli Chair (*) reported that several members of NAMC participated in various interfaith activities in North America.

- ✓ “Future of religion in a Secular world” at University of Toronto (Ervad Dr.Bagli)
- ✓ Commemoration of the 20th anniversary of The Toronto Peace Garden (Er Yezdi Antia)
- ✓ Halton-Peel high school interfaith meeting. (Ervad Nozer Kotwal)
- ✓ Meeting of International Community Council of Cleveland, Ohio (Ervad Dr. Bagli)

A letter was mailed on NAMC letterhead to the office of His Eminence Aloysius M. Cardinal Ambrozic of Toronto, which was acknowledged by a reply from the Office of the Cardinal