



INAUGURATION NEWSLETTER



Arbab Rustam Guiv Dar-e-Mehr, New York Inaugurated on Saturday, March 26, 2016

CONTENTS

Inauguration Special Section	า 2
Press Coverage	13
Thank You Section 14	-15
Get to Know:	
Claudio Cerminara	18
Dar-e-Mehr Perspectives	
Special Article Section	19
Accomplishments & Events	22
Brick by Brick:	
Dar-e-Mehr Update	23
Birth Announcements &	
Naviotes	2/

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ASTAD J. CLUBWALA, ZAGNY PRESIDENT

"This new building, in some ways, represents a passing from one generation to the next and can be seen as a gift from the generation that was born in our homelands of Iran, India and Pakistan to the generation of Zarathushtis born in North America."

"We talk, with a sort of resigned acceptance, of our dwindling numbers, but it is our next generation that will be crucial to the perpetuation of our religion. We leave quite a burden for them – let us do what we can, while we can, to make the start of their journey easier. Our new Dar-e-Mehr will provide them with a foundation, a base, a center for their spiritual and cultural lives."

"We are extremely proud of our Zarathushti stalwarts who have achieved great heights in every field of endeavor in our homelands. We now look forward to an equally successful new generation of Zarathushtis born in North America."







A Haft Seen table of seven plant-derived items whose Persian names begin with the letter "S" - decorated by IZA.



The Kebla holds a 3-foot tall metal Afarghanyu similar to a 250-year old prototype found at Dadiseth Atash Behram in Mumbai.



A traditional Jashan ceremony set up with offerings of sandalwood, incense, flowers, fresh fruit, dried fruit and malido.



A beautiful toran (garland) adorns a photo of Morvarid & Arbab Rustam Guiv, our original benefactors.



Dunkin Donuts munchkins generously donated by Shahrookh Bodhanwala for morning refreshments at the Inauguration.



Chalk designs ready to be placed at the entrance of the Dar-e-Mehr on the auspicious Inauguration day.





PROFESSOR KAIKHOSROV IRANI, GUEST OF HONOR

"What is this building for... 3500 hundred years ago a teacher of humanity in Iran contacted the spirit of the Universe... his name was Zarathushtra – one of the greatest teachers of humanity that there ever was and he inspired the world to believe in a perfect order – an ideal truth which he called Asha... that is what we revere and commit ourselves to in this building."

"I recall on the day before my Navjote when my father called me and said "do you know what you are going to do tomorrow." I said "yes." "And exactly what are you going to do" he asked me. I replied, "I am going to recite my prayers." He asked me, "Do you know the meaning of these prayers." I replied, "Yes. I have read it." He asked, "But do you understand what you are doing". And then he pointed out that "I am making a commitment." Ever since that day I have felt deeply about this commitment – it is a commitment to dedicate ourselves to this world to establish the perfect order - which is really ideal justice – justice without aberration, where each person gets what he deserves and no person suffers from what he does not deserve."

Prof. Kaikhosrov Irani, cut the ceremonial ribbon along with two of the congregation's newest Zarathushtis: Zarah Shroff and Farhaan Shroff.



ZAGNY Vice President and Emcee for the day, Khursheed Navder welcomes the congregation to this "momentous day in the history of the Zarathushti Community of Greater New York!"



30 Mobeds from all over North America gathered to pray and bless our new home.



Vada Dasturji Khurshed Dastoor of Udvada, India with Ervad Pervez Peshotan Patel of Elmhurst, NY along with Mobeds.



A procession of the Mobeds enter the new Dar-e-Mehr to signal the start of the prayers.



The traditional Jashan led by Vada Dasturji Khurshed Dastoor with Ervad Pervez Peshotan Patel serving as Raathwi.



30 Mobeds prayed in unison for over 2 hours during the Inaugural Jashan ceremony.



The fire from the Jashan prayer is transferred to the Kebla.



The first Atash Nyiash prayer is recited to Inaugurate the Prayer Hall and Kebla.



Tara Jamshidian opened the ceremony with the Star Spangled Banner (below), and was later joined on stage by children from the community to sing America the Beautiful (above).



VADA DASTURJI KHURSHED DASTOOR

"It is such a pleasure to be here today and I am unable to express my feelings but it gives me pride and joy to open this place for the people of North America and especially the people of New York, New Jersey and Connecticut."

"Udvada has been well connected with ZAGNY since a very long time – it was from you all – your contributions towards the Mobeds and people of Udvada that has been helping us in so many ways – year after year we have been receiving magnificent donations from ZAGNY and from other Associations and we are certainly thankful for that."

"And, I am really proud today that Udvada did contribute towards this wonderful place that is being inaugurated today.

The Guruj inside the Sanctum Santorum is from Udvada and is a gift from us that will always connect this place to Udvada. And, I would like this book of Udvada to be presented to ZAGNY, to Mr. Astad Clubwala, it will really cherish your memories of Udvada by going through this book."

"The blessings from Iranshah to you and your community – to this great country who has made you proceed ahead in your life and achieve your dreams – Blessings to you all and may this house of worship and place of worship always bless you and your dear ones and the legacy which you have given down to the younger generation will remain as a part of history in our Zoroastrian Community.

Blessings of the Iranshah to all of you – Yatha Jamayad, Yatha Afrinami."





LEON HARRIS, DEPUTY MAYOR OF POMONA

"Just over two years ago, this month, many of the same individuals assembled here to participate in the ground breaking ceremony – which is now a magnificent house of worship. On that rainy day you gathered to celebrate your renewed commitment to remain as a vital piece of the fabric of your community which began in March of 2001... and today we are an overflowing crowd gathered with you to celebrate your commitment and achievement and witness the consecration of this new house of worship which is a historic occasion for the community but also for the Village soul as well."

"May the tenets of your faith of Good Thoughts, Good Words and Good Deeds continue to be celebrated here in Pomona for many years. Congratulations."



