



ZANC MONTHLY BUZZ



In this issue:

- Editor's Note
- Upcoming Events
- Recent Events
- Community News
- Z-Class Updates
- Youth Engagement
- Spotlight on Farhan Panthaki
- In Other News

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,

As we move into the winter months, it's comforting to know that both of this month's events will be indoors! First up is a cooking demonstration with Peri Avari, who will be teaching us how to make delicious high tea treats. **Later this month, our popular Halloween Costume Contest returns, with exciting prizes (in the child, youth and adult categories), delicious food, and tons of fun. Thanks to an anonymous donor generously covering all costs, this event is completely FREE for our members! So bring your appetites, put on your most creative costumes and sign up ASAP!!**

This month, we shine the spotlight on a young Dastur, who shares his insightful perspective on his journey toward becoming a Parsi priest. I personally learned so much from our interview about the dedication, commitment, and challenges involved in pursuing this important role. Finally, a heartfelt thank you to everyone who shared their summer travel pictures with us. It was a real joy to receive each one and to include them in this month's newsletter. 🎃 Happy Reading 🎃

Move over, MasterChef - ZANC had its own culinary showdown!

🏆 **Patio Wars: 16 Contestants. 3 Judges. 1 Champion!** 🏆

With 70 hungry guests, 16 creative contestants, and 3 very serious judges, ZANC's Patio Contest was a delicious battle of flavors, creativity, and, of course, the all-important Khatoo-Mithoo-Tikhoo

The Contest: Before judging began, each contestant had to share what made their patio unique and was then assigned a number to ensure a fair, blind judging process.

The Judging: each judge awarded up to 5 points for each of 5 categories, for a max score of 25 points per judge.

- 1 Presentation & Eye Appeal
- 2 Originality & Twist
- 3 Khatoo - Mithoo -Tikhoo Patio
- 4 Authenticity
- 5 Protein / Vegetable / Other Treatment

The Winner: After plenty of tasting and deliberation one Patio emerged victorious. **Farzana Palsetia's** "Kolmi no Patio" had the perfect winning recipe - great flavor, originality and plenty of Parsi flair!



A big thank you to our 3 judges, Godrej Keravala, Sheena Driver and Kobad Jamshed, for making this Patio showdown one deliciously memorable event!

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR WINNERS

- 1st Place: Farzana Palsetia - *Kolmi no Patio*
2nd Place: Kerman Deboo - *Kolmi na farcha no Patio*
3rd Place: Shenaz Zack Mistry - *Crab no Patio*





The yummy feast 🍴

👉 Farzana's son, Xerxes, gives mom's dish a "thumbs up"



FUTURE EVENTS – MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

DATE / TIME	EVENT	LOCATION
Sat, Oct 3rd, 2 - 5 pm	High Tea Cooking Class	Dar-e-Mehr
Sat, Oct 24th, 5:30 pm	Halloween Costume Contest	Dar-e-Mehr
Sat, Nov 14th, 5 - 8 pm	Bingo Night	Dar-e-Mehr



GET INVOLVED! ZANC events rely heavily on volunteer support to run smoothly, and every helping hand makes a difference.

To volunteer, please contact Events Coordinator at events@zanc.org

UPCOMING EVENTS

HALLOWEEN COSTUME CONTEST AND MOVIE NIGHT

FREE EVENT FOR OUR MEMBERS



👻 Dress to Impress! 🎃

Come dressed in your spooky, crazy, or creative outfit for a chance to win prizes

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER BY OCT 22](#)

Join us for a festive evening of:

A Spooktacular Costume Contest

A Magical Movie Night

🍕 Pizza & Ice Cream Treats 🍦

 **Date:** Saturday, October 24th

 **Time:** 5:30 PM

 **Location:** Dar-e-Mehr

BINGO, BANTER & BIG WINS

Date: Saturday, November 14th

Time: Bingo 5 - 7 pm (followed by dinner)

Place: Dar-e-Mehr

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER BY NOV 9th](#)

Event Pricing:

Adults (10+) - \$20

Children (5-10) - \$10

Kids under 5 - Free

Bingo tickets:

Please bring change in cash to purchase bingo tickets at the venue.

NOTE: This is a members only event.

(Members may register visiting family who reside outside the Bay Area at member rates)



RECENT EVENTS



SENIOR SOCIAL: CHAI, CHAT & CONNECT

On September 9th, our seniors gathered at the Batliwalla residence for a delightful afternoon of games, laughter, and good conversation. The gathering was a wonderful opportunity to reconnect with friends, enjoy tea and snacks, and simply relax in each other's company. With plenty of smiles and friendly competition, it was a truly enjoyable afternoon for everyone. 🤖



A big thank you to Zarine & Neville for graciously opening their home and to the Senior Events Committee for all their thoughtful planning and efforts.

