



Persian Heritage

www.persian-heritage.com

Persian Heritage, Inc.

110 Passaic Avenue
Passaic, NJ 07055

E-mail: Mirassiran@aol.com

Telephone: (973) 471-4283

Fax: 973 471 8534

EDITOR

SHAHROKH AHKAMI

EDITORIAL BOARD

Dr. Mehdi Abusaidi, Shirin Ahkami Raiszadeh, Dr. Mahvash Alavi Naini, Mohammad Bagher Alavi, Dr. Talat Bassari, Mohammad H. Hakami, Ardeshir Lotfalian, K. B. Navi, Dr. Kamshad Raiszadeh, Farhang A. Sadeghpour, Mohammad K. Sadigh, M. A. Dowlatshahi.

MANAGING EDITOR

HALLEH NIA

ADVERTISING

HALLEH NIA

* The contents of the articles and advertisements in this journal, with the exception of the editorial, are the sole works of each individual writers and contributors. This magazine does not have any confirmed knowledge as to the truth and veracity of these articles. All contributors agree to hold harmless and indemnify *Persian Heritage (Mirass-e Iran)*, Persian Heritage Inc., its editors, staff, board of directors, and all those individuals directly associated with the publishing of this magazine. The opinions expressed in these articles are the sole opinions of the writers and not the journal. No article or picture submitted will be returned to the writer or contributor. All articles submitted in English must be typed.

* The appearance of advertising in this magazine does not constitute a guarantee or endorsement of the products by *Persian Heritage*. In addition, articles and letters published do not reflect the views of this publication.

* Letters to the Editor should be mailed, faxed or e-mailed to the above addresses and numbers. The journal reserves the right to edit same for space and clarity or as deemed appropriate.

* All requests for permissions and reprints must be made in writing to the managing editor.

PUBLISHED BY

PERSIAN HERITAGE, INC.

A corporation organized for cultural and literary purposes

Cover Price: \$8.00

Subscriptions: \$32.00/year (domestic);
& 50.00/year (International)

Typesetting & Layout
TALIEH PUBLICATIONS

Persian Heritage

Vol. 25, No. 98

Fall 2020

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK	6
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR	8
NEWS	
Turning Farmland into Doll Exhibition	9
The Solitude of the Traveler	10
Tjeknavorian's "Memorial" Piece in Home Quarantine	11
Iran Produces Anti-Corona Medicine	12
The Time of Pandemic	
Perspective	12
Persian Scholar and the Idea of Quarantine	13
The Art of Discomfort	14
History Repeats Itself	16
THE ARTS & CULTURE	
Reviews	17
Mehregan	18
An Interview with Hossein Ghorashi	20
<i>(Shahrokh Ahkami)</i>	
Howz-e Soltan Salt Lake	22
My Adopted Country	23
<i>(H. Guilak)</i>	
An Interview with David Rahni	25
<i>(Amanda Apicella)</i>	
The Rich History of the Persian Language	28
Iran's First Online Student Puppet Festival	29
An Interview with Hamid Ghorashi	30
<i>(Shahrokh Ahkami)</i>	
Meet Ali Houshmand	32

Important Notice

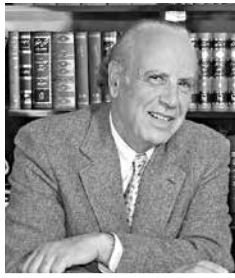
All written submissions to Persian Heritage with the expectation of publication in the magazine must include the writer's name, address and telephone number. When an article is submitted we assume the author has complete ownership of the article and the right to grant permission for publication.

Persian  Heritage

**Special
Announcement:**

**Contact our California
based Advertising Agent
for your ads.**

(973) 471 4283



FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Persian Heritage after 25 years of continued publication, for the first time halted the press for the Summer 2020 issue. Some of our readers and community were saddened by this and possibly others joyful thinking that after all these years *Persian Heritage* had stopped its press forever. Fortunately because of the support of so many we have returned with the Fall 2020 issue and hope to continue until WE make a decision to end the publication.

The Corona Pandemic came with a vengeance and has crippled the world and brought its citizens to their knees. The virus is entering its tenth month of life and shows little signs of leaving us. It remains dangerously contagious and continues to kill on its path of destruction. Despite all the tireless efforts by the medical community and governmental policies put in place, our success in battling this virus has been limited.

This virus has no boundaries on who it will infect every race, creed, religion, ethnicity age and sex is vulnerable, though some are more vulnerable than others. In the United States (as I am certain in other countries around the world), most of the people who have lost their battle to this virus are minorities; the elderly and people of color, specifically African-Americans. This is due to poverty, lack of access to health care, and underlying health conditions such as heart disease, high blood pressure and diabetes. The death rate among these minority groups is higher compared to people with greater wealth and the Caucasian population.

The impact of this virus on us is as diverse as the people it attacks. It has brought communities and families closer together. Places of work, schools and nursing homes closed. The breadwinners of the family now found themselves in new roles as cooks, caregivers, cleaners, babysitters, playmates and educators to their own children and families. Spending more time at home has taught all of us a new appreciation and understanding of the challenges faced by the homemaker. It has taught us about the tremendous amount of physical and emotional energy it takes to care for a child or elderly parent. And it allowed us to experience the joy of playing with a child to sharing an uninterrupted conversation with an adolescent. Couples are finding new appreciation for each other and sharing responsibility.

The quarantine has forced everyone to be creative while in isolation. For some families and individuals the experiences, though trying at times, have been positive. Unfortunately for some families and individuals the experience of togetherness

has been negative. In spending more time with their partner's unknown differences in opinions surfaced. Some differences have resulted in separations and divorce. People are anxious and getting frustrated during this Pandemic and want to go back to normalcy. We can only pray that there will soon be a vaccination and our hope to return to normalcy becomes a reality. It seems, however, that the Corona virus has no intention of leaving us any time soon. But! we are humans and as humans we will adapt to living with this virus. We as human beings will learn new ways to protect ourselves and the ones we love. We as humans will learn to live life and make a new temporary norm, while waiting for our old life to return.

I sadly remember the early days of the virus, when New York and New Jersey were the epicenters. Every day on the news we would see images of bodies piled up in storage waiting to be buried. Those were very difficult times. I also remember the day I was called to the hospital for a delivery. I knew the dangers that faced me at the hospital. I am not embarrassed to state that I was filled with fear and anxiety for my family and myself. I told no one where I was going as they were insistent that I close my office and stay home.

My fears dissipated as I drove convincing myself that I was a doctor and must be there for this delivery and a patient who for 9 months was in my care! When I entered the hospital I avoided touching anything as I made my way to the OB department. The hospital provided me with special protective gear that covered my body, face and feet. Hours went by waiting for the delivery and I was not in the mood to speak or mingle with anyone. And then a beautiful new baby entered the world. This moment put smiles on the parent's faces, the staff's faces and OF COURSE mine. This I thought was worth the risk of this OLD MAN possibly getting sick. I knew at this moment that I could not stay home as my family wished. I only prayed that those I love would be protected and understand my decision. When I arrived home I confessed to them. Their eyes, while filled with concern were also filled with love and understanding of my decision and they never asked me to stay home again.

