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By: Shahri Estakhry

The Scent of Orange Blossoms

The scent of orange blossoms brings the news of Spring. Earth rejuvenates and so will I. This universal homeland of all, our mother earth, steps out of the dormancy of winter and begins to shake itself out of the frozen or dried up grounds and perks up, knowing it is time for a “new day”. It will welcome all of its creatures and plants to a new life with the birth of a “new day”, with the birth of Norouz/Nowruz/Norooz.

Every year at this time I write with such joy about our new year and try to tell a story of my childhood days with my family back home and the memories of celebration of this meaningful and beautiful feast. Now I have a dilemma as to what to write about, with all that is happening out there, be it warfronts, the crazy acts of teen idols such as Justin Whatever, or the death of famous Hollywood icons due to drugs, all of which guide much of our younger generation’s daily lives. A recent study that shows one third of this country’s population are either in poverty or homeless, or is on the verge of becoming so. What is it that I want to write about and why?

Every radio/TV station begins its hourly daily news with sensational negative news in order to boost ratings and claim audience superiority. If there is any good news, it is lost in the action and presentation of the opening drama. What in the world gives, what is going on? This America is by far different than what I remember as a teenager arriving here. Who benefits in this whirlwind of affairs and who will suffer? I worry mostly about the future of our children. We can’t just sweep these problems under the rug and pretend they don’t exist or will not affect so many of us as new immigrants to this country. I will come back to these thoughts soon. But for now it is Norouz, a tradition celebrated by millions of people, generation after generation throughout the world. Without all we need rejuvenation of soul and spirit in our lives. The older I grow the more I begin to miss these special times with my family all around me. I miss being awakened at some crazy hour of the night to be around the Haftseen with all family members, for the arrival of the minute to second of the Spring Equinox- Norouz. I miss the wishes and getting Eidee (present) from my parents. I miss putting on new clothes and visiting our family elders to pay our respects and receive more Eidee. I miss my perfect and unequal childhood days!

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My birthplace Shiraz is the Norouz queen of cities. Millions descend upon it during the New Year holidays to enjoy Spring rose gardens in full bloom, and to visit the mausoleum of great poets such as Hafez and Sadii, well known for the beauty of their poems and about Spring. One gets drunken lost with the fresh aroma of almond, cherry, peach and of course orange blossoms. It is “the spot” to enjoy the change of seasons and see nature in full bloom.

Now, few continents away we will also spread our Haftseen cloth, place on it the traditional items. We will wear new clothes and some of us will visit each other and give Eidee to the younger members of our community, wishing all prosperity and happiness throughout the coming year. We will wish each other Good Thoughts, Good Words and Good Deeds.

Happy New Year- Norouz to all.

Oh, but how I long for the scent of the orange blossoms of my Shiraz!
The board of directors had their regular monthly meetings on January 8th and February 5th as usual and we are excited about a number of fun events and programs that we have in store for you! We have been working hard on PCC and ISSD events which we will lay out for you in this Peyk update.

The last of renovations are underway with the addition of bathrooms and upgrade of electrical systems. The stage has been built and ready for future performances and lectures. We are ready to commence the use of our community building very shortly as well as ready to have the building available for gatherings and celebrations. A facilities contract and regulations/fees are now available to provide guidelines about the use of our fabulous new cultural center.

First and foremost we have planned a fabulous OPEN HOUSE for all our members and friends to come celebrate the new building with us and our community. The Board members will be working hard to host you on:

- **SATURDAY & SUNDAY – APRIL 5 and 6 from 3 to 6 PM**
  
  OPEN HOUSE. There will be light refreshments and plenty of fun!

We are so pleased and excited to announce that our Arts and Culture Committee has initiated a MOVIE CLUB which will commence in MARCH 2nd and is scheduled for monthly events on the **FIRST SUNDAY OF EACH MONTH** from 6 to 9 PM at the CENTER.

- Also in the works are ART SHOW and POETRY NIGHTS (Shabe-Sher)

ISSD events are coming up with relation to our NOWRUZ celebrations; we will have sabzeh–Kari at Iranian-American Center on **SUNDAY MARCH 9th** and then the Nowruz student performances on March 16, 2014.

This year we have a wonderful young volunteer, himself a former ISSD student who has come back to the school to provide each kid with a T-shirt with their FARSI name written on it. Each class has been counted and sized for their shirts and each student will have a fabulous turquoise shirt with his/her name on it. Adults may also order these shirts and will be able to go Persian style for $20 a shirt. One of our continual challenges for KANOON is the need to apply for funds and GRANTS to be able to work for our community; we are URGING all readers, members and friends to help us locate a good GRANT WRITER and help us gain access to the large number of funds out there for non-profit groups such as ourselves. Please contact the PCC office with any information you may have about this topic.

- **Charshanbehsoori** at NTC (like last year, joint venture with House of Iran & AIAP...Tuesday MARCH 18, after 6 PM.
- **NOWRUZ PARTY with Black Cats** – HYATT HOTEL - MARCH 22/Saturday @ $120 member & non-member $140 (No children under five).
- **Sizdah-Bedar**, like previous years, joint venture with House of Iran & AIAP is **MARCH 30, 2014**.

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**Persian Cultural Center Presents**

**Movie Nights, Screening & Discussion**

**Every first Sunday of the month at Iranian-American Center**

**The Runner** (1985)

A film by Amir Naderi

94 minutes

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**Annual Nowruz Celebration Featuring**

**BLACK CATS**

Persian Dance Academy & DJ Julius

Dinner by Amir Catering
We would like to thank all of you who have contributed to the building fund so far; your vision and generosity will serve generations of Iranian-Americans and San Diegans in the future.

Add yours or a loved one’s name to this list.

