



# Peyk

Persian Cultural Center's Bilingual Magazine

P.O. Box 500914, San Diego CA 92150

[www.peykmagazine.com](http://www.peykmagazine.com)

# 197

January-February

Vol. XXX No. 197

ISSN: 1557-623X

HAPPY  
NEW  
YEAR

- HAPPY NEW YOU!?
- CRITICAL RACE THEORY: MYTH AND TRUTH
- AN INTERVIEW WITH PROFESSOR REZA VALI
- A MODERN-DAY PILGRIM FROM THE LAND OF NO
- THE SAUDI TAKEOVER, JOSH'S TRUTH, AND LEO'S SEVENTH
- PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF COVID-19
- MICRONUTRIENTS AND YOUR HEALTH
- ESTEEVE, A TURKISH MAN



**AK INJURY LAW FIRM**

**INJURED IN A  
CAR ACCIDENT?**

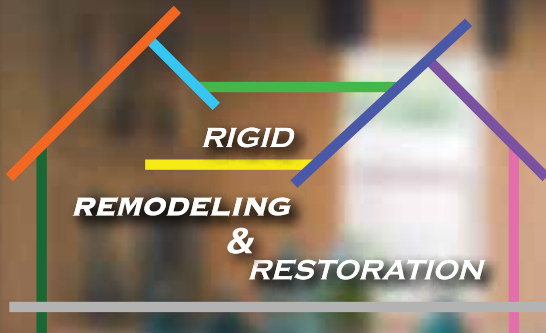
No Win,  
No Fee Guarantee

**877-470-HURT (4878)**  
**www.AKInjuryLawFirm.com**

مشاوره اولیه رایگان

**Free  
Consultation**

دکتر آزاده کشاورز  
وکیل تصادفات  
و صدمات بدنی



[www.RigidRestoration.com](http://www.RigidRestoration.com)  
[www.RigidRemodeling.com](http://www.RigidRemodeling.com)  
**760-500-1818**

**مهندس شان فروغی**

ریمادلینگ  
بازسازی و تعمیر خسارات ناشی از آب  
آتش سوزی  
ترکیدگی لوله  
تخفیف ویژه دیداکتیبل  
قرارداد با تمامی بیمه ها

**Shawn Foroughi**

CSLB:1039960

- Remodeling
- Flood Restoration
- Water & Fire

• **Ask us about our deductible waiver or discount program** •



Shaghayegh Hanson



## HAPPY NEW YOU!?

Every time a new year rolls around, my friend's elderly Italian mother wishes people a "Happy New You!" in her heavily accented English. No one has had the heart to correct her on this turn of phrase in the six decades she's lived in America. Just as well, since her salutation perfectly captures the mood we naturally adopt at this time of year to take self-improvement measures that will, hopefully, result in a better version of ourselves going forward.

I have made plenty of new year's resolutions in my time, many, if not all, of which ended up falling by the wayside in spectacularly quick fashion. As a result, I am quite cynical about the tradition. If the last year or so has taught us anything, it's that the best laid plans are subject to the vagaries of elements beyond our control. It has been an especially hard lesson for those of us with first world problems. What are those? Apart from treating the lack of toilet paper as a national crisis or a justification for hand-to-hand combat in the grocery store, here's a sampling of some memes that paint the picture:

"I have no food in my house . . . that can be made in less than two minutes."

"I have nothing to drink at home. Except a virtually unlimited supply of clean, fresh drinking water."

"Mom asks what I want for Christmas. Can't think of anything."

"Staying with relatives. They don't know their Wi-Fi password."

"I have to wake up at 4:00 a.m. Because I'm going on vacation."

Sadly, I can identify with all of these, most recently with the last one. A couple of weeks ago, I had to wake up at 4:30 a.m. to begin my epic 3-flight, 2-hour road trip to my vacation spot on an island in Belize. Grumpy and caffeine-deficient, I barely mustered a "thank you" to my Uber driver as he dropped me off at the airport. Then I waited in a long line at curbside check-in, only to be told I was in the wrong line and had to go inside the terminal, to wait in another long line at ticketing. Sixteen or so hours later, having endured a barrage of such first world problems, I arrived at my destination.

Belize set me straight. I can tell you about the glorious, white sandy beaches, the turquoise waters of the Caribbean, the stunning marine life at the coral reefs, but what is lodged in my heart is the indomitable and beautiful people of Belize. The tourism industry accounts for almost 45 percent of Belize's economy, and the locals, already at subsistence living, were hit hard by COVID-19. Without a welfare system, families were struggling in ways we can only imagine in our nightmares. And yet, the sounds of music and laughter filled the air wherever I went. At every turn, there was a ready smile, a kind gesture, a helping hand with directions or other guidance. The hospitality and warmth I was shown from people who had little, but were willing to give much to their fellow human beings, was humbling. I marveled at how Belizeans focus on, and find, pockets of joy in their everyday lives, despite the material struggles they endured. We first worlders have expectations and wants far beyond the meeting of our needs. I think it tends to make us a generally anxious and dissatisfied bunch and shackles our happiness to unnecessarily high standards. It's a fine notion to set goals, but to live in the moment and show gratitude for the things we do have, rather than the things we don't, is a finer way to live. At least this is what I will tell myself if (and when) my new year's resolutions go awry (again).

### Persian Cultural Center's Bilingual Magazine

*Peyk* is a bi-monthly publication organized for literary, cultural, and information purposes.

Financial support is provided by the City of San Diego Commission for Arts and Culture and Persian Heritage Foundation.

### Persian Cultural Center

6790 Top Gun St. #7, San Diego, CA 92121

Tel: (858) 552-9355

Fax: (619) 374-7335

Email: pcc@pccsd.org

www.pccsd.org

### January-February 2022 Vol. XXX

Persian Cultural Center

A non-profit national corporation

Established in 1989. San Diego, California

### Board of Directors:

Nikoo Atefi, Amir Farshad Babakhani, Parnian Badii, Hamid Beikzadeh, Farideh Fazel, Fariba Babakhani-Ghazi, Sara Taghavi, Soheil Bigdeli, Ali Sadr, Venus Safaei, Shahla Salah, Mahmoud Reza Pirouzian, and Hamid Rafizadeh

### Editorial Board

Shahri Estakhry, Shahrzad Julazadeh, Shaghayegh Hanson, Reza Khabazian, Ali Sahebzamani, and Rachel Tait

### Contributing Writers

Tania Ahmadi, Mohammad Ahrar, Hooshyar Afsar, Sanaz Majd, Mercedes Basirian Hariri, Sepideh Shamloufard and Danial Golphoroush

### Editor-In-Chief: Ali Sadr

### Graphic Artist: Saeed Jalali

*Peyk* reserves the right to edit all materials at its sole discretion. Materials submitted will not be returned to sender, even if not used, and the contributor will be deemed to have given consent and license for the reproduction and publication of such submission in *Peyk* magazine and/or the *Peyk* website.

### PCC Foundation

Charitable Organization

Affiliate of Persian Cultural Center

Tel (858) 552-9355

Fax & Message: (619) 374-7335

Cover Design: Saeed Jalali



## PCC's Board Meetings

Persian Cultural Center's board of directors holds its meetings every second Wednesday of the month. The last two meetings took place virtually on November 10 and December 8, 2021.

## Movie Screening of *Hit the Road* - October 30 and November 2, 2021

Pacific Arts Movement, in collaboration with PCC, screened the movie *Hit the Road* (2021) on October 30 and November 2 at the Ultrastar Cinemas in San Diego. The movie was directed by Panah Panahi, starring Amin Simiar, Hassan Madjooi, Pantea Panahiha, and Rayan Sarlak.



## Jong e Farhangi - November 12, 2021

The November Jong, hosted by Ali Sadr, was held at the Iranian American Center (IAC) and also broadcast online via Zoom, as well as Clubhouse. The guest was writer Khosrow Davami, who discussed his book *Yas-e Irani*. Mr. Davami read a few sections of his book to the audience, and a Q&A period followed the discussion.

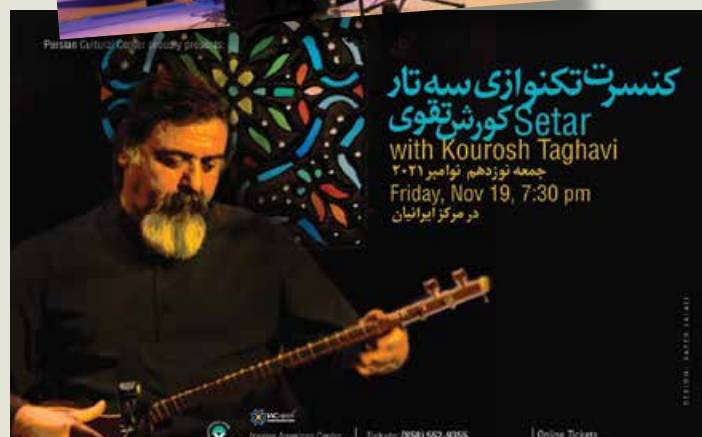


## The World Premiere of *Playing with Stars* - November 17, 2021

*Playing with Stars*, the latest movie by Hatef Alimardani, was screened for the first time in cooperation with PCC at the Ultrastars Cinema in San Diego on November 17. Farhad Aslani, Shabnam Moghadami, Michael Madson, and Melisa Zakeri starred in this movie. A number of celebrities attended this premiere. A Q&A session with the director and some of the movie's actors was held following the screening.

## The Sublime Sound of the Setar - November 19, 2021

A setar concert by Kourosh Taghavi, entitled "The Sublime Sound of the Setar," was held at PCC for a sold-out crowd on November 19, 2021.