These past few months have been extremely difficult for everyone including me. Like most I have become more aware of my surroundings; the people, their suffering and their hardships. My morals and values have been tested. I will always remember the parks, restaurants, streets, stores, places of worship once filled with people suddenly became empty.

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

I will always remember how smiles on faces were covered with masks. I will always remember how the joy of a hug and kiss changed to a quick elbow touch. I will always remember how my home and the homes of so many filled with the joy of laughter and conversation of family and friends became dreadfully quiet. And, I will also remember how to be grateful.

During one of these days a colleague of mine and I boarded the elevator at the hospital. The rules allowed only two at a time. We wore masks and faced the walls with our backs to one another. Suddenly I started laughing and said to him, "A few months ago we would have been in full conversations smiling at each other. Now we barely look at each other let alone speak. Are we afraid of infecting one another through our saliva, or do we look at each other as the enemy, the one who might infect you or you me?" My colleague responded by stating, "Yes, these are very difficult days, but what can we do? Today our elderly parents and grandparents are in nursing homes and we are not allowed to visit them fearing that we will somehow infect them and make them sick. They are in dire need of love from their grand kids and children and there is nothing we can do, we just have to bare this life of horror."

His words didn't console me. Instead they made me tremble and made me deeply sad. These feelings were intensified by the news from my beloved Iran. Each day the situation gets worse. Each day my fellow Iranians in Iran are dealing with a financial crisis that has crippled the country. Inflation,

suppression by the Mullahs and now this Pandemic has added to their despair. How much more can they suffer? When the Pandemic hit Iran in early November the government denied it occurring in the country. This led to a lack of management and control of the virus allowing it to spread quickly and things worsened. To this day there is no governmental plan to contain the virus. With the recent holidays of Ashura and the flocking of people in the streets without any protective gear, surely there will be a rise in cases. The lack of access to food, medicine, money, work, shelter and now the spread of the virus is causing enormous pain, suffering and hardship for my dear Iranian people.

I wish, I hope and I continue to pray that by the time this fall issue reaches your door step a vaccine has been introduced into the market and hopefully it will prevent more loss of life.

I thank all my dearest friends, subscribers and supporters for all the warmth and support you have given us in the last six months. I wholeheartedly wish for all humanity health, happiness and success, especially for my beloved Iranians who have suffered so much in the past. I wish, I hope and I pray for better and more prosperous days ahead.

Shahrokh Alavi

A Bilingual, Cultural & Educational Publication

Persian  Heritage

To Support Your Persian Heritage
Subscribe Now!

Yes! I want to subscribe to Persian Heritage

- \$32 for one year (US) \$52 for two years (US)
 \$40 one year (Canada & Mexico - credit card only)
 \$52 one year (Europe & other - credit card only)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Please send this clip with the payment to
Persian Heritage office.

Tel: 973 471 4283

Fax: 973 471 8534

www.persian-heritage.com

e-mail: mirassiran@gmail.com

ADDRESS:

**Persian Heritage Inc.
110 Passaic Ave. Passaic, NJ 07055**

THE PCIA

I was delighted to read the article on the PEACE CORPS IRAN ASSOCIATION in the current issue. Since I also served in Iran-Ahwaz, Kermanshah and Mahabad in 1966-1968 and have been a member of PCIA for years, it was great to see your readers informed about this wonderful group.

The photograph which accompanies the article DOES NOT depict Ms. Jackie Spurlock, a founder and former president. I believe that the gentleman on the right is JOHN LIMBERT who served in Hamadan and was later one of the American embassy prisoners taken by the Iranian students. He served as an ambassador (I don't recall which country) later on. I have bragged about your magazine to the people on the board and am glad they finally sent in the article. New Jersey is not a Persian hub as are LA and San Diego and Irvine. People would not expect such a great source of information about Persian history, culture and current events. Thank you and keep up the good work,

Geraldine Gillio (Wayne, NJ)

A DEEP APPRECIATION FOR THE LEVEL OF QUALITY

Foremost, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for developing Persian Heritage publications. Since having been introduced to it, my father reads exurbs from many of the articles to my mother and I. We deeply appreciate the level of quality, relevant, informative and moving articles. Often, my father is moved to tears from your sentiments.

Much gratitude and respect in advance,

Marjan Nourai

THANKS

Many thanks for sending this recent issue. I particularly liked the article about the Roots of Puccini's great Turandot.

Hope all is well with you. Please stay safe and healthy.

Best wishes, John Limbert

25 YEARS-OLD!!

Dear Editor

Congratulations!! Great job!! Can't believe it's been 25 years already!!!

Kamshad Raiszadeh

25 YEARS OF FULL DEDICATION

What an honor to have my old poem (when I was still a teenager!!) under your eloquent and thorough Article. Surviving 25 years of hard work and full dedication to the cause of keeping our "Heritage" alive, is admirable. My congratulations.

THANK YOU, and God bless;

Jahangir Jon Sedaghatfar

LONG LIVE THE EDITOR

Sepâs, thanks Dr. Ahkami for a great, culture and rich magazine of Persian Heritage. Merci, dast mareezaad. khodâ ghovvat.

Goli Farrell

A GREAT SERVICE

Happy Norowz from Dallas Tx.

Keep the good job going. You are doing a great service.

Thanks, Mohamad Pourfar



Iranian Woman Turns Farmland into Doll Exhibition

Iran Front Page, July 9, 2020



An Iranian woman has turned her farmland into an exhibition of dolls she makes for fun at the sixth decade of her life.

Khadijeh Abbasi, who lives alone in a village in Ardakan in Iran's central Yazd province, has been making creative dolls, a work that is astonishing and unbelievable. She is a 58-year-old woman who has been making dolls for five years with old clothes, scrap metal, and small pieces of other materials. She is from the city of Ardakan, but has been living with her husband in one of the villages of Ardakan for eight years where she spends her time with geese, chickens and sheep.

They are the only ones who live on this farm. Khadijeh has been working on carpets since she was a child, and has woven many silk carpets on her own, but in the past few years, she has been making dolls. "I had to create an entertainment for myself. So I started making dolls. The first doll I made was called Henna. I don't make these dolls for sale. I even received orders to make dolls, but I did it for them free of charge. I will not take any money in return."

Now Khadijeh's house has turned into a doll farm, each with its own story.

Handicrafts: The art of 'heart and hand'

Along with other historical and natural attractions of Zanjan province in Iran, handicrafts in the province are manifestation of skills, tastes and thoughts of artists and artisans who have showcased spirit and cultural identity of this land and territory in their works with their creations over the years.

Zanjan is known for its beautiful handicrafts such as knives, traditional sandals called charoogh and malileh. Malileh is a handcraft made with silver wires.

Zanjanian artists make many things like decorative dishes and their special covers as well as silver jewelry. In ancient times, Zanjan was known for its stainless and sharp knives. But this tradition is gradually becoming extinct by introduction of Chinese knives to the market which are cheaper and better made.

Many villagers today are traditional carpet weavers. This is perhaps Zanjan's most popular handcraft.