Supporter Tier 1 (up to $499)

- Shirin Abbaspour
- Arya & Darya Abolmaali
- Halleh & Stewart Akbarma/Iester
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Supporter Tier 2 ($500-$999)

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- Kourosh, Sara & Nava Taghavi
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- Khojasteh Turner
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- Afshar Family
- Pousy Afshar
- Hooshang and Farhan Akbarian
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- Farshid and Traycy Dini
- Abdolrahmood & Sakineh Douraghizadeh
- Aghdas & Fakrieh Douraghizadeh
- Sina & Nahid Emami
- Ali Fakhimi
- Ali & Anna Gheissari
- Ali Fakhimi

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- Vahe Akashian, RASHF Iran 1927-2010
- Shayan & Romteen Azmoodeh
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- John Hanson
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- Mahmoood &ereshrehg Mahdavi
- Behnem & Noshin (Berjus) Malek Khosravi
- Ali & Haidar (Massoud) Mojdehi
- Ramin Pourotemour
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- Jafar Farnam and Family
- Farram Family
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- Amir Pirozam Memorium
- Nasser Ostad (Rite Family Dental)
- Abyd and Molouk Salimi
- Akbar & Fariba Shokouhi

Platinum ($25,000 to $50,000)

- Tayebi Family
- Qualcomm

Tier I Founder ($100,000)

Tier II Founder ($200,000)

Persian Cultural Center

Elite Founder (%70 of Purchase Price)
**Chahārpāreh**

**EMERGENCE OF A POETIC FORM**

The early twentieth century was an eventful time for Persian literature in Iran. The literary renaissance (1896-1921) gave rise to new themes, forms and trends in both poetry and prose. According to Jan Rypka (1895-1968), the distinguished Iranologist and literary historian, a new readership developed during the Constitutional Revolution (1906-1911), no longer limited to aristocratic circles. Previously disseminated through books or divans, literary and critical works reached their readers increasingly in the form of pamphlets, newspapers and magazines. By the time the Second Majlis (the Iranian Parliament) was dissolved in 1910, more than 90 different periodicals were circulated in the country, notwithstanding several Persian-language newspapers printed worldwide.¹

In addition to the establishment of print culture and the consequent formation of public readership, translation—a renewed enterprise in Iran—played an important role in the development of Persian poetic modernity. A new literary Persian, simpler and less estranged from its colloquial register, emerged to accommodate the translation of Western poetry and novels. Qasidas, or panegyrics, became rare in particular and court poetry declined in general. Although the Qajar court continued the patronage of royal poets, or panegyrists, two of its influential figures, Iraq Mirza (1847-1926) and Mohammad-Taqi Bahar (1884-1951), voluntarily left the court and joined the veins of public literature.

Poets and literati began to forge variegated notions of poetic modernity in their creative and theoretical work. Rypka mentions three general circles that established a distinct style.² A trend of poetry revolved around the themes of ethics and love; the “personal experiences and feelings” of this group, led by Rashid Yasemi (1895-1951), Hamidi Shirazi (1914-1986) and Shahriyar Tabrizi (1906-1988), was at the heart of each of their poetic expressions. Political poetry, prevalent in the works of Farrokh Yazdi (1889-1893), A. Q. Lahuti (1887-1957), and M. A. Afsarshah (1908-1959), was generally characterized by the poets’ critique of the status quo and desire for social change. A third group, led by Nima Yushij (1895-1960), pioneered a free style (She’r-i Naw) by departing from the classical ‘aruz, or quantitative prosody of Persian poetry. Difference of opinion in the definition of poetic modernity often led to antagonism between literary circles; however, they fundamentally agreed upon the need for literary change as well as their increasing awareness towards European literature. The emergence of chaharpareh, a poetic form derived from French poetry, speaks to this dynamic and defining period of literature. The emergence of a new poetic form, Amr Taher Ahmed’s scholarship unpacks the intellectual and aesthetic complexity and fluidity of the formative years of Modern Persian poetry. Featured in this issue of Peyk is a widely-recited chaharpareh by Behbahani in English translation.

Yasemi, characterized as a “progressive” poet by the critic, was not alone in implementing Western forms, themes, and trends in his poetry; more conservative figures soon began to compose poetry in chaharpareh, namely Mohammad-Taqi Bahar, a distinguished poet who was initially opposed to changing the formal features of classical Persian poetry.

Initially deemed a variation of classical Persian forms (rubā‘i or dubayti), chaharpareh eventually gained the acceptance of Iran’s literary establishment. The newly emerged form underwent prosodic changes and took shape in the world of Persian poetry. Notable poets who have composed chaharpareh include Nima Yushij, Taqi Rafat (1887-1920), Hamidi Shirazi, Feraydun Tavallali (1919-1985), Feraydun Moshiri (1926-2000), Nader Naderpour (1929-2000) and Simin Behbahani (b. 1927). Through the emergence of a new poetic form, Amr Taher Ahmed’s scholarship unpacks the intellectual and aesthetic complexity and fluidity of the formative years of Modern Persian poetry. Featured in this issue of Peyk is a widely-recited chaharpareh by Behbahani in English translation.

Born in Tehran, Simin Behbahani (Peyk # 141) is one of Iran’s foremost contemporary poets. The form of ghazal (aa / ba) serves as the main vehicle for her poetic expression. English translations of her verse include A Cup of Sin (Syracuse University Press, 1999) and the bilingual editions, dubareh misazamat vatan (My Country, I Shall Build You Again, Sorkhan, 2009) and shayad ke masih hast (Maybe It’s the Messiah, Zabankadeh Publications, 2004). Having worked as an educator and poet for over six decades, Behbahani is an important figure on the Iranian literary-cultural landscape.

Selected from Rastakhiz (Resurrection, 1973), Fe’l-e Majhul (Passive Voice) was co-translated with Adeeba Talukder. The poem deals with question of domestic violence, a less commonly discussed subject in Iranian society, particularly at the time of the poem’s composition. The distant and mechanical tone of the passive voice—the grammatical construction—parallels the moral grievances that plagued the poet’s milieu. Passive Voice is composed in chaharpareh, wherein the second and fourth hemistiches rhyme throughout the poem (ab cb / de fe). The most drastic loss in the translation has been the poem’s music and rhyme. Although different from the original, the poem has gained its own unique music in English. Overall, our translation wishes to highlight a page from the rich history of Modern Persian poetry and bring literary readers worldwide a work by one of Iran’s prolific and prominent poets.

