











In this issue:

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We invite you to share your life updates for inclusion in future newsletters.

Email us your news so we can celebrate these milestones together with the community.

All content must be received by the 20th of the month to be included in next month's edition. Thank you! We look forward to hearing from you.

Editor's Note

Dear ZANC Community,

This month brings something new and exciting for our readers! We are delighted to welcome ZANC member Sanobar Mehta to the newsletter team as our Recipe Contributor. In this issue, Sanobar shares her inspiring vision to bring Parsi recipes into the mainstream through her project, *Stirring Up Stories*. Going forward, we shall be featuring one of her delicious recipes each month for our readers to enjoy.

Also this month, I was thrilled to interview the amazing Parsi chef and author, Peri Avari. We have been using her recipes for years, so it was truly exciting to share her story. Few people manage to turn their passion into a profession, but Peri has successfully done that. Her journey is the epitome of *following what one loves to do*. I enjoyed reading her motivation, her blogs, and recipes and hope you do as well. With all this talk about food, who needs more content, right? But we do! This issue also brings you fun photos from the Cooking Class and the Halloween Party, reflections from our scholarship winners, and Z-classs updates. Here's wishing everyone a warm and joyful Thanksgiving surrounded by friends and family. Happy Reading



Join Us to Inspire & Teach at Our ZANC Art Event

The ZANC Board is planning on organizing an exciting Art Event for both adults and children and we need YOU to help bring it to life! Do you have a creative skill you'd love to share? We're looking for 8-12 creative volunteers to share their talents by teaching one of the following art forms during the event:

Textile Arts

🮨 Painting & Drawing

Decorative Arts

- Crochet
- Knitting
- Embroidery
- Quilting
- Weaving
- Watercolors
- Oil Painting
- Calligraphy
- Origami / Quilling
- Pottery Painting
- Candle Making
- Floral Arrangement
- Beadwork
- Stained Glass
- **Balloon Twisting**

Please reach out to Dilber Mistry at events@zanc.org to help her plan and prepare for the event.

UPCOMING EVENT

LET'S GET COOKING: Anything Par Eedu Contest

Come show off your best Eedu-nu creation and join the fun as we celebrate everyone's culinary creativity. Make it savory or sweet and bring your delicious masterpieces. If attending but not participating, then please bring a dish to share.



Date: Sunday, December 7th

Time: 11 AM

Location: Dar-e-Mehr





CLICK HERE TO REGISTER

Registration Deadline: December 1st

RECENT EVENTS



DAR-NI-PORI COOKING CLASS

About 50 people of

all ages came together on Sunday, Oct 5th, for a fun cooking class led by the amazing Gool Jokhi. Everyone rolled up their sleeves, learned cooking tips and tricks, and went home with a printed recipe, and their newly made creation. A HUGE THANK YOU to the 3 lovely ladies (Gool Jokhi, Sanobar Mehta and Monaz Singh) for all



their hard work, and to the ZANC Board in making this a super fun event!



HALLOWEEN COSTUME CONTEST AND MOVIE NIGHT



For ZANC's Halloween night, families came dressed to impress for the child, youth, and adult costume contests showcasing incredible creativity and imagination. After all their hard work, the kids enjoyed a fun pizza party and ice cream while watching *Hotel Transylvania*. It was a spooktacularly evening filled with creativity, and festive spirit.













Child (ages 2-8): Hormazd Mistree, Nina Kekobad, Rayzad Choksey

Youth (ages 9-15): Arya Kadva, Zara Kekobad, Zinaya Choksey

Adults: Alysha & Fredy Kadva, Dilshad Kekobad, Vida Khoshroo



Check out all the fun pictures on the ZANC Facebook page

COMMUNITY NEWS



Your Gift is their Vision - Donate Your Old Glasses Today!

ZANC member Nina Daruwalla is on a mission to bring the gift of sight to those in need! She is an active volunteer with Ainak, a nonprofit organization, dedicated to bringing the gift of sight to those in need, and is seeking donations of gently used eyeglasses, frames, and cases to children in need. Many children struggle in school simply eyeglasses

who cannot afford eve care, this becomes a barrier to learning. A simple donation can help by providing eyeglasses and removing this barrier for good.

To Donate: Contact Nina at 408-219-5743 to coordinate your drop-off or visit the Ainak Website to make a direct donation.

Introducing "Stirring Up Stories" with Sanobar Mehta

Hi! I'm Sanobar. I've been part of ZANC since 2003, when I moved to the Bay Area from Southern California. I'm starting a new project to collect recipes and stories from our community - dishes that hold meaning, carry family traditions, spark memories, or simply represent something you're known for. I'd love to capture your recipe, hear your tips, and learn why it matters to you.



