

Peyk

Persian Cultural Center's Bilingual Magazine
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• We need your help!
• How does Iranian School of San Diego
affect your life?



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By: Shahri Estakhry



The Importance of Our Participation in the Political Process

It is that time again...election season...time for us to engage in the political process by voting! We take great pride in the fact that we are an educated and economically more fortunate immigrant population; and that we have assimilated, soared in countless professional fields and contributed greatly to the economic and societal engine of the United States. Our families have established our roots in the United States, our homeland that has provided us with so many opportunities.

However, we are relatively silent when it comes to the political machine of our new homeland. We have yet to fully embrace the importance of our involvement in the political process at the national, state and local levels. Decisions made by our politicians, at all levels of government, each and every day, impact our lives and the future of our children and generations to come. As taxpaying Americans, we should get more involved with the decision making process at all levels. We have taught our children that education and family are the most important things, but we have yet to fully teach our children that civic involvement through the political process is also a critical facet of being an American. The political process is about much more than just registering to vote. It is about being an informed and engaged citizenry as policy issues are shaped in city halls, board/commissioner chambers, state capitols/houses, and on Capitol Hill.

The truth of the matter is this is our home. The truth of the matter is we have invested a lot – in sweat, money, and heart – in our new homeland. The truth of the matter is we need to get more involved in the political decisions that are made, from the politicians in office that formulate international, domestic and local policies, to policy measures that impact the future of our nation, state and communities. More of us need to participate in conversations occurring in our communities, cities, counties, states and Washington DC as policy decisions are being formulated. We need to have our voices heard on the type and amount of investment that should be made for education, jobs, housing, improvement of our roads and highways, open space, public transportation, health care, taxes, regulations that impact the welfare of our businesses, and so many other policy issues.

One of the most important freedoms for us as Americans is our right to vote. We can vote for or against politicians and we can vote for or against policy issues that are being proposed at the local and state levels. We should not take this aspect of our freedom for granted and exercise it.

RULES OF THE GAME FOR IRANIAN-AMERICANS (US Citizens)

- 1) Register to vote.
- 2) Become informed about the candidates running at all levels of government. Here in California, we have the June 7th election ahead of us with a whole slew of candidates at all levels of government on the ballot.
- 3) Become informed about the policy issues on the ballot, at the state and local levels – they will impact our lives. And, the taxes we've paid, or will be required to pay, will be funding many of the measures if approved by the voters.
- 4) Vote! You can do this in person or as an absentee voter.
And finally...
- 5) If you choose not to vote, don't complain about the results!

To register to vote, please contact your local registrar of voters. In the San Diego region, please visit www.sdvote.com.

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PCC March and April Events:

PCC Board of Directors met on March 11 and April 13, 2016.

Jong e Farhanghi (Cultural Variety Show), takes place on the second Friday of the month at the Iranian-American Center.

The March 11th show was hosted by Saeid Nouri and Noushin Khorsandian. The first guest of the program was Mokhtar Paki, artist, writer and architect who presented his recently published book "Shahzad Sokoot." The second guest was Mojgan Ghazi Rad who spoke about her published books "Dar khallvat Chamadanha," "Marseha Shab Abi" and "Boay Shokofeh Bahi."

The April 8th show was hosted by Reza Khabazian. The program was a tribute to Siavash Kasraei, one of the most famous contemporary poets of Iran. The guests of the program, Ostad Hossein Alizadeh, Kourosh Taghavi, and Bibi Kasraei, spoke about his life, his personality, his poetry, and his social presence in society.

Film and Discussion Group meets on the first Sunday of the month at the Iranian-American Center.

The March movie was "Yalda Night" by Kiumars Pourahmad. After the show the audience had a lively discussion about the movie, a drama about a man named Hamed whose wife and daughter immigrate to Europe for a better future. Missing his family, he imprisons himself and continues his life in isolation.

The April movie was "Beautiful City" by Asghar Farhadi. The story is about Akbar, who has just turned eighteen. He has been imprisoned since the age of sixteen for committing murder. Now that he is eighteen he may be executed in accordance with the sentence he received. The show was followed by discussion about the filmmaker and his movies.

For the last two months, PCC and Docunight have been presenting documentaries on the first Wednesday of each month. The last two months they have shown "I Saw Shoush," a film by Bahman Giarostami, "Molf-e Gand," a film by Mahmoud Rahmani and "Atlan" by Moein Karmimoodini.



Persian Cultural Center Annual Meeting Election Sunday May 22, 2016

The Persian Cultural Center will hold its annual meeting and election for members of the Board of Directors on Sunday May 22, 2016 at the Mt. Carmel High School, from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM. Mt. Carmel High School is located at 9550 Carmel Mtn. Rd, San Diego, CA 92129.

The agenda for the meeting will be as follows:

- Welcome by PCC president
- Annual Board of Directors' report
- Introducing the new candidates
- Election process and results
- Adjournment

If you have been a member for the last year and interested to run for the board, please contact us immediately. If your membership has lapsed or want to become a member, this is the best time to do so and join us in our annual meeting. You can find the membership form in our website. In a few days a list on candidates and instructions will be sent to all PCC members. Thank you for your support.

Board of Directors of Persian Cultural Center





Nowruz celebrations

With the arrival of spring in March, PCC held several activities in celebration of the Persian New Year, Nowruz. In several public libraries across the city PCC displayed and showcased the Haftseen and various Persian artifacts. PCC (Persian Cultural Center) and AIAP (Association of Iranian American Professionals) celebrated Nowruz together at the Westin Hotel in Downtown San Diego. Like previous years PCC, AIAP, and HOI (House of Iran) organized Sizdehbedar and Chaharshanbeh Soori at NTC Park, in San Diego, hosting thousands of Iranian-Americans and their guests. The Iranian School of San Diego (ISSD) prepared for Nowruz by sabzehkari and egg coloring for ISSD students and the Persian Community at large. The annual Nowruz celebration for hundreds of parents and students took place at the Mt. Carmel High School auditorium.



2016 National Survey

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



With the long-negotiated nuclear agreement between the P5+1 and Iran finalized, adopted, and then implemented in January 2016, PAAIA asked Zogby Research Services to examine the attitudes of Iranian Americans with respect to U.S.-Iranian relations, the newly implemented agreement, and the experience of the Iranian American community.

From February 10-16, 2016, Zogby Research Services polled 400 Iranian Americans.

What we find is an Iranian American community that continues to maintain close ties with Iran, through regular communications with family and friends (64% do so at least several times a month) and closely following news from Iran (69%), as well as occasional travel by more than one-third of respondents. A majority of Iranian Americans personally identify based on their country of origin, while only 10% identify themselves by religion. Only about one-third say religion is important in their lives.

Respondents are concerned, however, that these ties to Iran and their identification as Iranian Americans may lead to problems. About one-half (47%) say they are concerned that travel to Iran will lead to closer scrutiny by U.S. law enforcement, and one-half (48%) note that they or someone they know have experienced discrimination because of their ethnicity or country of origin. Further, they are concerned about more discrimination in the future because of the rhetoric used by some presidential candidates regarding immigrants, Muslims, and Iranians (68%). Of those who expressed an opinion (87%), effectively all Iranian American respondents say that there is no support for extremist groups or ideologies in their community. One in ten respondents say they are not sure.