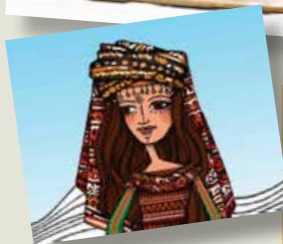


## Jong e Farhangi - December 10, 2021

The December Jong, hosted by Ali Sadr, was held at the IAC and also broadcast online via Zoom, as well as Clubhouse. The guest of the program was Fardin Saheb Zamani, filmmaker and researcher on folk literature. He spoke about children's folk literature and introduced a new app that he has developed called "Namaki & Felfeli." A Q&A followed the discussion.

## Yalda Celebration - December 17, 2021

PCC's Yalda Celebration was held at the IAC. The program consisted of poetry, live music by Kourosh Taghavi and Ali Sadr, and a performance of "Shahname Khani" by Mahmoud Behroozian and friends.







# Critical Race Theory: Myth and Truth

By Hooshyar Afsar

## Introduction

Odd year elections after a presidential election year are often used as a harbinger for what to expect in midterm elections. The Virginia and New Jersey gubernatorial races, plus other statewide elections in November 2021, are indicators of the mood of voters. Republicans had significant success in using Critical Race Theory and its presumed newly-found influence in the educational system to make gains. They succeeded in scaring many voters of the “future threat” Critical Race Theory embodies in turning young people away from the view of the U.S. as a “shining” example of democracy and human rights. They succeeded in using it as a scapegoat to attract voters who are scared of losing their sense of “pride” in their country. This is my second article related to Critical Race theory (see *Peyk* #195 for my article on Intersectionality). (1) In this piece, I intend to shed light on misinformation and disinformation regarding Critical Race Theory and perhaps debunk certain myths. In future articles, I will focus on its impact on immigrant communities like ours and how failing to apply it to our settings in the United States could have negative future consequences.

## What is Critical Race Theory?

The fundamental premise of Critical Race Theory (CRT) is that race is a social construct that is invented for social, political, and economic gain. There is no scientific basis for the construct of race. The Human Genome project that concluded in 2000 once and for all ended any doubts about the fact that human beings all over the planet share over 99.97% of their DNA. Since the year 2000, there have been certain efforts to discover a “race gene” that have all ended in failure. From a scientific standpoint, differences associated with race are superficial and are caused by thousands of years of climate conditions. These include the color of skin that is the most pronounced “racial” distinction.

The fact that race is an invented social construct does not mean that it can now be ignored and or denied. For hundreds of years, the notion of race and racism has been interwoven into the social fabric of societies around the world. In a sense, it has become a social reality causing significant disparities in many facets of life, impacting the livelihood of tens of millions of people in the U.S. alone. In fact, the concept of “colorblindness” and claims that we should see no color when judging people have been used to keep racial disparities in tact since the 19th century. CRT emphasizes that, although race is an invented social construct, it can not be ignored and we should not fall for the trick of “colorblindness.” CRT scholars criticize colorblindness as one of the liberal principles that help keep structural racism in place in many social structures and settings, including legal ones.

Intersectionality is another major pillar of CRT. Intersectionality is a framework by which various aspects of a person’s or group’s identity are considered as interconnected and overlapping rather than in prioritized and/or isolated fashion. These aspects include—and are not limited to—race, gender, caste, class, sexuality, ethnicity, and citizenship (immigration status). For more on intersectionality, please see the article I wrote on the topic in *Peyk* #195.

Many scholars have also defined CRT as more than a theory and as a movement or a “collection of activists and scholars interested in

studying and transforming the relationship among race, racism, and power.” (2)

The terms “critical” and “critical theory” also stem from a school of thought that envisions challenging power structures and liberating human beings from social conditions that enslave them.

## Critical Race Theory and Social Sciences Curriculum

In the past two years, the introduction of CRT in education has been used as a scapegoat by the right to make political gains. Let’s look and ask: how significant is the impact of CRT on the educational system?

First and foremost, CRT has been mostly on the curriculum in higher education and for the most part in law schools in the United States. One clear reason is that many young college students are interested in CRT so there is a demand for it. When it comes to primary and secondary education, there are only a few school districts in the country that have talked about introducing CRT. The changes we have seen in secondary education curriculums in certain places is more an adoption of a factual approach to U.S. history—promoting racial awareness or adapting an anti-racist approach—rather than CRT per se. For example, up until a few years ago, the school district in Albemarle County, Virginia (home of Thomas Jefferson, the author of the U.S. Declaration of Independence, the third president of the U.S., and one of the prominent founding fathers and architects of the United States), did not even cover the fact that Mr. Jefferson owned enslaved people, let alone the fact that he owned over 600 enslaved people during his lifetime and had at least seven children with one of them, named Sally Hemings, five of whom lived to be adults. During the election campaign this past summer, Albemarle County Public Schools were the target of accusations that they had adopted CRT as part of their curriculum. The county school board issued a statement that, while it emphasizes anti-racism programs, it has not added CRT to its curriculum.

It is a historical fact that many of the founders of the United States enslaved human beings and many others still went along with it. It is not hard to understand that many Americans are uncomfortable with talking about such facts and are concerned that somehow it makes young people less patriotic if they find out about such historical facts. Many people feel that telling the truth about the history of racial injustice in this country hurts America’s sense of “national pride.” Let’s look at CRT and U.S. history.

## CRT and U.S. History

There are multiple lines of reasoning which oppose having a critical view of U.S. history from a racial justice perspective. Some believe that slavery, Jim Crow segregation, lynching terror, and similar injustices are all in the past and the U.S. has “gone beyond” them. Others argue that, when we look at history, we need to understand it in the context of the relevant times and it is “unfair” to judge the founding fathers and other prominent white male politicians of the pre- and post-American revolutionary era with a set of contemporary criteria. Last but not least, there are outright efforts to suppress historical truth by either not talking about it or by totally misrepresenting what actually happened. Let’s analyze these one by one.



As far as the argument that the U.S. has gone beyond the “sins” of the past, there is some truth to it. Slavery was abolished after the bloody Civil War, resulting from an active second founding movement, and black men received the right to vote with the passage of the 15th amendment which was fully ratified in 1870. Jim Crow segregation and the lynching terror of the segregation era was put to an end by the civil rights movements and the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Yet, in both those cases, white supremacy and racism showed a lot more resilience and the country took major steps back. Jim Crow segregation was the eventual result of the 1877 compromise that ended reconstruction in the post-Civil War South. With the Supreme Court’s support, a set of openly racist Jim Crow laws were established in the South that lasted 75 years (from the passage of the Mississippi Plan/Constitution of 1890 to the Voting Rights Act of 1965). The end of Jim Crow segregation was turned back by resegregation of schools and housing in practice in the 1970s and 1980s without openly professing racism. White supremacy again showed that it would find a way back.

In fact, many civil rights movement activists came up with CRT as a result of the fact that the criminal justice system has shown to be intrinsically resistant to racial justice. Many of today’s racial justice theorists, including CRT theorists, show that a new system of racial control based on mass incarceration of black and brown people (predominantly men), complemented by mass deportations of the past 12 years, is now in place. Key to social mutation of systems of racial control in different forms is that fundamental social and economic oppression that are inherent to the systems of social and racial control have never been uprooted. In fact, certain CRT scholars believe that racism will never be fully uprooted in the U.S. None of this means that there has not been significant progress in the United States; there are clearly differences between slavery, Jim Crow segregation, and mass incarceration/deportation. For example, during the 75 year reign of Jim Crow segregation, mainly in the South, the majority of white Americans were okay with believing racist ideas that black people are racially inferior, yet today the majority of white Americans do not want to be known as racist and this applies to majority of CRT opponents. Of course, denying that racism continues to be systemic in almost all aspects of social, economic, and political life in the U.S. and in the legal and law enforcement systems is—by itself—a form of hidden racism, yet it is different from the openly racist ideas that justified slavery or Jim Crow segregation.

The second line of argument is the historical context narrative saying that we should understand the past times and see the founding fathers and other 18th and 19th century politicians in that light. The basic idea behind this argument is that those were different times and pretty much all powerful white men did it and were supported by all white women. In fact, that is not true. Even in the pre-American revolution era in the United States, there were abolitionists dating back to the 17th century, with many of them coming out of the Quaker church. The second president of the U.S., John Adams, never owned slaves even though he had a farm during the time that slavery was still legal in his home state of Massachusetts. Many of Adams’ friends encouraged him to buy a few slaves and make more money without doing so much work

on the land but Adams refused to do that. There were white male politicians of the time who either opposed slavery or renounced it and freed the enslaved people they owned. They were not in the majority, but they were there. These powerful men were contemporaries of slave owning founding father presidents such as Washington, Jefferson, and Madison. So, the argument that “everybody did it” doesn’t hold. Not all powerful white people of 18th and 19th century America were enslaving other human beings or racists who believed in systems of racial control. Having said that, there are various schools of thought in terms of studying history. I, for one, do not prescribe to eliminating historical context when looking at the past. In fact, context helps us understand why people did or didn’t do what they did. Of course, considering historical context does not justify injustice, racism, and enslavement even during those times. At the same time, one should not deny and ignore the temporal context of now and the scientific achievements of human society that has shed light on racist pseudo scientist ideas of enlightenment that justified a hierarchical and racist categorization of human beings. Those human species hierarchies put white Europeans at the top, representing all the “best” traits of humanity including intellect, wisdom, beauty, artistic creativity, and work ethic among others.

The impact of the last set of arguments that completely deny historical facts or make overt or covert attempts to ignore them should not be underestimated. Unfortunately, a clear trend to disinform (knowingly carry out a false representation of what happened) that was growing mostly on the right of the political spectrum came to a climax with the Trump presidency, such that lying with no shame became an everyday part of political and historical narratives. Certain academicians have characterized the Trump era as “post truth.” I, for one, believe that disinformation should be confronted with historical facts until hell freezes over. That is the only effective way to respond. For example, let’s take the case of the 2020 presidential election. Trump and his supporters continue to argue that the election was stolen in major cities such as Philadelphia, Atlanta, and Detroit, all metropolises with majority black populations. While there is no clear and proven evidence of significant irregularities that in any way could have changed the results of the elections, Trump and his supporters continue to beat the drums of disinformation to establish a completely false historical narrative. In the case of Atlanta in particular and Georgia in general, the Republican politicians in charge—such as Georgia’s secretary of state—fully agree that the elections were held with no major irregularities (in fact, Georgia’s presidential election had three recounts that reaffirmed the results beyond any doubt).