COMMUNITY NEWS

👁️ Look Who Made the Headlines in the *Jame Jamshed* 👁️



ZANC members Khursheed Irani and Shenaz Zack Mistry, two accomplished women, were featured in the September 6th edition of the popular Parsi newspaper, where they shared their insights on how AI can be used thoughtfully and meaningfully in their respective fields.

Khursheed Irani, Founder & CEO of Phizenix, a Silicon Valley technology consulting and talent solutions company, uses AI to transform the workplace and recruitment process. She sees AI helping organizations identify talent, streamline administrative tasks and evaluate qualities such as leadership, problem-solving and cultural fit, while emphasizing that human judgment remains essential.

Shenaz Zack Mistry, Senior Director of Product Management at Google, leads software for the flagship Pixel portfolio. She guides her team in building practical, human-centred AI features that solve everyday problems, from screening spam calls and restoring family photographs to assisting with emergency services. Grounded in a strong moral compass and human values, she believes AI must function as an invisible assistant that solves everyday problems and improves daily life.

Source: [WWZ Facebook page](#)

ZANC Foodies Group Lunch Meetup

Sunday, September 13th - Persian Food at [Chelokababi](#) in Sunnyvale, CA

Our fifth foodie group gathering was great fun, with laughter, lively conversation, and an array of Persian dishes eaten family style. It was a wonderful feeling to gather around a table, sampling the cuisine and sharing stories.





Among the drinks were Persian lemonade, saffron sharbat, a cucumber mint cooler, mango passion drink and a delightful Persian tea called "perfect zing", with a sugar stick to mix in the sweetness!



Appetizers and mains were an unending spread of ash reshteh (osh), gheymeh, fessenjun with saffron rice, joojeh kebab, koobideh platters, a Shirazi salad, falafel and hummus and kashko badernjan.



Two dessert towers, consisting of Baklava, cream puffs, ice cream and a warm mawa cake, ended the meal, and were demolished faster than anyone could say "yum".



Many thanks to our enthusiastic foodies who join in our food explorations and make happy memories with us!

Article & photo: Dilnavaz Bamboat

ZANC & PZO CDC Committee Continue to Improve Our Dar-e-Mehr

The ZANC & PZO Construction and Development Committee (CDC) continues to work together to maintain, improve, and enhance our Dar-e-Mehr for the benefit of the entire community. We are pleased to share that the **latest kitchen renovation** has been completed thanks to the **generous support of community members who donated to ZANC and PZO, including Nina Daruwalla**. The project included plumbing work, cabinet refacing, new countertops, faucets, and sink updates, giving our community kitchen a much-needed refresh.



The kitchen gets a fabulous face-lift (before and after pics)

Source: PZO Newsletter, Aug 28, 2026



Bay Area Zoroastrians Take on the 2026 Alcatraz Open

On September 13, 2026, two members of our Bay Area Zoroastrian community, **Karmin Guzder Williams** and **Shahvir Bhujwala**, conquered the 30th annual [Alcatraz Open Swim](#).

The event, which is organized by the South End Rowing Club, is a challenging 1.4-mile open-water swim from near Alcatraz Island to Aquatic Park in San Francisco and draws swimmers from across the US and around the world. It is a celebrated test of open-water endurance, which challenges participants to navigate the Bay's frigid waters and powerful currents, demanding exceptional physical conditioning, mental focus, and grit. Completing this legendary course marks an impressive accomplishment in both Karmin's and Shahvir's swimming journeys. Their achievement reflects perseverance, courage and a passion for the water.



Karmin Guzder Williams is a visual arts teacher at Lick-Wilmerding High School in San Francisco. Shahvir Bhujwala is a junior at Lick-Wilmerding and an American Red Cross-certified deep-water lifeguard. The two had independently signed up for the swim, unaware of each other's plans, until they unexpectedly crossed paths at the pre-event dinner on September 12th. The unexpected connection made the accomplishment especially delightful for two community members who also share the same school halls.

Congratulations to Karmin and Shahvir on this remarkable achievement!

Article & photo: Sonal Bhujwala

Monthly Women's Gathering At The San Jose Dar-e-Mehr



The Mehr-e-Mitra Fellowship offers a welcoming space for women in the Zoroastrian community to connect, grow, and uplift one another. Come and enjoy a morning of music, art, and fun conversations to uplift your soul.

**Join us on the third Sunday of each month
from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm**

Z-CLASS UPDATES

The 2026-27 School Year is off to a great start!