KATAYUN KAPADIA, FEZANA PRESIDENT

"FEZANA wishes you all the best as this Dar-e-Mehr continues to foster active participation from its current members and encourages future generations in fulfilling the religious, cultural and social needs of the Zarathushti community in the tri-state area of New York, New Jersey and Connecticut. We in the FEZANA community value the participation and contribution of our stalwart member Association ZAGNY during the last 25 years and are very proud to see that today ZAGNY and IZA have built a place of their own where the local community will carry out its activities with pride."

"We sincerely hope that this Dar-e-Mehr built upon the strong foundation of Zarathushti principles and values is a beacon of inspiration and spiritual comfort to the Zarathushti community of North America."

Astad J. Clubwala, ZAGNY President, addresses a packed auditorium of 600 guests in the main hall.





ASTAD J. CLUBWALA, ZAGNY PRESIDENT

"Ladies and Gentlemen: Planning for this event has been quite involved and my thanks to the various Committees – many of whose members have been sleep deprived for the last couple of weeks. So, it was only late last night that I had to figure out what I was going to say today.

I have been mulling over something in my mind for quite a while, but never got around to expressing it strongly, especially in public. So for better or worse, I've decided to GO FOR IT.

What would historians say about the Zarathushti religion a century from now or two centuries from now?

We are at a cross road. We have been grappling with the fact of declining numbers and quite frankly, it's pure mathematics. If the trend of the last few decades continues the answer is obvious. The debate has also been going on for decades with extremely strong opinions on either side.

The world evolves with time, the planets evolve over time, nature also evolves - and so do religions. We Zarathushtis are admired by others, quite frankly for our thoughts, words and deeds. Other non-Zarathushtis are concerned about our dwindling numbers and in India, we are considered an asset worth preserving. We are particularly known for our adaptability.

I have a dilemma, because I have two diametrically opposed views. I am not a scholar of religion – far from it. However, I do possess a "good mind". Well, some may dispute that – but mainly, I look at this issue in very simplistic terms. In terms of an innocent child.

We all teach our children while they are growing up – to share. To share toys, to share books, to share food with those who are hungry, to share empathy for those in need. We are the religion of the Good Mind. We are taught to share everything. So why is it that we cannot share our highest asset – the religion of Ahura Mazda?

Now, on the other hand, I also have another viewpoint. I also have the highest respect for those who know our religion best – our priestly class and our respected scholars. They are knowledgeable about the details of our religion and I will always defer to them on religious matters.

So I am genuinely caught in the middle. Between my personal "liberal" views and my tremendous respect for those that have the "traditional" or "orthodox" views. So perhaps, what we need is a balanced approach – a genuine serious meeting of the minds. A conclave, comprised of a broad spectrum of people – The priestly class, the scholars and also laymen. And, a combination of people - with traditional views, with liberal views and those with moderate views.

And the selection of these people could be limited to two simple criteria: (1) Complete respect for views different from your own; and (2) Should be able to answer "yes" to the following question: "If it meant the perpetuation of our religion, would you be willing to move from your strongly held beliefs, in the spirit of compromise?"

After all what do we have to lose? We are running out of time. If we continue on the current path and do nothing, the historians will write about the "extinct Zarathushti religion."

Just some food for thought. Thank you."



SHIRIN KHOSRAVI, IZA PRESIDENT

"It is with a sense of pride that the community is able to see the day that they have been dreaming about – contributing their time, their work and their funds towards."

"As we are celebrating this wonderful accomplishment I think we need to recognize and pay due homage to Arbab Rustam Guiv who was the donor and the benefactor of the New Rochelle, New York property. That property housed the first Darbe Mehr in North America and Arbab donated that to ZAGNY which was opened in December 1977."

"Arbab Rustam Guiv was a great philanthropist and as a goal for his life he had chosen to be an instrumental factor in making different Zarathushti communities' dreams of having a religious and cultural center a reality. God Bless you Arbab. He was a generous, open minded and a true human, and we have the obligation and responsibility to see that his vision is respected and followed."



VIRAF COMMISSARIAT, DMZT CHAIR

"The last time that I addressed a meeting this big was on September 13th of last year. About 350 people were here and it was a show and tell and you were here to look the place over and see how it was doing, and if you remember I compared you to expectant parents, you go for the ultrasound and you want to see how the baby is doing. I want to ask you a question now – how is the baby doing? As the saying goes, we have come a long way baby."

"Now we would never have had a building – it would never have been possible to have a building like this without extraordinary effort – and one needs to say

this – an extraordinary effort by the majority of the community. It was not a few people – it was a broad spectrum of people who came in and who through their hard work, their money and their good will – in whichever way they could help. This is a result of the hard work of the entire Zoroastrian community in the tri-state area."

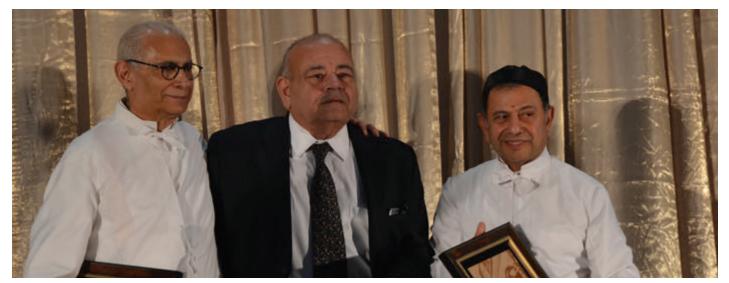


EDUL DAVER, NDMI CHAIR

"Our beloved Dar-e-Mehr is finally a reality. A new journey has begun hundreds of years after Sanjan; thousands of miles from India's restrictive doors, it is time to grow on America's open shores. America is a land of opportunity where Zarathushtis are growing with grace and dignity. 6 years ago we planned a new Dar-e-Mehr; which future generations would use with flair. With Yazd and Madras façades providing the inspiration, today the results are drawing fascination. A prayer hall and Kebla with traditional taste; which can be compared with the very best."

"We were believers and as Mark Twain once said – We did not know it was impossible so we did it. However, we had a fire in our belly and we had the

determination to succeed. The harder we worked without any fuss, the more Ahura Mazda's invisible hand came to help us. We will be truly satisfied when our Dar-e-Mehr is used with love and pride – it is a legacy for our next generation to ensure that our faith grows and blossoms. The future belongs to those who believe in their dreams - the future belongs to us."