I used the 2020 election because it is still fresh in readers’ memories, yet the same complete falsehoods have been used many times pertaining to the more distant past. One prominent example is the portrayal of the post-Civil War 12 year reconstruction period (1865-1877) that has been falsely characterized in the past as the era of oppression of white population in the South by black people and black politicians. (3) This is completely untrue. In fact, the terror was committed by the KKK against freed blacks who wanted to peacefully participate in the social, political, and economic

*Continued on page 20*

# An Interview with Professor Reza Vali

By Vahid Jahandari

*Professor Reza Vali is among the most acclaimed Iranian American composers. He currently resides in Pittsburgh, where he has taught as a Professor of Music at Carnegie Mellon University since 1988. One of Dr. Vali's many contributions is the utilization of the Persian dastgâh-maqâm system incorporated into Western contemporary techniques.*

*My acquaintance with Dr. Vali began in 2015, when I was in Iran applying to graduate schools in the States to continue my studies in Composition. However, for many years prior to that, when I was a student at Tehran University of Art, I knew about Dr. Vali's music and had studied his works. In late November 2021, I had the opportunity to interview him. This interview has been edited for clarity and space considerations.*

**Vahid Jahandari (VJ):** Thank you, Dr. Vali, for meeting with me. Would you please describe your early life in Iran and how you became engaged with composition?

**Dr. Vali:** I was born in 1952 in Qazvin. My family realized my interest in playing instruments at an early age and, soon after, I began studying at Tehran Conservatory of Music. During my education in Iran, the professors exclusively taught European music to students, and there was a rather not very positive attitude toward Iranian traditional styles. During my studies at the conservatory, we were prevented from studying the music of our homeland due to certain prejudice to its tuning system, improvisatory approaches, etc. Such qualities were in contrast with the Western classical genre, which was developed through a very different background and aesthetics that emerged from the Middle Ages.

**VJ:** When did you proceed with pursuing your studies outside Iran?

**Dr. Vali:** I continued my studies at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna in 1971. At that time, like many other aspiring composers, I fell under the influence of the modernist movement in Europe. I then moved to the States in 1978 and received my PhD in Composition from the University of Pittsburgh.

**VJ:** I understand that your musical language changed at a certain point, and you started focusing intensively on working with Persian music materials, rhythms, modes, and so on.

**Dr. Vali:** In 1990, I completed 17 sets of compositions, in which I borrowed Persian folk melodies. I gradually developed new tendencies in which all the characteristics of my works, including form, were inspired and derived from Persian music. I built an Iranian keyboard called *Arghonoon* that allowed me to recreate the intervals of Persian music precisely. Since 2000, I have composed entirely based on the Iranian modal system, dastgâh-maqâm.



**VJ:** Please tell us about how your music has been received in the U.S. and worldwide.

**Dr. Vali:** I don't tend to compose for a certain audience like many of my colleagues in academia. My music has been well received by Iranian expatriates, as well as American and European audiences over the years. The foreign listeners find my works exotic, and it takes time to get used to them as they find it quite different from the music they are accustomed to. Once the Iranian audiences familiarize themselves with my music, they start liking it. This is because my language does not purely represent a traditional system, and I have personalized my interests from the resources I derive into my music.

For instance, the Iranian audience who attended the premiere of my piece for Persian Ney and Orchestra in Los Angeles came to me and shared that they strongly connected with the music, particularly the last movement in *Dashti* mode. Similarly, when the piece was performed in France in January 2020, some of the audience members who had traveled to Iran as tourists came to me and shared that the music reminded them of the architecture, mosaic art, and mosques.

I am happy that my music is being programmed in the same concert with classical composers such as Mozart and Wagner. I received my first commission from the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra in 2006, and they have commissioned me four times, the last time in 2018. I have two pieces for the santur and string quartet. One of the greatest living performers of Persian santur, Dr. Dariush Saghafi, among the last remaining students of Master Abolhasan Saba, resides in Pittsburgh. He has performed my music on several occasions.





**VJ:** Please tell us about the Center for Iranian Music that you co-founded in 2013 in Pittsburgh.

**Dr. Vali:** I wish to connect the Iranian American community with its heritage. Since I am retiring from Carnegie Mellon University, I am passing the torch to my colleagues. One of the major initiatives of our center has been to recognize and exhibit Iranian art, connect with the audience, and familiarize the audience with many aspects of Persian music. We concentrate on four areas: traditional, folk, contemporary, and religious music of Iran. Among our guests have been Hossein Alizadeh, Kayhan Kalhor, Sepideh Raissadat, and many other exceptional Iranian musicians who had both concerts and masterclasses at CMU. We have had many successful concerts that have been sold out and well attended. We are happy to have succeeded in connecting with Iranian expatriates and celebrating our history.

**VJ:** What do you think about Iranian contemporary music that is primarily practiced in academia?

**Dr. Vali:** Iranian contemporary music is fast growing, and it needs to be introduced to the Iranian audience to change its perspective about the way of listening to music as an art form. On the other hand, the function of commercial music is entertainment, and it is unable to express and communicate a wide variety of thoughts and ideas in humanities and/or other disciplines to a profound degree. Young artists need to have their music more frequently performed and introduced to a broader audience.

**VJ:** What do you aim for as a composer?

**Dr. Vali:** For me, the dialogue of cultures is significant, and by writing music that incorporates Persian instruments and techniques with Western instruments, I aim to build bridges between civilizations. My music reminds Middle Eastern audiences of their

own nationality and heritage. I believe music moves across borders, and I consider a selection of instruments from various origins for this impact. I do not believe the audience necessarily needs to like the music, but it is more about encountering a new sound world and exploring the relationships. My happiest moments are when I am rehearsing my works with performers. The communications we have toward bringing the music to life are the fruits of my creative practice.

**VJ:** What do you want the American audience to take away from hearing your music?

**Dr. Vali:** I want them to know that Iran is one of the oldest cultures in the world, and Iran is not all about politics; it is the literature, food, and architecture which define my country. Cultures are not politics and musicians are not politicians. Though music may be used for political interests, it is not political in nature. Politics also cannot stop the development of music. Art always finds its way to evolve and flourish, regardless of religious, social, and political restrictions.

We cannot abandon many kinds of folk music—from the south of Iran to the north. They all emerged and are produced out of necessity from certain traditions and beliefs, like sacred music. This is because music is a form of human expression, like any language, but with the use of sounds. No matter the approaches or limitations, music captures the historical significance of its time and depicts the circumstances in which it has been made.

**VJ:** Thank you, Dr. Vali, for your time and consideration in having this interview with me. I look forward to hearing more about your activities and performances in the near future.

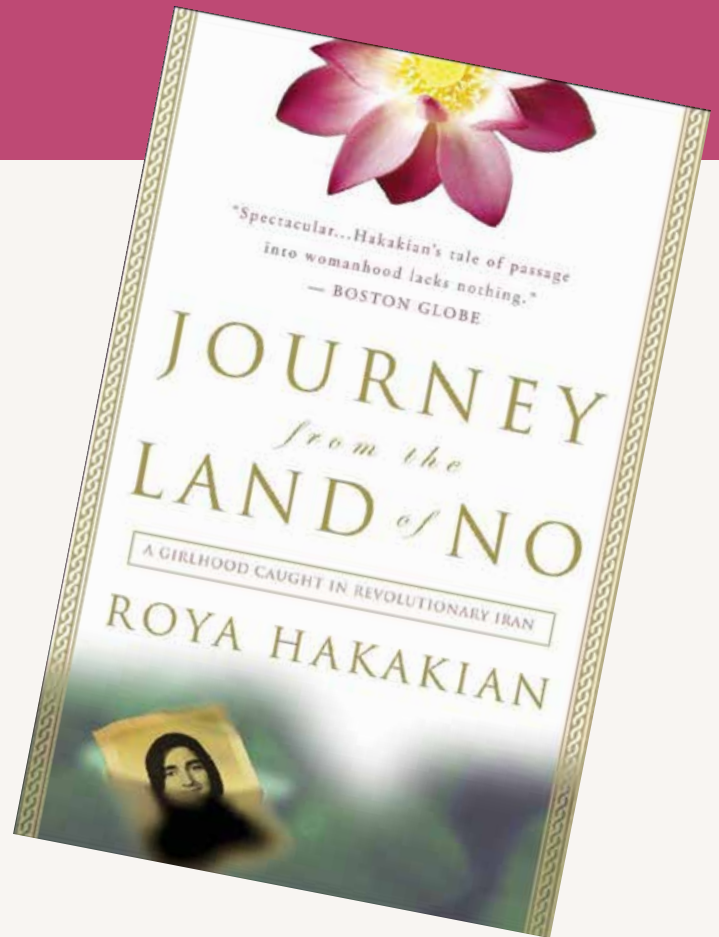


# A MODERN-DAY PILGRIM FROM THE LAND OF NO

By Roya Hakakain



The author then and now.



The event that marked every November of my childhood in Iran was the anniversary of the seizure of the U.S. embassy in Tehran. On the fourth of the month, school officials would summon us to dutifully cheer “Death to America.” Now, on the fourth Thursday of every November, I sit, within an hour’s drive from Plymouth Rock, at a meal to give thanks to the very country I was forced to denounce as a child—a modern-day pilgrim always contemplating my complex past.

An immigrant usually makes two kinds of journeys. The first is a physical one, a moment when the border is crossed, the boat arrives, the plane lands. But it is possible to make the crossing, yet never truly live in the new country, because one’s thoughts remain bound with all that is left behind. Everyone, including the immigrant herself, mistakes this arrival for the true arrival, which comes when she, despite still grieving the past losses, begins to discover the quotidian virtues of living here—the things that are mostly indiscernible by native-born Americans.

