

## **The North American Mobeds Council**

### **Minutes of the Nineteenth Annual General Meeting**

**Place:** Arthur Seguin Chalet, 365 St. Louis, Point-Claire, Quebec, Canada

**Date:** April 14 & 15, 2006

Members Present:

Yezdi Antia	Ontario
Jehan Bagli	Ontario
Xerxes Bamji	Ontario
Kersi Bhedwar	Quebec
Soli Dastur	Florida
Cawas Desai	Pennsylvania
Gev Karkaria	Quebec
Nozer Kotwal	Ontario
Behram Panthaki	Washington
Gustad Panthaki	Ontario
Adi Unwalla	New Jersey
Kobad Zarolia	Ontario

Khushroo Mirza (mobodyar) attended the meeting as an observer.

Dolly Dastur, President of the Zoroastrian Society of Quebec, welcomed the NAMC members to Montreal and wished the Mobeds a very successful meeting.

The meeting was called to order by the President Ervad Dr. Jehan Bagli at 4:15 pm. Jehan led the Mobeds in a short prayer. This was followed by one minute of silence in memory of Mary Boyce who passed away on April 4, 2006.

The secretary, Nozer Kotwal informed the members that there were three proxies, two for Nozer Kotwal and one for Behram Panthaki.

#### **1. Read & Adopt the minutes of the Eighteenth Annual General Meeting held at Suffern, NY, USA on July 30, 2005:**

Minutes of the meeting were discussed. Kobad Zarolia proposed to adopt the minutes as written and seconded by Soli Dastur.

The minutes were passed unanimously.

#### **2. Read and adopt the Financial Statements for the year ending December 31, 2005:**

The Treasurer, Gev Karkaria, presented the Financial Statements.

Behram Panthaki proposed to adopt the Financial Statements and Nozer Kotwal seconded.

The Financial Statements were passed unanimously.

### **3. Appoint Auditors:**

Nozer Kotwal informed the members that Ms. Sheherazad Talati C.A. has agreed to audit the books for the year ending December 31, 2005. Auditing for the fiscal year 2006 is tentative at this time.

Nozer said that he would look into the possibility of changing the fiscal year end in order to avoid the seasonal busy period for all auditors.

### **4. President's Annual Report:**

The President, Jehan Bagli, read his annual report, highlighting the activities that he and other mobeds have been involved during the last year.

### **5. Status Report on the Legality of Holding Elections Every 4 Years Instead of 2:**

Nozer informed the members that he had approached someone from Corporate Affairs for the Province of Ontario and enquired about the legality of holding elections every four years instead of two.

He was informed that Corporate Affairs were not permitted to respond to this question and that NAMC should contact a lawyer to get an official response to this question.

It was decided not to pursue this issue any further and that NAMC would continue with the present practice.

### **6. Status Report Booklet for Audience Participation in Jashan Prayers:**

Jehan said that one of the ways to prevent people from talking at Jashans would be to involve them in the ceremony.

Jehan and Behram had each selected some prayers for the laity to participate in during the Jashan ceremony.

Jehan stated that he was in the process of compiling a booklet with 2 options for the laity to pray. One list compiled by him and the other by Behram.

It was agreed that instead of 2 options for prayers, there would only be 1 list. The list of prayers would be reviewed by the following mobeds:

- Soli Dastur
- Cawas Desai
- Nozer Kotwal

It was also agreed that NAMC would sponsor a booklet of Soli Dastur's presentation on participating Jashan which would be used for educational purposes.

Kersi Bhedwar suggested that the NAMC should encourage the laity to say their kusti prayers prior to the Jashan ceremony.

Jehan said that we should recommend that any new Darbe Meher being built should have a place for people to wash and say their kusti prayers.

The Mobeds should recommend that everyone wash and say their kusti prayers prior to entering the prayer hall.

**7. Status Report on a Standardization Presentation for the Mobeds at Weddings, Navjotes, Jashans, Funerals, etc:**

It was agreed that the mobeds should send Nozer a copy of any presentations that they had, so that he could compile them with the help of Mehsad Dastur and distribute the same to all of the mobeds.

**8. The Meaning of Aatash ni Niyash:**

Behram Panthaki made a presentation on the analysis of three translations of the Aatash ni Niyash prayers. Gustad Panthaki made a presentation on the interpretation and analysis of the Aatash (Fire) from Zoroastrian viewpoint and its comparison with other religions. The presentations were extremely enlightening and informative.

Each of the Mobeds was given the opportunity to provide their comments on the presentations.

It was unanimously agreed that there would be a presentation and discussion on one religious topic at every NAMC Annual general meeting.

**9. Sarosh Prayers before Paydast:**

Kobad Zarolia stated that he was under the impression that no prayers (ceremonies) can be performed before the Paydast ceremony. Nozer inquired about whether or not Geh Sarna ceremony can be performed in the absence of the body of the deceased person. (e.g. Body not found or body donated to science etc.)

A discussion took place and it was agreed that:

- The Sarosh nu Patru should be prayed for 3 nights after sunset whenever possible
- The Geh Sarna ceremony may be performed even if the deceased body was not available.

Question – Can you perform Sarosh prayers before the Paydast prayers?

