The WZCC AGM took place in Orlando, Florida on May 1st to 2nd, 2019. For the first time, the AGM was set to coincide with the FEZANA AGM and the Global Working Group Meetings on May 3rd to May 5th.

The WZCC & FEZANA Gala Dinner which included the WZCC Annual Awards recognizing outstanding Zarathushti individuals from around the World was held on the evening of May 4th, 2019.

The meeting started with a benediction from Ervad Soli Dastur and the youngest member of the WZCC, Asha Gandhi (5) who prayed the Yatha-Ahu Vario and Ashem Vohu prayers.

Afsaan Kermani, President of the WZCC Central Florida Zoroastrian Community, welcomed all the WZCC delegates and guests to the “Entertainment Capital of the World”, Orlando. Close to 100 people attended the WZCC meetings and 200 attended for the WZCC & FEZANA Gala night.

Zarine Commissariat was the compere for the AGM meeting and introduced the WZCC Global President, Edul Daver. Edul talked about how a new chapter has been added each year: Bangalore in 2016, Central Florida in 2017, Southern California (LA) in 2018 and Toronto in 2019. The youth wing of the WZCC has been very successful ever since the new youth Director, Jehan Kotwal, has taken charge. Mumbai youth group has been very active with Coffee with WZCC meetups and London has followed their example by having the same Coffee with WZCC meetups.

WZCC has been fine tuning Synergy, the magazine to make it geared more towards business and entrepreneurship. A new website has been launched and each chapter can have their own page on the website. The system to make payments online has also been added.

A creation of ARO (area representative office) was started to help with areas where there is no chapter but there are enough interested individuals to keep them involved and in the loop. The formation of ZFN (Zoroastrian Faculty Network) in conjunction with GWG (Global Working Group) was also started to help students with an interest in graduate education, help with internships and facilitate activity between Faculty and Industry.

Edul also spoke about WZCC & FEZANA forming a new independent organization, which would collect donated funds and disperse it to budding entrepreneurs without interest burden.

The Secretary’s report was read by Zarine Commissariat; VP reports by Yazdi Tantra; Treasurer report by Katayun Kapadia; India report by Captain Percy Master; USA report by Rustom Engineer; UK report by Shernaz Engineer and individual Chapter reports by the Chapter Chairs present.
This was followed by the election of the new Global Directors: Dilnavaz Shroff (Canada); Afsaan Kermani (USA); Perses Sethna & Zubin Sethna (UK); Mehraban Ardeshirian (Iran); Meher Bhesania (ME); Capt. Percy Master (India) and Neville Shroff as Special Financial & Far East Advisor. The AGM ended with special thanks and Awards presented to retiring Directors – Homi Italia, Natalie Gandhi, Nauzar Maneckshaw, Perviz Varjavand, Bahram Partovi, Porus Guzdar, Pheroze Kharas and Neville Shroff.

The rest of the day was hosted by Zenia Shroff. The next session included the “Zoroastrianism & Entrepreneurship” Panel where Ervad Xerxes Dastur was the moderator, with speakers: Anne Khademian, Dr. Daryush Mehta, Ervad Ardaviraf Minocherhomjee and Dr. Zubin Sethna.

The panel talked about how Zoroastrianism and its teachings play a major role in their daily professional life. How you can accumulate wealth with honesty. Think about charitable causes and how you can help people you are working with. Happiness comes to those who make others happy. People should leave the earth better than how they found it. Have businesses see the value in tackling hunger and climate change issues. Create a shared value for the businesses.

In the evening we heard from Dr. Rashna Writer who talked about, “Predicting the Zarathushti Entrepreneurship Future by Creating It”. Rashna’s session was very interesting and sparked a lot of questions from the audience and fell into a discussion about the younger generation and how to get them see the value in WZCC and involved in Entrepreneurship.

Day 2 of the WZCC AGM was hosted by Afreed Mistry and started out with a benedictior from Ervad Soli Dastur. The first speaker of the day was Danny Khursigara who talked about the “Road to Success”. Danny has co-authored a book with the same title and he talked about what needs have been driving our decisions so far and how to double our results in business and life. How to be more productive and have more balance and fun. He emphasized the importance of gratitude. The audience truly enjoyed Danny’s session.

Danny was followed by Dr. Zubin Sethna, who is a Professor of Entrepreneurial Marketing and Consumer Behaviour at Regent’s University, London. Zubin spoke about, “The Psychology Behind Entrepreneurial Marketing”.

He was followed by Chuchi Arevalo of Spark Academy who talked about teaching Financial literacy and entrepreneurial concepts to children as young as 5 years old.
The afternoon comprised the Young Adult Entrepreneurship Panel. Behram Pastakia was the moderator with speakers: Khush Italia, Dr. Jeanie Kenkare, Dustyn Shroff and Dr. Jennifer Silva.

The panel talked about their lives and what made them become entrepreneurs. All stories had the common theme of not being able to expand their wings and do things their way while working for someone else. They all branched out and created their own businesses to be able to have the freedom to do the things they wanted to do. They all identified a need in their respective professions and followed through with a solution to resolve that need. This is what has made all 4 young entrepreneurs very successful.

The last afternoon session was by Dr. Mahzarin Banaji from Harvard University who talked about, “An Emerging Science of Good and Bad”. She had a very interactive session and engaged the audience in a series of tests to show each person’s biases and how people unknowingly maybe doing good or bad. She made everyone realize that people do things without being conscience of their actions or words. It was a very practical and engaging session with practical lessons for all, particularly business people.
The evening session was on “How Artificial Intelligence, Blockchain Technology and Smart Contracts are changing the World” by Afreed Mistry. Afreed walked the audience through what is AI, Blockchain and Smart Contracts and gave some use case examples in farming, health care, financial institutions, transportation and supply chain management. The audience found the topics interesting and most of them were hearing these topics explained for the first time.

The Day ended with an enjoyable entertainment program consisting of local community dancers, musicians and a magic show.

Day 3 comprised the FEZANA AGM.

At dinner the Central Florida Chapter presented a special award - “Prominent Local Entrepreneur for Orlando”, to recognize local young catering entrepreneur Delphina Bharucha. Preview was provided related to the WZCC AGM in Lonavla, India in Jan. 2020, NAZC in Dec.2020 and WZCC AGM in the UK in May 2021.
This was followed by recognition of the local host, Central Florida Chapter, who were very united and greeted all of us warmly. They bent over backwards to anticipate and meet every need of the participants. They received each delegate at the Airport and we were constantly fed with good Parsi and fusion food all week, along with lots of tea breaks with bakras, batasas, dhokla, chukli, cookies, etc. There were optional trips organized as well to Disney World, Universal Studios, Kennedy Space Centre and a bus tour of Orlando. A small group of people also went to see the SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket launch at 2:48 AM from Port Canaveral. A very big thank you to all the volunteers.

It was indeed a very memorable few days and best is yet to come. The Gala FEZANA & WZCC dinner along with the WZCC Annual Awards, recognizing outstanding Zarathushti individuals from around the World was held on Saturday May 4th evening and will be highlighted in a separate E-Blast.

Thank you delegates for attending the WZCC AGM and Thank You Orlando for your volunteerism beyond the call of duty. It was truly a special and memorable event where Zoroastrian values were clearly evident.