My physical arrival came some 30 years ago, at age 19. But my real arrival happened incrementally, over decades, with every encounter that pitted an aspect of my new life against that of the old.

Once, a boy I was dating in college grabbed my hand on a Coney Island beach. The gesture immediately struck me with fear: It was a sin in Iran for an unmarried couple to hold hands, something that the morality police closely monitored. In my panic, I withdrew

my hand and looked to see who might have followed us. (Habits formed under dictatorships are, like all habits, hard to shake.) But seeing that I was where laws do not regulate one’s love life, relief washed over me. I grabbed his hand and did not let go.

In 1988, a group of anti-war Iranian expatriates gathered at the United Nations to protest against the visit of President Khamenei, now Iran’s Supreme Leader, to the U.N. General Assembly. The police, who only ever showed up to quash protests in my former homeland, stood by till all of us voluntarily and peacefully dispersed. It was a lesson for all of us in how the civil liberties we dreamed of worked in reality.

Years later, after the publication of my [memoir](#), an interviewer asked if I hoped the book could become a bestseller. I sat in silence for a few moments taking in the magnitude of the distance I had come: my greatest literary dream had been to simply write what I truly thought without being arrested, imprisoned, or executed.

Jetlag, as it turns out, is more than a physical state. Those who have been displaced, especially from authoritarianism to Americanism, often experience similarly disorienting symptoms upon watching a car pass by with music blaring from its open windows. Or seeing a group of girls dancing in public. Or watching a couple kiss—*kiss!*—in a park. Or wearing a miniskirt or a sleeveless shirt. Or not covering one’s hair in public. Or covering the hair in public only to find that one’s choice of clothing is of no consequence to anyone.

*Continued on page 11*



This can be more bewildering to someone who has fled a joyless, theocratic state than trying to navigate the bureaucracy of applying for a social security card in a language not your own. More dizzying yet is to log onto the internet to find that no site is filtered. Or that every formerly banned book is only a mouse click away. Or that one is not required to hang a portrait of the “leader” in one’s office or store or place of worship. Or that there are no uniformed men on street corners to inspect the contents of the pedestrians’ bags just because they feel like doing so.

The disorientation ultimately subsides. In its stead comes the growing recognition of having come into a coveted inheritance. Long ago, it was an enamored visitor, Alexis de Tocqueville, through whose perspective native born Americans discovered the merits of their own democracy. More than 200 years later, it may well be for the immigrant once again to do more than merely work the farms, staff the emergency rooms, or design America’s new machines, but to help non-immigrant Americans recognize why this democracy matters still, not only to them, but to so many around the world.

Native-born Americans seem to think of democracy as a once-every-four-year exercise, which pops up on 9x12 lawn signs in their yards before an election. But they do not see its mark upon the smooth working of the traffic, say, where every car at the intersection stops at red. They have not driven in countries where a red light is just as red and yet, no driver misses the opportunity to run it, because the social contract between a people and their government—the trust that the laws are there to protect them—simply does not exist.

At the conclusion of every school year, most American children receive a book with their photos and names in it, honoring them

long before they have done anything worth committing to print. Perhaps most of their parents assume that the individuality of every child is celebrated elsewhere. But in most of the world most lives begin and end without much of a trace.

Non-immigrant Americans do not realize the beautiful design of the society that leads them toward living and planning for the future, as opposed to preoccupying them with martyrdom and the grudges of yore. In most other places, a tragedy like 9/11 would have been the occasion for a National Day of Mourning. In America, it is remembered as a National Day of Service.

America has many failings—our growing economic inequality perhaps among the gravest of them all. Such a failure is more than a mere flaw. It is an existential threat inflicted by ourselves upon our own democracy. Yet the first step to saving our democracy from this and other threats is to recognize the miracle of its existence in the first place. We cannot plot our way to a better future if we are not aware of our abundant riches, those for which countless others are fighting and dying elsewhere in the world, and for which immigrants still flock, ceaselessly, to our shores.

---

*Roya Hakakian is the author of A Beginner’s Guide to America: For the Immigrant and the Curious.*

*This article was first published in “Common Sense” on November 24, 2021, and is used here with permission from the author.*



The author and her father.

## *Peyk*

*Peyk* is Persian Cultural Center’s bi-monthly, bi-lingual publication organized for literary, cultural, and information purposes.

Please write to us. We welcome your suggestions and opinions.

website: [pccsd.org](http://pccsd.org)

Email: [pcc@pccsd.org](mailto:pcc@pccsd.org)

[www.peykmagazine.com](http://www.peykmagazine.com)



# The Saudi Takeover, Josh's Truth, and Leo's Seventh

By Danial Golforoush

Choosing to deny the existence of complexities and downfalls of what we love is part of human nature, much like ignoring parents' or loved ones' shortcomings and wrongdoings. Confronting the flaws and intricacies of what we love yields truth and the entirety of the experience of it. The world of football was just given the opportunity to—once again—battle its truth with a series of provocative events in the latter part of 2021, a year that has been everything and anything but normal.

## The Saudi Takeover: The New Billionaire on the Block

For Premier League fans, it almost felt like Newcastle United would never find its new owner. The back and forth between Mike Ashley (Newcastle's last owner), the Saudi Arabian Public Investment Fund (PIF), and the Premier League made it all feel like a weekly episode of Nana's favorite soap opera! But on Sunday, October 17, the team played its first match at home, St. James' Park, and began a new era under the new owners.

Per reports, the sovereign wealth fund chaired by Mohammed bin Salman, the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, became the majority shareholder at the club. It is fair to mention that sports fans are used to the acquisition of clubs by billionaires or sovereign wealth funds. Russian billionaire Roman Abramovich is the owner of Chelsea FC, while the Glazer family owns both Manchester United and the NFL's Tampa Bay Buccaneers. In 2008, Manchester City was purchased by the Abu Dhabi United Group, owned by Sheikh Mansour of the United Arab Emirates, which subsequently purchased more clubs under the City Football Group. Qatar Sports Investments bought Paris Saint-Germain F.C. and Red Bull, a company best known for their drinks giving you wings, building a profitable empire with the purchase of multiple clubs around the world in places like Germany, the U.S., and Austria.

All in all, football is not a stranger to the likes of PIFs. However, the Saudi takeover was more complicated and controversial than the ones before. Besides the usual questions of compromising the spirit of the sport, "sportswashing" has been a concern among the community. Saudi Arabia's questionable record on human rights has only led to the belief that the purchase of the club is mainly to become a positive PR-generating machine. Often the argument brought up during these acquisitions is that the money and attention surrounding the city will help with the growth of the community as well. Only time will tell if the acquisition of Newcastle will be a success on and off the field, but—for many—this is the continuation of football's obsession with commercialization and its indifference to the grassroots of the game, its fans, the community, and the essence of the game.



## Josh's Truth: "I'm a footballer, and I'm gay."

Football is not immune to toxic masculinity. In some ways, it is one of the biggest platforms that enables the perpetuation of it—from the strong man culture to lack of mental health resources for players to the lack of safe spaces for LGBTQ+ players. In late October 2021, Australian footballer Josh Cavallo became the first active football player to come out as gay. Cavallo made this announcement via a video on the official Twitter page of his team, The Adelaide United. "I'm a footballer, and I'm gay," he said, as a look of relief and a wave of emotions washed down his face. "Growing up, I always felt the need to hide myself because I was ashamed. Ashamed I would never be able to do what I love and be gay, hiding who I really am to pursue a dream I always wished for as a kid. All I want to do is play football and be treated equally." Cavallo continued by saying that he was living a "double life" before he made the news public. "I want to inspire and show people that it's OK to be yourself and play football. It's OK to be gay and to play football," he said. "Be yourself. You were meant to be yourself, not someone else."

Cavallo mentioned that throughout his time as a professional soccer player, he felt that by living his truth, he would be judged and neglected! Fortunately, a wave of positive and supportive messages came through from other professional players and teams—Zlatan Ibrahimović, Marcus Rashford, Manchester City, and Major League Soccer, to name a few. In the past, players chose to come out publicly only after retirement; both Thomas Hitzlsperger and Robbie Rogers chose this path after playing, demonstrating their fear of being rejected by their team and community for who they are. During an interview with the ¡Qué Golazo! podcast, Cavallo demonstrated the importance of such support for all: "It saddens me to think we could have the next Messi or Suarez on our hands, and if he's gay, he could turn away from the game."

*Continued on page 13*



Continued from page 12



### Leo's Seventh: Look! Up in the Sky! It's an Alien, It's a Magician, It's Lionel Messi!

It almost feels like déjà vu as Lionel Messi takes a record-extending seventh Golden Ball home to Paris. Golden Ball, or Ballon d'Or, is the sport's most prestigious individual prize, sought after by all the top players within the game. As ESPN's Gabriele Marcotti puts it, "If the sport is some kind of lingua franca, then this is the equivalent of talking about the weather, a natural conversation starter when you don't know what to say."

The award has become a popularity contest as more media and commercialization is introduced to the game. It's almost like the game is hungry for drama and attention. This is not to say that Messi did not deserve this award, but that there might be a better way to celebrate a team sport! Regardless, it is worth taking these moments in as Ronaldo and Messi have battled and split the riches between them in 11 of the last 12 Ballon d'Ors. The pair have only a few more years left in the tank until the likes of France's Mbappé and Norway's Haaland take over the conversation! The question will remain if any pair or any player can repeat what Messi has done here.

Regardless, it is worth celebrating these parts of the game for what they are as we battle with the questions of toxic masculinity and sportswashing in the game.