Special Recognition was given to the tremendous triumvirate: The Architect: Dinyar Wadia, the Builder: Farrokh Patel and the Visionary: Edul Daver.



Extraordinary Service Awards presented by ZAGNY to Yasmin & Jamshed Ghadiali, Framroze K. Patel, Ervad Pervez P. Patel, Mehru & Lovji Cama, Gev Nentin & Arzan Sam Wadia.



Extraordinary Service Awards presented by IZA to Ervad Noshir Cavas Hormazdiar and Shirin Khosravi.



Farrokh Patel, Framroze K. Patel, Ervad Pervez P. Patel & Lovji Cama - The original Trustees of the first Darbe Mehr in New Rochelle.



Children of the community performed as "Prominent Zarathushtis", presenting a look at the Zarathushtis worldwide who have significantly contributed to their respective fields and demonstrated the spirit of perseverance.



ZAGNY & IZA members harmoniously sing Khan Ashem Vohu with Tara Jamshidian and Zal Shroff.



An orchestra performance of Chaiye Hame Zarthosti.



Sheroo Kanga seen here with husband Vispi, made her signature malido for the Jashan, which was relished by guests.



Guests enjoyed innovative hors d'oeuvres and traditional lunch prepared by the community's culinary experts.



Chef Jehangir Mehta generously donated the appetizers for the Inauguration.



Restaurateur Mehernosh Daroowalla seen here along with son, Rayan and wife Tina, prepared the first meal at the new Dar-e-Mehr.



INVITATION

Created by graphic designer Nasha Mehta, the invitation was inspired by the Zarathushti belief that each day (roj) of the calendar is associated with a flower.

In honor of this tradition, the invitations for the Inauguration were designed with the flowers associated with the roj on March 26, 2016 - a narcissus representing Mohor Roj on the Shehanshahi and Kadmi calendars, and a lily representing Khordad Roj on the Fasli calendar.



BROCHURE

The beautifully designed celebratory brochure includes the must-know details about the Inauguration event as well as gives insights into the Dar-e-Mehr. It also features a comprehensive look at the history of ZAGNY, IZA and DMZT.

The deep dive into the new building touches upon everything from the inspiration behind the design, the construction process and details of the unique and special features. It also includes a donor list as of March 1, 2016.





ZARTHUSHTI RECIPE BOOK FROM IRAN

Generously donated by IZA, the book includes recipes for delicious and traditional Iranian Zarathushti dishes.

KEEPSAKE MEMENTO

This custom designed commemorative memento presented to guests along with the Brochure and Recipe book at the end of the event creates a memorable end to this once in a lifetime event.

PRESS COVERAGE

The opening of the new Dar-e-Mehr enjoyed worldwide press both before and after the event. It was covered extensively by mainstream American publications, Indian, Iranian and Parsi Press both in India and the US. We even received international interest from Swiss and Latin American sites and a story ran in a national Iranian Zoroastrian paper. Below are highlights from some of the top publications.

A special thank you to Urmez Daver, Mahafreen H. Mistry, Malcolm Shroff, Shirin Kumaana-Wadia, and Arzan Sam Wadia who generously shared the incredible images captured by them at the Inauguration event for our press and marketing efforts.

THE HUFFINGTON **POST**

The opening of this new space was an important turning point in the life of the Zoroastrian community in the United States, According to a press release from the DMZT, the new \$4.5 million temple in Pomona was built to preserve the Zarathusti faith and culture in America, to foster a sense of belonging, and to create a legacy for future generations to enjoy.



The gleaming square building with an impressive colonnaded portico is the Dar-e-Mehr Zoroastrian Temple, or DMZT. It is the meeting place and sanctuary for some 1,000 followers of Zoroastrian faith from across the tri-state area.



The Mobeds then proceeded to the prayer hall and Kebla where New York's longtime senior Mobed, Ervad Pervez Patel, performed a boi ceremony, praying the Atash Nyaish and Doa Tandorasti. The hundreds in attendance then lined up at the Kebla to pay their respects. With that, New York, which had established North America's first Dar-e-Mehr, came also to have the newest.



In that, he was echoing the words of Arbab Rustam Guiv at a speech given at the opening ceremony of the New Rochelle temple on December 3, as quoted in a ZAGNY Newsletter. Guiv then reportedly exhorted the community to "be united.... be broad minded and welcome newcomers who desire to know, study and follow Zoroastrianism. Our prophet did not ever put any restrictions on anyone who willingly wanted to follow his principles. Make constructive criticism to build up new and thoughtful places to make the Zoroastrian Temple and International Center."

MAINSTREAM MEDIA

Huffington Post USA Today Religion News The Journal News **Rockland Times** The Gazette Voices of NY

TEGNA MEDIA - 28 News Outlets Nationwide

INDIAN

India Abroad Desi Talk

News India Times American Bazaar India West Indian New England

PARSI

FF7ANA Jam-e-Jamshed Parsi Khabar Parsi Times Parsiana

IRANIAN

Payvand.com **Amordad**

SOCIAL MEDIA STATS



You Tube 10,000+

YouTube Views of the Inauguration video.

100,000+

Total Reach of ZAGNY page posts for week of the event and after.

LIVE STREAM FACTS **& FIGURES**



1,500 Devices Watched



32 Countries



Average 2 Hour Viewing Time (6 Hour Event)

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Gool & Farrokh Patel

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Hira & Toos Daruvala

Pouruchishti & Farokh Hirjibehedin

SILVER INDIVIDUAL SPONSOR Parviz Najmi

THANK YOU TO OUR DEDICATED VOLUNTEERS

CHILDREN'S ROOM

Pearl Ball

Rajan Patel

DECORATIONS:

Dilnaz Nalladaru

Soonoo Aria

Dilnaz Shroff

7arine Shroff

DECORATIONS:

