

NORTH AMERICAN MOBEDS COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE TWENTY FOURTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Date: May 15 & 16, 2011

Location: Zoroastrian Association of Philadelphia and New Jersey. Meeting held at the Gibson House Community Centre, 984 Tuckerton Road, Marlton, New Jersey. USA.

Members Present:

Jehan Bagli	Ontario
Khushroo Bharda	Ontario
Minocher Dadachanji	Philadelphia
Rohinton Dadina	New Jersey
Soli Dastur	Florida
Cawas Desai	Pennsylvania
Noshir Karanjia	New Jersey
Gev Karkaria	Quebec
Nozer Kotwal	Ontario
Adil Masani	Philadelphia
Adil Minocherhomjee	California
Arda-E-Viraf Minocherhomjee	California
Noshir Mirza	Ontario
Tehemton Mirza	Ontario
Behram Panthaki	Washington

Farhad Panthaki	Boston
Gustad Panthaki	Ontario
Pervez Patel	New York
Fariborz Shahzadi	California
Adi Unwalla	New Jersey
Rayomand Unwalla	Philadelphia
Rostam Vahidi	California
Kobad Zarolia	Ontario

Pallan Ichhaporja also participated in one session, as an observer.

No Proxies were registered.

ZAPANJ President Ms. Freny Ranji welcomed the members of the NAMC and wished all a productive and successful meeting.

Meeting was called to order by President Ervad Kobad Zarolia after a short prayer.

Topics of discussion:

- (1) Adopt the minutes of the Twenty Third Annual General Meeting held at the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago (8615 Meadowbrook Dr. Burr Ridge, Illinois, USA)

Disputes arising from the previous minutes:

Item #5: Cawas mentioned that he had submitted material either to Jehan or Soli. Since the write up was missing or misplaced, Cawas handed over another hard copy to Jehan & Soli.

Item #8: Cawas suggested that we include “natural born children” in the resolution. The revised resolution would now read as follows:

“NAMC would have no objection to any of its members performing the Navjote of natural born children or children adopted by heterosexual Zoroastrian couples or heterosexual couples of interfaith marriages where one spouse is a Zoroastrian”

The resolution revisions were tabled and voted on. There were only two objections against the resolution and the remaining twenty-one individuals were in favour of passing them. Cawas proposed and Behram seconded and the revised resolution was deemed “passed”

(2)Adopt the Financial Statements for the year ending Dec. 31, 2009.

Treasurer Tehemton Mirza presented the financial statements. Nozer Kotwal proposed to adopt the statements and Behram Panthaki seconded. Financial Statements were passed unanimously.

The treasurer advised the members that we had 16 paid up LIFE MEMBERS in our Council.

Kobad advised that Fezana had agreed to donate \$4,000.00 annually to NAMC to defray travel costs incurred by mobeds for lecture and seminar trips.

Appoint Auditors:

As no audits are required for our type of association, and as it is difficult to find an auditor to verify accounts of an organization with an annual revenue of less than \$100,000.00, the following resolution was tabled and voted on:

NAMC will elect an “Audit Committee” of three members to review the procedures and financial statements of NAMC on an annual basis. No member of NAMC's Executive Committee shall be eligible to be elected to the Audit Committee. Furthermore, at least two members of the Audit Committee shall be knowledgeable in accounting and auditing practices.

The resolution was proposed by Behram and seconded by Soli. The resolution was passed unanimously.

(3) President's Annual Report: President Kobad Zarolia highlighted NAMC's activities during 2010.

Congratulations to Soli on being awarded the Rohinton Rivetna "OUTSTANDING ZARATHUSHTI" award from Fezana.

Lecture Circuit: The NAMC Lecture Team made up of Jehan Bagli, Soli Dastur, Behram Panthaki, Gustad Panthaki has been complimented and hailed by all the host associations where the lectures were held. Fezana has requested that these lectures and seminars continue and extend to more associations in North America and if possible arrange repeat seminars in locations already covered in 2010.