# Events in San Diego



#### JONG E FARHANGI

Friday, January 21, 2022, at 7 PM

Friday, February 18, 2022, at 7 PM

#### MOVIE AND DISCUSSION

Thursday, January 27, 2022, at 7:30 PM

Thursday, February 24, 2022, at 7:30 PM

#### POETRY NIGHT

Wednesday, January 19, 2022, at 7 PM

Wednesday, February 16, 2022, at 7 PM

#### THE ELECTRIC ÜD TRIO

Electric Üd Concert

Sunday, January 16, 2022

5:00 PM – 6:00 PM PST

Iranian-American Center

6790 Top Gun St. #7, San Diego, CA 92121

#### BEYOND VAN GOGH

AN IMMERSIVE EXPERIENCE

Del Mar Fairgrounds

2260 Jimmy Durante Blvd

Del Mar, CA 92014

Jan 14 - Mar 6, 2022

#### MARIELA CONTRERAS

SAN DIEGO VOCALIST CAPTURES THE MUSIC OF LIFE

Museum of Making Music

(760) 304-5840 Jan 15, 2022

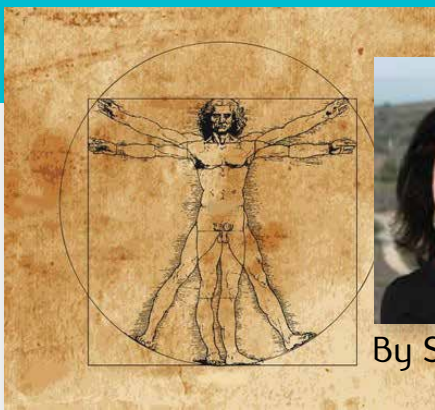
#### PURE PROJECT 6TH ANNIVERSARY PARTY

Pure Project Balboa Park

8582526143 Jan 29, 2022

پیک  
نشریه کانون فرهنگی ایرانیان

برای درج آگهی لطفاً با تلفن  
**858-552-9355**  
و یا [pcc@pccsd.org](mailto:pcc@pccsd.org)  
تماس حاصل فرمائید.  
email: [pcc@pccsd.org](mailto:pcc@pccsd.org)



By Sanaz Majd, MD



## Physical and Psychological Effects of COVID-19

Experiencing and surviving an acute COVID-19 illness is one hurdle, but persistent symptoms for months after have been another potentially overwhelming and unanticipated challenge for many patients. As time passes, we gain more data on people who have suffered from this nasty virus, with more and more people reporting some long-term effects lasting for up to months after initial infection.

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) has been collecting information and reporting on a growing population of people recovering from the SARS-CoV-2 infection (aka COVID-19) who have developed more persistent symptoms after an acute illness. These include quite a broad myriad of chronic symptoms, defined by the CDC as lasting greater than or equal to 3 months in duration after diagnosis and not explainable by other medical conditions. This has often been referred to as “long COVID.” More than a third of long COVID patients on average report more than one lingering symptom, and the symptoms may consist of physical and/or psychological symptoms.

### PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS

Fatigue and shortness of breath were among the COVID-19 symptoms most commonly reported, followed by chest tightness and cough. But other physiologic symptoms reported have included:

- Altered taste and/or smell
- Dizziness
- Body aches
- Hair loss
- Diarrhea
- Joint and muscle pain
- Headaches

In general, the milder the illness and the healthier the person, the shorter the duration of illness and course. Persistent symptoms seem to be more in common in those with underlying medical conditions, the elderly, those who developed serious complications (such as pneumonia or blood clots), those who required hospitalizations, and most especially those who were admitted to the Intensive Care Unit (ICU).

However, recent studies show that prolonged COVID-19 symptoms are not uncommon in healthy people who experience even a mild illness.

In one study, 410 healthy Swiss participants who suffered a mild illness were followed for 7-9 months after a COVID-19 diagnosis. Almost 40% reported residual symptoms. Fatigue was the most commonly reported symptom in about 20% of the participants, but about 16% reported loss of taste or smell, 11% reported shortness of breath, and 10% reported persistent headaches. (1)

In another study at the University of Washington, a total of 150 participants with mild COVID-19 illness, who had been treated as outpatients, were followed for about 6 months after initial infection. Approximately 18% reported 1-2 persistent symptoms, 14% reported at least 3 persistent symptoms, and 29% reported worsened quality of life at the 6 month mark. The symptoms that tended to linger the most were fatigue and loss of taste or smell. (3)

### PSYCHOLOGICAL SYMPTOMS

It is important to note that we are still learning about the psychological effects of COVID-19. Studies are currently very limited and in progress, and we need long-term data to adequately assess its chronic effects on the brain and mental health.

However, up to 36% of adults reportedly suffered from some type of psychological effect from the global pandemic itself, regardless of whether or not infection with the actual virus occurred. No doubt that the pandemic itself has produced a profound surge in mental health disorders, most especially affecting young people who remained in significant social isolation. And the potential neuropsychiatric effects of the virus itself to those who were infected adds even another layer of complexity.

We do have data that the COVID-19 virus itself seems to at least acutely affect the brain and may increase risk of neuropsychiatric symptoms all on its own, regardless of the psychosocial impact of the pandemic. In one trial of 214 hospitalized COVID-19 patients, acute central nervous system symptoms were present in up to 25% and included dizziness, headache, or delirium. (3) Another study of 841 COVID-19 hospitalized patients found almost 60% showed acute neuropsychiatric symptoms including anxiety, depression, delirium, dizziness, and insomnia. (4)

Although we need more data reflecting the long-term psychiatric effects of the COVID-19 virus, we do have some long-term data on other similar coronaviruses, such as with the SARS and MERS viruses, which do tend to behave similarly to the SARS-CoV-2 virus in many ways. In one systematic review of SARS and MERS that examined six studies of over 500 participants followed



between 3 to 46 months after recovery, the prevalence of anxiety disorders and depressive disorders were both approximately 15%, while PTSD prevalence was about 32%. (5) The SARS-CoV-2 virus, however, may very well have an arguably higher prevalence of chronic mental health illnesses than in SARS and MERS epidemics, given the much broader, graver social and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Future research will certainly shed more light on this.

The two groups of people especially at higher risk of developing psychological symptoms as a result of the infection itself include those who suffered from a more serious illness requiring hospitalization or ICU stays, in addition to those who have pre-existing mental health conditions, such as depression and anxiety. These two groups have particularly suffered during this past pandemic, no doubt.

Although the mental health symptoms reported are similar to those reported by hospitalized patients due to other illnesses in previous studies, termed “post intensive care unit symptoms” (PICS), the psychological symptoms do seem to be a little more prevalent in those who suffered from COVID-19 than from other similar illnesses.

Of all symptoms, anxiety has been overall the most commonly reported. But other psychological symptoms most often reported include:

- Insomnia - often termed “coronasomnia”
- Depression
- Post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- Memory changes
- Difficulty with concentration

In one large study of about 62,000 people who were diagnosed with COVID-19 and followed for 14 to 90 days thereafter by reviewing electronic health records, the overall incidence of any psychiatric diagnosis was reported at 18%. (6)

## HOW TO PREVENT LONG COVID

Of course, the best way to prevent long COVID is to prevent a COVID-19 infection in the first place. Besides the same recommendations that you have heard repeatedly, such as social distancing, proper hand washing, and masking, the most effective method hands down is to vaccinate.

Studies show that chronic COVID-19 symptoms are not only significantly less severe in both the acute phase (initial 4 weeks) and chronic phase (lasting 28 days or more), but are also significantly less common in those who are vaccinated, compared to those who are unvaccinated. Vaccinated people are also more likely to be asymptomatic when exposed to a mutation.

A recent study of 163 people who suffered from long COVID were followed for 8 months and reported either improvement or no change in symptoms after vaccination with Pfizer’s or AstraZeneca’s vaccine, but in no way were they exacerbated by the vaccine. (7)

The greatest impact you can make, not just for your own health, but for the health of your family, loved ones, and those around you (think elderly grandparents, co-workers on chemo, more vulnerable children, and those with underlying medical conditions and immune suppressed states) is to vaccinate yourselves and your loved ones. We are at war with a virus that transforms itself when given the opportunity to mutate in largely unvaccinated people at this time. If we all vaccinate, we can help prevent its mutation, transmission, and chronic sequelae.

More COVID-19 mental health resources can be found for patients at:

National Institute of Mental Health: <https://tinyurl.com/4fv5hprv>

Center for Disease Control: <https://tinyurl.com/bd254a7v>

---

*Sanaz Majd, MD is a board-certified Family Medicine physician and host of the Majd MD YouTube channel (@Majd MD), reviewing the latest medical topics and headlines. You can also follow her on Facebook or Instagram: @SMajdMD.*