Like many of their American compatriots, the most important issue for Iranian Americans in determining their votes in federal elections is the economy and jobs (59%). Foreign policy (33%) and terrorism and national security (22%) are also important



issues for these voters, as are education (21%) and the honesty of the candidates (20%).

More than seven in 10 respondents rate Barack Obama's presidency (75%) and Obama's handling of U.S.-Iranian relations (71%) as either excellent or good.

Considering the ongoing presidential nominating contests, when asked who they would support in the Republican primary or caucus in their state, respondents are very divided, with only John Kasich getting a double digit response (13%). Those who would vote on the Democratic side lean toward Bernie Sanders in the primary and caucus process, with

43% saying they would vote for Sanders versus 34% who would support Hillary Clinton.

With respect to the P5+1-Iranian nuclear agreement, or the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the level of support among Iranian Americans is strong and stable (65% in 2016, 64% in 2015). A majority of respondents say they expect the agreement to have positive impacts on improving Iran's relations with the U.S. and the West (77%), improving the personal and civil rights of Iranian citizens (68%), expanding economic opportunities for the Iranian people (65%), and improving Iran's relations with its regional neighbors (55%).

Going beyond the nuclear deal, Iranian Americans say the top priorities for the U.S. government in Iran should be advancing democracy and promoting personal and civil rights (56%) and allowing Americans to invest in Iran to improve the economy and create employment opportunities (52%). When asked about their concerns as Iranian Americans, they identify the promotion of human rights and democracy in Iran as most important to them personally (68%).

For the complete report go to www.paaia.org

Permanent Display

We would like to thank you again for your generous contribution to the IAC building fund. We are in the process of installing a permanent display of the contributor's names on the entrance wall of the Center. Please review the following list. This is the perfect time to review the spelling and category of your name. If you wish to upgrade your category please contact our office immediately. If you wish to add your name or names of your loved ones to the list, it is never too late. Please send your contribution to PCC. Your vision and generosity will serve Iranian-Americans and San Diegans in general for generations to come.

Please send your corrections and questions to: pcc@pccsd.org or call (858) 552-9355

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Forgotten Routes of Persian Literary Culture



From Constantinople to Calcutta.
Edward Stanford, Ltd. 1885. Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division

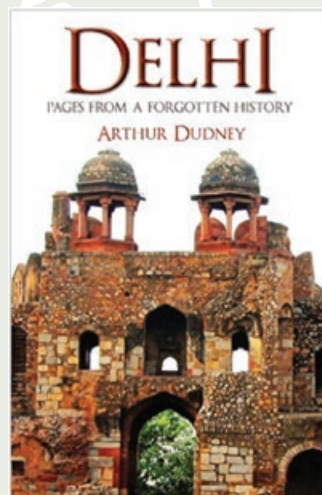
In *Peyk* 162, we shed light on one of the less commonly discussed aspects of the Persian language in our community: its transnational routes as a literary language. When we speak of Persian, it is best to acknowledge its two distinct lives. As a living language, Persian has official status in Afghanistan (along with Pashto), Iran, and Tajikistan. Not to mention the Persian-speaking diaspora which has grown significantly in the past four decades, primarily in North America and Europe. This is a language with many local variations and standardized registers. But Persian has had another life, a historical one in parallel to its spoken tradition. Historical Persian, for the lack of a better term, still flows in the veins of the literary traditions with which it has coexisted: Turkish, Kurdish, Pashto, Punjabi, Urdu, Bengali, Malay, Georgian, and many others. Unlike spoken Persian, here we do not speak of a political territory with clear-cut borders and statistical profiles of “native” and “non-native” speakers, rather we are referring to an interconnected cultural zone wherein Persian was a common denominator for many linguistic and religious communities. Wali Ahmadi calls this zone a *Kingdom of Literacy*. Richard Eaton, applying Sheldon Pollock’s formation for Sanskrit literary culture, opts for a different term: *the Persian Cosmopolis*.

So where does historical Persian reside today? It lives in literary circles, Sufi shrines, university classrooms, and the libraries of its old literary centers and new Western homes: London, Delhi, Ann Arbor, Istanbul, Cambridge, and Hyderabad, among others. This is the language that literary and cultural historians study to better understand the realm in which Persian once served as a language of administration, literary production, and Sufism, from Bosnia to Xinjiang. This is the less-emphasized history whose routes may at times fade away from our living memory in the age of bellicose nationalism and walled nation states. More importantly, this aspect of Persian lives in the literary cultures of Anatolia, and Central and South Asia. The afterlife of Persian may not be shown through statistics or political maps; it requires cultural mapping, delving into texts and genres, going to literary gatherings and shrines. As part of this discussion, in our last issue we reviewed Rajeev Kinra’s *Writing Self, Writing Empire*, a study focusing on the life, career, and literary productivity of Chandar Bhan Brahman, one of the most distinguished litterateurs and *munshis* (state secretaries)

of the Indo-Persianate world. In this issue, we will introduce three more exciting works, all written in the twenty-first century. As we shall see, every book powerfully demonstrates just how little we know about a literary tradition we cherish so dearly. And if we read with a more critical and capacious definition of the nation, every book demonstrates just how damaging it is to hold Iran and the Persian language synonymous, as one defining the other.

Dudney, Arthur. *Delhi: Pages from a Forgotten History*. Delhi: Hay House, 2015.

What would a literary guide to Delhi look like? Of course, it would celebrate the city’s most accomplished writers who have primarily composed in Urdu, Hindi, and English. But before the rise of vernacular literary cultures and British colonialism, Delhi was a major literary hub for Persian-language writers and poets. Poetic salons, standalone book stalls, literary networks, and rivalries all point to a vibrant environment in which Persian, alongside other languages, thrived. Arthur Dudney has written a literary guide to Delhi to honor its neglected and at times forgotten Persian literary heritage.



The book first establishes pre-Islamic cross-cultural links between Iran and South Asia, and then moves to the court of Samanids where Persian begins to gain a stronghold as a local language of administration, increasingly threatening to displace Arabic in Eastern Islamicate lands. Dudney takes us through a journey of a millennium-long literary tradition with a keen focus on its less enshrined figures: Mas‘ud Sa‘d Salman, Amir Khusrāu, Bidel, and many others. Dudney follows the polycentric routes of

Persian literature as it grows well beyond the realm of any single dynastic court. In doing so, he asks us, does Persian have a natural homeland? If so, is it Khorasan or ‘Eraq-e ‘Ajam? Is it Central and South Asia or Iran? These lands all make one part of this literary tradition.

In the course of seven chapters, Dudney highlights the most distinct features and forms of Indo-Persian literary culture: panegyrics, ghazals, Qawwali, *musha‘eras* (poetic assemblies), not to mention the amusing anecdotes of Persian literary history about poets and patrons. The notion of language and identity comes close to a unifying theme in this book. Who is a native speaker (*ahl-e zaban*)? Do native speakers of Persian have an automatic claim to “their” literature? Do they have an automatic mastery over it? Dudney summons Khan-e Arzu (d. 1756), the distinguished Delhi-based Persian-language poet and critic, to guide us through the twists and turns of this multifaceted question. Khan-e Arzu shows

us that native poets or writers of any language make mistakes and that an Iranian poet does not necessarily have an advantage over an Indian poet. Dudney grounds the question of identity and language—more particularly, the close association of Persian with Iran—in the political events of the eighteenth century: Mughals are weakened, the Safavid empire collapses, and Nadir Shah Afshar (d. 1749) brutally sacks Delhi. This is how India and Iran begin to diverge politically and culturally.