Mehr News Agency, 06/12/20
Photos By Mehdi Almasi



AWARD FOR LIFETIME CONTRIBUTIONS



Dr. Fereydoun Ala, an outstanding Iranian physician, has won one of the most prestigious honorary awards in Medical field for his lifetime contributions to Iran’s health system. Dr. Ala established the first Clinical Hematology Department, and the first Hemophilia Center at the Tehran University Medical Faculty. Later, in 1974, he founded Iran’s Blood Transfusion Organization (*Sāzēmān-e Enteqāl-e Khun-e Irān*)—a center for recruitment of healthy voluntary blood donors.

**ON THE VERGE OF OBLIVION?
Stone Lions Deserted in Southwest Iran**

Tehran Times, 03/29/20

Photo by Alireza Mohammadi, ISNA

Some cultural heritage enthusiasts say that hundreds of stone lions, which were placed on top of the tombstones of brave and courageous people of Bakhtiari tribe in the past, are now on the verge of oblivion and even fading away.



Bakhtiari nomads regard such stone statues, locally called ‘Bard Shirs’ as a symbol of bravery, valor, and characteristics like adroitness at hunting and shooting in war as well as horse-back riding on top of the gravestone of that group of people. Scattered across certain graveyards in Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari province, southwest Iran, these statues remind men who enriched the history of their tribes in a mythical form by their names and departed this life.

**SOHRAB MOHEBBI TO CURATE
2022 CARNEGIE INTERNATIONAL**

ArtForum, July 08, 2020



Writer and curator Sohrab Mohebbi has been named curator of the Carnegie International’s 58th edition, set to open in 2022. Mohebbi, who is thirty-nine and grew up in Iran, is the first Western Asian person to helm the contemporary art survey in its 124-year history. Prior to his appointment, he served as curator at SculptureCenter in Queens, New York, and associate curator at the Roy and Edna Disney/CalArts Theater

in Los Angeles.

According to Artnews, Mohebbi will focus his research around conceptions of “reconstitution” and “decentralization”; he names Chicana theorist Gloria E. Anzaldúa’s semi-autobiographical *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (1987) as a central text. He also plans to distribute the International across Pittsburgh, creating new partnerships between the museum and the city’s other public entities. When asked how the Covid-19 pandemic will inform his curation, Mohebbi replied: “I’m sure that whatever we do will be a document of this moment.”

This edition of the Carnegie International will be the first led by the newly appointed director Eric Crosby. While curator at SculptureCenter, Mohebbi organized the group exhibi-

tion “Searching the Sky for Rain” and a monographic Banu Cennetoğlu show (both 2019). At REDCAT, he curated solo exhibitions of work by Dave Hullfish Bailey (2018), Tamara Henderson (2016), and John Knight (2016). His 2015 REDCAT show “Hotel Theory,” which he cocurated with Ruth Estévez, received the 2013 Emily Hall Tremain Exhibition Award.

NEW SMART PHONE CORONA TEST

Massoud Tabib-Azar of the University of Utah are trying to create a portable reusable virus sensor. It is about the size of a quarter and detects the virus in one minute.

The sensor used to detect another virus Zika, is now being reworked for COVID-19. Besides identifying the positive or negative, the test will also provide the person with the ability to track the virus and reduce spread. At this point, however, the U.S. is stating that at least five million COVID-19 tests per day are necessary to understand and contain the spread. This is currently not possible because of the current turnaround time of detection. With this one minute result test this may be able to be accomplished and use only one drop of saliva. In other words a simple conversation on your phone would allow enough saliva to hit the sensor. How does it work?...The individual plugs the sensor into the cell power port and launches an app. It is then read using a signal. It is believed that the prototype will be ready for clinical trials within two to three months and available for retail of \$50 to \$60 dollars, if approved for commercial use.

THE SOLITUDE OF THE TRAVELER

Photograph by Reza Deghati

This traveler, poised on the summit of a mountain in Afghanistan brought to mind my own road traveled. I discovered the enlightened wandering of a traveler during my adolescence in my native Iran, and I found I loved it. It is a feeling that pushes one out of one’s comfort zone, getting on the road, exposing oneself to the unknown, to encounters, sometimes, even to danger, to the suffering when you push yourself and the joy of taking a break and finding a welcoming smile. I have often hiked alone, with only my camera for companion. Those years whetted my appetite for taking to the road in search of the unknown, which could take the form of a person or a landscape. I have always had a desire for physical experimentation with insatiable curiosity. Then there is only one step between discovery and desire, the need to share it with the rest of the world, and, consequently to bear witness to it through photography. Ever since, my life has been lived between war and peace, along the roads of the world.



**COMPOSER LORIS TJEKNAVORIAN
CREATES “MEMORABLE” PIECE
IN HOME QUARANTINE**



Tehran Times - Loris Tjeknavorian, the 82-year-old Iranian composer, has said that he has created one of the most memorable pieces of his life during the home quarantine. Speaking to Mizan, he said, “I have worked on a special piece over the past four months for which I have not selected a name as yet, but it is the outcome of contemplation and mediation during the home quarantine. I believe it will be one of the most memorable works of my professional life.”

“Despite the government’s permit for reopening concert halls after about a four-month shutdown, everything is still closed and I think it is impossible to perform any concert at present, but I have many pieces ready to be performed,” he added.

“The pandemic caused great losses for musicians, however, it also provided great opportunities for them to create new and innovative works in their solitude during the home quarantine.” Earlier in April Tjeknavorian released a 12-minute composition named “Corona”

The piece was composed in three movements named “Assault”, “Death” and “Life”.

Loris Tjeknavorian: “Corona” for strings in three movements “The first step to fight the coronavirus is to observe all the health tips to get rid of this new disease soon, but as long as this situation continues we should try to do our best. If we are artists or musicians we need to work harder and if not we need to increase our personal knowledge,” he said at that time.

A PLEA FOR PEACE

Nasrin Sotoudeh was arrested on 2018 in Iran by the Prosecutors Office and Ministry of Intelligence. Why? Because of her work, as an attorney for human and women’s rights. Additional charges once she was in Evin Prison were added with a sentence of many years and 1488 lashes. Currently, she is in the women’s ward of the prison and shares three rooms with 45 other inmates, most of which are there because of their activism.



Her days like the other inmates are filled with chores, reading, crafting and reading with visitation with her family on Sundays. Interesting enough her ward is absent of any women who protested against the hijab, but some of her cellmates are those who visited the subway and handed out flowers last Inter-

national Women’s Day.

It is Ms. Sotoudeh’s opinion that Iran, is a country where women’s rights are systemic. Because of this she feels that International Women’s Day is important and needs to be commemorated and honored.

This year with all that is plaguing Iran, including the coronavirus, she pleads with the government to end its animosity with the world. And she pleads the help of other activists around the world, Americans and all Iranians to help those in Iran with their pursuit of peace and survival.

DID YOU KNOW?

Azar Andami was born on December 8, 1926 and died on August 19, 1984 at the age of 58.. She was an Iranian physician and bacteriologist. Born in Rasht, Iran in 1926, she began her career as a teacher for the Ministry of Culture, but attended the University of Tehran and graduated as a Doctor of Medicine in 1953.



At first, she specialized in gynecology. She moved to the Pasteur Institute in Tehran and then to Paris to study bacteriology.