## REFERENCES:

1. Antonelli M, Penfold RS, Merino J, et al. Risk factors and disease profile of post-vaccination SARS-CoV-2 infection in UK users of the COVID Symptom Study app: a prospective, community-based, nested, case-control study [published online ahead of print, 2021 Sep 1]. *Lancet Infect Dis.* 2021; S1473-3099(21)00460-6. doi:10.1016/S1473-3099(21)00460-6
2. Arnold DT, Milne A, Samms E, Stadon L, Maskell NA, Hamilton FW. Symptoms After COVID-19 Vaccination in Patients With Persistent Symptoms After Acute Infection: A Case Series. *Ann Intern Med.* 2021;174(9):1334-1336. doi:10.7326/M21-1976
3. Groff D, Sun A, Ssentongo AE, et al. Short-term and Long-term Rates of Postacute Sequelae of SARS-CoV-2 Infection: A Systematic Review. *JAMA Netw Open.* 2021;4(10):e2128568. Published 2021 Oct 1. doi:10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2021.28568
4. Taquet M, Dercon Q, Luciano S, Geddes JR, Husain M, Harrison PJ. Incidence, co-occurrence, and evolution of long-COVID features: A 6-month retrospective cohort study of 273,618 survivors of COVID-19. *PLoS Med.* 2021;18(9):e1003773. Published 2021 Sep 28. doi:10.1371/journal.pmed.1003773
5. Nehme M, Braillard O, Chappuis F, Courvoisier DS, Guessous I; CoviCare Study Team. Prevalence of Symptoms More Than Seven Months After Diagnosis of Symptomatic COVID-19 in an Outpatient Setting. *Ann Intern Med.* 2021;174(9):1252-1260. doi:10.7326/M21-0878
6. Logue JK, Franko NM, McCulloch DJ, et al. Sequelae in Adults at 6 Months After COVID-19 Infection [published correction appears in *JAMA Netw Open.* 2021 Mar 1;4(3):e214572]. *JAMA Netw Open.* 2021;4(2):e210830. Published 2021 Feb 1. doi:10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2021.0830
7. Taquet M, Geddes JR, Husain M, Luciano S, Harrison PJ. 6-month neurological and psychiatric outcomes in 236 379 survivors of COVID-19: a retrospective cohort study using electronic health records. *Lancet Psychiatry.* 2021;8(5):416-427. doi:10.1016/S2215-0366(21)00084-5
8. Mao L, Jin H, Wang M, et al. Neurologic Manifestations of Hospitalized Patients With Coronavirus Disease 2019 in Wuhan, China. *JAMA Neurol.* 2020;77(6):683-690. doi:10.1001/jamaneurol.2020.1127
9. Romero-Sánchez CM, Díaz-Maroto I, Fernández-Díaz E, et al. Neurologic manifestations in hospitalized patients with COVID-19: The ALBACOV registry. *Neurology.* 2020;95(8):e1060-e1070. doi:10.1212/WNL.0000000000009937
10. Rogers JP, Chesney E, Oliver D, et al. Psychiatric and neuropsychiatric presentations associated with severe coronavirus infections: a systematic review and meta-analysis with comparison to the COVID-19 pandemic. *Lancet Psychiatry.* 2020;7(7):611-627. doi:10.1016/S2215-0366(20)30203-0



By Mohammad Ahrar, PhD

# Micronutrients and Your Health: Iron, Zinc, and Iodine



## Introduction

The human body requires macronutrients as well as micronutrients. Macronutrients include proteins, fats, and carbohydrates. They have been discussed in *Peyk* issues 159, 162, and 165. Micronutrients include vitamins and minerals. Vitamins (except vitamin D) and minerals cannot be manufactured in the body and are therefore referred to as “essential micronutrients” and they must be provided in the diet. In this issue of *Peyk*, we will discuss a few essential microminerals including iron, zinc, and iodine.

## Iron

**Major roles** Iron is a mineral that is essential for formation of hemoglobin in red blood cells. Each hemoglobin contains 4 iron atoms and each atom of iron can carry one oxygen molecule. There are millions of molecules of hemoglobin in just one red blood cell, and about 5.4 million red blood cells in just 1 cubic millimeter (the size of a pinhead). The function of red blood cells depends on iron; without it, oxygen cannot be carried to the tissues of the body, and human life depends on oxygen.

**Do you get enough iron?** According to the World Health Organization, iron deficiency is the most common form of micronutrient malnutrition globally. It is more common in women than men. Children and pregnant women are especially vulnerable to the consequences of iron deficiency. In humans, iron deficiency is a leading cause of anemia in which not enough oxygen can be carried to the tissues or organs. Medical studies show that severe anemia during pregnancy can result in poor fetal growth, preterm birth, low birth weight, and increased risk of death for the mother and the baby.

**Food sources** Iron is commonly found in animal products such as red meat (beef, pork, lamb, goat, or venison), seafood, poultry (chicken or turkey), and eggs. Iron can also be provided from non-animal sources, including tofu, beans, lentils, and dark green leafy vegetables. Studies show that iron from plant sources is less easily absorbed by the body than iron from animal sources. Standard iron-fortified infant formulas contain enough iron to support a growing child's needs. It is always a good idea to consult with a child's pediatrician before introducing iron-fortified foods because some children may need more iron than others or some may be allergic to some foods containing iron.

**What foods affect absorption of iron?** Reports show that when foods containing iron are paired with foods high in vitamin C—

such as citrus, berries, tomatoes, broccoli, cabbage, and dark green leafy vegetables—the absorption of iron in the digestive system will improve. On the other hand, the presence of compounds such as phytates, saponins, lectins, and tannins in some foods—such as raw beans, lentils, peas, soybeans, and peanuts—can interfere with normal absorption of iron and other micronutrients. When these foods are soaked in water or cooked (or, in the case of peanuts, when roasted), their micronutrient contents will be absorbed more efficiently.

## Zinc

**Zinc's role in the body** Zinc is an essential trace element necessary for human health and growth, necessary for activating many enzymes that carry out vital chemical reactions in the cells. It is a major player in the formation of DNA and protein synthesis, healing of damaged tissues, and growth of cells. Zinc is also an essential element for supporting the immune system and helps in resisting some infectious diseases. Because most cells in the body continuously grow and multiply, adequate zinc is required during times of rapid growth, especially during childhood, adolescence, and pregnancy.

**Is zinc deficiency common?** Zinc deficiency is rare and is seen mostly in people who do not absorb zinc well due to digestive disorders such as inflammatory bowel diseases or who have undergone gastrointestinal surgery. People with chronic liver or kidney disease or who have severe burns and infections are also at risk. Pregnant women require more zinc for the fetus and during lactation. Vegetarians/vegans may also consider zinc supplements in their diet because zinc from plant food sources has a lower bioavailability than in foods from animal sources. Some chemicals such as lectins, found in raw legumes (beans, peanuts, soybeans) and raw whole grains, can interfere with the absorption of zinc. In rare cases, loss of taste or smell, poor appetite, delayed wound healing, and abnormal hair loss could be signs of zinc deficiency. Because illnesses and abnormalities can have similar symptoms, please talk to your doctor if you see any of these symptoms before changing your diet.

**Is a zinc supplement necessary?** When a variety of food is included in the daily diet, the body usually gets enough zinc, and there is no need for supplements. Because micronutrients are required by the body in very small amounts, the use of any supplement, including zinc, should be under the supervision of your doctor.





**What are good sources of zinc?** Red meat, poultry (dark meat), fish, and fish products are good animal sources of zinc. Beans, nuts, and whole-grain cereals are good plant sources of zinc. Fortified breakfast cereals and milk can also provide adequate zinc per serving. Although legumes and whole grains are good sources of zinc, if consumed in raw form, the presence of some phytates can bind to the zinc, lowering its absorption.

**Zinc toxicity** Although zinc has many health benefits, consuming too much of it can be harmful mainly because the body cannot store excess zinc. According to medical reports, excess zinc intake can have adverse effects and can cause nausea and vomiting, loss of appetite, abdominal pain, headaches, and diarrhea. Medical professionals at the Harvard School of Health recommend against taking supplemental zinc unless it is known that the diet is low in zinc or its deficiency is confirmed. Toxicity occurs almost exclusively from zinc supplements, but not from natural foods.

**Caution** Use of an oral supplementation of zinc can interfere with the effectiveness of some antibiotics, some blood pressure medications can increase the amount of zinc lost in urine, and excess zinc can interfere with the absorption of iron and copper. For these reasons, you should speak with your doctor or health care professional before you start, stop, or change your diet, and before using a zinc supplement.

## Iodine

Iodine is an essential trace mineral that naturally occurs in the earth's soil. It is also known as iodide which is the most common form in nature. Like many other trace minerals, the human body cannot produce iodine, which is why it is important to include iodine-rich foods in the diet. When iodine is consumed in the daily diet, it is quickly and almost completely absorbed in the gastrointestinal tract and picked up by the thyroid gland. The thyroid gland concentrates iodine in appropriate amounts for thyroid hormone synthesis; most of the remaining amount is excreted in the urine.

**What is iodine good for?** Iodine plays a vital role in thyroid gland health and production of thyroid hormones. Thyroxine is referred to as tetraiodothyronine (T4) which contains four iodine molecules. Triiodothyronine (T3) contains three iodine molecules. T4 is the major form of thyroid hormone in the blood, but T3 is

much more potent—both forms influence every cell and tissue in the body. Thyroid hormones regulate many important biochemical reactions in the cells, including protein synthesis, enzymatic activity, production of energy and metabolic activity, and physical and mental development. They are also important for proper skeletal and central nervous system development in fetuses and infants.

Thyroid hormones regulate the rate at which calories are burned, affecting weight loss or weight gain. Because the thyroid hormones work at the DNA level in the cells, and iodine is essential for thyroid hormones, an iodine deficiency can adversely affect the functions of all bodily organs.

**Sources of iodine** Because the iodine content in soil varies, the iodine content of crops in different regions can also vary. In the early 1900s, salt iodization programs were implemented in many countries, including the U.S. Iodized salt is now commonly used as a good source of iodine. Food sources of iodine include fish, oysters, and other seafood, plus seaweed like kelp, which is one of the most common sources of iodine. Fruits and vegetables are not good sources of iodine; the amounts they contain are affected by the iodide content of the soil in which they grow, fertilizer use, and irrigation practices. This variability in turn affects the iodine content of meat and animal products because of its impact on the iodine content of foods that the animals consume. Dairy products contain iodine; amounts vary by whether the cows received iodine feed supplements and additives. Iodine is also present in human breast milk and infant formulas. Plant-based beverages, such as soy and almond beverages, contain relatively small amounts of iodine.

**Iodine deficiency** Because iodine is essential for the thyroid gland to produce hormones, its deficiency will cause imbalance in thyroid hormones, a medical issue.

## Summary

Micronutrients such as iron, zinc, and iodine are necessary for human health. Iron is essential for the formation of hemoglobin in red blood cells to carry oxygen to all organs of the body. Zinc supports the immune system and is a major player in the formation of DNA, which is essential for protein synthesis and healing damaged tissues. Iodine plays a vital role in thyroid gland health and production of thyroid hormones such as thyroxine which is essential for production of energy in the cells.