Amr Taher Ahmed, in his scholarly essay published in adabiyat-i tadbīqi (Tehran, 2011),³ argues that chaharpareh was developed at the crossroads of Persian literary modernity and encounter with Europe’s poetic heritage in the beginning of the century. At times translated into English as linked couplets, chaharpareh, a series of rhymed quatrains (ab ab / cd cd), first appeared in Persian letters through the poetry of Rashid Yasemi,³ inspired by the work of Victor Hugo. Versed in French literature, Yasemi had translated critical essays by French literary theoreticians; his poem, as Ahmed’s comparative analysis demonstrates, has formal, semantic, and thematic similarities with Hugo’s quatrains.

² Aria Fani

³ Persian Poetry Today

Dome of the Rock reflected in al-Aqsa | Photo by Aria Fani
It’s just that your words are as hard as your tears.

Children, looks like Jaleh is hard of hearing!

Vengeful and furious, I said:

Department, looks like Jaleh is hard of hearing!

Vengeful and furious, I said:

Department, looks like Jaleh is hard of hearing!

Vengeful and furious, I said:

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Department, looks like Jaleh is hard of hearing!

Vengeful and furious, I said:

Department, looks like Jaleh is hard of hearing!
A TRADITIONAL NOWROUZ FEAST

From: The Joy of Persian Cooking
By: Pari Ardalan Malek

Joyous Season of Nowrouz to all and noush-e-jan. Our warm greetings to Ms. Pari Ardalan Malek and best wishes for the year ahead, thank you for sharing your recipes with our readers.

“Following dishes are traditionally served on the eve of the Iranian New Year- Nowrouz. Polo is prepared exactly the same way as Chelow (white rice recipe Peyk #107), but in order to maintain the light, fluffy quality of the rice, boil the rice in polo recipes for only 2 minutes, instead of 3-4. It is important not to over cook the rice, as the other ingredients mixed in any polo recipe will tend to make the rice soft.”

SABZI POLO:
Preparation time 1 hour; serves 6-8 persons

3 cups dry rice; 3 cups chopped parsley; 3 cups chopped spring onions;
1 cup chopped dill; 3 teaspoons liquid saffron; ¼ cup butter; 2 cups water;
½ teaspoon salt.

1. Cook rice (Peyk #107- Chelow ) for 2 minutes.
2. Just before draining the rice, add the chopped greens (except for dill), stir gently, boil for 1 minute and drain in a colander. Mix the chopped dill gently with drained rice. Add salt.
3. Melt ¼ cup butter in the cooking pot and add ¼ cup water to it.
4. Add rice mixture to cooking pot.
5. Before placing cover lid and steam pour over the rice ¼ cup of melted butter with ¼ cup of water.
6. Cook for 45 minutes on low heat.
7. To make tahdig (rice crust), cook rice for an additional 15 minutes on medium heat.
8. Remove 1 cup of the rice from the top of the pot and save on a separate plate.
9. Add 1 teaspoon liquid saffron to the plate and mix gently with the rice. Reserve for garnish.
10. Add other tablespoons liquid saffron to the mix in the pot and mix gently.
11. Spoon out rice out onto a serving platter, garnish with saffron rice (step #9) and serve.

FRIED WHITE FISH:
Preparation time 1 hour, serves 6-8 persons

2 small white fish; 2 eggs slightly beaten; flour for dredging; ¼ teaspoon salt; 1/8 teaspoon pepper; oil for frying; ¼ cup chopped parsley; 6-8 lime halves.

1. Wash fish, cut into 3-inch long pieces.
2. Mix flour, salt and pepper.
3. Dip fish in eggs and roll in flour mixture.
4. In a skillet, fry fish in oil on both sides and drain on paper towel.
5. Garnish with lime halves and parsley.

KOOKOO SABZI: Fresh Herb Quiche/Souffle,
preparation time 45 minutes, makes 8 wedges.

4 cups chopped parsley
4 cups chopped spring onions
1 cup chopped Chinese parsley
1 cup chopped dill
4 green lettuce leaves
7 eggs
1 tsp baking soda
1 tablespoon flour
6 tablespoons oil
¼ tsp salt
½ tsp pepper
½ tsp turmeric
½ tsp cinnamon

1. Chop dill and lettuce leaves finely by hand.
2. Chop remaining vegetables in a food processor or by hand.
3. Heat 3 tablespoons oil in a large skillet, then sauté vegetables and set aside.
4. When cool, mix vegetables with remaining ingredients (except oil) in a large bowl. Beat with electric mixer for 3 minutes.
5. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Pour remaining oil into a 9 or 10 inch round Pyrex dish and place in the oven.
6. When oil is hot, remove Pyrex dish and fill with vegetables, smoothing the top.
7. Bake uncovered for 35-45 minutes.
8. Remove from oven and slice into wedges.
9. To give the sides an even color, fry kookoo on all sides in 1 tablespoon oil.

OPTIONAL: Add 2 tablespoons barberries (zereshk) and 2 tablespoon chopped walnuts in step 3.
NOWRUZ

The freshness and beauty of spring are everywhere around you, from the excited chirping of birds to the shy blossoms of trees, and you enthusiastically bid your friends a “Happy New Year!” Then somebody, a teacher, friend or colleague, asks you what it’s all about: what day is it on, what do you do to celebrate and why? Here are the essentials.

THE MEANING AND HISTORY:

Nowruz literally means “New day” and marks the first day of the Iranian calendar. There is much quibbling over the correct transliteration of the word into English and some people prefer to write Norouz, or Norooz, among others. However, the “official” spelling, as registered with the Library of Congress, is Nowruz. The day falls on the spring equinox, or the first day of spring, when sunlight is evenly divided between the north and south hemispheres. It is usually on March (Farvardin on the Iranian calendar) 21, or the previous/following day.