Answer – Yes.

**10. Other Issues:**

Based upon the information provided by Dolly Dastur, Jehan reported that 4 children, 3 in Texas and 1 in North New Jersey, had recently completed their Navar ceremony. He wrote felicitations to them and requested Adi Unwalla to mail them a Jashan book. Nozer stated that it was NAMC's policy to present newly ordained Navarians with a gift of \$101.00 and a copy of a book by J. J. Modi.

It was unanimously agreed to send a congratulatory note to the newly ordained priests and to present them with the above mentioned gifts.

### **11. Consecrated Fire:**

Behram Panthaki made a presentation on “Consecrated Fire” and stated that this issue would be brought to the attention of NAMC in the near future.

Kobad Zarolia presented blue prints of conceptual drawings of Ontario Zoroastrian Community Foundation’s Place of Worship, Community Centre & Seniors Home which will be built in the near future.

A lively discussion took place on the definition of a “Consecrated Fire”. It was agreed that:

***At the present time it is not possible to perform the consecration of the fire as we know and understand it, in the establishment of an Atash Behram and Atash Adaran, and according to the traditions and practices that are followed in India.***

Dr. Firoze Kotwal has provided some information on how to consecrate a dadgah fire. It was decided that NAMC would go back to Dasturji Dr. Firoze Kotwal for further clarification on this issue.

It was also suggested that we should try to avoid the use of the word “Agiyari” as many community members relate it to a place of consecrated fire.

### **12. Donations to Overseas Worthy Causes:**

Nozer stated that a school for autistic children in Bombay had sent him an e-mail asking for donations stating that not one Zoroastrian group was contributing to this cause even though there are a number of Zoroastrian children in this institution. Nozer also reminded the members that NAMC cannot legally contribute to such causes as it is not included in our constitution.

It was agreed that NAMC’s mandate is to promulgate our religion and will therefore restrict contributions to this cause only.

Behram suggested that NAMC sponsor a Navar. One suggestion was to offer to pay for a child in India to have his Navar performed. Jehan warned about the risks involved in such a venture. Recently NAMC had an unfortunate experience on responding to a request of a Panthaky from Mumbai, for Navar performance in India.. Upon further inquiry it appeared that the request was not entirely truthful. Nozer advised that Canadian laws dictate that we have to prove to Revenue Canada that NAMC had full control over the expenditure of any donations made overseas supported by valid receipts.

Kobad suggested that NAMC should instead sponsor children here in North America who does not have the finances to go to India for the Navar ceremony.

NAMC agreed to sponsor deserving children to go to India for their Navar ceremony.

The following resolution was unanimously passed:

***Be it resolved that NAMC will subsidize a prospective candidate for Navar from North America up to a maximum of \$1000.00.***

Kobad also suggested that NAMC buy a number of prayer caps which could be donated to various associations in North America.

### **13. Other Business:**

#### **A) Mobedyars in training**

Behram said that he had 2 Mobedyar candidates and 1 prospective candidate:

- Hormuz Katki
- Hormuz Wadia
- Zubin Mistry – (Prospective candidate)

Soli Dastur had 1 candidate – Jamshed Motafaram

Adi Unwalla had 1 candidate – Malcolm Cooper

Gev Karkaria had 1 candidate – Mahiyar Bhathena

Jehan had 1 candidate in Toronto – Hormuz Chothia. It was agreed that Yezdi Antia would look after this candidate

Jehan had 1 candidate in Denver, Colorado – Rumi Engineer

#### **B) NAMC Website**

Jehan said that NAMC should have a website and presented some logos to the members to select as the NAMC logo.

Adi Unwalla enquired as to what would be put on the NAMC website.

The following suggestions were made:

- Names and addresses of mobeds
- Information on the Mobedyar program
- Papers by Gustad and Behram Panthaki

It was decided that the NAMC executive committee would be the only group to decide what would be put on the NAMC website.

It was unanimously agreed that Soli Dastur would design and maintain the website.

#### **C) NAMC Awards**

Jehan stated that a number of youth are being ordained as Mobeds and we do not have way of tracking their accomplishments. He suggested that NAMC sponsor an award to youths who provide a service to their community.

It was agreed that we would have FEZANA present an NAMC award to a Mobed or Mobedyar (up to the age of 35 years) for services rendered to the community.

Jehan will approach FEZANA to establish and administer an NAMC award to young Mobeds and Mobedyars for community service. The selection of the recipient will remain the prerogative of NAMC.

## **D) Vote of Thanks**

Cawas Desai asked for a vote of thanks to:

- Gev Karkaria for his continued service as Treasurer
- Jehan Bagli for his service as President of NAMC and especially for starting the seminars
- Xerxes Bamji for writing the minutes at most of the Annual General meetings

## **14. Elections:**

By acclamation, the same committee was re-elected for next two years

It was agreed that the next meeting would be part of a seminar.

The Time and location of the next meeting will be decided by the Executive Committee at a later date. The presentation at the next meeting will be – History of the Zoroastrian Religion.

All members present expressed their gratitude to Zoroastrian Association of Quebec and their members for their kind hospitality and for hosting the Nineteenth NAMC Annual General meeting.

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