Unlike most surveys of Indo-Persian literature that suddenly end right after the Colonial state does away with Persian in 1837, Dudney closely follows the afterlife of Persian in South Asia. In today's India, he takes us to Afghan quarters in Delhi, the Iran Culture House near the Yamuna river, and different Indian libraries. Overall, the book's prose is quite academic and dry considering it is written for the general reader. All the same, the author keeps us engaged when he occasionally cites lines of poetry or shares his personal relationship with India. *Delhi: Pages from a Forgotten History* is an insightful and timely book for literary enthusiasts and history buffs worldwide. Dudney must be commended for writing a fairly accessible book that informs non-academic readers of the most debated and relevant issues in literary and cultural studies today.

Truschke, Audrey. *Culture of Encounters: Sanskrit at the Mughal Court*. Columbia University Press, 2016.

As the title suggests, this book is about the interplay of languages and cultures. Well before Persian gained political ground in India through the Ghaznavids, works of Sanskrit literature had already travelled to the Near East through Middle Persian. For instance, *Panchatantra*, an ancient collection of animal fables, was translated into Middle Persian (Pahlavi) in 570 CE by Borzuya. The Pahlavi translation became the basis for a Syriac rendition, *Kalilag and Damag*. Later, it was translated into Arabic, called *Kalilah wa Dimnah*, in 750 CE by the Persian-language scholar, Ibn al-Muqaffa. In the fifteenth century, Kashefi translated the collection into Modern Persian. The routes of *Panchatantra* and its wide-reaching echoes point to an interconnected region that much later becomes part of the Indo-Persianate world.

Truschke's *Culture of Encounters* argues that in order to better understand the imperial culture of Mughals, one must study the interplay of languages, primarily Persian, Sanskrit, and Hindavi. Truschke traces the participation of a group of Sanskrit literati (Jains and Brahmins) in the Mughal court who served as translators, negotiators, and astrologers. For instance, Persian-language translators, Sanskrit literati, and Hindavi-speaking intermediaries all collaborated in the rewriting of Sanskrit works into a new Indo-Persian epic. *Razmnama*, the Persian translation of *Mahābhārata*, allowed the Mughals to form “a

web of associations between the epic and Indo-Persian forms of knowledge” (200). Overall, Truschke challenges the notion that Mughals used Persian as the sole vehicle for literary production. Sanskrit knowledge systems were an integral part of a Persianate literary ecosystem that mapped the Mughal rule onto the Indian subcontinent.

Dale, Stephen F. *The Garden of the Eight Paradises: Babur and the Culture of Empire in Central Asia, Afghanistan and India (1483-1530)*. Leiden: Brill, 2004.

Dale's *The Garden of the Eight Paradises* is a comprehensive study of Zahir al-Din Muhammad Babur's political (and literary) career through the prism of his poetry and autobiography. Babur is the founder of an Indo-Afghan state that later evolved into the Mughal Empire. Born 1483 in Andijan and raised in Ferghana, Babur was a Chaghatay-speaking Timurid prince. Once he was pushed out by the Uzbeks from Central Asia, Babur conquered Kabul, his beloved resting place today. In 1526, Babur crossed Amu Darya, sacked the Lodi Sultanate, and took Delhi. He was also a member of the Naqshbandiya order and traced his lineage from Central Asian conquerors: Timur (d. 1405) and Chinggis Khan (d. 1227).

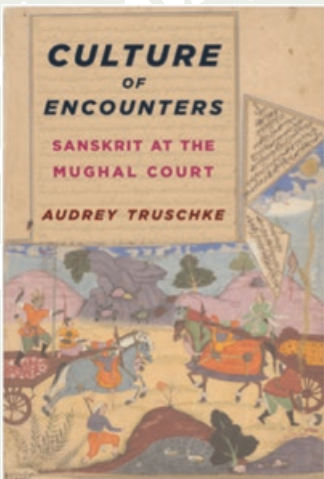
His autobiography, later called *Baburnama*, is “a testimonial to his political purpose, and is suffused with a profound and utterly self-assured sense of political legitimacy derived from his Timurid descent, the source of his self-described imperial ambitions” (38). A critical question that the book grapples with is this: why did Babur choose Chaghatay Turkish (also called Turki) as a vehicle for his poetry and autobiography? Babur had lived in Kabul for twenty years and knew Persian well. However, was he comfortable in literary Persian? The answer is unclear.



What is clear is that even though Babur composes his work in Turki, his writings are still distinctly marked by a shared Persianate literary idiom. His poetry incorporates Persian poetry, poetic topoi, stock images, literary expressions, sentence structure, morphology, word formation, and vocabulary. The Persianate literary register of Babur's Turki offers us many clues as to a multilingual literary culture that operated across a diverse linguistic scene. Is Babur a unique case? Not by any means. Scores of Persian-language poets were and are multilingual: Mas'ud Sa'd, Rumi, Mir 'Ali Shir Nava'i, Mirza Ghalib, Iqbal, and many others. One important facet of Persian poetry is its near and distant echoes in other languages and traditions. Stephen Dale's careful study of Babur's Turki poems illuminates the multilingual scene upon which Persian has developed and operated.



Share your views with Aria: ariafani@berkeley.edu





Omar Khayyam Statue Unveiled at the University of Oklahoma

Posted by Noah Ringler Friday, April 15, 2016

On Wednesday, March 30, 2016, the College of International Studies at the University of Oklahoma unveiled a marble statue of Persian philosopher and scientist 'Omar Khayyam', an 11th-century poet, astronomer, scholar and mathematician. Carved by the well-known Iranian sculptor, Hossein Fakhimi, the statue depicts Khayyam with a globe that contains constellations representing his contributions to astronomy, algebra and poetry and symbolizes Iran's cultural and scientific contributions to the entire world over the centuries.

The unveiling ceremony was in commemoration of the establishment of a Center for Iranian and Persian Gulf Studies, thanks to a \$4 million gift from the Farzaneh Family Foundation which Oklahoma University President David Boren announced, "is believed to be the largest gift in the university's history from those who came to OU as international students." President Boren commended Mohammad and Jalal Farzaneh for being "active leaders in our OU family."

In his appreciation of the statue and its symbolic significance, President Boren said "This statue will stand on our campus for years and decades and hopefully centuries to come as a reminder to us of the role that a university is to play in society," he said. "The role that a university should play in broadening our horizons and in deepening our understandings of other people and in building bridges between people of different countries and different societies."

Dean Suzette Grillo made similar statements that the statue stands as an inspiration for friendship and understanding between the people of Iran and the people of the United States.

The Center for Iranian and Persian Gulf Studies will provide opportunities for students to develop a better cultural understanding, appreciation and awareness of the United States, Iran and the Middle East. It will include an academic major in Iranian and Persian Gulf Studies.

The gift will also help fund scholarships for Iranian students and for students studying Persian language, three endowed professorships, an endowed lectureship, and a prize for Iranian Literature. The gift also will establish a Persian artwork fund and an endowed Persian book collection.