Nowruz boasts a 15,000-year history. In Persian mythology, King Jamshid introduced Nowruz celebrations to the people to celebrate overcoming the hardships of winter and looking forward to the promise of spring. King Jamshid is symbolic of the transition of Persians from animal hunting to animal husbandry and a more settled life in which the seasons played a major role. The ancient Persian prophet Zoroaster (founder of the Zoroastrian religion) incorporated Nowruz as an elaborate feast to celebrate Ahura Mazda (Zoroastrian God) and the Holy Fire at the spring equinox. In 487 BC, King Darius the Great celebrated Nowruz at Persepolis, where he had newly built his palaces. The bas reliefs at Persepolis today show people from all over Persia coming to offer Nowruz gifts to the King. From about 248 BC Nowruz became the national holiday of successive ruling dynasties in Persia and survived as such even after the introduction of Islam in 650 AD.

Here is Omar Khayyam’s description of Nowruz in ancient Persia:

From the era of Keykhosrow till the days of Yazdegard, last of the pre-Islamic kings of Persia, the royal custom was thus: on the first day of the New Year, Nau Ruz, the King’s first visitor was the High Priest of the Zoroastrians, who brought with him as gifts a golden goblet full of wine, a ring, some gold coins, a fistful of green sprigs of wheat, a sword, a bow and a handsome slave. In the language of Persia he would then glorify God and praise the monarch. This was the address of the High Priest to the King: “O Majesty, on this feast of the Equinox, first day of the first month of the year, seeing that thou hast freely chosen God and the Faith of the Ancient ones; may Surush, the Angel-messenger, grant thee wisdom and insight and sagacity in thy affairs. Live long in praise, be happy and fortunate upon thy golden throne, drink immortality from the Cup of Jamshid; and keep in solemn trust the customs of our ancestors, their noble aspirations, fair gestes and the exercise of justice and righteousness. May thy soul flourish; may thy youth be as the new-grown grain; may thy horse be puissant, victorious; thy sword bright and deadly against foes; thy hawk swift against its prey; thy every act straight as the arrow’s shaft. Go forth from thy rich throne, conquer new lands. Honor the craftsman and the sage in equal degree; disdain the acquisition of wealth. May thy house prosper and thy life be long!”

The Haft Seen Table. Seven (haft) things beginning with the letter “S” (Seen) are placed on a decorated table in families’ homes. The items and their symbolism are as follows: sabze (wheat, barley or lentil sprouts)-rebirth; samanu (sweet pudding)-affluence; senjed (dried fruit of oleaster tree)-love; seer (garlic)-medicine; sib (apple)-beauty and health; somaj (sumac)-sunrise; and serkeh (vinegar)-age and patience. Some other items usually placed on the table are Hyacinth (flower), coins (wealth), a mirror (cleanliness), goldfish in a bowl (for Pisces which the sun is leaving), and a holy book and/or poetry book (Shahnamah or Hafez).

Haji Firuz. Symbolizing the Sumerian god of sacrifice (who was killed at the end of each year and reborn at the beginning of the New Year), Haji Firuz is a man with a black painted face and a red costume who sings and dances through the streets playing instruments, to herald the coming new year.

Chaharshanbe Suri. This festival of fire takes place on the eve of the last Wednesday of the year. People build fires to celebrate light over darkness (testament to the tradition’s Zoroastrian roots) and jump over them saying, “Zardi-ye man az to, sorkhi-ye to az man,” meaning, “My yellowness to you, your redness to me,” signifying rejuvenation from the fire.

Sizdah Bedar. On the thirteenth (sizdah) day of the new year everyone leaves the house for the outdoors (bedar concept) to have picnics and parties. The thirteenth day is considered unlucky based on the ancient Persian belief that the 12 constellations in the Zodiac ruled the earth for a thousand years each after which the earth collapsed into chaos. At the end of this day, the sabze from the haft seen table is thrown into running water to cleanse the household of any bad luck or sickness that the sabze has absorbed.

During this time of festivities, family and friends visit each other and eat dishes such as sabzi polo mahi (green herbed rice with fish), reshteh polo (rice and noodles), dolme barge (meat and vegetables in vine leaves), and Kookoo sabzi (herb and vegetable omelette). Families buy new clothes and clean out their houses, ready for a fresh start. There are many parties that accompany the general joyous and optimistic mood.

HAPPY NEW YEAR EVERYONE OR NOWRUZ KHOJASTE!
Common Core State Standards and Smarter Balance

As I continue to learn more about Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and the impact it will have on students and teachers, I understand the debate from both sides. As a professional educator, I realize my role is to support teachers in implementing the common core in the most effective way possible, but as a parent, I am very curious about the implementation and the impact it will have on my own children.

CCSS is a whole different way of teaching, pushing critical thinking and problem solving skills across all subject areas. This is not a bad thing, but when you are changing an entire way of teaching and expect student to learn in a whole new way, there have to be some considerations to how schools will transition to common core. As it stands, most students will be jumping in with both feet this year and years to come. For the first several years of their education, they were taught to learn one way and are now going to have to shift their whole way of thinking so that they learn in a different way.

Without a doubt, I find change to be very exciting. However, there should always be a plan to transition when we are talking about students and the impact on their learning. In the past, our students have participated in STAR testing and other standardized exams. Next year, the standardized exams will be based on the CCSS and are referred to as Smarter Balance. What do these assessments really mean? For years, our students have been taught to be successful in one state exam and now they are suddenly going to be assessed based on their learning that is based on curriculum that most educators are unclear and confused about.

Is there reason to be concerned? The debate for CCSS is that it will better prepare students for a complex future. I can’t say I can argue this point. But there is also evidence that points to the fact that publishing companies are going to make millions of dollars off of CCSS and Smarter Balance. So I have to ask, what was the real motivation behind CCSS?

New York has been implementing CCSS for three years now and has just recently decided to suspend testing due to the opposition. Other states are now following suit. However, in California, we are just beginning to move forward. As parents, I believe it’s important for you to know what your rights are and understand what you can expect.

Most districts have been holding CCSS information sessions at the school level. I would encourage you to attend these meetings. I would also highly encourage you to visit www.smarterbalanced.org to learn more about the assessment and even view a few sample questions.

This spring, the state will field test the Smarter Balanced test. As parents, we have the choice of allowing our children to participate in these assessments. It’s important to keep in mind that though such tests may have an impact on the school based on test scores, they have very little impact on students’ futures. As a matter of fact, I cannot say for sure that I am confident testing material that is so complex based on skills that students may not have developed over the years is a good thing. After reviewing Smarter Balanced test questions, my husband and I have decided to opt both of our children out of standardized testing from this point on in their K-12 educational career. It is clear that this whole process is still in the experimental stages and I am not confident that the testing will not have a negative impact on our children.

