

NORTH AMERICAN MOBEDS COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF THE THIRTY- THIRD ANNUAL GENERAL  
MEETING

Location: Virtual Web Based GoTo meeting

Date: September 5, 2020

NAMC EXEC 2019-2020 Present:

Arda-e-viraf Minocherhomjee	California (President)
Tehemton Mirza	Ontario (Vice President)
Kurush Dastur	Maryland (Secretary)
Xerxes Madan	Ontario (Treasurer)
Mehbad Dastur	Ontario (Executive officer)

PARTICIPATING MEMBERS

Adi Sidhwa	New York
Xersis Dastur	Ontario
Soli Bamji	Ontario
Pesi Vazifdar	Illinois
Kobad Zarolia	Ontario
Behram Panthaki	Washington DC
Cawas Desai	Pennsylvania
Boman Damkewala	Illinois
Pervez Patel	New York
Farhad Panthaki	Massachusetts
Gev Kakaria	Quebec
Frank Shahzadi	California
Cyrus Pavri	New York
Adil Antia	British Columbia
Poras Balsara	Texas
Poruz Khambata	New York
Karl Khambata	New York
Kamran Panthaki	Ontario
Jehan Bagli	Ontario
Khushroo Bharda	Ontario
Nozer Kotwal	Ontario
Kayomarz Sidhwa	Texas
Maneck Bhujwala	California
Soli Dastur	Florida
Adi Unwalla	New Jersey
Adil Minocherhomjee	California

NAMC President Ervad Arda Minocherhomjee welcomed all participants and the meeting was called to order

- 1) Read and adopt the minutes of the last Annual General Meeting.

Minutes were read, Er. Cawas Desai proposed, Er. Soli Dastur seconded and the minutes were adopted

## President's report

NAMC President Ervad Arda Minocherhomjee submitted his report listing various activities and accomplishments of NAMC in 2019 as outlined below:

- 1) NAMC sponsored Ervad Pervez Bajan lecture series in Chicago (ZAC), Houston (ZAH), Orange County(ZACLA), and San Diego. These lectures were productive and enlightening. Next Year we may bring him to Toronto and NE USA. ZAC (Chicago) wants him to come back and give lectures in summer, circumstances permitting.
- 2) NAMC members Tehemton Mirza, Soli Dastur, and Arda Minocherhomjee gave presentations at the World Zoroastrian Youth Congress on July 6, 2019. The presentation was well attended. NAMC has been invited to the next NAZ Congress in Houston to be held in 2024 for 2 panel discussions of 2.5 hours.
- 3) NAMC Young Mobeds Educational Seminar in San Diego on July 20th/21<sup>st</sup>, 2019.  
7 Mobeds from Chicago, Toronto, and Houston attended the seminar in La Jolla, CA—NAMC has trained 15 young Mobeds so far.
- 4) In March 2020 during the early months of the Covid 19, NAMC started web based Daily Tandarosti Prayers in which we recited select paragraphs/prayers followed by Tandarosti in which we recited over 300 names. The prayers were continued for three months. Ervads Kurush, Tehemton, Soli, Xerxes, Arda, Pervez and Mehad participated in the prayers.
- 5) Articles were published in FEZANA Journal & Hamazor regarding NAMC's role in COVID 19
- 6) Pilsum Master of Alberta was initiated as a Mobedyar by Ervad Tehemton Mirza, on Sept 15, 2019
- 7) Ervad Jal Panthaky of Toronto has been training 2 students (Jijina in Texas and Lali in San Diego) via Skype for Navar prayers. With the establishment of Bareshnumgah it will be possible to perform Navar ritual in NA

- 8) NAMC donated C\$10,001 to OZCF towards their efforts for establishing a Bareshnumgāh in Toronto. NAMC also donated \$501 each to 2 the newly ordained Maratabs in NY/NJ
- 9) Bareshnumgāh paper was discussed by NAMC scholars the day before the AGM and will be published in 2020.
- 10) NAMC is exploring the possibility of starting an NA Institute of Zoroastrian Studies either on its own or with select Chicago Zarathushtris
- 11) NAMC has so far raised a total of \$82,000 for Young Mobeds Education fund. In 2019/2020 we raised \$26,750 including \$10,000 donated by WZO-USA
- 12) NAMC also raised \$47,000 towards Avesta Scholarships for young Mobeds. So far 3 young mobeds, Ervads Zerksis Bhandara (CA), Nekzad Elavia (ON) and Kamran Panthaky (ON) have been awarded these scholarships. They will be tutored by Ervad Ramiyar Karanjia, Principal of Dadar Athornan Institute.
- 13) NAMC will be applying for 501(c) (3) status with the assistance from Framroze Patel of New York. Once we obtain this status all US donations will be eligible for tax deduction. Separately, ZAGNY board has agreed to add NAMC link on their Website

NAMC is looking forward to working closely with FEZANA under the leadership of their newly elected President Arzan Wadia and Vice President Er. Kayomarz Sidhwa. We thank past president Homi Gandhi for his support.

Finally, Arda thanked all the executive members and Soli Dastur for their continued support and contributions.