She published several scholarly papers and invented a vaccine against cholera.

A crater, named “Andami”, on the planet Venus was named in her honor by the International Astronomical Union.

Taken from Wikipedia

PERSPECTIVE

Someone sent this to me and I'm passing it along - a different perspective to think about self-isolation, to stay on track and how to face another life challenge.

1. There are no bombs raining on our heads.
2. I am not a prisoner held in solitary confinement, as millions are.
3. I am not a refugee trying to escape with my life.
4. I am not standing in line waiting to fill a pot of water.
5. I have access to fresh food and I'm not starving.
6. I have hot running water.
7. My country has not been ruined by years of war.
8. I can reach my friends by phone and check in on them.
9. My friends check in on me because they care about me.
10. Any whiplash I feel about this strange turn of events is itself a sign of privilege.
11. More than half of the world would gladly trade their everyday problems for the modest inconveniences I am experiencing.
12. I may have anxious dreams but I'm dreaming them on a proper bed and I'm not sleeping on the sidewalk.
13. By staying at home I'm helping the planet rest.
14. As long as I have my mind I can create, imagine, dream and not be lonely.
15. This global crisis connects me to people around the world and reminds me of our common humanity. This is a good thing.
16. When something tragic happens to another country next time, I will respond to it not with superiority, but humility and recognition.
17. I will fight for positive changes and economically just policies in my own country.
18. I am surrounded by books.
19. I am surrounded by love.
20. The trees have already begun to bloom.

IRAN PRODUCES ANTI-CORONAVIRUS MEDICINE "TOCILIZUMAB"

The drug "Tocilizumab", confirmed to be effective in the coronavirus treatment, has been produced in Iran and will be distributed in hospitals in the next two weeks, IRNA reported on Monday. In addition to Remdesivir, Tocilizumab has been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to help partially improve COVID-19, Heydar Mohammadi, an official with Food and Drug Administration said.



This drug has not yet entered the pharmaceutical market in the country and only a limited amount of it had previously been donated to China, which is still used in hospitals, he stated.

He went on to say that the subcutaneous injection of Tocilizumab or Actemra, which is used to treat rheumatism, is now produced by an Iranian pharmaceutical company, but the intravenous injection is used for COVID-19 patients.

Probably next week, the clinical trials and tests will be approved by the Food and Drug Administration, and it will most likely be released and distributed in the hospitals during the next two weeks, he noted.

Iran previously produced the antiviral agent Remdesivir for the treatment of coronavirus patients.

So far, no effective and reliable medicine has been identified for the treatment of coronavirus in the world, but remdesivir and Actemra are prescribed for patients with this virus in Europe and the United States.

Remdesivir was studied in clinical trials for Ebola virus infections but showed limited benefit. Remdesivir has been shown to inhibit replication of other human coronaviruses associated with high morbidity in tissue cultures, including severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus (SARS-CoV) in 2003 and Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV) in 2012.

The number of people diagnosed with coronavirus in Iran reached 296,273 on Tuesday, of whom 16,147 have died and 257,019 recovered so far. Over the past 24 hours, 2,667 new cases of people having the virus have been identified, and 235 died, Health Ministry spokeswoman Sima Sadat Lari said.

Currently, 3,902 patients with coronavirus are in critical condition, she added.

Source: Tehran Times

138 HEALTHCARE WORKERS IN IRAN LOSE LIVES TO COVID-19

COVID-19 pandemic has taken the lives of 138 healthcare workers so far in Iran, most of whom were doctors and physicians, Hossein Keranpour, the director of public relations of Medical Council, has announced. The healthcare workers who lost their lives in the fight against coronavirus are called martyrs of health.

Most martyrs were among the physicians amounting to 60 percent, and 20 percent of whom were nurses and the rest were other hospital staff. Maryam Hazrati, deputy health minister for nursing said in May that some 65 percent of 200,000 nurses in the country was at the forefront of coronavirus fight.

Source: Tehran Times

Persian Scholar
Ibn Sina
 First Came Up
 With Idea of
Quarantine

Rasia Hashmi
 Pakistan's Siasat News,
 April 06, 2020



“Ibn Sina was a Persian polymath who is regarded as one of the most significant physicians, astronomers, thinkers and writers of the Islamic Golden Age, and the father of early modern medicine“

It was the Persian scholar of medicine, Ibn Sina (980-1037) who first came up with the idea of quarantine to prevent spread of diseases. He suspected that some diseases were spread by microorganisms; to prevent human-to-human contamination, he came up with the method of isolating people for 40 days. He called this method al-Arba’iniya (“the forty”).

Hence, the origin of the methods currently being used in much of the world to fight pandemics have their origins in the Islamic world.

Ibn Sina is also known as Abu Ali Sina and often known in the west as Avicenna. He was a Persian polymath who is regarded as one of the most significant physicians, astronomers, thinkers and writers of the Islamic Golden Age, and the father of early modern medicine.

In the article ‘Ibn Sina: An Exemplary Scientist’ published in ‘the fountain’ authors Ihsan Ali / Ahmet Guclu quoted, Richard Colgan’s book ‘Advice to the Young Physician’ published from New York, in which the author wrote: “Ibn Sina (known as Avicenna in Latin and in the

West) in his masterpiece The Canon of Medicine (United States National Library of Medicine, MS A 53) states that “Body secretions of a host organism (e.g., human being) are contaminated by tainted foreign organisms that are not visible by naked eye before the infection.” Let’s paraphrase this millennium-old statement as “Infections are caused by the contamination of body secretions of host organisms by foreign tainted microorganisms.”

It is quite impressive that this definition is almost the same definition we use today for infections and more importantly that Ibn Sina hypothesized on the existence of microorganisms. Ibn Sina went even further to hypothesize that microbial diseases (e.g. tuberculosis) could be contagious and that those who are infected should be quarantined. Let’s briefly review the discovery of microorganisms and be further astonished with the intuition and vision of the “Father of Early Modern Medicine”.

The authors further quoted Robert Koch’s book ‘A Life in Medicine and Bacteriology’ published from Washington, D.C. which read: “In the seventeenth century, nearly seven centuries after Ibn Sina, the Dutch scientist Anton van Leeuwenhoek (also referred to as the “Father of Microbiology”) observed microorganisms

under a microscope (van Leeuwenhoek 1980). With his fundamental discovery, he showed that there were living organisms that were not visible to the naked eye. What van Leeuwenhoek did not realize was that these microorganisms (e.g. pathogen: a disease-causing microbe) could actually be the cause of infections. This is contrary to the discoveries made by Ibn Sina seven centuries earlier that microorganisms could be the cause of infections despite the extremely limited evidence for the existence of microorganisms at the time. Nearly two centuries after Leeuwenhoek’s first observation of microorganisms, in 1876, Robert Koch, a German physician, postulated that microorganisms could actually be the cause of infection and therefore disease by his fundamental observation that the blood of an infected animal that contained pathogenic bacteria that, when transferred to a healthy animal caused the recipient animal to become sick.”

Ibn Sina’s gigantic medical encyclopedia al-Qanun fi al-Tibb (The Canon of Medicine), comprising of upwards of a million words, has been used as the standard medical textbook up until the seventeenth century and is still widely considered a valuable resource for the study of medicine.