The new school year of [Z Class](#) kicked off on September 13th with contagious excitement and joy. Open to all Zarathushti children from TK through high school, the program is designed to teach, inspire, connect, and encourage growth. A warm welcome goes out to all the students, teachers, educators and parents who continue to support our

community. Their commitment ensures the smooth running of our classrooms and helps keep the spirit of the community thriving.



The Z Class teachers would like to thank all the volunteers whose hard work and generosity keep the program thriving and look forward to a year filled with purposeful learning, heartfelt connection, and the continued celebration of our shared heritage.

Days/Time: Classes meet at the Dar-e-Mehr every 2nd & 4th Sunday from 10-11:30 am

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

Voices of Success: ZANC Students on Winning Scholarships

The Bay Area Z Community is proud to congratulate three bright young women on receiving the 2026 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! 🙌🙌

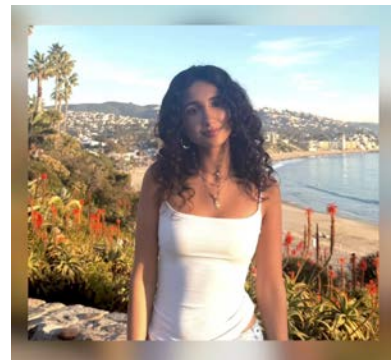


NATASHA PATEL - Goolcher and Keki Captain Scholarship for Performing Arts - Virtual Reality Development, Ringling College of Arts & Design, Florida

I am a senior 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. I am honored to receive this scholarship as it encourages me to continue on this path with the motivation of helping others.

DIANA COMMISSARIAT - Soonu and Jal Birdy Endowed Scholarship - Molecular Biology & Neuroscience, USC

I am currently a junior pursuing a degree in Biological Sciences with hopes of becoming a pediatrician. My passion for healthcare has grown from a lifelong love of working with children and some of my most meaningful moments have come from helping a child discover a confidence they did not know they had. I am very grateful to receive this scholarship, which allows me to continue pursuing a future where I can combine my love for science with the compassion, patience and commitment to service that have shaped me throughout my life.



SUHANA PATEL - 12th World Zoroastrian Congress Scholarship - Doctor of Medicine, New York Medical College

I am a second year medical student and I am passionate about medicine, particularly dermatology, where I hope to combine my interests in patient care, immunology, and community service. It is an honor to receive the FEZANA Scholarship, and I am deeply grateful for the support of the Zoroastrian community, both through ZANC and FEZANA. I look forward to carrying this spirit of service with me throughout my medical career.



IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Farhan Panthaki



This month, we highlight a remarkable young man who is not only a dedicated Dastur but also a man of many interests. His dedication and spirit of service continue to make a difference in our community. Let us explore his journey and his unique perspective in this 3 page special feature.



Farhan was born in Dadar Parsi Colony in Mumbai and spent most of his childhood growing up in Mississauga, Canada. He moved to the Bay Area 11 years ago to start a career at Apple. In his spare time Farhan loves reading, being outdoors camping/hiking, going for a drive in the California hills, exploring new restaurants, and playing ice hockey. He also scuba dives and is currently working towards his pilot's license. Farhan became a Navar at age 12 and was ordained at Rustom Framna Agiary in Dadar. He is an active member of ZANC, and NAMC (North American Mobeds Council). He loves being able to perform navjotes, weddings, Jashans, and being able to contribute back to the community.

Let's hear about Farhan's journey and his Parsi Perspective in a Q&A Session:

Q: What first sparked your interest in becoming a Dastur, and at what age did you begin considering this path?

To be honest it was first sparked by my parents! They told me about it when I was around 9 years old and explained that because my dad had not been able to become a Navar due to his boarding school education and travels, the lineage would end with me if I chose not to pursue it. I was very apprehensive at first because it's a lot of studying and memorization but looking back now I am so glad my parents prompted me to go forward with it!

Q: Were there any particular people, experiences, or influences that played a significant role in your decision to pursue the priesthood?

Outside of my immediate family, there were 2 Dasturjis in Toronto who played an important role in my journey. Ervad Darayus Panthaky helped me a tremendous amount when I started studying. I would go to his house once a week and he would listen to me pray, correct my pronunciation, and guide me through the process. I couldn't have done it without him! Ervad Nozer Kotwal was an extremely influential figure in my life *after* I completed the Navar ceremony. When I first started performing Jashans I was super nervous and it was difficult to get opportunities. Nozer uncle would always pull me into prayers and soon pushed for me to lead them. He was so supportive, helpful, and encouraging. I attribute a lot of my confidence and interests I have today to him, as well as to the other senior Dasturjis who encouraged me and nurtured my interests.