PAAIA applauds members Jalal and Mohammad Farzaneh for their invaluable contributions to achieving cultural understanding between Iran and the United States.

Source: PAAIA newsletter



Note from Marika Sardar, Associate Curator
for Southern Asian and Islamic Art at
The San Diego Museum of Art



There are exciting developments in store for the Museum's collection of Persian art, as it moves into a new space opening in December 2016. The works of art will be installed in a bigger gallery and the collection will be enhanced by the longterm loan of highlights of the Ancient Near Eastern Collection from the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. The new gallery will cover four thousand years of Persian history, including treasures from the Achaemenid, Sasanian, Safavid and Qajar periods. The current gallery will close in early June to prepare for changes across the entire museum—make sure to see it before the big move, and be ready for a celebration in December.

What's on now: The museum opens two interesting exhibitions this spring: *Brush and Ink*, a selection of Chinese paintings curated by the contemporary artist Pan Gongkai (April 29, 2016 through September 4, 2016), and *Quilts and Color*, an exhibition looking at American quilts as examples of Modern art and color field experiments (May 28, 2016 through September 4, 2016).

Already on view are the exhibitions *Ferocious Bronze: The Animal Sculptures of Arthur Putnam* and *Brueghel to Canaletto*, a private collection of European painting from Spain. The entire museum is also in the midst of a year-long reorganization. Now open are new galleries for European art and an outdoor sculpture display in front of the museum. Coming up next are new galleries for Modern art (July 2016) and American art (November 2016), and finishing up with the new spaces for Indian, Southeast Asian and Persian art in December 2016.

Feel free to contact me with any questions you have about the museum: msardar@sdmart.org.

NEW
Visit Persian Art Gallery
at the san Diego Museum of Art



Persian Cultural Center

Tel: (858) 552-9355 Fax & Voice: (619) 374-7335
www.pccus.org



Dastan Ensemble & Salar Aghili in Concert

Friday May 13, 2016 at 8PM
Qualcomm Q Auditorium
6455 Lusk Blvd, San Diego, CA 92121
858-552-9355

TheatreInSearch and

Persian Cultural Center present

Shahre Ghesse (City of tales)

Saturday May 21, 2016 at 7:00pm
SDSU Don Powell theater
5500 Campanile Dr., San Diego, CA 92182
858-552-9355

PCC Annual Meeting and Election

Sunday May 22, 2016 at 10 am to 12pm
Mt. Carmel High School
9550 Carmel Mt. Rd, San Diego, CA 92129

A Thousand faces of Love (Rumi)

Sunday June 12, 2016 at 4-7pm
Iranian American Center
6790 Top Gun St. #7, San Diego, CA 92121
858-552-9355



Art Exhibition Open to Public

From 9:00 am to 3:00 pm (Monday to Friday)
Iranian-American Center • 6790 Top Gun St. #7, San Diego, CA 92121
Info: 858-552-9355

Movie and Discussion,

First Sunday of the month at the Center
Iranian-American Center • 6790 Top Gun St. #7, San Diego, CA 92121
Info: 858-552-9355

DOCUNIGHT

First Wednesday of the month
at the Iranian-American Center (IAC) at 7 pm
Documentary films about Iran or by Iranians

Jong-e Farhangi

Every Second Friday of the month at 7:30 pm
Iranian-American Center • 6790 Top Gun St. #7, San Diego, CA 92121
Info: 858-552-9355

Setar Class by Kourosh Taghavi

Registration and info: (858) 717-6389

Tombak Class by Milad Jahadi

Registration and Info: (858) 735-9634

Daf Workshop

Sundays 11am-12 at Iranian School of San Diego (ISSD)

Piano Class by Farid Afshari

Registration and Info: (858) 349-1913

Iranian School of San Diego

858-552-9355



End of the Year Program Sunday June 12, 2016 at 10-12

Mt Carmel High School, 10am-12pm

Branch I, Sundays from 9:30am-1pm

Mt. Carmel High School

Branch II, Thursdays from 6-8pm

Mt. Carmel High School
Mount Carmel High School
9550 Carmel Mountain Road • San Diego, CA 92129

Persian Dance Academy of San Diego

(858) 552-9355 www.pccus.org

Dollar a Month Fund

Tel: 858-552-9355 • www.dmfund.org
www.facebook.com/DollarAMonthFund



Association of Iranian-American Professionals (AIAP)

Tel: (858) 207 6232 • www.aiap.org

Last Wednesday of each month at 6:30 PM

at Sufi Mediterranean Cuisine
5915 Balboa Ave, San Diego, CA 92111



ISTA (Iranian Student Association at UC San Diego)

www.istaucsd.org



House of Iran

Tel: (619) 232 Iran Balboa Park,
Sundays 12:00-4:00pm



Iranian-American Scholarship Fund

Tel: (858) 552-9355 • www.iasfund.org
www.facebook.com/Iranian-AmericanScholarshipFund



Mehrgan Foundation

www.Mehrganfoundation.org Tel (858) 673-7000

PAAIA

Public Affairs Alliance of Iranian-Americans
www.paaia.org



NIAC

National Iranian-American Council
www.niac.org



Book Club Meeting

Last Saturday of each month
Iranian-American Center (IAC)
6790 Top Gun St. #7, San Diego, CA 92121
Tel (858) 552-9355

Iranian-American Life Science Network (IALSN)

www.ialsn.org

for latest Events in San Diego visit:

www.chekhabar.com

Amgen Tour of California

Date: May 15 - May 15, 2016
Time: 11:30 AM to 4:00 PM
Mission Bay, San Diego, CA 92109
http://www.amgentourofcalifornia.com/

KPBS Kids Workshop Presents: Sid The Science Kid

Date: May 14 - May 14, 2016
Time: 10:15 AM to 11:15 AM
Workshop times: 10:15 AM and 11:15 AM
320 North Broadway, Escondido, CA 92025
760.233.7755
sdcdm.org/kpbs-kids-workshops

Blue Whale Migration Spring/Summer 2016

Date: June 1 - September 30, 2016
Time: 1:00 PM to 3:30 PM
Please check in about 30 minutes before departure.
www.newportwhales.com/newport

Visit Our web site at www.pccus.org



A LITTLE LOST

By Marriam Zarabi

This nonfiction story is inspired by a collective account of reflections and life lessons, shared by grandparents of the Iranian community in Kansas City, and passed on to their Iranian-American granddaughters and grandsons.

He adjusted his rear view mirror. He was lost, once again, on the frequently traveled but unsuccessfully navigated freeway. His lack of direction was consistent and reliable, and always a burden. Attempting to re-route himself, his mind started wandering again. This was often the reason for his inadequate navigation skills. He chuckled to himself, remembering his grandfather's words for these literal and metaphorical moments: *rahet-o gom kardi, rahet-o payda mikoni*.

His grandfather had a quiet disposition paired with an observant nature. Although he was silent, he was never unnoticed and his presence was never inconvenient. His silence was filled with a life of teachings and morals, laughter, curiosity and wonder. His grandfather was a man of many memories but little nostalgia.