Why this project? Growing up in Hong Kong, food was always at the heart of our Parsi traditions. When I came to California for

college, I realized I didn't just miss the food, but also the memories and connection it brought. Now, with my own kids off to college, I want them, and all our youth, to inherit not just recipes, but the stories and traditions behind them. My goal is to share these in our monthly newsletter and eventually create a community cookbook to celebrate who we are, keeping our culinary heritage and stories alive.

The first recipe features Nazneen Spliedt. To most people she is a past President of ZANC and a dedicated long-time community volunteer. To me, she is someone very dear, "Aunty Nazneen" to all of us who grew up in Hong Kong. She has been a role model, an inspiration and a steady voice of wisdom. It was an honor to learn her recipe together in her kitchen and I hope you enjoy the first "Stirring Up Stories" recipe.

RECIPE OF THE MONTH



KUMAS with Nazneen Spliedt



ABOUT THE CHEF

Nazneen first made Kumas in 2000 after moving to the US from Hong Kong, inspired by a friend's mother's version. She later tweaked it using "Manna of the Angels" cookbook. On her first attempt the center was raw, but after reaching out to cookbook author Niloofer Mavalwalla she learned a trick to perfect it. She makes it often for museum board meetings, Muktad offerings, and whenever Dastoorji requests it! She chose to share this recipe because it's simple, traditional, and well-loved. This dish carries the memory of an old friend's mom from Karachi and brings a sense of satisfaction and pride every time she makes it. Nazneen encourages you to follow the recipe but not be afraid to tweak it!





HAVE A SPECIAL RECIPE TO SHARE?
Get featured in the "Stirring Up Stories"
community recipe collection project!

Contact Sanobar Mehta at sanobar3104@gmail.com for info.

INGREDIENTS

1 cup whole wheat flour, sifted
6 oz all purpose flour, sifted
1 cup sooji (coarse if possible)
1 ½ tsp baking powder
½ tsp baking soda
1 tsp salt
1 tsp ground cardamom
1 tsp ground nutmeg
6 oz butter
2 cups sugar
5 eggs (room temp)
1 cup desi yogurt (room temp)
Few drops vanilla extract
Pinch of saffron
Slivered almonds (optional)

DIRECTIONS

24 servings

- 1. Place yogurt at room temperature for few hours, to get little sour. Soak saffron in 1 tbsp of water/milk for half hour.
- Make dry mixture by adding to bowl both flours, sooji, baking powder, baking soda, salt, cardamom and nutmeg.
- 3. In mixer add butter and sugar, and beat until creamed together. Add eggs one at a time until mixture is smooth.
- 4. Add ¼ cup of dry mix to mixer and beat on low. Add a spoon of yogurt (including water it sits in) and mix well. Alternate adding dry mixture and yogurt, ending with dry mix. Add a few drops of vanilla essence and saffron mixture, and mix well. Stir in handful of slivered almonds.
- 5.Add mixture to parchment lined 9" x 13" baking tray. Gently bang tray on counter to remove extra air. Add slivered almonds on top for garnish. Chef's Tip: Use a knife to mark 4" square in middle of the pan to allow even baking!
- 6. Place on middle rack at 350 F, bake for approx. 40 mins (or longer) until golden brown and center is done. Turn off oven, leave inside for few minutes, then remove to cool and serve.

Written by Sanobar Mehta

Z-CLASS UPDATES

Fostering Learning through Collaboration and Crafts

Each year the <u>Z-Class</u> students create a collaborative art project which allows them to share ideas, build on one another's strengths, and grow together in a supportive environment. Crafting encourages learning through creativity, hands-on problem solving, and the joy of making something meaningful as a team.



Z-Class Farohar Mosaic Project:

This year's art project is a Farohar made with mosaic tiles. Designed to foster unity, the mosaic will be created jointly by Z-Class students and teachers over a few classes. The children will learn how to mosaic while also experiencing the assembling of many small pieces into a unified whole that echoes Zoroastrian teachings about the power of individual

and contributing to Asha. A border of white hexagonal tiles surrounds the Farohar, each inscribed with the names of students, families, and educators. More than just an art piece, the mosaic will serve as a lasting testament to the values of this year's theme of 'Houdanoosh', and it will invite every participant to see themselves as part of a larger story.



A big thanks goes out to Z-Class art instructor **Delzin Choksey** for leading this creative project.



