

NORTH AMERICAN MOBEDS COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE TWENTY FIRST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Place: Zoroastrian Religious and Cultural Centre. 1187 Burnhamthorpe Road East, Oakville. Ontario.

Date: May 24 and 25, 2008.

Members Present:

Jehan Bagli	Ontario
Khushroo Bharda	Ontario
Soli Dastur	Florida
Cawas Desai	Pennsylvania
Darayus Kanga	Ontario
Nozer Kotwal	Ontario
Noshir Mirza	Ontario
Tehemton Mirza	Ontario
Behram Panthaki	Washington
Gustad Panthaki	Ontario
Jal Panthaky	Ontario
Adi Unwalla	New Jersey
Kobad Zarolia	Ontario

Mobedyar Khushru Mirza from Quebec also attended.

There were three Proxies

Niloufer Bhesania, President of the OZCF, welcomed the NAMC members to Oakville and wished them a productive meeting.

The meeting was called to order by the President Ervad Dr. Jehan Bagli at 1.30 PM. Jehan led all Mobeds in a short prayer.

(1) Read and adopt the minutes of the Twentieth Annual General Meeting held at Gibson House Community Centre, 365 St. Louis, Marlton. NJ. On May 19, 2007 :

Cawas Desai proposed that the minutes be adopted as written and Jal Panthaky seconded. The minutes were passed unanimously.

(2) Read and adopt the Financial Statements for the year ending Dec. 31, 2007.

In the absence of the treasurer Gev Karkaria, the President presented the Financial Statements. One query was raised by Tehemton Mirza and the explanation was given by Secretary Nozer Kotwal.

Kobad Zarolia proposed to adopt the Financial Statements and Behram Panthaki seconded. Financial Statements were passed unanimously.

(3) Appoint Auditors:

The President informed the members that Ms. Sheherezad Talati CA has agreed to audit the books for the year ending Dec. 31, 2008. The appointment was unanimously passed.

(4) President's Annual Report:

The President Jehan Bagli, read his Annual Report, highlighting several interesting activities that he and other Mobeds had been involved in during 2007. Some of the highlights were:

(a) A very successful seminar in NJ in 2007 which was well attended and well received by 80 to 100 participants.

(b) Publication of "Congregational" prayers for the JASHAN ceremony.

(c) Mobedyar Program: Six persons qualified to date, thanks to special efforts by Behram Panthaki and Adi Unwalla.

(d) Training Program for Mobedyars has been requested by the Mobed group in UK.

(e) NAMC Website launched, thanks to Mobed Kerman Katrak – (www.namcweb.org)

(f) Introduced NAMC page in the FEZANA Journal.

Soli Dastur proposed that we adopt the President's Report. Behram Panthaki seconded. The report was unanimously adopted.

(5) Communication and dissemination of information to all members of the NAMC.

Soli Dastur volunteered to undertake this very vital function and be the focal point for sending out all communication. The members unanimously agreed to have him handle this portfolio and give him all possible support.

(6) Navjote of adopted children:

Behram Panthaki initiated this discussion. Instances of controversial situations in India were explained by some members. Others informed the members of situations in Canada as well. Cawas Desai explained that the Navjote ceremony was more a "tribal" custom than a Zoroastrian Religious practice and ritual. In North America the "National Adoption Law" would apply. This automatically awards the same privileges to adopted children as biological children. Tehemton Mirza also reiterated that Canadian and US Laws must apply. Adi Unwalla added that the decision to perform such a Navjote should be left entirely to the discretion of each individual Mobed.

Behram Panthaki tabled the following draft resolution, with a request that it be discussed and voted upon, at the next NAMC AGM.

"There is every likelihood that childless Parsi/Irani Zoroastrian parents of opposite sexes, and /or couples of interfaith marriages (where one party is a Parsi/Irani Zoroastrian) will adopt a child of non-Zoroastrian parentage.

The aim of this resolution is for NAMC as a body, to accept the adopted children of such parents as described above, into the Zoroastrian fold. NAMC, therefore, would have no objection to any of its members performing the Navjote of such adopted children."

(7) Status report on “Standardised” presentation by Mobeds at Weddings, Navjotes, Jashans, Funerals etc.

Cawas Desai and Adi Unwalla will forward recommended presentations for Weddings, Navjotes and Jashans to Jehan Bagli and Soli Dastur, to put up on the NAMC website.

It was unanimously agreed to restrict speeches at funerals to just a eulogy for the deceased.

(8) Status report on purchase of Religious Books for the NAMC Library.

Tehemton Mirza explained that setting up an “NAMC” Library did not appear to be workable. Several key issues need to be addressed before we jump into this project. Physical location, Librarian, record keeping, availability to the membership across all of North America, constant updating of books and resource lists.

Soli Dastur informed the members that FEZANA has already established a library in Houston. He suggested that NAMC could donate books to them. Also any member, who has a personal library of Zoroastrian Religious Books which he wishes to share with members of the community, or which he wishes to donate to FEZANA, may do so. FEZANA would maintain an updated Master List.

Kobad Zarolia suggested that copies of special publications brought out by members of the NAMC, should be distributed to all Zoroastrian Associations of North America, with a request to the associations to make them available to their local membership.