His social interactions were learned from his grandfather: he had a deep understanding of people from a catalogue of observations and personal reflections. His grandfather's observations and life experiences were passed on to him as he made the best of his life as a hybrid immigrant. He heard every glimmer in his grandfather's silence and chose to fill his silence with the same comforting sounds of memory, sounds of learnings, and sounds of smallness and grandeur, expression and exasperation.

Now, years later, and lost on this forever freeway, he remembered his grandfather saying *vaghti sen-e man beresi, mefahmi*, and as a child feeling like it would take many forevers for him to reach his grandfather's age—and to have lived as much as his grandfather. He wasn't old, but he wasn't young either. He was old enough to understand his grandfather's words and almost old enough to feel the weight of their meaning.

He visited his grandfather after his first year in the United States. He never noticed how short his grandfather was until his visit—his deep wrinkles and small frame. As he grew taller with experience, his grandfather shrunk with tiredness. His visit home and his visit with his grandfather were deeply familiar and deeply nostalgic.

Now, years later, he felt old enough to understand the complexities of nostalgia and old enough to navigate the dual complexities of his immigrant identity. He was growing comfortable in navigating his sense of belonging, sense of *here* and *there*, and the sense of loss that creeps in the cracks of these complexities.

He was finally able to find joy in wandering and being lost—lost between two cultures and two worlds—lost in leaving questions unanswered and forever pondered. Pulling to the side of the

freeway to take out his map from the glove compartment, he heard a knock on his window.

"Anything I can help you with, sir? You look a little lost," said the police officer.

He unfolded his map, over-thumbed and thin. Smiling, he replied: "A little."

Marriam is a young professional exploring her dual identity through narrative and written prose, often writing about her personal experiences as a second-generation Iranian growing up in Kansas City.

Marriam Zarabi

Marketing Communications | Iranian Alliances Across Borders



Dollar-a Month Fund
www.dmfund.org

We had our ninth annual fundraising Game Night.

Special thanks to all attendees and congratulations to our 2016 Champions...



Backgammon: Dr. Hassan Samadi
Poker Champion: Sonny Arian
Poker Runner Up: Saeed Khatamee

STAND UP TO HUNGER
STAND UP FOR EDUCATION
STAND UP WITH US
Every Dollar Can Save a Life!

Water & Energy Savings Kits & CARE Bill Discount Program

When and What You Use Matters

San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E) has been letting you know about gradual changes to your electric bill. These changes are taking place as a result of statewide electric rate reform. The transition to a new electric rate structure that began last September enters the next phase later this year. Read more: <http://www.sdge.com/RateReform>

How these changes affect your electric bill will depend on your energy use, where you live and whether you're enrolled in a bill discount program like California Alternate Rates for Energy (CARE). You should also know that summer season electricity rates begin on May 1. Summertime rates are 2¢ to 3¢ higher than those in the winter, so this may affect your bill.

To that end, there's never been a better time to learn about ways that might help you save energy and save money! Here are some solutions that can help you do a variety of things from saving water or conserving energy using your smartphone, to earning credits on your energy bill to determining if you are eligible to receive a discount on your energy bill.

- Don't let May Gray cloud your spirits. Let SDG&E's free Home Energy Water Savings Kit make your days brighter! <http://www.sdge.com/residential/easy-and-affordable-ways-save/complimentary-home-energy-water-savings-kit>
- Are you a homeowner with central air-conditioning and a w-fi connection? Tap your way to energy savings with an ecobee smart programmable thermostat, (a \$300 value) with free installation, when you sign up for SDG&E's Reduce Your Use Rewards Program. By participating you may also receive a credit on your bill when you save electricity on a Reduce Your Use day! Visit: <http://www.sdge.com/residential/reduce-your-use-thermostat> #espsdge
- Get rewards for saving energy! Save electricity on a Reduce Your UseSM Rewards day and you may earn a credit on your SDG&E bill! Watch this short video to learn more about the Reduce Your Use Rewards program: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8qkYDXuMAFI&feature=youtu.be>
- Check It out. You may qualify for at least a 35% discount on your energy bill. Click the link below use. <http://www.sdge.com/residential/care-video> #espsdge



Emotional Health Spring Cleaning

By: Lisa Hildreth, LMFT

Another Nowruz has come and gone. Annual spring cleaning has occurred (Khuneh tekooni – homes have been shaken!). Spring is here! Flowers are blooming. There is a different feel in the air. Those of us with children in school have wrapped up spring break vacation.

Magazine headlines have also changed. Just about every magazine cover at the grocery store has a caption shouting "Slim down for summer!" or "Get ready for swimsuit season!" During this time of year, we start to pay a lot of attention to our physical health, but often neglect to recognize our emotional health. So, why not do a little spring cleaning for your soul?

Just as it feels good to walk into an organized closet or enjoy a sparkling hardwood floor, a mental spring cleaning can provide a boost and a sense of relief and accomplishment.

The two key characteristics of a person with good mental health are the ability to enjoy life and flexibility. But how does one dial down life and allow himself or herself to enjoy life and be flexible? Below is a mental and emotional self-help spring cleaning checklist to help you get started!

- **Breathe!** Close your eyes and take 10 deep breaths and empty your mind to help slow you down.
- **Journal.** Identify your thoughts and emotions on paper to clear emotional space.
- **Prioritize.** Make task checklists and start on the most important ones first. Check tasks off as you go and don't procrastinate.
- **Do one thing at a time.** Avoid doing several things at once to help reduce stress.
- **Communicate.** Relieve bottled up tension by talking with your spouse, partner, friends, or family members about your concerns. Learn to address conflict calmly.
- **Be tolerant and forgiving.** Learning these skills helps you reduce frustration and anger.
- **Exercise.** Engage in physical activities. Walk, go to the gym, or take a class.
- **Quiet time.** Always have a lunch break or take some "me-time" so you can relax and unwind. Hike, do yoga, meditate, pray.
- **Put things in perspective.** Make a list of the things that are troubling you; then fold it and put it away for the rest of the day. Think to yourself, "Will this matter in a week, month, or year from now?"
- **Stay positive.** Be a positive person and praise yourself and others for good work.
- **Give up grudges.**
- **Sleep.** Make sure you are getting enough rest.
- **Eat** a well-balanced diet.
- **Avoid** caffeine, alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs as they can act as depressants.
- **Have fun!** Find time to do things you enjoy!

Lisa Hildreth possesses a Master of Science degree in Counseling and is a licensed therapist for children and families both in private practice and school settings.



5 Over-The-Counter Treatment Options for Seasonal Allergies

Nowruz has passed and it's now officially Spring, a time to rejoice over warmer temperatures, blooming Cherry Blossom trees, and picnics and soccer at the park. Accompanying this beautiful time of year, however, are some potentially uncomfortable symptoms. It happens to be that time of year when sneezing, itchy-watery eyes, post-nasal drip, and a runny nose that seemingly runs as far as a marathon all flourish—allergies are more commonly triggered and heightened during this otherwise splendid time of year.