Sogand Tabatabaei
 Doesn't Push the Anxiety Under the Carpet
 The Art of Discomfort

Sudhiti Naskar

Photo: Fiona Jane Orolfo

Double Scoop, (A visual arts news site in Nevada) July 1, 2020



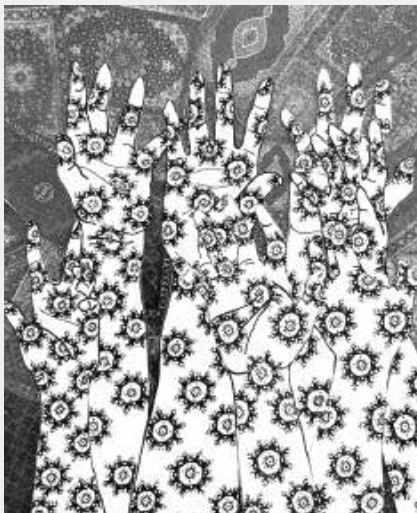
Editor's Note: Sudhiti Naskar was my colleague in the Media Innovations MA program at UNR, class of 2019. Shu is from India, and often, when we ran into each other in the grad lab, she'd talk about how much Eastern influence she notices in American art and culture. Those conversations evolved into a series of three articles in which she interviews artists from Eastern countries who work in Reno. Check out her article on Miya Hannan, "Common ground is closer than you think," and stay tuned for her piece on printmaking professor Eunkang Koh in July.

Kris Vagner

Sogand Tabatabaei, a young artist and a Master of Fine Arts student at the University of Nevada, Reno, has been living all by herself during the entire lockdown, away from her husband and parents, who are in Iran. During this period, she has created art that reflects some of the anxieties and uncertainties she has been feeling.

Titled "Lockup-2020," a new piece shows the moon with the body of a man, and the sun with the body of a woman on a backdrop of textured mustard yellow. The face of the sun, with bewildered eyes and an open mouth, suggests tension and fear. Somehow the fairytale-like visual has gotten jinxed with anxiety.

And why is the moon towering above the bright star? Isn't the sun the most powerful thing in our galaxy? "Lockup – 2020" is not the only art by Tabatabaei that made me want to get ahold of her and quiz her about her work. Its theme recurs in her



paintings and installations: discomfort and her refusal to push it under the carpet.

TURNING DISCOMFORT INTO ART

Tabatabaei said the relation between the moon and sun is a visual metaphor for a man-woman relationship in Iran. "Moon is the masculine gender, and the sun is feminine gender in traditional Persian stories," she explained. In Iran, she said, "A woman lives under the shadow of a man. Your existence is acknowledged because of the existence of a man in your life."

In the image, the man controls the ropes. I know this relationship. I have seen it in a different culture and country. (I'm from India).

I have heard similar stories from my American girlfriends.

Turning difficult-to-articulate feelings and politics of social construct into art is what makes Tabatabaei's work relatable. Even if one does not see the cultural contexts, they know what's going on within the frames. Once, at an exhibition of her work at UNR, a white man in his 20s remarked, "I can see how anxiety can be used to make art." The pandemic might have given her art a new edge, but its roots have been there for years.

Tabatabaei was born and raised in Tehran, the thriving capital city of Iran. "People think Iran is this dry, colorless place, but it isn't," she said. "There are so many lights in the city that it surprises outsiders." Perception aside, it has a vibrant nightlife. "We have so many cafes where we have movie nights," Tabatabaei said. "Writers and artists own many of these cafes. They are meant for conversations. I

would go out with my friends almost every night and stay out late. Some of these cafes stay open until five in the morning."

Iran used to be a cosmopolitan and liberal nation in the Middle East. In 1979, its authoritarian rule, rooted in religious nationalism, started after a conservative Islamic revolution dismantled the Shah of Iran, who was allied to Europe and America.

The new government not only rejected the West's ambition to mine Iran's oil, it also rejected all things Western, including culture and attire. "There is a strict government rule about how women should dress," Tabatabaei said "My mother did not want to wear a hijab in the early days of the revolution, but it became compulsory. These days about 50 percent of women do not like wearing the hijab."

Tabatabaei, who was born in 1993, said Iranian women of her generation question everything: "We ask, why do women have to hide their bodies? Why do we have to obey men's rule?" Currently, women of Iran dress in Western clothes. They are rejecting the traditional cover-all hijab and going out with partial head covers. "They know they can get arrested because of this," Tabatabaei said. "Designers, dressmakers, people who wear the dresses all do it with grave risks. Whether my generation knows it or not, they are sending out a message. They are part of this movement."

THE MAGIC OF CARPETS

When Tabatabaei was eight, she went to Kashan, a city famed for high-quality carpet, located north of Esfahan province, where her father's side of the family lives.

THE TIME OF PANDEMIC

“Here I saw for the first time how a carpet is made,” she said. “I was born and raised on carpets, and my mother tells me I used to daydream around a carpet. I have memories of a childish imagination that I could hide under the flowers. Persian carpets don’t have forms like flowers or leaves. They are abstract forms, but from a distance, they look like flowers. I would try to name the color.

This always made me feel warm and secure, but until then I had not seen how a carpet was made. In Kashan, when I saw a woman weaving a carpet in a small room, threads everywhere, an unfinished work, I did not like it. I knew she came from a family that abused her. She had a hard life. I thought she was lying while creating colorful images. It was like she was pretending when she had no bright spot in her own life. I don’t know why I reacted like that; guess I did not want to know the messy process behind something that looked perfect and complete to me.” Growing up, she started disliking the carpet. “At one point, I hated the patterns and colors.” Then, in her early 20s, she became interested in traditional Persian music. This helped her to see the beauty in her culture. Slowly she regained her love for carpets.

In her artwork, instead of showing carpets as uncomplicated and exotic, she uses them as a motif to express her political consciousness, her discomfort around Iranian laws, and her sense of hybridity as an international person in America. She made a collage where carpet-like patterns merge into each other and create a tapestry of maps or landscapes held together by a federal document that also looks like a carpet.



The threads started appearing in her work when she began making art in the United States. “The initial reason that I used thread was to portray my psychological state of mind,” she said. “When I was leaving my country I was having mixed feelings about leaving. I expanded the idea, and I used threads to demonstrate female existence and the amount of mixed and tied up emotions and feeling an individual carries.”

Tabatabaei has experienced anxiety and loneliness since she came to the U.S. But instead of suppressing them, she lets them guide her thoughts about how gender and cultural identity function in her work. She said that higher study in the U.S. is a step in that direction. Since she came here three years ago, she has made deeply personal art using different media such as video, drawing, print, and installation.

Her piece titled “Alienated” unpacks the uncomfortable feeling that she is under surveillance because of her foreign origin. Even though her viewers did not know about her discomfort around the term “legal alien,” a tag for international students, they could relate. An older woman told her, “There’s a security camera at my work, and I identify with the feeling of being watched.” A younger woman associated the familiar feeling of alienation with a fast-changing world—and with discord in her own family. Responses like these give Tabatabaei hope that she might be on the right path.