Sheroo Kanga

Kerbanoo D'Rozario

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Rohit Bansal

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Shirin Khosravi

Nina Mistry Dilnaz Nalladaru

Khursheed Navder

Aban Nentin

Armaity Patel Ferzin Patel

Katie Patel

Yasmin Pavri

Dilnaz Shroff

7arine Shroff

Parvin Sorooshyari Parinaaz Vimadalal

Shirin Kumaana-Wadia

Mitra Yektashenas

CHALK

TORAN

PARKING & TRAFFIC

Rustom Bhopti Adrian Byramji Ashish Daruwala Mavvar Noushi

Rajan Patel Adam Schenck

REGISTRATION DESK Sima Gojgini

Kerman Dukandar Adil Mistry

Rusi Press

STAGING SUPPORT

Rohinton Dadina Tanaz Dutia Jeannie Kenkare Cyrus Mistry

Ervad Cyrus Pavri

Zarine Shroff

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Shiraz D. Antia Navaz Katki Dadina Jasmine Dukandar Behroz Dutia

Anita Lam Zoeish Lam

Dinaz Langrana Arnaz Maneckshana

Xerxes Kotval

Adam Schenck

Nainaz Tarachand

A SPECIAL THANK YOU

ASHARAM GEMS

Many thanks, for your generous donations of gorgeous jewelry pieces towards our fundraisers. Your support over the past few years, through the kind courtesy of Persis Bansal, is deeply appreciated.

ACCOUNTING & RECORD KEEPING

Thank you to Behroz & Minu Dutia who found this magnificent property in Pomona on which our beautiful Dar-e-Mehr sits. Thanks also to Behroz and Minu for managing the cash accounts and disbursements for the DMZT New Building account. They have painstakingly acknowledged every donation and maintained perfect accounting reports that account for every dollar spent on the \$5M project.

Thank you to Nina Mistry who has meticulously recorded each pledge and donation as well as coordinated details for the 400+ donor listing. Nina also played a key role to keep track of our "funding gap" and prepared updates before monthly e-blasts, Newsletter articles and flyers. Behroz, Minu and Nina - your incredible dedication and hard work in supporting the NDMI (New Dar-e-Mehr Initiative) has been invaluable in making our dream a reality.

PERCIS & ROHIT BANSAL

The beautiful custom designed commemorative memento presented to guests at the end of the Inauguration would not have been possible without the tireless efforts of Percis Bansal and her son, Rohit, who spent countless hours during their Mumbai holiday to source this impressive piece that met with the approval of all the discerning committee members. Percis and Rohit collaborated with a craftsman who cut a new mold to specially make this glass piece with the custom design by none other than our own Arzan. Rohit's endless trips to the manufacturer, his keen eye for detail and his unparalleled negotiation skills ensured that our beautiful memento was appropriately packed in the sagan-nu-red box and ready in time for the Inauguration. Thank you Percis and Rohit for that perfect keepsake to mark this once in a lifetime event!

A big shout out to Rohit for facilitating the Lladró Votive Fundraiser. Rohit's expertise in negotiating this extraordinary arrangement with Lladró NY, enabled ZAGNY to launch the Lladró Campaign. Rohit's tremendous dedication and commitment, his zeal to make one more sale and his enthusiasm are second to none. Rohit personally tracked every order and ensured every shipment for more than 2,800 Votives sold to date. ZAGNY could not have done this without you, Rohit – you are our Lladró Hero!

CHRISTINA

Rati Birdie is probably not a name that's familiar to many at ZAGNY. But Rati has been a longtime ZAGNY supporter. Over the past 5 years Percis Bansal has requested contributions from Rati's boutique store, Christina, in Mumbai, for various fundraising events and Rati has generously contributed many many items. Christina's evening purses, kurtas, scarfs and shawls have always been sought after during auctions. Thank you Rati! ZAGNY would also like to extend its heartfelt thanks to Rati for the kind gift of Christina shawls contributed on the occasion of the new Dar-e-Mehr Inauguration.

HOSHI ADI KARANJIA

The challenge to ship 400 memento pieces, weighing 400lbs, from Mumbai India, to NY was instantly resolved when Percis Bansal met Hoshi Adi Karanjia at a dinner party in Mumbai. Without the slightest hesitation, Hoshi graciously said, "Don't worry, I will ship them for you to NY at my cost" (saving ZAGNY approximately \$2,000). Hoshi promptly coordinated the repacking and shipping of mementos with Buhariwala Logistics to ensure we received the pieces in time for the Inauguration. Our sincerest thanks Hoshi.....We salute your Zarathushti spirit!

INAUGURAL JASHAN AFARGHANYU

As the saying goes at ZAGNY – "When you need a resourceful partner, call Arzan." In a short five days Arzan sourced the Afarghanyu from Bandra, Mumbai, and personally carried it to NY. The Afarghanyu was made possible through the kind donations from Percis & Rakesh Bansal, Behroze & Astad J. Clubwala, Ferzin & Rajan Patel, Chandan & Rumi Sanjana, and Shirin & Arzan Sam Wadia.

PIROOZI COOPER-WITTLIN

Thank you Piroozi for sharing your incredible musical talent on the Oboe and performing "Thus Spake Zarathustra" by Richard Strauss to create a perfect ambience for the Priests as they walked into the main hall for the Jashan. Thanks also for spending numerous hours in private practices with our children for the grand finale "Chaiye Hame Zarthosti"!

THE INAUGURATION EVENT TEAM

Our community is blessed to have incredibly talented and hard working individuals. A handful of dedicated people - a dream team - generously contributed tremendous amounts of time, work and expertise to ensure that this was a once in a lifetime event for the community.

We would also like to thank their families who supported them from behind the scenes so that these dedicated individuals could focus on the great task at hand.



Ferzin Patel, COMMITTEES COORDINATOR, AV CO-CHAIR, Logistics & PR with husband Rajan, and son Davin.



Mehru Cama, Logistics, CHAIR with husband Lovji.



Mrinalini Nair, PR CHAIR & Brochure DESIGN with husband Sherazad, and son Zaydan.



Khursheed Navder, CHAIR Catering & Entertainment with husband Shailendra Dusaj, AV, and children Neville and Natasha.



Piroja Press, Logistics, REGISTRATION & Gift Bag Distribution with husband Rusi.



Astad J. Clubwala, EVENT CHAIR with wife Behroze Clubwala, Decorations, CHAIR



Nina Mistry, Brochure, CHAIR, Catering & PR with husband Adil, and daughters Adina and Maya.