And no one wants to sit at the doctor's office if they don't need to, right? Allergies are one of those medical conditions that do have some solid over-the-counter treatment options. So why not give them a whirl on your own beforehand? Here are some of the most commonly recommended remedies for those suffering from seasonal allergies, which can be obtained with only a visit to your local pharmacy:

1. **Non-Sedating Antihistamines:** These include *loratidine* (Claritin), *cetirizine* (Zyrtec), and *fexofenadine* (Allegra). Do not waste your money on the brand – the generic versions work just as well. They work against the chemical called “histamine,” the culprit that causes itching and fluid release (hence, runny nose, post-nasal drip, and watery eyes). The medications last 24 hours and do not typically cause drowsiness, which means you can tolerate the medicine during the daytime.
2. **Sedating Antihistamines:** On the other hand, *diphenhydramine* (Benadryl) is the ingredient in many allergy and nighttime cough/cold products sold over-the-counter. Not surprisingly, it is also a component in various over-the-counter insomnia remedies. Unlike the above, besides causing drowsiness in most (and enough to knock some out like a log), its effects are more transient and typically last about 6-8 hours. This one you may want to save as a bedtime option to battle those allergies. Please note that this group of drugs is not recommended in the over 65 aged population.
3. **Intranasal Steroid Sprays:** Steroids calm down inflammation (via a different method than anti-inflammatory drugs like *ibuprofen*, however). And nasal sprays that contain mild steroids work to attack the back of the nasal passages in order to help stop post-nasal drip, a drip from the back of the nasal passages to the throat. Post-nasal drip can be a nuisance – when severe enough, it can induce a chronic cough, hoarse voice, or persistent sore
- throat. *Fluticasone* (Flonase), a favorite amongst many doctors, is now over-the-counter. Two sprays into each nostril once daily often starts to kick in after one to two weeks of use, but is effective only if used daily and not simply “as needed.”
4. **Decongestants:** Not everyone can tolerate these, so be careful about your choices, as they can increase heart rate and blood pressure in those susceptible. They are useful in those experiencing nasal, sinus, and ear congestion – if you have not noticed, all three are anatomically connected. There are two main types – *phenylephrine*, which is a weaker decongestant, and *pseudoephedrine*, a more potent chemical that has been replaced by *phenylephrine* in most over-the-counter products due to *pseudoephedrine*'s potential for abuse. *Pseudoephedrine* is more effective at opening up those nasal passages, but is not kept on the shelf – you must ask the pharmacist and show identification prior to purchasing it, as it is tracked in a database (yes, no kidding). I should mention that decongestants are not meant for daily chronic use like the non-sedating antihistamines above. They are designed for short-term use no longer than a week or so in more acute situations, like the common cold or an allergy flare up. Stay away from the *nasal spray* decongestants (like Afrin) like the plague, as it can worsen your symptoms rather than alleviate.
5. **Nasal Saline:** Seasonal allergies are often environmental. That means something in our surrounding environment often triggers the symptoms, like blooming trees, pollen, grass, etc. These “allergens” enter our bodies via the nasal passages, and flushing them out using nasal saline will help to clear out those allergens right where they enter. Using over-the-counter saline products like the Netti Pot or Ocean Spray can help aid in the war against allergies.

I should also mention that sometimes when one lone treatment method is insufficient, it may work best when combined with another. For instance, a common combination recommended by physicians is to incorporate a daily non-sedating antihistamine along with an intranasal steroid spray.

With that I wish all of you a happy spring and Nowruz. And of course, always...*afiyat basheh!*

Dr. Sanaz Majd is a board-certified family medicine physician who podcasts and blogs at <http://housecalldoctor.quickanddirtytips.com>.



A Guide to Matching Herbs and Spices With the Right Veggies

Rhea Parsons from Green-Living Website *One Green Planet*

“We all know we should eat our vegetables and they are delicious just the way they are. However, just like other foods we cook and eat, their flavors can be enhanced. Adding herbs and spices adds a depth of flavor that turns a vegetable dish from ordinary to extraordinary. Cooking veggies with onions, garlic, salt and pepper is most common... but what about all the other herbs and spices available? There are so many it can seem daunting. How do you know which herbs and spices to use with which vegetables?” These vegetable-spice pairings are suggestions. Don’t be afraid to experiment and come up with your own favorite combinations. When you enhance the flavor of your veggie dishes with herbs and spices, you’ll never have to be reminded to eat your vegetables again.

- 1. Artichokes** pair well with bay leaf, garlic, coriander, paprika, and parsley.
- 2. Asparagus** has a strong flavor and pairs well with basil, curry, dill, marjoram, mustard, nutmeg, oregano, rosemary, and tarragon.
- 3. Beets** are sweet and earthy. They pair well with spicy, fragrant, and warm herbs and spices. Use basil, caraway, chives, cloves, coriander, cumin, dill, ginger, fennel, allspice, sage, thyme, and tarragon.
- 4. Broccoli**, broccolini, and broccoli rabe are all grassy and verdant vegetables. You can use pretty much any herbs and spices with them and not go wrong. They pair best with basil, chives, curry, dill, garlic, ginger, marjoram, oregano, red pepper flakes, rosemary, sage, tarragon, and thyme.
- 5. Brussels Sprouts** These little tiny cabbages are so delicious, especially baby sprouts. It’s not their fault that so many people cook them wrong and they end up gray, mushy, and smelly. Pair Brussels sprouts with caraway, garlic, marjoram, mustard, nutmeg, oregano, parsley, rosemary, and thyme. Roast or sauté, don’t boil.
- 6. Cabbage** has a mild flavor so it can really use some help with herbs and spices. Try flavoring cabbage with bay leaf, caraway, chives, coriander, curry, dill, fennel, garlic, ginger, marjoram, mint, nutmeg, parsley, and thyme.
- 7. Carrots** are naturally sweet and pair well with both mild and strong flavors. Use basil, cinnamon, coriander, cumin, curry, dill, fennel, garlic, ginger, mace, nutmeg, paprika, parsley, rosemary, sage, and thyme.
- 8. Cauliflower** has a very mild taste. It takes on the flavors of whatever it is cooked with so add lots of flavor. Cook cauliflower with any herbs and spices you like. Try it with basil, coriander, cumin, dill, fennel, garlic, ginger, mint, nutmeg, oregano, paprika, parsley, tarragon, and thyme.
- 9. Corn** is sweet, mild, and tastes best with bright herbs and hot spices. Pair corn with dill, basil, rosemary, thyme, garlic, cilantro, sage, and paprika.
- 10. Celery**, also called celery root, has a mild, grassy taste. It pairs well with allspice, basil, coriander, fennel, marjoram, nutmeg, paprika, and thyme.

11. Cucumber is mild and watery. It can be paired with light and refreshing or hot and spicy herbs and spices. Prepare cucumbers with basil, chives, dill, coriander, parsley, tarragon, rosemary, mustard, garlic, and mint.

12. Eggplant is rich and flavorful on its own, but it’s even better with strong herbs and spices. Combine eggplant with basil, garlic, ginger, oregano, parsley, cilantro, curry, mint, and sage.

13. Green Beans don’t need a lot of help, but you can use herbs and spices to make them simply fresh and flavorful or hot and spicy. Flavor green beans with basil, chives, dill, nutmeg, garlic, pepper, mustard, oregano, red pepper flakes, rosemary, and thyme.

14. Leafy Greens are diverse, including kale, Swiss chard, collard greens, and mustard greens, just to name a few. Pair greens with basil, bay leaf, coriander, garlic, ginger, red pepper flakes, marjoram, oregano, nutmeg, and rosemary.