“A Symphony of Life” is a very fascinating autobiography about the Iranian-American author’s journey through war, love, revolution and freedom.

The remarkable life of Dr. Simin Redjali takes place between the 1930’s and the present time. I enjoyed this book very much because I too have been through all of the events and similarities in Iran. It is a wonderful story of our past for all to read, especially the younger generation who have not witnessed this era of Iran’s history.

An exceptional individual, the author Dr. Simin Redjali is a professor of psychology, sociology and education, as well as, her families’ beloved matriarch. She believes that hard work and education does pay off and help one become successful in life. Redjali was well educated and at an early age opened a college and encouraged the young people to get a good education.

Involved in women’s welfare, she also worked very hard to promote the social status of women in Iran.

In reading this book, often I saw chapters of my own life parade in front of me and memories of what it used to be. I recommend this book for it describes well a chapter of our history of which many of us were part of. I hope you too will enjoy it as much as I did.

P. Yousefi

BOOK REVIEW

By Sheiveh N. Jones, Ed.D.
Persian Cultural Center
Tel: (858) 552-9355  Fax & Voice: (619) 374-7335 www.pccus.org

Charshanbeh Soori with HOI and AIAP
Tuesday, March 18, 2014 7:00 to 10:00 pm
NTC Park, 2455 Cushing Rd, San Diego, CA 92106

Annual Nowruz Celebration
Featuring Black Cats
Saturday, March 22, 2014 at
Manchester Grand Hyatt San Diego
One Market Place, San Diego, CA 92101
7:00pm-1:00am  Tel: (858)-552-9355

Sizdeh Bedar with HOI and AIAP
Sunday, March 30, 2014  1:00 to 6:00 PM
NTC Park, 2455 Cushing Rd, San Diego, CA 92106

Setar Class by Kourosh Taghavi
Registration and info: (858) 717-6389

Tomkach Class by Milad Jahadi
Registration and info: (858) 735-9634

Daf Workshop with Ali Sadr,
Tuesdays 6 to 7:30 PM at the new Iranian-American Center (IAC)

Santour Class by Arash Dana
Registration and info: (619) 278-1851

Iranian School of San Diego
858-552-9355
Mt. Carmel High School
9550 Carmel Mountain Road  San Diego, CA 92129

ISSD Nowruz Preparation, Sabzehkari and egg coloring, Sunday March 9, 2014
Iranian-American Center (IAC)

ISSD Nowruz Celebration
Sunday March 16, 2014 at ISSD
At Mt. Carmel High School
Dollar a Month Fund Nowruz Bazaar
Sunday March 3, 2013 at Iranian School of San Diego
10am - 12pm

ISSD Classes:
Branch I: Sundays  at 9:30 AM - 1:00 PM
Mt. Carmel High School

Branch II: Thursdays  at 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM
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
Annual Charity Bazaar
Sunday March 9, 2014
at Iranian-American Center (IAC)
10am-12pm
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

Day of Iran
March 23, 2014  11am – 5pm at Balboa Park

Iranian-American Scholarship Fund
Tel: (858) 552-9355  www.iasfund.org
www.facebook.com/IranianAmericanScholarshipFund

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 www.twitter.com/niacouncil

Book Club Meeting
Last Sat. 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
March 8th 2014 Nowruz Celebration
at Sufi Mediterranean Cuisine
5915 Balboa Ave, San Diego, CA 92111

If you are in the neighborhood of the following public libraries, please check-out our Nowruz and cultural presentations.

Carmel Valley Branch Library:
3919 Townsgate Drive, San Diego, CA 92130

Linda Vista Branch Library:
2160 Ulric Street, San Diego, CA 92111

Rancho Peñasquitos Branch Library:
13330 Salmon River Road, San Diego, CA 92129

Pacific Beach Branch Library:
4275 Cass Street, San Diego, CA 92109

North University Community Branch Library:
8820 Judicial Drive, San Diego, CA 92122

College-Rolando Branch Library:
6600 Montezuma Road, San Diego, CA 92115-2828

La Jolla/Riford Branch Library:
7555 Draper Avenue, La Jolla, CA 92037-4802
Imagine a teenager having recently immigrated to the United States, who is spending the summer in his native Shiraz. The August of Shiraz, hot and dry, draws him inside the bookstores of Molla Sadra. Intimately familiar with the poetry of Sohrab Sepehri, he has a ravenous appetite for commentaries on Sepehri’s oeuvre, which encompasses too many titles to note, even in a bibliography. With his new camera, one may even say he has an eye for photography. He grabs a few books, goes to the cashier, and spots underneath the display case at the counter a copy of *Ta Shaghayegh Hast* (While Poppies Bloom) – an exquisite find!

With colors popping out of its cover, *While Poppies Bloom* is a coffee table book of eighty photographs of Persian landscapes published together with the poetry of Sohrab Sepehri in both Persian and English. It represents a collaborative effort between the translator, Karim Emami, and photographer and Iranologist Riccardo Zipoli. In the book’s introduction, written with sincerity and style, Zipoli speaks of his love affair with Iran, its culture and its people.

Upon his return to the United States, the teenager reached out to Zipoli; he admired how well his images of rural Iran captured the voice and sentiment of Sepehri’s poems. Their correspondence marked the beginning of a friendship, initially formed through phone conversations and emails, until they eventually met several years later over a coffee in Campo San Polo in Venice, Zipoli’s “second” home.

Although their correspondences had primarily been of an intellectual nature, their first meeting held a casual, social pleasure as well. The young man, the writer of these lines, immediately stepped into a different world through Riccardo’s eloquence in Persian, his knowledge of Iranian geography, and his ability to tune into the nuances of Iranian society. With a style of speaking and humor unique to him, tactfully and humbly, Riccardo began to describe his first encounter with Iran in 1972. Driving through former Yugoslavia and Turkey with his mentor, Gianroberto Scarcia, Riccardo’s one-month stay in the country commenced a lifelong love affair, bringing together his passion for exploring the Iranian landscape and his area of expertise, Persian poetry.