Q: What was the journey like from your initial interest to becoming a Dastur?

The ceremony itself is challenging in ways I didn't initially expect. You have to live in the Agiary for 28 days without leaving which can be quite challenging. Then there are sections where you can't look at fire, touch water on the outside of your skin or touch wood elements (since this included paper, I had to use metal sticks to read the prayer books). You also have to sleep on a leather pad on the floor. My head Dastur was also very strict, so I wasn't allowed to listen to music, read fiction, or have any form of outside entertainment. The hardest part was that, during certain periods, I wasn't allowed to have contact with other people. It really made me realize at a young age the value in the seemingly "little" things in life - like a nice hug from your parents. :)

Q: In what ways has being a Dastur shaped your personal life, values, and worldly outlook?

I think being a Dastur has led me to be more compassionate and understand different people's viewpoints. I feel lucky to have had exposure to so many different situations, requests, families, and traditions which has really helped open up my own world-view and helped me become curious and has made me want to learn more about others.

Q: What have been some of the most rewarding aspects of serving the community as a Dastur?

For me the most rewarding aspect is getting the opportunities to help people and to be a part of the special moments in their lives. Many ceremonies, such as weddings, jashans and navjotes are joyous occasions, and it's rewarding to be able to celebrate those happy moments with others. Other ceremonies, such as funerals, are a tough time in people's lives but I'm happy that I'm able to provide a moment of support and comfort through prayer in their time of grief.

Q: What challenges have you encountered along the way, and how have you navigated them?

One challenge for me was how to get integrated into a new community after moving to the Bay Area. I googled "Zoroastrian associations nearby" and attended the first ZANC event that was posted on the website. At that time Nazneen Spliedt was amazing in introducing me to people. Soon I started asking around about helping with Jashans and eventually I connected to Dasturji Kobad and the rest of the community. Another challenge was that I would sometimes receive conflicting information about how to perform a ceremony, the correct order of prayers, or the items required for a ceremony. My approach to help with this is to listen to all the different opinions and then make my own best judgment based on my own research and understanding.

Q: How has the role of a Dastur evolved in today's modern world compared to previous generations?

I think that in today's modern world, especially here in the west, Dasturs are primarily called upon for ceremonial purposes, whereas in the past they played a larger role in providing guidance and participating in community discussions. Part of this may also be due to the limited number of Dasturs available today. That is why I believe that having more practicing Mobeds will help strengthen the community.

Q: What advice would you give to other young people interested in becoming priests?

You should do it! The hardest part is just taking that first step! The path can seem daunting at first, but it is extremely rewarding and anyone who is interested can absolutely do it. There is

also a lot of support available, so don't be afraid to reach out and ask for help. Looking back, I am so happy my parents pushed me towards this path and I followed through with it.

Q: Looking back, is there anything you wish you had known when you first began your journey?

I wish I had known how rewarding it would feel and how many opportunities there would be to connect with others and give back. While studying at the age of 10 or 11 I would often want to just skip it all and go outside to play games with my friends. If I had known back then how rewarding it would feel, I think the journey would have been a lot easier.

Q: What message would you like to share with the next generation about the importance of preserving and passing on our religious traditions?

Our religion and our community are really special. It is so worthwhile to get involved, but that doesn't mean you have to do everything. Pick whatever part of the community you connect with the most - whatever brings you the most joy - and join in there. It can be through food, planning events, learning ceremonies, volunteering or teaching. My belief is that if you do it with genuine kindness and an open heart, you'll get ten times more out of it than what you put in!



IN OTHER NEWS



🔥 Passing the Flame Forward 🔥

Help your kids connect with their Zoroastrian roots! **Dinsha Mistree** is teaching fun and engaging Zoroastrian classes once a month for youth ages 1-18. Through stories, traditions, and age appropriate lessons, children will have the opportunity to learn about the Zoroastrian faith, culture, and heritage while building a stronger connection to their community.

Questions? Email Dinsha at dmistree@gmail.com.

CONNECT AND CONTACT

Join ZANC WhatsApp Groups, Facebook and Instagram



- WhatsApp: [CLICK HERE](#) to join WhatsApp
- Facebook: [CLICK HERE](#) to join Facebook
- Instagram: [CLICK HERE](#) to follow Instagram



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. [CLICK HERE](#) 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 [EMAIL](#) 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: Dilnavaz Bamboat, Sonal Bhujwala

And Finally...

Summer, Suitcases & Making Memories 🧳❤️

A look at where our ZANCsters ventured in the summer of 2026