Questions/Information:

Email Z-CLASS or

CLICK HERE to learn more about Z-Classes



YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

Voices of Success: Bay Area Students on Winning Scholarships

The Bay Area Z Community is proud to congratulate three bright young women on receiving the 2025 FEZANA Scholarships. This honor recognizes their hard work, and commitment to excellence in their chosen fields of study. We celebrate their achievements and wish them continued success! See all the winners HERE.



My name is **Natasha Burzin Patel** and I am an undergraduate student at Ringling College of Art and Design in Florida pursuing a degree in Virtual Reality Development. I'm passionate about combining immersive technology and art to create impactful experiences in fields such as medical simulation, training, and education. Growing up as a member of ZANC, and now being a youth leader of ZYNA, I truly am grateful for the opportunity to pursue my passion. I am honored to receive this scholarship from FEZANA, as it encourages me

to continue on this path with the motivation of helping others. I strive to balance my studies with the commitment of giving back to the religious and educational communities that have supported me.

My name is **Diana Hormazd Commissariat** and I am a Biology major at Chapman University in Southern California with an emphasis in Anatomy and Physiology and a minor in neuroscience, pursuing a career in healthcare. I graduated from Homestead High School in 2024, and during my time there, I won many awards for speech and debate, the Presidential Volunteer Service Award, and an academic scholarship from the Stanford Blood Center for my dedication as a student liaison. My passion for medicine began early, growing up in my mom's childcare center, where I learned how meaningful it is to make people feel safe and cared for. That same spirit has guided me



not only in my current research on the gut-brain axis and my leadership roles on campus, but also in service to my Zoroastrian community. As a junior counselor at Z-Camp, I had the privilege of mentoring younger kids, passing down traditions, and helping establish the same sense of belonging that shaped me. I love any opportunity to give back to the community at large or the incredible Zoroastrian community I call home. Receiving the Dhunmai and Dosabhai Gandhi Scholarship is a true honor. It affirms my dedication to both science and service, and inspires me to continue blending compassion, community, and knowledge in my journey to becoming a physician.



My name is **Ava Rathenberg** and I am a student pursuing my Bachelor of Science at the University of Southern California's lovine and Young Academy with a concentration in Machine Learning and Artificial Intelligence, where I am learning to design products and become an entrepreneur. I am driven by a strong passion for helping others through technology, and my goal is to develop accessible, effective healthcare wearables that can improve lives. This scholarship represents my vision to make meaningful change in the world. It supports my

academic journey, helps me pursue a master's degree, and motivates me to continue my research in the Artificial Intelligence space. At USC, I plan to build an on-campus Zoroastrian community, bringing the younger generation together and empowering Zoroastrian students. With this opportunity, I can continue pushing the boundaries of technology and exploring the field of Artificial Intelligence. I envision a future where healthcare and technology are smarter, personalized, and accessible to all.

NCZC (Northern CA Zoroastrian Center) UPDATE



Thank you for your generosity and belief in this project. Every contribution brings us closer to creating a permanent home for our community - a place where our families, children, and future generations can gather, celebrate, and grow together.

We know that when you give, you want to understand exactly how your donation is being used. Transparency and accountability are at the heart of how we operate.

All donations made to the **New Community Center Campaign** go directly toward the shared goal of securing and building a permanent center. This includes:

- Real estate and facility costs (purchase, permits, and construction)
- Architectural, engineering, and design services
- Community and cultural programming related to the new center

The NCZC Finance Committee carefully reviews and tracks all donations and expenditures. Major financial decisions, including disbursements or transfers, are approved by the NCZC Committee and the ZANC Board. Regular financial updates will be shared with our community to ensure full transparency on how funds are managed.

Have questions about donations, pledge forms, bank/stock transfers or anything else? Simply email us at nczc@googlegroups.com

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Peri Avari



This month, we're thrilled to shine the spotlight on an exceptionally talented ZANC member—**Peri Avari**, a celebrated chef and author. With a deep passion for the culinary arts and a unique talent for blending tradition with creativity, Peri infuses every dish with flavor, culture, and heart. Let us explore her journey, inspirations, and the delicious impact she's made on our community in this 2 page special feature!



Her Life: With a lifelong passion for food and hospitality, my journey has taken me from the grand halls of India's iconic Taj Hotels—where I had the honor of managing state visits for dignitaries such as Bill Clinton, Stephen Hawking, Margaret

Thatcher, and Elton John—to promoting Indian cuisine in China and founding food ventures in California's Silicon Valley. Currently, I am the founder of Simply Bhonu, offering small-batch, handcrafted chai and unique spice blends. Along the way, I've been the voice behind the decade-old Indian Parsi



food blog Peri's Spice Ladle and authored two e-cookbooks - <u>Spice Up Your</u> <u>Celebration</u> and <u>Tikka Tikki & Spicy Bites</u>.