Riccardo began his academic career in 1978, and at present, chairs the Department of Eurasian Studies at Venice University, where he teaches Persian literature and photography. The author of multiple publications, his scholarship engages historical and stylistic problems in classical Persian literature, particularly concerning the *Sabk-i Hindi* (lit. ‘Indian Style’ of Persian poetry). What initially began in the 70s as an interest in landscape photography in rural Iran has now turned into a career that has taken him to dozens of countries, and has seen his work exhibited in galleries around the world, such as the Persian Gulf island of Hormuz, which recently exhibited a number of his works in an exhibition entitled *A Gulf, a Strait, and a Sea*.

Riccardo’s latest book, *Riflessi di Persia* (Reflections of Persia), brings together the uniqueness of his life and work. In the introduction, in both Italian and English, he evokes the likes of the Persian-language poet ‘Abdo ‘l-Qâder Bidel (1644-1720), and Jorge Luis Borges to contemplate on the process of discovering, studying, photographing, and rediscovering Iran. *Reflections of Persia* features 50 photographs in which Persian landscapes have been placed within a dialogue alongside those of 15 other countries, including Cuba, Iceland, Mexico, Morocco, Yemen, and Oman. The photographs have been divided by specific themes (e.g., roads, bushes, trees, walls, etc.) and general ones (e.g. deserts, mountains, clouds, etc.), while the remaining two categories (fields and oases) are intermediary. Each theme includes a photograph of
Iran, used as a model or source of inspiration, followed by four photographs of other countries selected to “complete” the theme. The geographical origins of the individual images are only listed in the final appendix, forcing readers to pay close attention to each landscape both on its own and vis-à-vis others. In doing so, Riccardo removes political borders, placing before the eyes of readers a global “empire of landscapes.” As he states, 

"Through all my trips to Iran, a sort of a conceptual landscape has gradually taken shape in my mind and spirit and now, increasingly often, I find that landscape also in other countries. In a certain sense, the world has been stripped of its borders in an aesthetic globalisation of the landscape, fostered by a region which, in my cultural formation, has become a peaceful, unrivalled exporter of beauty."

In the past four decades, what has Riccardo discovered in Iran that calls on him to trace its features outside the country? And, if Iran is to be rediscovered in other terrain, what constitutes the essence of its landscape? On what level does “Persianness,” which has now assumed a form of a “universal constant,” rest? The answer lies in the author’s first encounters in Iran, accompanied by Scarcia. “My professor had alluded to the existence of two Iranian landscape satrapies,” notes Zipoli, “far outside the borders of the country and very distant from each other: the northern satrapy of Iceland, and the southern satrapy of Yemen.” An Old Persian term, satrap referred to local governors of various regions of the Persian Empire. Applying a term conventionally used to divide Iran’s political landscape in terms of its natural geography, Scarcia points to other provinces outside of Iran that are “arranged according to the typical models of its own land.” Riccardo’s photography captures these satrapies, and his selection of arrangements speaks to the existence of an empire – a “landscape empire,” as opposed to a political one. Riccando’s Iran, discovered and rediscovered in verdant valleys, dense forests, and desert plains, becomes a mirror in which the world and its distant lands appear before one’s eyes.

Reflections of Persia also features 52 lines of poetry, translated in English and Italian, by Bidel, a seventeenth century Persian-language poet from India. The concept of reflection is central to the poems, while the image of the mirror constantly resurfaces. Bidel’s verse, known for its complexity and “polysemantic labyrinths,” ties in well with the general theme of the book, i.e., tracing reflections of Persia in all of its geographical diversity in remote and faraway landscapes. The selected poems speak powerfully alongside the photographs, each image having been arranged in thematic sets with one photograph acting as a source of inspiration (the mirror) for the other four photographs, which present variations (reflections) of the theme.

Bidel, a relatively understudied figure in Iran today, evokes yet another distant landscape of the country: the global realm of Persian literature, especially where South Asia is concerned. In Mughal India, Persian was the main language of the administration, literary production, and historiography, and played a vital role in the reform of the educational system during Emperor Akbar’s reign (1556–1605). The legacy of Persian literature, however – once shared among different cultural, ethnic, and religious groups in the subcontinent – is becoming increasingly occluded. While Iranian nationalists view Sabk-i Hindi as degenerate, dense, inaccessible, and elitist, Hindu nationalists regard Persian, one of the major literary languages of India, as a vernacular of “Muslim” elites, a heritage foreign to South Asia. It is against such a political and historical backdrop that the importance of Riccando’s scholarship, encapsulated by his latest publication, should be regarded. Reflections of Persia celebrates the journey of a scholar, photographer, literary translator, and above all, an Iranologist who has gone above and beyond the political borders of Iran to hold up a mirror of its distant literary and natural landscapes.

"Of every vision the mirror shows only a simple reflection, no painter knows how to make a drawing of the human soul.

- Bidel"

• Purchase the book at www.cafoscarina.it
• Visit Riccardo’s website @ www.riccardozipoli.com
Vitamin D Deficiency

Vitamin D deficiency has received a lot of press in the recent years. Many people seem to all of a sudden be interested in finding out their vitamin D “levels” due to increased media coverage of what most experts agree is “over-hyped” (as are many media coverage of all topics). Nevertheless, it can become a vital medical issue in some patients -- but who? What is all the hoopla over this vitamin about? And if you live in Southern California, should you even be worried about Vitamin D levels since many of us seem to get enough sun exposure? Let’s find out.

What is Vitamin D?

Vitamin D is a key component for bone health. It helps to absorb calcium in the intestine in order to help build bone. It also helps to suppress a hormone called “Parathyroid Hormone” that tends to break down bone.

There are two main sources Vitamin D:

1. The skin: Vitamin D is actually produced underneath the skin when exposed to sunlight. This production slows down with age, and those with darker skin may require more sunlight to produce sufficient vitamin D levels. But skin cancer is also a big concern for experts – so we don’t want to “trade” one disease for another.
2. The diet: Vitamin D is also ingested in the foods we consume. The largest supply often comes from fortified milk, and contains about 100 IU’s (international units) per 8 oz.