NAMC "ATHRAVAN" Newsletter: Thanks to Soli and Khushru, the Newsletter made its debut in 2010. The Newsletter is distributed to all NAMC listed member mobeds, to all Fezana groups and to 210 mobeds in the North American diaspora. NAMC requests that mobeds write articles to fill the other issues of the magazine.

NAMC Mobedyar Program: 2010 saw the initiation of Mobedyar Boman Damkewala, in Chicago, in an impressive ceremony. NAMC welcomes him into our fold. Currently six more persons are under training.

Jehan's response to an improperly published article about Zarathushtra: Jehan responded in a well informed and scholarly manner to an article published in a Pharmaceutical Paper by a self proclaimed expert on our religion and on Zarathushtra in particular. The author acknowledged his mistakes and sent a letter of apology. NAMC thanks Jehan for pursuing this work.

Felicitation of Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi: NAMC was one of the religious groups that had sent a letter to the CM to designate Udwada and Iranshah as a heritage site.

A copy of the President's report will be on the website along with the minutes.

(4) Status report of Mobedyar training: Soli has been mentoring Houtoxi Contractor from Pittsburgh. She has been given a list of prayers to read and practice reciting. Currently, she has slowed down a little as she has just become a grandmother.

Jehan has been coaching a young Iranian lady Mahshad Khosraviani. He has explained briefly the requirements for this course and things are progressing slowly.

Kobad advised that there have been too many requests from North American Zoroastrians to enrol in the Mobedyar program. We do not have adequate resources in terms of trainers to accommodate everyone. We should restrict ourselves to training applicants from locations where there are no mobeds.

Other comments and suggestions:

Have a selective training approach. Choose a remote location over mobed rich location, stretch training period, encourage young adults, Iranian communities are very dependent on mobedyars. For remote or distant location training, the trainer should get together with the pupil from time to time. NAMC can pick up travel expenses of the trainer.

General consensus: Continue training women mobedyars. The North American Zoroastrian population is probably ready to accept them; however, we should wait until the 2012 NAMC meeting before making a final decision.

(5) NAMC Website:

General consensus was that we should put NAMC AGM and EGM Minutes on the website.

Financial statements will NOT be put on the website.

Soli and Adil to coordinate this item and collect all necessary information to be forwarded by Kobad to our webmaster.

(6) Presentation of Zamyad Yasht by Ervad Brigadier Behram Panthaki : Behram gave a very informative and enlightening talk on the Jamyad Yasht. This type of lecture/discussion is very useful for mobeds young and old.

NAMC is thankful for this dissemination of valuable knowledge and information.

(7) Wedding ceremony discussion

Cawas pointed out that the prayers/ceremony are not a contract but a sacrament.

Fariborz mentioned that he sometimes uses translation of some portions and even adds an explanation during the course of the ceremony.

Rostam explained that the ceremony has over the years been changed from Avesta to Pazand to Persian and in Iran it is recognized as a “social agreement”

Members decided that it should be left to individual mobeds to either continue with the prayers as we do them now and give an explanation before or after the ceremony or modify and say the initial portion in English.

Adil commented that the prayers in their current form are like an opera and could be recited with an explanation later.

(8) Discuss the “Atashkadeh” paper prepared by Ontario mobeds :

At the start of the discussions, many members were reluctant to distribute this paper as a NAMC publication. The group went through the paper, item by item, and made changes that everybody agreed to. The Ontario mobeds who authored this document would revisit the changes and corrections. Cawas agreed to review the document with the changes and also prepare and submit a suitable preamble in the next two weeks.

If all members agree, the President would circulate the document by e-mail to the mobeds present and request approval within two weeks. On receipt of approval, the paper would be distributed to all Associations in North America as a NAMC document.

(9) Awards to young Navars and recognition of senior priests:

The NAMC to stop recognizing junior mobeds and will leave that to local associations. Instead, the NAMC will present awards to recognize older mobeds who have given outstanding service to the community for many years. NAMC will present a shawl and plaque at a large Fezana function or Congress. Soli has volunteered to design a NAMC plaque. Gev suggested that we should include all deserving North American mobeds even if they are not members of the NAMC.