Gev Nentin, Finance, CHAIR with wife Aban, and daughters Farida and Sheri.



Arzan Sam Wadia, AV CO-CHAIR, Logistics & PR with wife Shirin.



Ervad Pervez P. Patel, Jashan, CHAIR with wife Katie, daughter Avan and son-in-law Nevil.



Percis Bansal Decorations



Mahrukh Cama Brochure



Spenta Cama Entertainment



Ervad Rohinton Dadina Jashan



Kamal Davar Jashan



Edul Daver Logistics



Jasely Dukandar Catering



Kerman Dukandar Finance



Behroz Dutia Logistics



Sima Gojgini Catering



Marzie Jafari Brochure



Tara Jamshidian Entertainment



Sheroo Kanga Finance



Parviz Kermani Entertainment



Ervad Karl Khambatta Jashan



Shirin Khosravi Logistics



Arnaz Maneckshana Brochure



Dilshad Marolia Brochure



Ervad Cyrus Pavri Finance



Cyrus Pourooshasb Finance



Sam Shroff Catering



Zarine Shroff Catering



Kiomars Sorooshyari Decorations & Jashan



Ervad Khushroo Vimadalal, Catering



Piroozi Cooper-Wittlin Entertainment

DAR-E-MEHR PERSPECTIVES







According to Google Maps, the distance from ZAGNY's first home in New Rochelle to the new Dar-e-Mehr in Pomona is 41 minutes without traffic, a mere 32.2 miles. But for some individuals this journey started even before they were born, decades ago, when their parents were laying the foundations of the community that we know today. At the epicenter of their childhood experiences and religious exploration was the Darbe Mehr, the first of it's kind in North America. We've asked some of these individuals to tell us about their relationship with their beloved Dar-e-Mehr and the ZAGNY community and here's what they had to say.

TEMILYN & DARIUS MEHTA

It's not often in life when people can point to one place where they fell in love. In our case...we can. The New Rochelle Darbe Mehr.

To be fair, the seeds of love were planted at the Darbe Mehr grew and were cultivated over time. A slow progression of initially meeting at 13 years of age – note passing in Lovji Uncle and Villy Aunty's religion classes, an evolving friendship through ZAGNY camps, Navroze functions, Parsi New Year celebrations, and everything in between. Along with our friends, ZAGNY and the Darbe Mehr was the center of our world, the place where we looked forward to going to meet up, gossip, and generally feel like we belonged. Even now, looking back, so many of the milestones of our lives were celebrated there – Darius' Navjote, Temi's Sweet Sixteen, and even Temi's first job (DJ Tay-Me-Tame)!



Temilyn's sweet sixteen party at the New Rochelle Darbe Mehr.



Temilyn and Darius Mehta with children Zane and Zia.

As we grew, and friendship turned to love (circa 18 years of age), our visits to the Darbe Mehr became less frequent. Nevertheless, when we would attend as a couple, it was a happy homecoming with the same sentiments and warm embrace.

Eventually, after dating for eight years and at the age of 26, love turned to marriage. Our intimate Parsi wedding turned into a nearly 300 person affair filled with all of the "cousins", "aunties", and "uncles" that we grew up with in the halls of the New Rochelle Darbe Mehr.

Fast forward to March 2016 – our family, complete with our 6-year-old son, Zane, and 3-year-old daughter, Zia, walk through the doors of the brand new Dar-e-Mehr hand-in-hand. We can't help but smile as our kids run towards their friends, embracing them. They talk of ZAGNY camp, religion classes, and all the possibilities. And, as we kneel in the beautiful prayer room, we can't thank Ahura Mazda enough for how life has come full circle. We are a proud part of this community and we look forward to creating many more amazing memories within the walls of our new Dar-e-Mehr and with all of you!

SHIRAZ D. ANTIA

I have been a member of ZAGNY for 40 years. My earliest memories of ZAGNY are meeting for religion classes in the late 70's. At that time we met at the UN School in NYC. I was about 8-9 years old. We would also have our Navroze functions there twice a year in March and August. I remember always winning cool stuff from the raffles to raise money for ZAGNY.

I have fond memories of when our community moved to our new Darbe Mehr at 249 Weyman Avenue in New Rochelle. The highlight was coming to the Darbe Mehr to meet my Zoroastrian friends every month....it was our home away from home and despite space limitations we all pulled through and made it work. To us kids, it didn't



Ivy Gandhi, led the memorable ZAGNY camps which are now named after her.

matter much that we would have class in a small stairwell. It was actually fun because it was different from the usual classroom environment. We had the opportunity to have sleepovers at ZAGNY camp led by Ivy Gandhi. Those days were the best where we really got to bond, enhance friendships and have fun for a whole weekend. I still remember when the boys in the group would scheme and try to scare the girls at night!



Lovji Cama has overseen the religion curriculum at ZAGNY for close to 40 years.

As the years went by (after completing religion classes) as young adults, we would get together to celebrate Navroze and birthdays, or simply hang-out in NYC. Even though we all lived far away, the Darbe Mehr was our meeting place to hang out and spend time together. I don't know where I would be if we did not have a common meeting place.....I may have not stayed in the tri-state area. But many of us who grew up in this area have stayed close to our roots, got married and now have our own families. We have attended each other's weddings and now to Navjotes of our children, the next generation of ZAGNY Zoroastrians.

While in college, I couldn't help but think about my future and what I wanted to accomplish after college. I soon realized

that I wanted to reciprocate what ZAGNY gave to me. I wanted to give the younger generation the same experience I had growing up with ZAGNY and the religion classes at the Dare-Mehr. Teaching has been a great joy for me. I truly love meeting new students and their families. It is so much fun to teach the children of parents I grew up with. The first challenge I faced was having my own children in my class. There was more pressure for my children to set an example and the tone of the class. However, they soon learned to live with the situation. Now my children have the pleasure to learn from Lovji Cama, our beloved Dean, who taught me over 30 years ago, and who inspired me to teach. I have been blessed to have a number of my former students graduate from the religion class and volunteer to assist me in teaching.