Why is Vitamin D Important?

Bone health becomes an issue mainly in the elderly population who may more easily fracture due to osteoporosis (which is low bone density). Studies also show that vitamin D may reduce the risk of falls in the elderly, along with fractures. Therefore, low vitamin D levels are typically a concern in the elderly population.

Severe deficiencies are now rare in developed countries like the U.S. However, levels have been found to be at the lowest in the Middle East and South Asia. Mild deficiencies can be found in adults living in the U.S, however, and may contribute to osteoporosis.

Normal Vitamin D Levels

When measuring vitamin D levels, doctors order a metabolite of vitamin D referred to as “25-hydroxyvitamin D.” The lower limit of normal is somewhat controversial, but most experts agree that it should be somewhere between 20 to 30 ng/mL.

Who Should Be Tested?

Not everyone needs a vitamin D level, despite all of the media hype. Medical guideline recommendations are to test those who are at risk for low levels, such as those:

- Elderly patients that are in nursing homes, or are home bound
- Elderly with falls
- Intestinal disease: Crohn’s disease, Celiac disease
- Surgery that removes any part of the intestines, such as in gastric bypass
- Kidney or liver disease (these organs help metabolize vitamin D)
- Osteoporosis or Osteopenia diagnosed on a bone density test

How Much Vitamin D Do We Need?

The typical adult needs about 800 IU’s of vitamin D daily (elderly home-bound patients may need more). Therefore, if you don’t have a risk factor for vitamin D deficiency, the recommendation is to make sure to maintain this daily intake – whether it’s through the diet or a supplement (or both), rather than measuring blood levels.

Supplements are sold in two various forms – as “cholecalciferol” (Vitamin D3) and “ergocalciferol” (Vitamin D2). D3 is preferred over D2 because it’s the more naturally-occurring form of the vitamin with likely improved absorption rates.

In addition to vitamin D, Calcium is a key nutrient for bone health. For premenopausal women and men, 1000mg of calcium is also recommended, and 1200mg for postmenopausal women.

If you have a risk factor for vitamin D deficiency, make sure to bring it up to your doctor. Otherwise, make sure to get the appropriate amount of vitamin D and Calcium every day to prevent problems later on down the road.

Dr. Sanaz Majd is a board-certified family medicine physician who podcasts and blogs at http://housecalldoctor.quickanddirtytips.com.
Disappearing middle-class jobs

The high unemployment rate seen during the Great Recession has pulled back to 6.7 percent, but some of the lost jobs simply aren’t returning.

Into thin air

A startling number of middle-class jobs may be headed toward extinction.

More than any other job class, mid-level positions have struggled to recover from the recession, and only a quarter of jobs created in the past three years are categorized as mid-wage. There are high-skilled professional jobs that require college degrees and low-skilled service jobs for less educated workers, but the middle is getting squeezed.

We took a look at data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics to see just how anemic the middle-class job market is in America. While there’s no one definition of “middle class,” economists generally agree that mid-level jobs require between a high school diploma and a bachelor’s degree, earn on average $13.84 to $21.13 an hour, and are non-supervisory office or production roles.

From the BLS data, we identified the following 15 middle-class jobs that are expected to shrink by 5 percent to 25 percent

Projected 10-year decline .

- Mechanical drafters - 4.9 percent
- Insurance appraisers, auto damage - 5.3 percent
- Insurance underwriters - 6.5 percent
- Mail clerks and mail machine operators, except postal service - 8.8 percent
- Prepress technicians and workers - 12.9 percent
- Telephone operators - 13.1 percent
- Switchboard operators, including answering service - Projected 10-year decline: 13.2 percent
- Reporters and correspondents - 13.8 percent
- Reservation and transportation ticket agents and travel clerks - 14.0 percent
- Computer operators - 17.0 percent
- Data entry keyers - 24.6 percent
- Word processors and typists - 25.1 percent
101 Steps; Closing A Gap

In our ever-changing digitalized globe, free online sources such as Wikipedia are more than sources of information. They simultaneously mirror and form our global culture; disparities and biases that find their way into these sources, are not only reflections of our current socio-political conditions but also they contribute to the formation of our future.

On February 1, 2014, about 600 volunteers in 31 venues around the world participated in a collective effort to take a step in closing the gender gap in Wikipedia in the field of arts. One Wiki entry at a time!

The gender gap has been known to exist in computer-related occupations for years. Yet, it has only been lately accepted and spoken of publicly. The first large-scale publication with an attempted to quantify the gap was a 2010 survey conducted by the United Nations University. The survey showed that less than 13% of Wikimedia contributors are female. The reasons suggested for the low participation percentage varies from leisure inequality to how gender socialization shapes public comportment. Debating on the causes of such inequality, however, does not take away the practical effect of this disparity. Due to the lack of female participation in Wikipedia the content is slanted and many articles on notable women in history and art are absent on Wikipedia. This signifies a terrifying trouble in an increasingly important repository of shared knowledge.

In order to address the absence of women artists in Wikipedia, WMF and the Art+Feminism Wikipedia Edit-a-thon, invited volunteers in the United States, Canada, Australia, Italy, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom, in nonprofit institutions, museums and universities, to gather on February 1st and contribute entries on women artists. Volunteers for this project, mostly women, set out to write entries, for the fast-growing crowd-sourced online encyclopedia. 101 women artists got their Wikipedia pages in one day. Among them we find great artists, sculptors, painters, photographers, performance artists, just to name a few the American Simone Leigh (Born 1968), the ecological artist Aviva Rahmani, the Australian printmaker Ethel Spowers (11 July 1890 – 5 May 1947), and the Indian artists, Zarina Hashmi (born 1937). This was one day and 101 steps to close a gap!

We have a long way to go; are you in?
Dear Readers:

As a part of our community services, we have approached some of the Iranian medical specialist in various fields to send us their information to share with the community. We appreciate the work of Dr. Reza Shirazi who spearheaded this effort. The following list is not complete by any means. If you are a Medical Doctor and would like to be added to this list, please send your information to Dr. Shirazi or directly to Peyk.