Jehan: NAMC should have a selection criteria for the award delegation. Jehan has volunteered to formulate a selection criteria.

Cawas: NAMC should continue to recognize Young Navars and Mobedyars at large Fezana functions. They need not be present. Just announce their names and location. Nozer added that we should ensure capturing all these young achievers.

Fariborz: Present young achievers a nice watch with an NAMC logo.

Local North American Associations should nominate deserving candidates.

The Executive Committee will decide the appropriate form of recognition. However, the proposal to bestow a title like “Dastur” was overwhelmingly voted down.

(10) Is the Patet Pashemani a necessary prayer in the Navjote ceremony?

Soli: Dr. Dhalla had managed to eliminate this prayer in Pakistan, years ago.

Rostam: In Iran a shorter version of the Patet is recited. It could also be the Patet Avastani.

Cawas & Pervez: Patet Pashemani is recited on behalf of the child for sins that the child may have committed or could commit in future.

It was decided to let individual mobeds pray whatever form of Patet that they thought fit.

(11) Subjects for NAMC Lectures and Articles for “Athrawan” :

The President requested all members present to come up with subjects and Articles to assist the “Lecture Team” and the editors.

(12) Other Business permitted by the Chair:

(a) Servicing small Zoroastrian groups : Rostam and Fariborz said that they would like to set up a program to assist small pockets of Zoroastrians who are isolated and away from larger groups. Rostam's idea is to select one household and have the people establish a fire in their home. This could be a place for local Zoroastrians to congregate. Mobeds or Mobedyars from larger groups could visit

these groups periodically and motivate them to remain interested in our religion. The President requested Rostam and Fariborz to come up with a policy and procedure to accomplish this.

(b) Soli informed the group that Rohinton and Kayomarz in Chicago have compiled material from tapes and lectures delivered by Dasturji Minocherhomji and will be publishing them shortly.

(c) Soli: Dealing with a “renegade” mobed: How should the NAMC react to a situation where a mobed of questionable character who is thrusting himself on the community and other mobeds during a religious ceremony (like a Jashan), even though the community has pointedly rejected him for his misbehaviour? Luckily, Kobad mentioned that he was aware of this particular situation and would personally speak with the priest and resolve this issue. For mobeds who are faced with this unpleasant situation, the recourse would be to refuse to sit with the offending mobed for a religious function. It would then be up to the local community to resolve this issue. The NAMC has no authority and cannot issue an edict.

(d) Khushru : At our AGMs or EGMs can't we make it a practice to have a “Grand Jashan” with participation of all mobeds present? Most members are of the opinion that this ceremony takes away too much valuable meeting and discussion time. Unless there is a special event like ordaining a mobedyar, we should stay with the agenda of the meeting, due to time constraints.

(e) Attendance at future NAMC AGMs: Kobad proposed that we continue to increase participation at our AGMs and invite all North American mobeds to join. We should also make an extra effort to encourage more Iranian mobeds to join the NAMC.

(13) Next Annual General Meeting: Location not decided. We shall await information from Washington, DC. With a vote of thanks to the Chair and our host association, the meeting was adjourned.

An important post-meeting event note: Soli presented a slide/video recording of the inauguration of the Dallas Darb-e-Mehr. A very important feature of this inauguration was the performance of the VANDIDAD by three mobeds. (Soli himself participated in this event). Incidentally, this was the FIRST Vandidad performed in North America. Congratulations Dallas and felicitations to Soli.

Another item to record, was the successful publication of an excellent book by Ervads Jehan Bagli and Adi Unwalla: "UNDERSTANDING and PRACTICE of NAVJOTE and WEDDING CEREMONIES". Adi and Jehan very graciously donated a copy of the book to each NAMC member present at the meeting. Our thanks to our learned mobeds.

NAMC member e-mail contact Information available upon request