Shiraz D. Antia with children Shirin and Dinyar

As an adult, I realize how lucky I have been and am truly grateful that my father encouraged me to go to religion class every month. It instilled in me my Zarathushti identity that I can now pass on to my own children. I am proud and honored to be a part of this wonderful community!

NAVROZ & HANOZ GANDHI

From Darbe Mehr to Dar-e-Mehr

It seems like yesterday, although by actual count it's over 30 years ago, that we were driving to New Rochelle to attend our first religion class at the Darbe Mehr after moving from India to the United States. Classes scattered throughout the house – next to the kitchen, in the alcove at the top of the stairs, in a room next to the prayer room, the main room, and down the stairs on the stage. Through a narrow door at the top of the stairs was a small little prayer room which Mom always required us to visit before we left the Darbe Mehr each time we were there. Parents milling about on the porch and in the dining area, eating snacks and drinking tea, reminiscing their youth in India, the families they

had left behind, and comparing stories of their pursuit of a better life for themselves and their children in a country that required much hard work and fortitude. And in these discussions, undoubtedly, the lingering concerns of all were the unknown changes that lay ahead.

Fast forward to today. No longer an immigrant community, our numbers have grown. The 3rd generation of greater NY Zoroastrians consists mostly of natural born citizens of the United States. Intermarriage is no longer the lightening issue it used to be. Navroze or Navrozmare is now Nowruz; Sadeh, Mehregan, Yalda, and other Iranian Zarathushti holidays are now part of our vernacular; and our place of gathering and worship is no longer a large house on Weyman Avenue affectionately known as the Darbe Mehr, but a beautifully constructed Dar-e-Mehr on Pomona Road funded principally through the members of our local community.

While there is no doubt that these changes are due to a natural evolution, there is equally no doubt that they have been shaped by the leaders and teachers of our community. The Dar-e-Mehr we have today, while architecturally inspired by our history in Iran and India, is spiritually inspired by these individuals. This building stands as a testament to them –



Villy Gandhi, mother of Navroz and Hanoz, was a favorite teacher amongst the children.



Hanoz, Shazneen and children Shayaan and Jedd, along with Perinaaz and Navroz surround their father Homi Gandhi

some unfortunately no longer with us today

– who through their perseverance and sacrifice have guided and continue
to guide our community through its evolution, ensuring that we work

together to maintain our identity and the fundamentals of our faith, despite the strong forces of assimilation.

The opening of the Dar-e-Mehr on March 26th has been called a hand off; a passing of the baton from old to new. However, this analogy understates our journey here. Together, we have driven up a mountain, without any road signs and with many forks, some of which had the potential to lead us back down the mountain. While our trip hasn't been perfect, we are finally at the top and everyone is in good cheer, and of course, well fed! There may be more forks in the road and mountains ahead, but we've upgraded our car, our tank is full, and...we now have a map!

SPENTA CAMA

People gather to mark the momentous occasion with thirty priests who answer the call from far and wide to bless, pray, Rally and rejoice at our newly built Dar-e-Mehr.

Outside the festivities begin, to welcome one and all with the tili ladies embellishing foreheads for good luck. Flowers adorn the entrance along with torans above each doorway.

Ushta te is the overwhelming feeling vibrating in the air as we wait for the red ribbon to be cut.

Designs of chalk bursting in the vibrant colors of fuschia, yellow, red, orange, green, magenta and white herald spring and new beginnings. Greetings of good thoughts, good words, and good deeds in horseshoe shaped arrangements, commemorate the auspicious event.

The journey from 249 Weyman Avenue in New Rochelle to 106 Pomona Road in Suffern curves

Over doting memories of boys versus girls pillow fights at summer camps complete with Zarathushti lyrics to Angel in the Centerfold and a boom box blaring Electric Avenue, Lovji Uncle's super-sized ravo (no fries with that one), dhan dar patio, religious skits, endless games of basketball, water fights, compassionate friends, and the joys and pains of teenage love.

Beliefs that bind us together as the kusti guides us all to follow the path of Asha as we assemble and join hands to pray together. Elevate and invigorate the next generation is the rally cry of the champions who forge ahead with herculean effort, donating their time, vision, commitment, and resources to inspire.

A challenge is presented and the community responds with each new fundraising event – from batasa, bhakra, malido and kids' bake sales to T-shirt sales, Lladró votives, flea markets, Jamva Chaloji and Kids Count, to name a few, reaching the height of almost 400 donors.

Zarathushtis unite and welcome new comers, is the call from our dear Arbab Rustam Guiv, as

Our prophet did not restrict those who desired to follow His principles.

Reverence for the legacy of those who toiled for my generation, expecting nothing in return (Ashem Vohu in action!) with many leaving us too soon, but guiding us with their fravashi for now and always – our beloved lvy, Farrokh, Villy, Erach, and Khodarahm.



1985 ZAGNY Camp at the New Rochelle Darbe Mehr.

Old architectural designs from fire temples in Iran and India to evoke an Ambience like no other Dar-e-Mehr found in North America – from the façade of Aegean Beige with the eternal flame, to the fountain and stunning Schonbek chandelier. Symbols abound in their glory: the Farohar, the Persepolis Bas Relief limestone panel, the Haft Seen table, and the Afarghanyu – custom made just for us in Mumbai. The Kebla, sanctum of the grand prayer hall, designed with the dignity of its purpose, in simple and elegant style with open glass for all to view the sacred fire, rituals and priests.

Read about our history in the new library and encourage your child to learn at the monthly religion class in new, independent classrooms including mini chairs equipped for the tiniest tots (a far cry from religion classes taught at the top of the staircase as children spilled down the stairs in New Rochelle).

Inauguration day, March 26, 2016, is one of the best days of my life as I look out at the hundreds in the audience before introducing the children performing as Prominent Zarathushtis, and I am overcome with emotion as the congregation sings Chaiye Hame Zarthosti in unison for the grand finale.

A place of belonging, a home away from home, a place to worship, and cultivate our culture and religion; a place for my children, your lineage and all future generations to hold Navjotes, weddings, Ghambars, Jashans, and even memorials – Zoroastrian festivities to complete a new home for all members of the tri-state area to gather, learn, unite and celebrate together!