15. Leeks are relatives of onions and garlic, but they have a milder taste. Pair them with bay leaf, celery salt, dill, mustard, nutmeg, paprika, parsley, sage, and thyme.

16. Mushrooms are rich, earthy, and meaty. They have definite strong flavors that can be brightened up with herbs or spiced up with hotter spices. Pair mushrooms with garlic, thyme, ginger, cumin, curry, coriander, pepper, red pepper flakes, and parsley.

17. Parsnips look like carrots that have all of the color drained out of them. They are nutty, spicy, and starchy. Pair them with chives, fennel seeds, parsley, thyme, and coriander.

18. Peas are mild and sweet. They pair well with dill, mint, parsley, sage, basil, marjoram, nutmeg, onion, and curry.

19. Potatoes work well with any herbs and spices. Pair them with basil, garlic, red pepper flakes, mustard, paprika, pepper, rosemary, thyme, oregano, and sage.

20. Pumpkin and winter squash are on the sweet side, so they do best with warm, spicy flavors. Pair them with basil, curry, cumin, coriander, garlic, ginger, allspice, nutmeg, cinnamon, paprika, thyme, rosemary, sage, curry, and parsley.

21. Radishes are crunchy and peppery. There is a wide variety of sizes, shapes, and colors, including white daikon. Enhance the flavor of radishes with basil, chives, dill, garlic, mint, and parsley.

22. Spinach has a strong flavor and does well with strong herbs and spices. Use spinach with basil, dill, chives, garlic, ginger, nutmeg, allspice, red pepper flakes, and thyme.

23. Sweet Potatoes are, as their name suggests, sweet. They do well with warm and spicy flavors. Cook them with allspice, cinnamon, garlic, ginger, red pepper flakes, paprika, thyme, sage, and nutmeg.

24. Tomatoes are mild and sweet. They are delicious as is or with just a touch of salt, but they can also be jazzed up with herbs and spices. Eat tomatoes with basil, cilantro, chives, dill, garlic, mint, curry, paprika, pepper, rosemary, oregano, parsley, thyme, red pepper flakes, fennel, and tarragon.

25. Zucchini (or summer squash) is very mild and takes on the flavor of the foods with which it is cooked. Enhance the flavor of zucchini with basil, chives, dill, marjoram, onions, oregano, red pepper flakes, garlic, coriander, pepper, and thyme.



SUCCESSFUL IRANIAN AMERICAN WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE PUTS SAN DIEGO ON NATIONAL MAP

For the first time since its inception, the Iranian American Women's Leadership Conference, was held in San Diego on February 28, 2016. Over 600 attendees filled conference rooms at the Westin Gaslamp hotel to connect, feel empowered and inspired, and to celebrate our community's successes as a new immigrant population despite various challenges. The sold-out event featured 11 panels, from the first Iranian American judges and successful authors to breaking traditional taboos and hearing from the younger generation of rising stars. Our own Shahri Estakhry was given the Community Leader of the Year Award and Zohre Elahian was given the Philanthropist of the Year Award. Prior to making its debut in San Diego, the conference has taken place in Washington D.C., New York City, Orange County, Beverly Hills and San Francisco, always selling out. Founder of the Iranian American Women Foundation, Mariam Khosravani, and the San Diego Conference Chair, Haleh Tayebi, along with local committee volunteers worked tirelessly to make this one of the most organized and inspiring conferences to date. As stated in the program, the goal of the conference was to "participate in fruitful dialogue, to forge lasting connections, to inspire multigenerational thinking and inter-generational bridge-building, and to encourage women of all ages to follow their dreams." The overwhelmingly positive feedback from participants was that this goal was achieved. President Obama's letter to the attendees, printed in the program, also captured the purpose behind the conference. The President stated, "When organizations like IAWF bring women together and provide resources and mentorship to empower women to achieve their greatest potential, they help ensure all our people have the chance to write their chapter in our country's narrative and steer the course of our future."



**THANK YOU,
SAN DIEGO!**



10th Annual Iranian-American Women Foundation (IAWF)

by Radin Rahimzadeh

At 9:00 a.m., I was making my way up the stairs of the Westin Hotel in San Diego, to participate in the 10th Annual Iranian-American Women Foundation Conference (hereby known as IAWF Conference). This was my first time attending and I was expecting it to be a calm networking affair. However, ascending the stairs, I toed into a sea of women (and a few men), abuzz with spirited chatter. For the next 30 minutes, I was floating around the open market, accepting generous embraces and warm smiles from new acquaintances who treated me as an old friend. At 5:30 p.m., leaving the hotel, I made my way to my car with energetic strides—a complex array of perfume scents, gifted to me through the hugs of new acquaintances, lingering with each step.

Traveling from across the country, the IAWF Conference brought together women identifying as Iranian-American from a diverse spectrum of professional sectors, academic disciplines, and community and global involvements. Nonetheless, throughout a day of exchanging ideas, experiences, and passions, a core similarity between all of the participants became evident. Regardless of socio-economic or political base, all of us in attendance wanted to learn and support one another to confidently, competently, and comfortably leverage our unique identities to contribute to our American context.

Additionally, this conference was unique from any other in its success of creating an ecosystem that encouraged intelligible and compassionate dialoguing. Curious attendees could comfortably learn and inquire about challenges and taboos that the remarkable featured speakers had overcome or are currently navigating and for which they are finding solutions. Manifesting naturally in these dialogues were the organization's initiatives to inspire, empower, and connect.

In the first few pages of the program guide, there is a letter addressed to the 2016 IAWF Conference attendees from President Obama, in which he states:

"Iranian American women have played a vital role in this endeavor [of moving us towards a more perfect Union], contributing to America's growth and lighting the path to progress. When organizations like IAWF bring women together and provide resources and mentorship to empower women to achieve their greatest potential, they help ensure all our people have the chance to write their chapter in our country's narrative and steer the course of our future."

The words of the president resonate powerfully in this era where our national identity roots from a myriad of geographies and cultures. Thank you Marian Khosravani, Haleh Tayebi, Staff, and IAWF San Diego Committee for inviting us to celebrate the unique identities of the Iranian community and for empowering all of us to continue the celebration in our respective communities.

To my dear readers, I encourage you to explore the Iranian-American Women Foundation website: www.iawfoundation.org. It has invaluable resources for you, your daughters, your nieces, and friends in terms of mentorship, career advice, and anecdotes that truly inspire. You can sign up, create a profile, and begin connecting with like-minded and inspiring Iranian-American women. I look forward to the 2017 conference, see you there.

Radin Rahimzadeh is a former Iranian School of San Diego (ISSD) Student and recent graduate of UC Davis.



Iranian American Leadership Conference

by Leily Rezvani

Committed to inspiring and uniting Iranian-American women from all around the world, the Iranian-American Women Foundation (IAWF) recently hosted its 10th Women's Leadership Conference in San Diego. Nationally recognized, the IAWF has strived to uplift and empower Iranian women of all ages by hosting conferences all across the United States. The organization seeks to inspire, unite, and prepare women to be change-makers.