## Financial report

NAMC treasurer Ervad Xerxes Madan presented his financial report for the year 2019. During the year we received donations of \$12,502 with donor restriction specifically earmarked for Young Mobeds education fund. The total amount received to date towards this fund is \$73k.

In addition we also received during the year general donation without restriction of \$ 5,356. We disbursed \$6.17k for travel and other expenses towards Young mobeds education seminar.

Arda explained that NAMC did not incur any expense on food and accommodation during these seminars since it was provided free of charge, thanks to the generosity of local Zarathushtri residents.

Given that donation sizes are getting bigger, the need for appointing external auditors was discussed. This would add further transparency and provide greater comfort to our Donors and regulatory bodies. Preferably, the Auditor should not be affiliated with NAMC executive Committee. We should look for a qualified person within our community who can provide the services on a voluntary basis.

## Bareshnumgāh paper

- 1) The final draft of the Bareshnumgāh paper is prepared jointly by Ervad Tehemton Mirza, Ervad Soli Dastur and Ervad Arda Minocherhomjee with the input from some of our learned Mobeds/NAMC Scholars.
- 2) During the meeting, discussion centered on the Historical perspective of the Bareshnumgāh ritual as well as the most practical ways of having this in the NA environment.
- 3) The main sources of this paper were the 3 books authored by Ervads Hormuzd M. Pavri, Noshervan N. Unvala and Jivanji J. Modi. This treatise has attempted to incorporate as much as possible the procedures and requirements as outlined in these books. Again, certain changes/modifications are recommended to suit the North American context.
- 4) There was a discussion that NAMC should forward this paper to some scholars and scholarly Mobeds in India and seek their opinion and suggestions but not necessarily their approval. If their suggestions work for us we could incorporate them. In any case the final decision and approval will rest with NAMC.
- 5) The ultimate goal of establishing Bareshnumgāh is to be able to perform inner liturgical ceremonies including the Navar ritual at some of the already established Atash Kadehs in North America.
- 6) To achieve this goal we also need to train the new generation of mobeds in the performance of these ceremonies within the next 5 to 10 years. Arda mentioned that this would be possible if NAMC worked towards establishing a North American Institute of Zoroastrian Studies.
- 7) During this discussion the question came about the number of “Haas” to be recited in the performance of the Yasna Ceremony since according to Ervad Soli Dastur even in India today the complete Yasna with 72 chapters is not recited. NAMC will make recommendations once the Bareshnumgāh is established
- 8) NAMC in consultation with senior mobeds will have to prepare a schedule of fees that will be charged for the performance of various ceremonies at the Bareshnumgāh particularly the Navar ritual that spans over a period of almost 4 weeks with 2 Nahans. It

was decided that a sub-committee consisting of 3 mobeds, Ervad Soli Dastur, Ervad Adi Unwalla and Ervad Cawas Desai will propose the fees to be charged. This schedule will then be submitted to the executive committee for final approval.

## North American Athornan Institute

There was a favorable response from participants to the idea of establishing an Institute in NA. However the following questions need to be addressed:

- 1) Who should be in charge? Arda nominated Ervad Tehemtom Mirza to lead this effort and to be the Dean of this institute.
- 2) How do we integrate the Iranian community's views with the Parsee views? All views would be welcome.
- 3) Should the institute welcome all interpretations of Zarthustra's teachings, be it Parsee, Iranian, Kurdish etc.? Yes, NAMC scholars would provide guidance.
- 4) Will the access to the institute be limited only to the mobeds, or to all Zoroastrians or to all who are interested in Zoroastrian studies? Yes, we will have two arms –one for Mobeds and the other for everyone else—including conducting credit level courses.
- 5) Should the institute be a separate body from NAMC and operate autonomously or under the banner of NAMC? The institute will be under the control of NAMC.
- 6) Do we have the required finances to operate the institute independently? NAMC will have to start fund raising for this new endeavor.

## Matters that need urgent attention

### Fundraising in the USA (501c3)

As mentioned earlier in the President's report NAMC is applying for (501c3) status in the USA. Mr. Framroze Patel of New York has kindly agreed to assist us in this process-- Pro bono. As a charitable organization we need to ensure that we are meeting both US and Canadian regulations.

There will be no change in NAMC's culture based on this, just beneficial to our potential donors in both countries.

- Succession planning
  - Median age of mobeds involved in NAMC is 60+

- Arda proposed that we need to form a Committee of young mobeds who would propose a strategic plan to the Executive Committee. The goal is to get people engaged and recruit young mobeds (<35yrs)  
Volunteers: Adil, Adi, Mehsad, Cyrus, Porus, Karl, Farhan Panthaki
  - Action: Mehsad to send Adil the emails of the young mobeds above
  - Action: Adil to schedule a 1-hour meeting to facilitate within the month
  - Report outcomes to NAMC executive committee

Ervad Adil Minocherhomji deserves a lot of credit for a fairly detailed account of the proceedings.

## Election of the new Executive Committee Members

The current members of the executive committee were re-elected unanimously for the next two-year term.