Spenta with husband Adam and children Feroze and Zahra is joined by brother Cyrus and wife Farzana and their children Delara, Rayan and Arzan along with parents Mahrukh and Rohinton Cama.

No amount of thank you is enough to all the volunteers and donors who made this dream a reality, and as I told my children on Inauguration night, this is for your generation and the next. The torch, brightly lit and flourishing, passes on.

SHERAZAD MEHTA

Memories of Lovji Uncle's religion classes; waking up with rice on my face at lvy Aunty's summer camps; a flashback to the Pomona open house before it was ours; carpooling with Erach Uncle and the Camas to attend DMZT board meetings; Sunday NDMI meetings led by Edul Uncle hammering out every single detail; losing my wife to fundraising events months on end; each of these moments, pushed me toward this one beautiful spring day in March 2016.



1985 ZAGNY Camp at the New Rochelle Darbe Mehr.

A sense of pride. As an engineer, I appreciate the design details of the new building, but as a Zoroastrian, the pure beautyof it makes me proud. I have seen hundreds of models and thousands of

renderings in my career. I have designed and built projects all around the world, yet somehow the first time I saw the Dar-e-Mehr, it was simply aweinspiring.

A sense of comfort. This is the third Dar-e-Mehr that I have walked into, yet it is the first one that I finally felt was our home and our future. Now we have

a foundation where our children can grow up...and grow into.



Religion classes in the New Rochelle Darbe Mehr.



Sherazad with wife Mrinalini (Mindi) and son Zaydan.

A sense of togetherness. It is a proven fact that aesthet-

ics, lighting, circulation, and performance of a building has a huge impact on how people will behave and interact. Well-designed buildings can influence a community. This building has already has changed us as it has opened and united us at the same time. I could have never imagined that one day I would pray with my son standing next to my non-Zoroastrian wife in our beautiful prayer room.

The journey to this historic date in March was a long one. I am so very thankful to the so many who have contributed so much.

Please note: In this newsletter, to maintain accuracy with the timing of the name change from "Darbe Mehr" to "Dar-e-Mehr", the building is referred to as "Darbe Mehr" for events and related mentions up to the 2015 name change by the DMZT Trustees, and thereafter it is referred to as "Dar-e-Mehr".



GET TO KNOW CLAUDIO CERMINARA

Claudio joined the REDCOM team in June of 2015 as a Project Superintendent. Having 20+ years in the construction industry, Claudio is extremely passionate with all of his projects from start to finish and takes pride in his work. The Dar-e-Mehr was by far one of his favorite projects. He resides in Caldwell, NJ with his lovely wife, Linda, and their three young sons- Stevie, Joseph and Anthony.

Had you heard of Zoroastrianism before starting the project?

No, I had not but I looked online to learn more about it and my fascination grew because of the Temple and the kind, genuine people behind it. I have visited India and enjoyed it very much and have an appreciation for Indian Religions.

What were the major challenges from a construction point of view?

The greatest challenges were the stone that was imported and the Kebla. The application of the stone to the front of the building was extremely difficult and had to be maneuvered and anchored very carefully and precisely. The Kebla took a

huge effort from a design and safety view point.



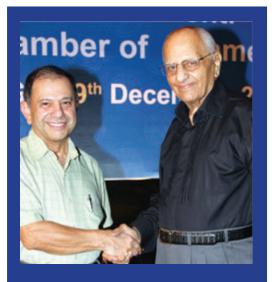
How different was this project/building from previous projects you have been associated with?

This project was my first experience with a religious Temple. I appreciate the experience gained and the genuine care, everyone had to make the Temple turn out the way it did. A true masterpiece.

What are your views about the Inauguration?

Inauguration day was very impressive to me and my family. Seeing the Zoroastrian Community so proud and happy made me feel the same way. I will always treasure this project and I am appreciative to have been a part of making this amazing Temple come to life.

COMMUNITY ACCOMPLISHMENTS & EVENTS



WZCC ELECTS EDUL DAVER AS GLOBAL PRESIDENT

ZAGNY's own Edul Daver, who served as Corporate Secretary of WZCC (World Zoroastrian Chamber of Commerce) during its formative years was elected Global President last December at the Global Meet in Goa, India taking over from outgoing President Minoo R. Shroff.

DINNER WITH VADA DASTURJI

A reception in honor of Vada Dasturji Khurshed Dastoor and his wife Havovi was hosted by Behroze & Astad J. Clubwala at their home on Sunday, March 27th, and was attended by approx. 40 community members pictured below.





NEW FEZANA EXECUTIVE BOARD

The new FEZANA Executive Board was elected at the 29th FEZANA AGM held in Novi, Michigan from April 29 to May 1, 2016. ZAGNY takes great pride in announcing that the Board is led by two of ZAGNY's own: Homi Gandhi as President and Arzan Sam Wadia as Vice-President! The other members are Nilufer Shroff as Treasurer; Percy Master as Secretary and Afreed Mistry as Assistant Secretary.



NYC PERSIAN DAY PARADE - APRIL 17, 2016

On a bright and sunny day about 200,000 people lined up on Madison Avenue in New York City to witness the Annual Persian Day Parade in celebration of the Persian New Year - Nowruz, heralding the arrival of Spring. At the head of the parade was the proud Zoroastrian contingent made up of Zoroastrians from the Washington DC area as well as IZA and ZAGNY members. The parade represented many diverse religious and ethnic communities with ties to Persian heritage - Zoroastrians, Christian/Armenians, Muslims, Jews, Bahais, Kurds, Baluchies, Turks and people of the Caspian region.

BRICK BY BRICK: DAR-E-MEHR UPDATES

"The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams."

We had a beautiful dream and it is now our proud reality. Hearty congratulations to the community! We thank the tremendous efforts of those who contributed funds and time.

Though Phase I is behind us, we have a little farther to go to complete Phase II. Please help us to keep the momentum to complete our remaining must-have items by September.