## Selected references

<https://www.health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/micronutrients-have-major-impact-on-health>  
<https://www.cdc.gov/nutrition/micronutrient-malnutrition/index.html>  
<https://www.mayoclinic.org/drugs-supplements-zinc/art-20366112>  
<https://www.webmd.com/vitamins/ai/ingredientmono-982/zinc>  
<https://ods.od.nih.gov/factsheets/Iodine-Consumer/>  
<https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/320891>

# An Immigration Story: Esteve, A Turkish Man

Reza Khabazian

Leaving your homeland and residing in another - with a totally new culture, language and set of laws and regulations - is very challenging and requires a lot of adaptation that, in most cases, is also very frustrating.

But, looking back at those challenges many years later makes some of them look funny, some amazing, and some, of course, sad. The truth is, no matter how we feel about them, the challenges are, for sure, part of the history of immigration that needs to be documented for use by our grandchildren or simply by historians to picture the hardship that first generation Iranians had to go through to meet those challenges.

The main purpose of this column is to encourage our readers to start telling their stories so we can present a diverse documentary. The first of this series--“How I Met A Dime”--was published in the May-June 2021 issue of *Peyk*. This is the fifth part of Mr. Khabazian’s story.



As a means to retaliate against hostage taking, President Jimmy Carter came up with some executive orders that made the life of all Iranian students more problematic than before. One executive order authorized immigration officers to come to all colleges and universities to check the visa status of all Iranians. Another executive order made it almost impossible for any financial transaction with Iran, affecting the financial situation of all Iranian students. As a side effect of these orders, the American public—which had previously been on the sidelines—suddenly became vigilant about visa requirements, such as prohibiting work for students and so on.

In general terms, it was not easy anymore to express your identity, such as your name or your real national origin. Ali became Al, Reza became Ray, Iran became Persia, and—more painful than all—speaking Farsi in public became a big No No.

It is always amazing to witness that, in the world of politics, the same people who are liked and respected all of a sudden become unwanted and disrespected. The hostage crisis era was not pleasant to be in or even, now, to remember it. But the new generation of Iranians ought to know how the first generation lived under heavy stress so subsequent generations can flourish and enjoy living in America.

\*\*\*

The hostage crisis was ongoing but my schoolwork, good or bad, ended in May 1980 and I received my master’s degree in plant science. The time arrived to either apply for my PhD degree or look for a job related to my expertise. But then I received a letter from Texas A&M University that read:

“We are not accepting applications from Iranian students at this time.”

Looking for work seemed to be the only remaining option. Honestly, I did not have any confidence to apply to major companies in Corpus Christi, mainly due to the general attitude against Iranian

nationals. Therefore, finding a job in a small nursery operation came as welcome news.

It was in this firm that—luckily—I met “Chris,” a salesperson working with the largest nursery in town. When she learned about my degree and plant knowledge, she encouraged me to see her on my day off so she could introduce me to the owners of this family-operated business, and I did.

“Mrs. T” was a very well-groomed lady in her late fifties who, without a doubt, knew very well how to dress with the utmost art of color coordination. Chris introduced me and left the room. Mrs T looked at me with curiosity and said:

*“Chris spoke very highly about you,”* while looking at me with obvious curiosity, and then she continued: *“We always have room for highly educated people to be part of our team. She said that you received your master’s degree. Is that right?”*

*“Yes, Ma’am. It is.”*

*“Excellent, when do you want to start?”* she asked.

*“From the beginning of the month so I can have enough time to give my notice to my current employer.”*

*“Of course! So, I will see you at 8 a.m. on the first of the month here in my office.”*

*That was it?* I thought with utmost happy feelings. *Then why I was so afraid of applying for major companies? Maybe I had assumed what Iran would have done if the tables were turned and America had taken Iranian hostages—I couldn’t imagine that Iranian companies would have willingly employed Americans.*





As I was leaving her office, Mrs T paused me for a second:

*"Could you please bring your degree or transcript when we meet."*

"Sure," I said, as I was exiting her office.

And then, on the first day of the next month, I was standing in front of her office, ready to start my real job.

When Mrs. T saw me, she left her desk and asked me to follow her to the main nursery so she could introduce me to her son, "T Junior." As I was following her, she stopped, looked at me directly, and asked the question that I was always afraid of:

*"Where are you from, can I ask?"*

*"From Iran,"* I answered hesitantly.

*"Humm mm, I suspected that,"* she sighed, *"why don't you stay here and let me talk to my son."*

The entire world was crumbling over my head. *This is the end of it, I thought, I can not get a decent job as long as this crisis is ongoing.*

Not long later Mrs. T came back with her son, Mr. T Junior, a tall, well-built, handsome Texas Man wearing boots and a cowboy hat. He offered me a handshake and did not waste a moment to express his feelings:

*"Look, Mr. Khabazian, I am 35 years old, married, and have two little dolls as my daughters that I love dearly. I never ever imagined that one day an Iranian national would be my employee. If our government needs me and orders me, I wouldn't hesitate to join the army, grab a rifle, and help to free our people. My mom has told me about your expertise and believe me, we always welcome people who are knowledgeable but TODAY, you have put me in an awkward position and I don't know what to tell you."*

As he finished his statement, he crossed his arms over his chest and kept looking between me and his mom.

I felt awful and was ready to leave when I thought to myself: *I can easily leave and look for a less desirable job, but I would blame myself if I don't express my true feelings. They won't hire me. What do I have to lose?*

I looked at them directly and said:

*"Mr. T, Mrs. T! I really appreciate your honesty and very clear message. I am very sorry that I did not come to America in a better time, and I am also sorry to put you in this awkward situation. I understand you and sympathize with you perfectly. Believe it or not, I also care for the safe release of hostages, too. Before I go, I would like to take a couple of minutes of your time and say something before my departure. I, like you, are married and have a little son that I love dearly and want the best for him. If the situation of my homeland was normal like a couple of years ago, I could go back and the least position I could have was being a teacher in the school of Agriculture that pays a high salary. The reason I refrain from returning is my lack of support and any relationship with the current regime. I am certain that all the hostages will be released sooner or later, but what about the future of my only child or the release of 36 million other people?"*

As I was ready to pause and say goodbye, I noticed that Mr. T's arms were no longer on his chest, but were now hanging at his sides. He looked at his mom, turned to me, and—without hesitation—brought his hand forward, shook my hand, and said:

*"Welcome to our company."*

I saw a smooth feeling of relief on Mrs. T's face while I was forcing myself not to cry. A cry of joy or a cry of sorrow or both!

*"Now, that you are on our team, we should talk about two other obstacles. First, we have to give you an American name. What do you like to be called?"*

"Ray," I said.

*"No... please... we have three Rays here and we are already confused. Pick another name."*

I have no idea where my mind was and what I was thinking when I came up with this funny name that even I had a hard time pronouncing!!

*"Esteeve."*

*"That's fine,"* said Mr. T Junior. *"What about your nationality?? We can't have that around here. Not with our customers, not with our other employees, and especially not with my dad, T Senior."*

*"How about Turkey!?"* I cried.

And that is how, in a short few minutes, I lost my identity and a new man was born.

Esteeve, a Turkish Immigrant.



activity of the society. The false reconstruction era narrative, later dramatized in the movie *Birth of a Nation* (watch the Netflix documentary *13th* with your family if you have not), was used to justify Jim Crow segregation that turned back the achievements of the reconstruction era.

This last set of arguments against CRT is also used in a more indirect fashion by many writers and academicians who acknowledge that many founding fathers owned enslaved people, yet the picture is presented by using such terms as “complicated” or “contradictory.” These terms are used to somehow reduce the severity of injustices committed. Jefferson is again a prime example because in words he opposed slavery, while in action he was for it. A prime example of such writers is Pulitzer Prize winner Jon Meacham who is celebrated in the liberal political circles including President Biden. In Meacham’s biography of Jefferson, titled *The Art of Power*, the author almost completely ignores what Jefferson said about black people. Meacham fails to mention that, in his book *Notes On the State of Virginia*, Jefferson characterizes blacks as intellectually inferior and lacking artistic and craftsmanship abilities. This is, of course, when Jefferson owned enslaved black artisans who were highly talented in many crafts required for running Jefferson’s plantation at Monticello near Charlottesville, Virginia. Of course, Meacham also forgets to mention that Jefferson called Native Americans “savages” in his U.S. Declaration of Independence and the fact that our third president’s racist ideas were not confined to black people. The fact that I am able to write the truth about historical figures like Jefferson is directly related to CRT and its critical analysis of history. CRT as a movement has also caused changes in Monticello regarding showing the racist side of Jefferson’s legacy, changes that were perhaps unimaginable in my first visit to Jefferson’s residence less than 20 years ago. Now, many young proponents of a critical view of U.S. history have dedicated part of Monticello to Sally Hemmings, the enslaved mother of five to seven of Jefferson’s children. Sally’s windowless private room was discovered to be hidden behind a public restroom and next to Jefferson’s own room to facilitate easy and private access. It has now been reconstructed and her memory is now being honored for the Monticello visitors.

### Practical Impact and CRT Misrepresentation

It is true that one aspect of CRT is activism towards remediation of disparities caused by centuries of racism, from slavery to Jim Crow segregation to mass incarceration. Unlike what is being publicized by Fox News, CRT is not about affirmative action. Of course, affirmative action is one of the accomplishments of the racial justice movement that has resulted in the emergence of a black middle class and black academia. Without affirmative action, the percentage of representation of blacks and those from other communities of color in colleges and universities, particularly top tier higher education institutions, would diminish significantly. In fact, affirmative action has contributed to the emergence of many racial justice thinkers who have made their mark on the racial justice movements in the last forty years; yet, that is not what CRT is about.

As early as 1978, when a white man by the name of Allan P. Bakke took his lawsuit of “reverse discrimination” for being denied acceptance to medical school in California all the way to the Supreme Court and won, misrepresentation of CRT has been

used by conservative circles to fight practical remediations of racial disparities such as affirmative action in education. Even today, FOX News is spearheading attacks against CRT as being equivalent to affirmative action to turn back its impact. Regardless of what we think about CRT in present day America, racial disparities are so wide and so deep that they require an ongoing effort to address them for the foreseeable future, efforts that need to go far beyond affirmative action if we are truly committed to realization of racial justice.