“It’s a big responsibility to talk about your country and culture to an international audience,” she said. And it can get tricky. Sometimes, the ones she turns to for creative inspiration, her people and culture, do not agree with her: “I have had Iranian women living in America telling me, ‘But we are not weak, we are not victims!’ And I say, ‘Yes, that is exactly what I am trying to say, that we are strong and resilient.’”

Some from Iran have asked her if she is blaming men. Her answer: “I don’t think I am! I am talking about political issues that can add to a woman’s burden.



I am not saying it is because of men. I am questioning political activities that can be made even by a woman in the government. A woman who is in charge can restrict other women.”

Conversations like these challenge preconceived ideas and make people uncomfortable. Tabatabaei tells me that she is looking for the “common language” that connects her to her audience beyond the cultural, political, and geographical differences. Yet, finding it takes constant work, and it starts by exploring the self.

Sudhiti Naskar is a multimedia journalist and researcher who has years of experience covering international issues. In the role of journalist, she has covered art and culture, environment, economy, politics and gender. Her work has appeared in BBC, The Wall Street Journal, The National, The Caravan and more. She’s also the author of the book Tsunami, Waves that Shook the World.

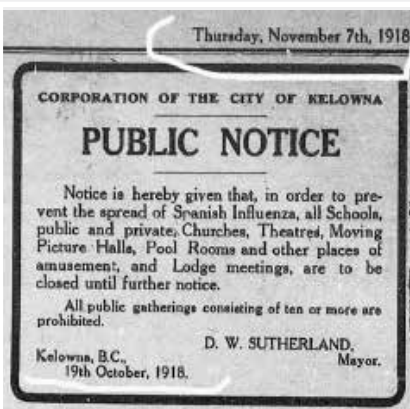
Correction and Apology

On page 17 of the Spring 2020 issue of *Persian Heritage* there is a correction to the article PCIAA. The names under the pictures are incorrect. Please note that the images in the picture should read Brian Appleton and John Limbert. Jackie Spurlock is not in the image.

THE TIME OF PANDEMIC

History Repeats Itself

this poem written in 1869, by Kathleen O'Mara and reprinted during 1919 Pandemic.



And people stayed at home
And read books
And listened
And they rested
And did exercises
And made art and played
And learned new ways of being
And stopped and listened
More deeply
Someone meditated, someone
prayed Someone met their
shadow
And people began to think dif-
ferently And people healed.
And in the absence of people
who Lived in ignorant ways
Dangerous, meaningless and
heartless, The earth also began
to heal
And when the danger ended
and People found themselves
They grieved for the dead
And made new choices
And dreamed of new visions
And created new ways of living
And completely healed the
earth Just as they were healed



REVIEWS

A MOSAIC OF METAPHORS (a film by Bahman Maghsoodlou)



This educational and impressive film is a must see. It searches the life and work of a great master in Iranian theater. One who has also created many exceptional works in the cinema. The film was an official selection at the MESA Film Festival 2019. In this film the viewer will see the extraordinary works of Bahram Beyzaie, a dramatist and filmmaker. He considered to be one of the most prominent and important Iranian scholars of the performing arts. Besides films he has gifted the world with fifty books and theater experiences. This film is the third part of The History of Iranian Cinema, that focuses on his works from 1970 to 2009. What better professional to have made this film than Bahman Maghsoodlou, whose works need no explanation.

THE LADIES' SECRET SOCIETY: HISTORY OF THE COURAGEOUS WOMEN OF IRAN Manda Zand Ervin

This riveting and remarkable book reveals, in print for the first time, the long history of struggle against clerical domination partaken by Iranian women across the centuries. Rooted in the long-standing and distinguished history of ancient Iran across the millennia, where Mother-Gods were once revered, the Ladies' Secret Society, an organization founded in 1909, was both the inheritor of this proud history, and the progenitor of the contemporary women's rights campaign of Iranian women (inside Iran and the diaspora) today.

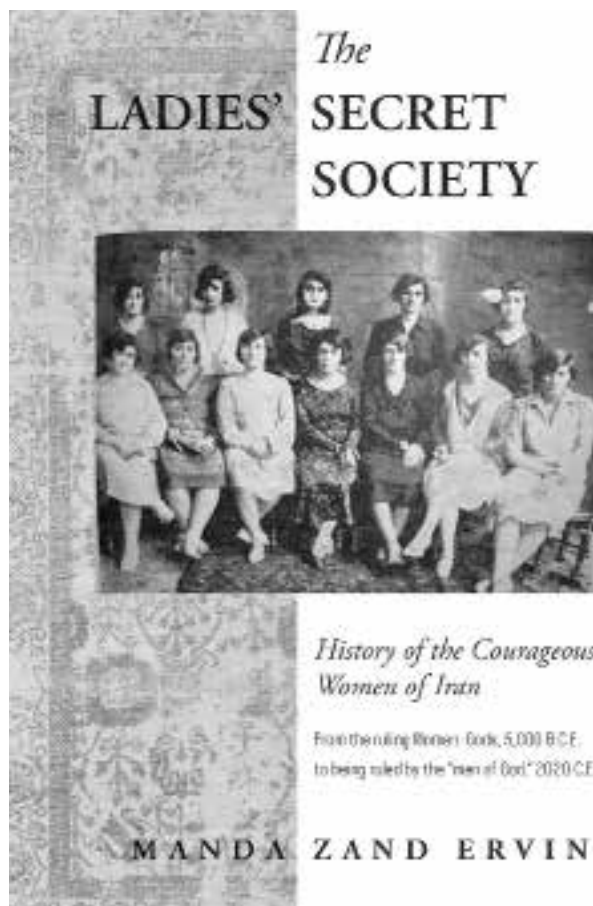
Iranian women from Malayer (near Hamedan in the northwest) engaged in target practice in the Malayer city limits in the late 1950s. The association between weapons and women is nothing new in Iran; Roman references for example note of Iranian women armed as regular troops in the armies of the Sasanians (224-651 CE).

Zand Ervin relates the stories and records the accomplishments of generations of individual women activists, who fought for every iota of freedom they gained, only to witness their hard-won rights virtually stripped overnight after the arrival of the pan-Islamic establishment into Iran in 1979. During the early days of the establishment of the pan-Islamic theocracy, Zand Ervin witnessed the execution of several innocent people, including her high school principal, who, as stated by Zand Ervin, was executed simply because she was a woman – and the Secretary of Education. She offers dramatic and compelling eyewitness testimonies of strong and emancipated women who were forced against their will to live under a pan-Islamist system. These same women, as Ervin Zand documents, have fought back often under

near-impossible odds, and continue to fight for women's rights inside Iran to this day. Manda Zand Ervin's History of Iran (with its compulsory imposition of the veil upon women since 1979) offers insight and context into the distressing news of today dominating the headlines and the ensuing dangers of the clerical gender apartheid system.

Born in Iran, and educated in the United States, Ervin was the managing director of the department of statistics and international affairs at the Customs Administration of Iran prior to the 1979 Islamic Revolution. In 1980, Ms. Zand Ervin came to the United States as a political refugee and became a US citizen three years later. As a women's rights activist and leading expert on Iranian affairs, she has been frequently consulted by Members of Congress and has testified at Congressional briefings, the Helsinki Commission, and the United Nations. In February 2008, Mandana Ervin was appointed as the United States' Delegate to the United Nations' Commission on the Status of Women. She was also the featured speaker at the G8 Summit in Rome, on Violence against Women in 2009. In 2012, she received the EMET Speaker of the Truth award.