Though I'm professionally an Indian chef, one of Simply Bhonu's core missions is to preserve and showcase the culinary heritage of my native Parsi cuisine, with deep history and a rich story to tell. As a mom to two college-age boys, I've always made it a priority to nurture their love for home cooking and encourage balanced eating habits. I'm grateful I did—my older son, Varun, recently graduated and still manages to cook dinner every evening, even with his packed work schedule, and my younger son, Rohaan, is a familiar face at my markets and in both my home and commercial kitchens. He's now taking that passion further by majoring in food science.

Before moving to California in 2014, our family spent a decade in Texas, where we were actively involved with the community and ZANT. I'd love to see more food conversation and cooking within the ZANC community, and I'm always happy to do my part. After all, what could be more exciting than coming together to bake fresh mawa cake and have Parsi choi? People often say that 'if you love what you do, it doesn't feel like work'. I'm living proof of that! When I'm stressed or need to clear my mind, I head straight to the kitchen and start cooking. Outside the kitchens, I take long walks, spend time in daily meditation, and am an avid reader.

Her Work: <u>Simply Bhonu</u> creates small-batch, handcrafted chai teas and unique spice blends. Our signature Masala Chai and Parsi Choi blends capture the comforting allure of fragrant spices, herbs, and Assam black tea. Explore our distinctive line of single-use and multi-purpose spice blends, such as Dhansak Blend, Parsi Curry, and a fragrant finishing Garam Masala, for a simplified approach to Indian cooking.



Let's hear from Peri in our Q&A session:

Q: What and who first inspired you to start cooking?

PA: If I had to dig deep, I'd say the first role model behind my love for cooking was my Mamaiji (maternal grandmother). I spent my childhood summers with her, and the mouthwatering aroma of her Khichri-Saas, methi ni bhaji, fresh rotli, caramel custard, and homemade Bhakra still bring back memories of those warm afternoons at her home.

Q: What are your own personal comfort foods (Parsi dish)?

PA: I've been told that when I was a kid, the only things I ate happily were Dar-Chawal and Tareli Macchi (rice, lentils, and fried fish) and Charvelu Eedu (scrambled eggs). I can safely say that even today, those are still my comfort foods.

Q: What has been your biggest cooking challenge so far?

PA: As a chef, I'll happily take on any cooking challenge with glee! But I have always struggled with making Indian chapati. As a perfectionist, I still have days when my chapati doesn't fully puff up or come out perfectly round. When I was a young chef, it used to bother me that I couldn't master something so basic. But over time, I've learned to accept it!

Q: What's your favorite dish to cook and why?

PA: Lamb Berry Pulao - What makes it special to me? I grew up in Mumbai, attended CJM Fort, St. Xavier's, and worked at the Taj in Colaba. With my grandmother living at Marine Lines, I



was always just a short walk from some of the city's most iconic Irani cafés. Lamb Berry Palao is just one of the many dishes that made my youth and early working years so special.

Here's a recipe I created for it—hope you enjoy it and make it your own. As I always tell my cooking class participants, "A recipe is only a guide, not a manifesto!"

CLICK HERE for Peri's Lamb Berry Pulao Recipe

Newsletter: Subscribe for mouth-watering recipes and pro tips

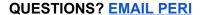
Shop: Buy with free shipping across California - no minimum required

Blog: Read about various recipes, food techniques, and tried-and-true tips

Cooking Classes: Enjoy community, private, and corporate event classes

Instagram and Facebook: Follow Simply Bhonu on social media

What makes Parsi Food Truly Unique?







PRESS AND MEDIA:

Palo Alto Online | Go Solo Magazine | DeliveryRank Blog | Metric Studio Podcast

IN OTHER NEWS



THE FEZANA JOURNAL

The journal is published four times a year, for the purpose of disseminating news and views, as well as educational and inspirational articles about the Zarathushti religion, culture and practices as they pertain to Zarathushtis in North America.