PHASE II (\$350,000 NEEDED BY SEPTEMBER 30, 2016)

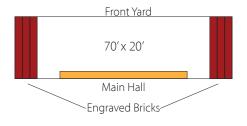
- Security Enhancements
- Fountain Feature
- Engraved Brick Patio
- Library and Other Furniture
- Audio Visual Equipment
- Acoustic panels (if required)

FINAL PHASE: SOLAR ENERGY SYSTEM BY DECEMBER 31, 2016

THE ENGRAVED BRICK PAVER PATIO

A Brick Paver Patio (70' X 20') will be constructed on the West side of the Main Hall. The Engraved Bricks will comprise only 10 -15% of the

total number of bricks used to construct the patio. Engraved bricks will be placed along the two short edges of the patio to form an attractive border with the lettering facing the center of the patio for good visibility and avoid the engraved bricks from being walked upon.

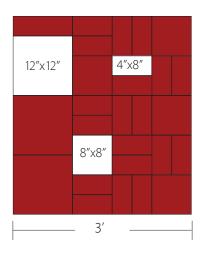


Pavers are available in various sizes, at the following donation levels:

- \$1,000 SMALL 8"X 4": 3 Lines (18 Characters)
- \$2,000 MEDIUM 8"X 8": 4 Lines (18 Characters)
- \$5,000 LARGE 12"X 12":5 Lines
 (23 Characters)

DONATE TODAY!

For more information, please email Edul Davar at eduldaver@gmail.com



UPCOMING ZAGNY EVENTS!

Meet new friends and old, and join the community at these upcoming events. Go to zagny.org for more details on how to register (and donate) today!

IVY GANDHI KIDS Z-CAMP

Friday, June 17th - Sunday, June 19th Kid-focused event held at Camp Ma-He-Tu, Bear Mountain, NY will include hiking, swimming, bonfire with smores, and more.

B.D. PETIT PARSEE GENERAL HOSPITAL FUNDRAISER

Saturday, June 18th

The annual fundraiser to support the Parsee General Hospital, Mumbai will be held at the residence of Yasmin and Jamshed Ghadiali. A Jashan will be followed by dinner. Donate today!

ANNUAL ZAGNY PICNIC Sunday, July 17th Join us at the Spruce Run Recreation Area in Clinton for games and activities.

ANNUAL PARSI NEW YEAR CELEBRATION Saturday, Aug 27th This annual event will be held for the first time in our new Dar-e-Mehr and will include dinner & entertainment.

ERACH MUNSHI UDVADA FUNDRAISER

Sunday, October 16th A Jashan and lunch at the Dar-e-Mehr will support Mobeds and needy Zarathushti families of Udvada, Surat and Navsari. Donate today!

DAR-E-MEHR OPEN HOURS

Our new Dar-e-Mehr is officially open to you and your family. Priests will be on-site and the Afarghanyu will be lit. Please visit us during the hours of:

- Sunday, June 5 from 12PM 4:30PM
- Sunday, June 19 from 1PM 4PM Go to DMZT.org for information.

BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENTS & NAVJOTES

WELCOME TO THE COMMUNITY!



Parizad and Anthony Torres along with big sister Priya and grandparents, Nelly and Cawas Cama are delighted to announce the birth of their

son/brother/grandson **SEBASTIAN CAMA TORRES**, born on January 13, 2016.



JIMI KADWA was born on January 20, 2016 at 6 lbs to proud parents Kainaz and Neville, a doting big sister Jasmin and brother Dinsha.



Janki and Jimmy Avari along with big sister Farah and grandparents, Dinci and Nausheer Avari, are delighted to announce the birth of their daughter/

sister/granddaughter **MAYA AVARI**, born on March 28, 2016.



Dixie and Kaizad Cama welcomed their daughter. **SHANAYA KAIZAD CAMA**, born on April 3, 2016, in New York City. She is sister to an excited

big brother, Darius, and granddaughter to Mehru and Lovji Cama and Nilufer and Nevil Kadva.



Proud parents, Sarosh and Dana Nentin and grandparents Gev and Aban are delighted to announce the birth of their precious daughter and

granddaughter **CORY SIRUN NENTIN**, born on April 5th, 2016.

DEVITRE NAVJOTES

On February 13, 2016, ZAGNY members Aashish and Dinny Devitre held the Navjote ceremonies of 4 of their grandchildren and 4 of their grand nieces at the Taj Village in Goa. Dastur Khushru Madon (Panthaki of the Colaba Agiary) kindly arranged for 7 other priests from Mumbai to officiate at the ceremony. From left to right Persis Devitre, Ellora Devitre, Jai Somani, Leyla Somani, Amalya Devitre, Kaiya Devitre, Samiyatara Bajaj, and Isha Bajaj. It was a lovely event and the Zarathushti community is fortunate to have 8 additions!





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THANK YOU!

The 2014-17 ZAGNY Board would like to thank our vibrant community for making the inauguration of the new Dar-e-Mehr a huge success!



From Left to Right: Kayomarz Khambatta, Cyrus J. Pavri, Kerman Dukandar, Khursheed Navder, Astad J. Clubwala, Meherzeen Daruwala, Mayyar Noushi, Sam Shroff, Khushroo Vimadalal, Arzan Sam Wadia

CONNECT WITH ZAGNY TODAY



www.zagny.org



facebook.com/zagnyusa



twitter.com/_zagny



UPCOMING EVENTS

Check out our new online calendar: zagny.org/calendar/

SUMMER

June 5, Sunday: Last Religion Class & WZCC Quarterly Event June 17, Friday - June 19, Sunday: Ivy Gandhi Kids Z-Camp June 18, Saturday: B.D. Petit Parsee General Hospital Fundraiser

July 17, Sunday: ZAGNY Picnic

Aug 13, Saturday and Aug 14, Sunday: Muktad Prayers

Aug 27, Saturday: Parsi New Year Celebration

FALL

Sep 17, Saturday: First Religion Class with ZAGBA/ZAPANJ

Oct 2, Sunday: Religion Class

Oct 16, Sunday: Erach Munshi Udvada Fundraiser Nov 6, Sunday: Religion Class and Halloween Parade

WINTER

Dec 4, Sunday: Religion Class

Dec 31, Saturday: ZAGNY New Years Eve Gala