Manda Zand Ervin is the founder and president of the Alliance of Iranian Women, an organization that brings the voices of Iranian women living under the gender apartheid policies of the pan-Islamic establishment's Sharia Laws to the West. Her articles have appeared in; American Thinker, the Washington Times, PJ Media, Gate Stone Institute and many others. She has appeared on CNN, Fox News, BBC and regularly speaks on human rights, women's rights and Middle East issues.





Mehregān is a Zoroastrian and Persian festival celebrated to honor the yazata Mithra (Persian: Mehr), which is responsible for friendship, affection and love. It is also widely referred to as the Persian Festival of Autumn.

According to *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Zoroastrianism* (2015), it was originally a feast honoring the Zoroastrian yazata Mithra. By the 4th century BCE, it was observed as one of the name-day feasts, a form it retains in today. Still, in a predominantly Muslim Iran, it is one of the two pre-Islamic festivals that continue to be celebrated by the public at large: Mehregān, dedicated to Mithra (modern Mehr), and Tirgan, dedicated to Tishtrya (modern Tir).

Name-day feasts are festivals celebrated on the day of the year when the day-name and month-name dedicated to a particular divinity intersect. The Mehr day in the Mehr month corresponded to the day farmers harvested their crops. They thus also celebrated the fact Ahura Mazda had given them food to survive the coming cold months.

Irrespective of which calendar is observed, Mehregān falls on the 196th day of the

calendar year. For details on how this date is calculated, see basis for the date, below. For calendars that have March 21 as Nowruz or New Year's Day (i.e. in the Fasili and Bastani variants of the Zoroastrian calendar as well as in the Iranian civil calendar), Mehregān falls on October 2. For the Shahan-shahi variant of the Zoroastrian calendar, which in 2006–2007 has New Year's Day on August 20, Mehregān fell on March 3 of the following Gregorian year.

For the Kadmi variant, which has New Year's Day 30 days earlier, Mehregān falls on February 1. In al-Biruni's eleventh-century *Book of Instructions in the Elements of the Art of Astrology* (233), the astronomer observed that "some people have given the preference to Mihragān [over Nowruz, i.e. New Year's day/Spring Equinox] by as much as they prefer autumn to spring."

As Biruni also does for the other festival days he mentions, he reiterates a local anecdotal association for his description of Mehregan (ha almirjan in the author's Arabic parlance) with a fragment of a tale from Iranian folklore: On this day, Fereydun vanquished the evil Zahhak and confined him to Mount Damavand.

This fragment of the legend is part of a greater cycle that ties Mehregan with Nowruz; Dahak vanquished Jamshid (who the legends have as the one establishing Nowruz or New Year's Day), and Fereydun vanquishes Dahak, so restoring the balance.

The association of Mehregan with the polarity of spring/autumn, sowing/harvest and the birth/rebirth cycle did not escape Biruni either, for as he noted, "they consider Mihragān as a sign of resurrection and the end of the world, because at Mihragān that which grows reaches perfection."

In Ancient Times

Mehregān was celebrated in an extravagant style at Persepolis. Not only was it the time for harvest, but it was also the time when the taxes were collected. Visitors from different parts of the Persian Empire brought gifts for the king all contributing to a lively festival. During pre-Islamic and early Islamic Iran, Mehregān was celebrated with the same magnificence and pageantry as Nowruz.

It was customary for people to send or give their king, and each other, gifts. Rich

people usually gave gold and silver coins, heroes and warriors gave horses while others gave gifts according to their financial power and ability, even as simple as an apple. Those fortunate enough would help the poor with gifts.

Gifts to the royal court of over ten thousand gold coins were registered. If the gift-giver needed money at a later time, the court would then return twice the gift amount. Kings gave two audiences a year: one audience at Nowruz and other at Mehregān. During the Mehregān celebrations, the king wore a fur robe and gave away all his summer clothes.

After the Mongol invasion of Iran, the feast celebration of Mehregān lost its popularity. Zoroastrians of Yazd and Kermān continued to celebrate Mehregān in an extravagant way.

In the Present-day

For this celebration, the participants wear new clothes and set a decorative, colorful table. The sides of the tablecloth are decorated with dry marjoram. A copy of the *Khorddeh Avesta* ("little Avesta"), a mirror and a *sormeh-dan* (a traditional eyeliner or kohl) are placed on the table to

gether with rosewater, sweets, flowers, vegetables and fruits, especially pomegranates and apples, and nuts such as almonds or pistachios. A few silver coins and lotus seeds are placed in a dish of water scented with marjoram extract.

A burner is also part of the table setting for kondor/loban (frankincense) and esband (seeds of *Peganum harmala*, Syrian rue) to be thrown on the flames.

At lunch time when the ceremony begins, everyone in the family stands in front of the mirror to pray. Sharbat is drunk and then - as a good omen - sormeh is applied around the eyes. Handfuls of wild marjoram, lotus and sugar plum seeds are thrown over one another's heads while they embrace one another.

In 1960s the Postal Service in Tehran issued a series of stamps to commemorate Mehrgan Festival.

Basis For the Date

As noted above, Mehrgān is a name-day feast. These name-day feasts are festivals celebrated on the day of the year when the day-name and month-name dedicated to a particular angel or virtue intersect. Indeed, Zoroastrian Persians before Islam had 30-days months, which means that each day in a month had a different name, with 12 of the days also being names of the 12 months. The day whose name corresponded to the name of the month was celebrated. It was a celebration of life, seasons changing, God, and joy. In Zoroastrianism, happiness is very important and is considered as a holy virtue that must be attracted. Thus, this religion has always had many feasts and celebrations.

What that day corresponds to in another calendar is subject to which variant of the Zoroastrian calendar is fol-

lowed:

- The Fasili and Bastani variants of the religious calendar adhere to Gregorian intercalation (leap-day) rules, and therefore Mehregān is celebrated on a day that is fixed in relation to the Gregorian calendar. Mehregān is then always on October 8.

- The Shahanshahi and Kadmi variants of the religious calendar do not intercalate at all, with the result that over the last 14 centuries, Mehregān has fallen behind and is now either 7th (Shahenshahi) or 8th (Kadmi) months before the same date in the Fasili and Bastani variants.

The Bastani calendar is used primarily in Greater Iran and by Persians of the diaspora, while Zoroastrians of India (subject to calendrical faction) use one of the other three variants. Non-Zoroastrian Iranians do not observe any variant of the Zoroastrian calendar, but

instead use Iranian calendars. When introduced in 1925, the Zoroastrian festival days were pegged to the Bastani variant of the Zoroastrian calendar. The first six months of the civil calendar had 31 days each, while all Zoroastrian calendar months have 30 days each. So, by the 7th month (Mehr) there is a difference of 6 days between the two.