FEZANA JOURNAL is the official publication for the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America

Click Here To Subscribe

London's Lord Mayor hosts First Ever Zoroastrian Parsi Dinner at his Residence

The dinner, which was held on Sept 26th, was co-hosted by Lord Karan Bilimoria and the Lord Mayor of London, Alastair King. Bilimoria is the founder of Cobra Beer and the first-ever Zoroastrian Parsi to sit in the House of Lords. The Lord Mayor of London used his dinner invitation to acknowledge and



celebrate the substantial contributions the Zoroastrian community has made to the British economy and culture. He highlighted their outsized influence, despite their small population: "Though tiny in numbers, barely 5,000 in the UK, Britain would not be the same without the contribution of the Zoroastrian Parsi community. From business to philanthropy, education to industry, the spirit and dedication of the community is felt worldwide." The dinner was attended by many distinguished members of the Parsi community, highlighting their diverse contributions across various sectors.

Read the Full Article by Ishani Duttagupta in New India Abroad

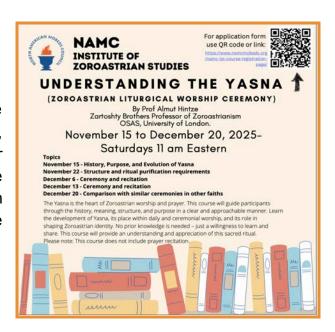
ARTS AND EDUCATION

NAMC INSTITUTE OF ZOROASTRIAN STUDIES

Understanding the Yasna - This course will guide participants through the history, meaning, structure, and purpose in a clear and approachable manner. Learn the development of Yasna, its place within daily and ceremonial worship, and its role in shaping Zoroastrian identity.

Nov 15th to Dec 20th at 8 am (PST)

CLICK HERE TO REGISTER





Zoroastrian Women in the United States of America by Paulina Niechcial

This book examines how ancient Zoroastrianism is practiced in the US diaspora and how it has evolved dynamically. As it developed in the patriarchal cultures of Iran and India, to move beyond the dominant male perspective, this book focuses on women. Richly illustrated with the narratives of subsequent generations of Iranian and Parsi immigrants, the book gives a taste of the diverse Zoroastrian life across the US. It broadens the picture of the ethnoreligious landscape in the country and also highlights the role of social practice theory in the study of religion. **CLICK HERE TO ORDER.**

About the Author: Paulina Niechcial is an assistant professor at the Center for Comparative Civilization Studies at the Jagiellonian University in Krakow, Poland. She holds MA degrees in ethnology and in Iranian studies, and a PhD in Sociology. She also studied Persian language and literature at the University of Tehran in Iran. Her academic pursuits focus on the study of minorities and identity and the anthropology and sociology of religion.

Zoom Lecture: Saturday, Nov 8th (9 AM PST) Zoom ID: 862 7732 6439 | Passcode: REC



CONNECT AND CONTACT

Join ZANC WhatsApp Groups, Facebook and Instagram



WhatsApp: <u>CLICK HERE</u> to join WhatsApp

• Facebook: <u>CLICK HERE</u> to join Facebook





Stay engaged with other Zs, post pictures, and strengthen our community connections. **NOTE:** You will still continue to get the ZANC monthly newsletter and event notices via email.

Maintain Active Membership: Active memberships are vital to ensuring the continued growth and success of our community here in Northern CA. Your membership dues go toward maintaining our Dar-e-Mehr, sustaining ZANC's operations, and funding valuable programs that benefit all members. <u>CLICK HERE</u> to join or renew your membership.



All feedback & suggestions are welcome & encouraged:

General questions: email the ZANC BOARD

Membership: email the **ZANC SECRETARY**

Volunteering: email the EVENTS COORDINATOR



THE NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE:

Stay connected with the ZANC Newsletter — your source for community news, announcements, and upcoming events. Please <u>EMAIL</u> us your personal milestones so we can celebrate and acknowledge them with the community. **All content must be received by the 20th of the month.**

Editor: Dianne Patel (newsletter@zanc.org)

Collaborators: Delzin Choksey, Kathleen Chothia

Contributors: Recipes (Sanobar Mehta) and NCZC (Erin Press)

And Finally...

FEZANA announces an exciting Partnership with Turkish Airlines Corporate Club!



With the travel season upon us, FEZANA is delighted to announce a brand new, exciting partnership with Turkish Airlines Corporate Club which brings exclusive travel benefits to our community. Members traveling on flights originating from North American cities can now enjoy special discounts and privileges. The program extends to the members of all 27 Zoroastrian associations in the United States and Canada.

Member Benefits:

- Special discounted fares on international flights
- Complimentary extra baggage allowance on select routes
- Greater ticket flexibility, including easier date changes
- Access to Turkish Airlines' extensive global network via Istanbul

Booking Details:

All reservations must be made through

Bomi Patel, BB Travel Experts LLC

**** Phone: (408) 264-4395

WhatsApp: +1 (408) 390 0750

Email: <u>bbtes9@gmail.com</u>