Tehemton Mirza had the following alternate suggestions for utilising and investing some of our NAMC funds:

(a) Local weekend training camps for Mobeds: Jehan Bagli and Adi Unwalla mentioned that there has been no response to repeated announcements, personal letters of invitation to Mobeds and letters to Associations. Khushroo Bharda volunteered to give this activity another try. He agreed to try and bring together a group of young Navars for a weekend camp in Toronto.

(b) Donate prayer books (Khordeh Avesta in English and Persian scripts) with a bold **“DONATED BY NAMC”** stamped or printed on each book, to each and every Zoroastrian Association in North America.

(c) Sponsor a Lecture Series.: Invite recognised high-profile Zoroastrian scholars to come and deliver lectures to NAMC members and local association members as well. These could be coordinated with NAMC AGMs. Jehan Bagli volunteered to pursue this.

(d) Sponsor a young Mobed to attend a refresher course camp at the Cama Institute in Mumbai or at any recognised place of Zoroastrian studies.

For this item, the following resolution was tabled by Tehemton Mirza and seconded by Soli Dastur:

“Resolved that the NAMC contribute to the scholarship of any North American Mobed/s, to pursue Zoroastrian studies. Such scholarship will not exceed a total of \$5,000.00 per year.”

The resolution was voted on and passed unanimously. A committee of three NAMC members – Tehemton Mirza, Gustad Panthaki and Cawas Desai was nominated to review applications and recommend suitable candidate/s.

(9) Status report on Directory of Mobeds in North America:

Noshir Karanjia, who was to compile this information was not in attendance and had not submitted a report. No information was available.

Soli Dastur suggested that this list be put on the NAMC website. The information should preferably be compiled and presented for each local North American Association with Telephone numbers and e-mail IDs of Mobeds.

(10) Adoption of “Seasonal Calendar” by FEZANA:

Jehan Bagli read out a letter from the FEZANA President. The members discussed the matter at length and it was decided that the NAMC could not endorse any one specific calendar. Depending on the general consensus of the membership, each Association currently decides and follows the calendar used by the majority of its constituents. The incoming President of the NAMC will discuss the matter with the President of FEZANA and find out the motive behind this request.

(11) Discuss lack of availability of Mobeds in isolated areas:

Behram Panthaki initiated this discussion by citing an incident in Virginia, where he was unable to attend to an emergency request, due to other previous commitments. All members agreed that Mobeds would volunteer their services when called upon, **if they are readily available**. The community should not imply and take for granted that all Mobeds MUST make themselves available whenever any Zoroastrian calls.

It was agreed that each North American Zoroastrian Association must prepare and maintain their own list/directory of Mobeds in their area, consult with their Mobeds about their availability for routine and emergency services and make this list available to the community member looking for Mobed's services. In the absence of a local Association, the Association in the nearest State or Province should be contacted.

(12) Lady Mobedyar:

Jehan Bagli initiated this discussion. He has been approached in the past by Zoroastrian ladies with a request that they be trained and qualified as a Mobedyar. Jehan tabled the following resolution and Gustad Panthaki seconded the same:

"Be it resolved that Resolution #9 of April 2 and 3, 1999, be amended to read as follows:

The main pre-qualification for a Mobedyar must be that such person should be born of two Zoroastrian parents (not a non-Zoroastrian adopted child) and who has been initiated into the Zoroastrian faith by having that person's Navjote performed by a duly ordained Mobed"

The resolution was voted on and unanimously passed.

(13) Membership of NAMC:

Adi Unwalla proposed that all Mobedyars be given full membership in the NAMC with voting rights identical to those available to all Mobed members.

He requested that an extra ordinary meeting be convened at the time of the next AGM to amend Constitution Article #4 to read as follows:

"Membership of the Council shall be open to all Mobeds and Mobedyars residing permanently in North America"

Under Article 2 (Definitions – 5a) add 5b to include definition of "Mobedyar"

(14) Discuss the meaning of Five Gahs:

This Gah session was organised by Ervad Jehan Bagli and he gave an introductory presentation on the subject.

Five Mobed members had each prepared a short but very informative paper on one Gah. Each one presented his paper and Soli Dastur was requested to incorporate this valuable information in the NAMC website.

A vote of thanks to Gev Karkaria, Behram Panthaki, Soli Dastur, Gustad Panthaki and Cawas Desai for their extra ordinary efforts to research, compile, collate, edit and present this information to the membership.

(15) Election of New Executive Committee:

The new Executive Committee will comprise of:

Kobad Zarolia - President

Noshir Mirza - Vice President

Nozer Kotwal - Secretary

Gev Karkaria - Treasurer

Gustad Panthaki - Executive Officer.

(16) Dates for AGM in 2009.

It was decided to hold the next AGM over the Easter Weekend. All members present, except Tehemton were in favour of this date and it was confirmed accordingly, by a majority vote."

(17) Vote of Thanks to the outgoing President and Executive Committee:

Noshir Mirza proposed a Vote of Thanks to the outgoing Committee. All members present, joined in applauding their very valuable contribution. We look forward to their active participation for many more years.

(18) Conclusion of 2008 NAMC AGM:

The 2008 AGM concluded with a vote of thanks to OZCF for hosting the meeting and to all the volunteers who not only put in their labour of love, but also generously donated the food they provided. The dinner hosted by the President of the OZCF, Niloufer Bhesania and her husband Mehernosh was also gratefully acknowledged.

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