What began as a single conference to recognize the achievements and successes of Iranian-American women has turned into a large platform to inspire and connect them. Maryam Khosravani, founder and president of the IAWF, told the *Los Angeles Times* in a 2014 interview, "It was founded to showcase Iranian-American women's success in this country. We want speakers to share their contributions, tell us their level of education and be willing to inspire, not impress. This is the message we want to give, especially to our younger generation." Khosravani shared a childhood memory with the *Los Angeles Times* about how her father taught her to see other perspectives when she helped him deliver food items to families in the winter. She recalled that one family did not have enough money to send their children to school. Years later, Khosravani is still supporting young women to reach their full potential by not only providing them with wonderful opportunities, but also the funding to help these rising stars receive an education.

One of these rising stars is Nadia Farjood, currently studying at Harvard Law School in hopes of increasing political representation for women by serving as an associate at the White House and as the Senior Manager for Strategic Initiatives at *Political Parity*. Farjood serves as an ambassador for *VoteRunLead*, as well as on the *American Planning Board of Humanity in Action* and on the advisory councils for *Running Start* and *Legal Momentum*. In her panel, Farjood talked about how her grandmother inspired her to become an advocate for



women. When she was accepted into Harvard Law School, she remembered how excited her grandmother was for her and the advice she gave. Her grandmother told her to fight for the rights of women, which is what Farjood is striving to do in law school.

As another rising star, Saba Vahdat serves as the founder and president of *Empire Advisory Group*, which is a consulting firm that specializes in guiding people to obtain mortgage-recording tax refunds and better defend themselves during building violations. Additionally, Vahdat also serves as vice president of *ELMO Realty Co. Inc.*, where she regulates the expansion of the group's real estate affairs, and partners with nonprofit homeless shelters and religious organizations to support them with meeting their real estate needs. "My family and I use real estate as a platform to provide emergency shelter, transitional housing, permanent housing, and supportive services to help combat homelessness in our community. We have housed over 1,800 of New York City's most vulnerable population and will continue to devote resources, money, and manpower towards families without a place to sleep at night."

Vahdat's biggest inspiration is her father, who "set very bold goals and enable everyone to achieve them." His work ethic and skills have positively influenced how his daughter manages business responsibilities. In addition to her father's inspiration, Vahdat has found inspiration in the IAWF. "I have a deep gratitude and appreciation for IAWF because it celebrates Iranian American women's accomplishments and inspires us to pursue our dreams by having an organization that we can turn to and lean on. Through IAWF, I have developed friendships and gained new insights on a variety of topics. I've learned how these savvy female businesswomen across all professional sectors have defied odds. This is an exciting organization that I am honored to be part of." The IAWF continues to empower young entrepreneurs, philanthropists, and leaders like Saba Vahdat.

Through the IAWF, I learned that our way of approaching leadership cannot be limited to taking on larger positions, but rather directing our passion to understanding it with depth and by taking concrete actions to improve the world around us. Women are instrumental in achieving long lasting change and should no longer be ostracized. It should be a worldwide priority to work closely with women on global leadership initiatives because through women's inclusion in this process, we will enter into a far more hopeful chapter of cultivating success and liberty. Given the challenges we face in the world today, a negative discourse surrounding the role of Iranian women has developed. At the IAWF, women from all walks of life are taken on a path to glory where endeavors become success stories. As leaders, empowerment has become our path, not our goal.

Leily Rezvani is a high school student at High Tech High North County. She is also an intern at USD Institute for Peace and Justice





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How does Iranian School of San Diego affect your life?

by Sana Seif

The following is an interview performed by Sana Seif, a current student-TA at ISSD, with Radin Rahimzadeh, who was a student-TA at ISSD before going to college- Peyk

How did going to ISSD affect your life?

I did not understand the profound affect that ISSD had on my life until I graduated from high school and moved north to attend the University of California, Davis. The sense of community, nurturing environment, and cultural and historical competency related by the school has really shaped how I comfortably and confidently communicate my identity and sense of self, to both myself as well as those I encounter in the U.S. and abroad. Of course, in terms of practicality, I have used Persian in my professional context; but, more than anything, learning how the history and culture of Iran has emerged and intertwined with the surrounding region has made me a more globally fluent, tolerant, and open-minded individual. The sense of community I observed at the Iranian school has inspired my passions to build bridges across other communities here in the United States that share borders and histories with Iran. The leadership and selflessness of administrators, volunteers, and families in contributing to the wellbeing and continued success of the school has kept my optimism and motivation aflame in creating my own non-profit that serves the Iranian community and communities that serve the Near East and South Asian region.

How do you use Persian in your everyday life?

Knowing Persian is a matter of social survival for me. I live in a household of three other witty Isfahanis and you always have to be alert and ready to answer back in Persian jokes and *zabol masals*. All joking aside, I greatly value speaking Persian because there are certain words and feelings that cannot be translated and I appreciate being able to communicate these (sometimes very poetic and deeply emotional) sentiments. Furthermore, over the years I have been able to explore Persian poetry, literature, cinema, music, and culture in general. Living in the United States, I lean on my Iranian heritage and culture a lot to find peace away from my fast-paced and shifting environment and schedule. I also leverage my unique identity to view an issue or event from a different perspective. Often times in exploring Iranian words and visuals, I have been inspired and have pulled from my culture to complement my thinking and professional decision-making. All in all, knowing Persian has been a practical asset in the professional, social, and academic spheres in which I have found myself.

What was the most important take away from attending ISSD?

The most important takeaway from ISSD has been community. Even now, after four years of not attending or teaching at the school, I have been welcomed back to this growing and

changing community with such warmth and love. Some faces have remained the same, but many have changed. Regardless of whether my conversation is with someone I have known in the community for years or if it is with someone I have just met, there is this indescribable feeling of comfort and human connectivity on a very personal and almost familial level. I believe that it is due to this unique socialization that I have absorbed particular manners of conversation, gesticulations, even eyebrow movements (I kid you not) that allow me to relate very personably and charismatically, not only with my Iranian counterparts but global counterparts as well.

How would you like to encourage students at ISSD to look at their experience in a positive way?

Next Sunday, when you are at school, look up and look into your instructors' eyes. Look into Principal Sadr's eyes, Ms. Bagheri's eyes, Ms. Babakhani-Ghazi eyes, and all of the countless volunteers at the school. Their pupils literally sparkle. Seriously, take a moment to notice this. Look up and note how wide they smile when you walk up to them to say hello or ask a question. Notice their mirth and affability. You would never know if they have had a tough week or have faced any challenges during the day. Draw your energy and excitement to attend your Sunday classes and extra-curricular activities post-classes from these exemplary people—these wonderfully kind people who make up OUR little San Diego community, these people who have been tirelessly volunteering to create a space for all of us to thrive, feel supported, partake in fun activities in San Diego, and lead in our American context with full appreciation and confidence in our unique identity. Take a look around at all of the friends you've made. At this moment, you might only see each other every Sunday; however, many of these friends will be those who you call at odd hours of the day (and perhaps night) when you need someone to talk to in the future. If you have participated in the Iranian school, you always have a community to welcome you back, no matter your geographical location or your life's trajectory.

What would you like to say to conclude this interview?

I really enjoy connecting with new people and collecting perspectives. Send me an e-mail (below) with questions, comments, or personal narratives. I look forward to speaking with you again, Sana joon, and anyone else reading this piece!

Thank you for your time.

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