CRT talks about a critical look at past and present power structures and ways for human beings to liberate themselves from those aspects of such structures that curtail their freedom in any way. A critical look at history and continuation of the past unjust power structures in new forms today is also part of CRT. Giving voice to marginalized communities of the present day society and historical characters who were hidden behind the shadows of powerful characters such as Sally Hemmings is yet another possible outcome of taking a critical look at U.S. history.

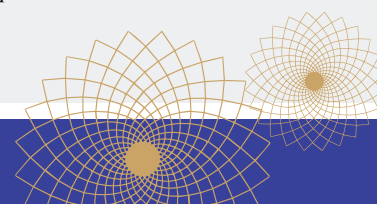
### Ending note

Celebrating Sally Hemmings’ legacy at Monticello is a clear example that CRT does not mean that we should be ashamed of U.S. history. It teaches us that there are many characters and movements in U.S. history that we could celebrate, honor, and learn from. It encourages us to be critical of the mainstream and “official” view of our history in this country. Perhaps we have been solely honoring and celebrating people in power and their oppressor power structures instead of the people and movements who challenged them. Perhaps the courage to inquire and uncover historical facts allows us to honor and celebrate those who truly deserve our recognition. Perhaps we could trust ourselves and future generations that a critical view of our history will allow us to learn the best historical lessons and use them as the guiding light for our future. Critics of CRT call it “revisionist” as if revising our views of our history is a bad thing. Perhaps, and only if we are committed to having healthy and thriving communities in this country, that kind of critical and factual revision is a good thing to keep alive forever.

### References:

- 1- Afsar, Hooshyar, “Intersectionality and Our Community,” *Peyk* #195, September 2021. Available at: <http://peykmagazine.com/en/2021/09/10/intersectionality-and-our-community/>
- 2- Delgado, Richard; Stefancic, Jean (2017). *Critical race theory: an introduction* (3rd ed.). New York University Press. ISBN 978-1-4798-0276-0.
- 3- Foner, Eric (2019) xxii-xxiv. *The Second Founding: How The Civil War and Reconstruction Remade The Constitution* (1st ed.). W.W.Norton & Company. ISBN 9780393652574.

*Hooshyar Afsar is one of the founders of Racism Awareness Project (RAP), an educational program on the history of and present-day racism in the United States and its impact on the Iranian American Community. RAP has had a variety of educational forums across the United States. Mr. Afsar has written several articles and book reviews on the topic for Peyk and other publications. He can be reached at hoosh.afsar@rapusa.org.*









**Rowan Kian Sadr** took his time and finally arrived on May 8, 2021, at 8 pounds, 15 ounces, to his grateful and exhausted parents, Ideen Sadr and Alyssa Earley, in San Francisco. Juju (his shortened nickname from “Jujeh”) is now 7 months old and enjoys trying food, loves all kinds of music, “talking” and laughing, and trying to keep up with his cousin Mika.



**Mika (Joon) Sadr** was born January 24, 2021, 17 minutes before her due date, disproving all allegations that Persians are always late. She has hated milk from birth, but we believe she was born this way to allow her dad to maintain his 10 hour sleep schedule. Her tan skin comes from her love of carrots and her blue eyes have yet to change, fingers crossed. We think her first word will be Ziba, the name of her pet dog,

who is constantly being yelled at for chewing up baby toys. She plans to start Persian school as soon as possible so she can teach her mom to become fluent in Farsi. In the meantime, she sees her grandparents twice weekly for immersion into the culture and she is the light of their hearts.



**Radin Yousefi** was born on November 20, 2021, to Omid and Shabnam Yousefi.



**Mila Sanchez** was born on September 3, 2021, at 6 pounds, 10 ounces, to Bita Mohammady and Mikael Sanchez. She has already grown so much in the past three months and has been such a happy baby. She enjoys looking around at her surroundings, meeting new people, and spending time with family.



It is with great pleasure to announce that **Mariam Gheissari** and **Shervin Afrashteh** will be holding their marriage ceremony this February 2022 in San Diego. Mariam and Shervin met during their undergraduate studies at UC Irvine and went on to pursue medicine and dentistry, respectively. Growing up in San Diego, Mariam was a long-time student at ISSD and an active member of the Persian Cultural Center.



Hamid and Parisa Rafizadeh are proud to announce the marriage of their daughter **Nikta Rafizadeh** to **Michael Young** on May 8th, 2021, at the Rancho Bernardo Inn. The couple met as undergraduates at San Diego State University and now reside in Orange County. Nikta is a proud alumna of ISSD.



**Dr. Mahmood Mahdavi**—a “legend,” according to *Peyk*’s Shahri Estakhry—has retired. In honor of Dr. Mahdavi’s milestone, Mrs. Estakhry shares the following: “Soon after I moved to San Diego, I was referred to Dr. Mahdavi, ENT specialist. This was in 1987. For 34 years, he not only was my ENT specialist, but also a good friend, a guide to introducing me to the best specialists at Scripps, as well as a supporter of different aspects of need for our community.

Dr. Mahdavi completed medical school at Tehran University in 1967 and completed his American Board of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery in 1976. He completed his internship in 1973 and did his residency in 1976 at the University of Chicago’s hospitals and clinics.

After moving to San Diego with his family in 1985, Dr. Mahdavi began his practice part time at Mission Bay Hospital and after a year opened his office at Scripps Memorial Hospital.

For as long as I remember, Dr. Mahdavi and his family have supported our community organizations and programs. He is one of the founders of the Iranian-American Scholarship Fund and a member of Persian Cultural Center, as well as other organizations. It is time for us as a community to thank him profoundly for his services and making us proud of the caliber of humanity he has shown. We wish him a happy retirement and many, many years of enjoyment ahead.”





**Ali Pirouzian**, Registered Civil Engineer and Program Manager for Construction Engineering and Materials Lab Section in County of San Diego, Department of Public Works, received a prestigious “Distinguished Owner Honoree Award” from the Construction Management Association of America (CMAA) for the year 2021 among five other Agencies’ Managers.

The CMAA is an industry association dedicated to the practice of professional construction management. CMAA represents more than 16,000 members, including federal/state/local government and private sector owners, construction consultants, technology suppliers, academia, and legal organizations all with a common goal: to improve our nation’s infrastructure.



**Radin Rahimzadeh**, an alumna of ISSD, cofounded Fore Transit to find sustainable ways to move goods and people. She co-invented patent-pending aerodynamic kits with her co-founder that improve truck efficiency by up to 21%. Fore Transit also has an IoT device to track air-quality metrics of vehicles in its network. It has raised \$250,000 and expects revenue of \$2 million in 2022.

*Source:*

<https://www.forbes.com/30-under-30/2022/manufacturing-industry?profile=radin-rahimzadeh>



**Ranin Kazemi**, Associate Professor of History at SDSU, was selected as the new Director of the International Business (IB) Program. According to SDSU’s announcement: “With broad international and interdisciplinary experience, Professor Kazemi is superbly qualified to direct IB and to lead the program into the next phase of its growth. His research focuses on the histories of trade, capitalism, and international business, including a project on British

tobacco interests and nationalist protest in nineteenth-century Iran. He is fluent or conversant in multiple languages, including Persian, English, Arabic, Turkish, French, Urdu, Kurdish, and Azeri Turkish.” Professor Kazemi shared this statement about his new role: “I am delighted to join a wonderful team of colleagues who have made International Business one of the top-ranking programs in the country. The program allows students to gain global opportunities, cultural awareness, and language appreciation, while also preparing them for a diverse workforce.” For the full announcement, see:

<https://cal.sdsu.edu/our-faculty/stories/new-ib-director>



Public Announcement

## SDG&E RESIDENTIAL CONTENT PACKAGE DECEMBER 2021

### END THE CALL. END THE SCAM.

Did you know that over 800 utility scams were reported to SDG&E over the past two years with losses totaling more than half a million dollars?! The number of scams has increased since the pandemic started. Scammers impersonate SDG&E employees and target vulnerable SDG&E customers facing financial difficulties and take advantage of their reliance on essential services.

Here are some tips on how to recognize common scam tactics:

Scammers often threaten immediate service disconnections if a customer does not pay immediately. SDG&E will never contact customers to tell them they must pay now or risk immediate disconnection. The company works with customers on payment plans if they are struggling to pay past due balances and offers a variety of assistance programs. Visit [sdge.com/assistance](https://sdge.com/assistance) to learn more about these programs.

Scammers often demand payment with cryptocurrency (such as Bitcoin), prepaid cards (such as Green Dot MoneyPak) or via third-party payment apps like Venmo or Zelle. SDG&E does not use these payment methods. SDG&E customers may receive communications to pay their bill online via their MyAccount at [myaccount.sdge.com](https://myaccount.sdge.com) or the Billmatrix system, or to call their automated pay-by-phone option at 1-800-411-7343.

You can guard against fraud using these tips:

Only provide financial information over the phone if you made the call.

Make sure whoever is on the other line can verify they are with SDG&E or can verify your account information. If you are unsure, hang up and contact SDG&E directly. Every SDG&E employee on company business is required to carry a photo ID badge. If you encounter someone claiming to be an SDG&E employee, request to see his/her ID badge or call SDG&E at 1-800-411-7343.

If you want to verify information about your account, including bills and payments, log in to your MyAccount portal at [myaccount.sdge.com](https://myaccount.sdge.com) or use the convenient SDG&E mobile app. Learn more about the app at [sdge.com/mobileapp](https://sdge.com/mobileapp).

Victims of utility scams are urged to call SDG&E immediately at 1-800-411-7343 to report it. Additional tips to avoid becoming a victim of utility scams can be found at [sdge.com/avoid-scams](https://sdge.com/avoid-scams).