Afshin Bahador M.D.
So. Coast Gynecologic Oncology, Inc.
Gynecologic Oncologist
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La Jolla, CA 92037
858-455-5524

Kaveh Bagheri, MD, FACP, FACC
Internal Med, Pulmonary Med, and Critical Care Med.
8851 Center Drive, Suite 405
La Mesa, CA 91942
619-589-2355

Hamid Ghazi, M.D.
Internal Medicine
Kaiser Permanente-Rancho San Diego
Kaiser Permanente 3875 Avocado Blvd.
La Mesa, CA 91942
619-670-2924

Anousha Ghodsi-Shirazi, M.D.
Kaiser Permanente Obstetrics and Gynecology
Rancho Bernardo Medical Offices
17140 Bernardo Center Dr, Suite # 100
San Diego, CA 92128
800-290-5000

Mahshid Hamidi, M.D. Family
5224 Balboa Ave, Suite 31
San Diego, CA 92117
858-565-6194

Alborz Hassankhani, M.D., Ph.D.
Cardiology and Cardiac Electrophysiology
5525 Covenant Center Drive, Suite 609
La Mesa, CA 91942
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(619) 668-0089 (fax)

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Robert B. Lavard M.D.
Encompass Family and Internal Medicine Group
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La Mesa, CA 91941
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fax 619-460-7083
www.EncompassMD.com

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Fax 858-483-5572

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Fax 858-483-5572

New Age Dental Group
858-521-0000
11968 Bernardo Center Dr. (in the Vons Center).
San Diego, CA 92128

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Hossein Saadatmandi, D.D.M.
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760-599-1100
www.premierdental-arts.com

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Simah Shabtik, M.D.
Ophthalmologist
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Phone 858-457-2010

Majid Shahbaz, M.D.
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Diplomate of the American Board of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery
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Fax 658-768-0510
www.50Stateoral.org

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Fax 858-521-0806
Fax 858-521-0808
www.familleyology.org

Reza Tirgari, M.D.
Avalon Laser
619-999-1138
2455. 15th Ave, Ste 2A40
San Diego, CA 92101

Babak Shoushtari, D.M.D.
Endodontics
La Jolla Endodontics
1410 Regents Park Road #330
La Jolla, CA 92037
PH: 858-546-9299
F: 858-546-9399
lajollaendo.com

Sooheen Nezam
Nutritionist: Specialist in fitness, pregnancy and diabetes treatment
4373 La Jolla Village Dr. Suite #400
San Diego, CA 92122
Phone 858-952-6988

Sahel Bazaar
7467 Cuvier Street, A
La Jolla, CA 92037
Tel: 858-456-9959

Sahra Estefan
3919 Townsgate Dr
San Diego, CA 92119
Tel: 858-552-1668

Darband Restaurant
Authentic Persian Restaurant
1556 Fifth Ave
San Diego, CA 92101
Tel: 619-230-1001

Soltan Banoo
Eclectic Persian Cuisine
4645 Park Boulevard
San Diego, CA 92116
Tel: 619-298-2801

North University Community Branch Library
8820 Judicial Drive
San Diego, CA 92122

Grill House Cafe
9494 Black Mountain Rd
San Diego, CA 92126
858-271-5699

Rose Market (Bay Area)
14445 Big Basin Way
Saratoga, CA 95070

Maryland
Ms. Firoozeh Naeemi
Massachusetts
Super Heroes
509 Mount Auburn St
Watertown, MA 02472-4118
(617) 924-4978

Nevada
Zaytoon Inc.
Mediterranean Market & Kabob
3655 S. Durango Dr, 314
Las Vegas, NV 89147
702-685-1875

North Carolina
Ms. Nazi A Kite
Tennessee
International Food Mart
2855 Logan St.
Nashville, TN 37211

Virginia
Saffron Grill
1025-A Seneca Rd.
Great Falls, VA 22066
Tel: 703-421-0082

Dr. Reza Shirazi or directly to Peyk.

As a part of our community services, we have approached some of the Iranian medical specialist in various fields to send us their information to share with the community. We appreciate the work of Dr. Reza Shirazi who spearheaded this effort. The following list is not complete by any means. If you are a Medical Doctor and would like to be added to this list, please send your information to Dr. Shirazi or directly to Peyk.
Dear Community Members,

Please join the PCC members and Board of Directors in welcoming Ms. Marika Sardar, as the new Associate Curator of Southern Asian and Islamic Art at the San Diego Museum of Art. Once more, we look forward to our partnership with the Museum and several projects ahead.

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

The San Diego Museum of Art and the Persian Cultural Center (PCC) have been working together for the last ten years to make the museum a home for the Persian community and a representative of Persian culture for San Diego as a whole. Over the years the PCC has funded conservation projects, supported research and translation, and partnered in creating programs celebrating Iran’s cultural heritage.

Having moved to San Diego this summer from the Metropolitan Museum of Art, I felt lucky that a relationship between the museum and the Persian community already existed. I have studied and worked with material from Iran for many years and arrived with the goal of making our collection of Persian art a bigger and more vibrant part of the museum. Already we have created a gallery dedicated solely to Iran—a first for the museum—and we hope to expand our exhibitions and programming even further over the coming months. This builds on a longstanding commitment to Persian art: in 1927, the first example of art from Iran entered the collection; fittingly, it is a page from the *Shahnameh*.

But we still need to expand our collections, bring speakers, musicians and artists to our auditorium, and put together stunning exhibitions highlighting the long and varied history of Persian artistic production. I look forward to working with you all to accomplish these goals—and most importantly, to seeing you at The San Diego Museum of Art.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions you have about the museum:

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Illustrations:

1. *Court Scene with Dancing and Feasting*, conserved with support from the Persian Cultural Center. 1920s. (Museum purchase with funds provided by The Asiatic Arts Committee of the Fine Arts Society and Mrs. Irving T. Snyder, 1958.33)

2. *Rustam blinds Esfandiar with an Arrow*, folio from the *Shahnameh*. 16th century. (Museum purchase with funds provided by the University Women’s Club, 1927.14)