Thus, October 8, which in the Bastani/Fasili calendar is the 16th day of Mehr month, is in the Persian civil calendar the 10th day (Aban) of the same month. The relationship between Mehregān and the various calendars is perhaps better understood relative to Nowruz. When (relative to another calendar) the first day of the year occurs is subject to interpretation, but independent of when it occurs, Mehregān is celebrated 195 days after that, that is on the 196th day of the year.

Can you please introduce yourself to our readers?

Thank you for this opportunity. I am Hossein Moayed Ghorashi, and I was born on November 23, 1945 in Mashhad Iran. My parents were Mrs. Pourandokht and Dr. Mahmood Ghorashi.

And where were you educated?

I have two high school diplomas from Barrington high school in Illinois, and Shahreza High school in Mashhad. My higher education degrees include a B.S. and M.S. in Electrical Engineering majoring in electronics from University of Tennessee in Knoxville TN.

What was your experience and exposure to the United States?

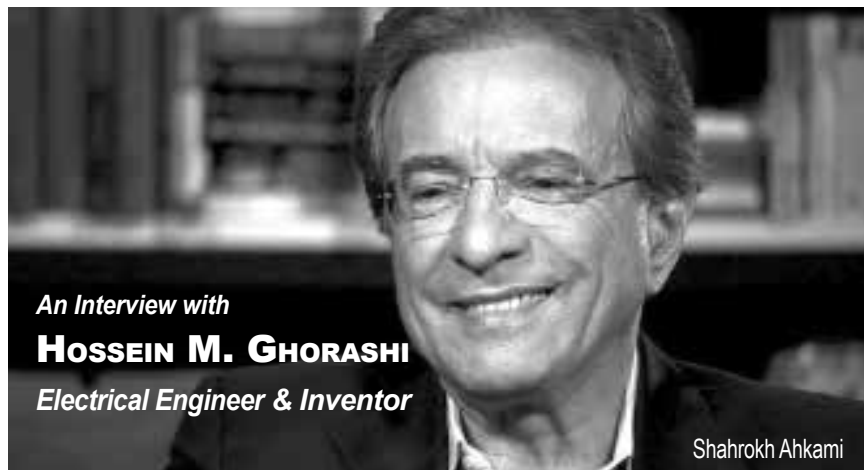
As a 16-year-old youngster in Iran, my exposure to and impression of the United States was limited to the American movies. It seemed to be a country made up of wild western frontiers and busy cities with high rises like New York.

How did you come to the United States?

In 1962, I saw a flier at school from American Field Service (AFS), an organization which specialized in international student exchange programs with the US. They were looking for 3 student candidates who could meet the scholastic requirements and had the necessary social backgrounds. After an English exam and an interview with my family, I was selected, and set to travel to the US to live with an American family to attend my senior year in high school. To my surprise, I found myself ready to take this big step, and that I had my parents' approval and blessing. As a highly active child, I think they were ready for a break, for a while at least! I found AFS's exchange program extremely interesting and valuable. It was an opportunity to learn a new culture, and to share my own in over 60 presentations at various schools and organizations. This was quite an experience for a young boy.

Did American Education differ from education in Iran?

I found the American high school



An Interview with
HOSSEIN M. GHORASHI
Electrical Engineer & Inventor

Shahrokh Ahkami

As a small child Hossein is remembered by the Ghorashi family as being smart and brave. He was fortunate to have a gracious mother and distinguished father. Both exposed Hossein to the latest tools of knowledge and the importance of education. We, as older cousins were amazed at his ability to read one book per week and his eagerness to share the story with us. He is both humble and courteous, both characteristics are obvious by simply looking at his face and seeing his genuine smile.

Persian Heritage is happy and honored to have two cousins, Hamid Ghorashi and Hossein Ghorashi on the cover of this issue. We are proud to have the opportunity to introduce them to the younger generation.

Shahrokh Ahkami

curriculum quite different from that in Iran. The few courses required for graduation were vastly simpler and narrower in scope compared to the many complex and advance courses in Iran. In general, the Iranian school system provided a much smoother transition to university than the American counterpart.

What were your personal experiences as a newcomer to the United States?

My American family was warm and generous treating me like a son. I kept in touch with them until the passing of the parents a few years ago. I was treated as an honored guest everywhere and later found out that the students had helped with my expenses by selling newspapers!

AFS's mission of cultural exchange between the students and those they met in US was a total success whose benefits continued throughout our lives. In this regard, the social experience and learnings that I took back to Iran were amazing.

You had a very unique experience shortly after your arrival to the United States,

can you share that with us?

At the end of the school year, international exchange students for the calendar year of 62-63, totaling over 2400, gathered in Washington D.C. where some of us had the unique opportunity to meet President Kennedy at the White House.

I was lucky enough to answer a few of his questions about my experience in the US. I then returned to Iran, and as a more mature young man, I carried with me an abundance of enlightened cultural insight to share.

Looking back at my 55 year plus of living in this country, I have nothing but fond memories, and consider myself lucky to have the opportunity to adopt a mix of Iranian and American cultures, which I have passed onto my children.

You come from a long line of physicians. Your maternal grandfather was an ophthalmologist. I believed he traveled every year to Holland to buy flowers and established the most amazing flower garden in Mashad. Your father also an

ophthalmologist was the first to have a hospital for eye surgery, of which your grandfather started. You broke the chain and became an electrical engineer? How did the change come?

As you have stated, I come from a long family line of physicians, both from my father and mother side of the family. My father was an ophthalmologist who also performed eye surgeries. While he never pushed, or suggested, I had the feeling that he wanted me to follow in his footsteps. One day I asked to be present during a surgery, and what I recall from the first moments of that experience was enough to convince me that I was not to be a physician!

After graduating from high school in Iran, I joined my cousin, Mr. Pirouz Ahkami, at David Lipscomb College in Nashville, TN. Upon completion of our freshman year, we then transferred to University of Tennessee in Knoxville, pursuing electrical engineering.

Can you discuss your introduction to inventions?

After graduation from university, I was employed by Spinlab, a local company which specialized in the design and manufacturing of cotton testing instruments. These instruments, which were used worldwide, measured properties of cotton fibers. While testing was slow and only measured singular properties, it was an important advancement in a field that estimated properties were conducted by human classers for decades.

Properties of cotton are important to several entities. They are the basis of cotton farmer's selling price, the merchant's marketing strategy, and the textile mill's basis of productions of yarn and fabric.

With over 100 million bales of cotton (50 billion pounds) produced each year, the need for an instrument that could measure multiple properties of cotton fibers such as length, uniformity, strength, elongation, finesse, color, and non-fiber matters rapidly was clear. In the '80's we embarked on a project to develop such an instrument to achieve this objective that later was known as High Volume Instrument (HVI).

Over the course of following years,

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) purchased an average of 30-50 instruments per year. In the early 90's, USDA successfully began to test 100% of US cotton on these instruments. The global world of cotton followed suit, and today over 80% of the world cotton is tested on these instruments, and it is the international standard for cotton testing.

I was the project manager during the development of multiple generations of HVI. In this role, and later as VP of Research & Development / Engineering, I maintained a level of responsibility for hardware and software developments. During this period, we were granted over 22 international patents in this field for which I authored and coauthored.

In 2000, I became the CEO of the US operation. I continued to participate in national and international conferences, presenting research papers in new developments and applications. The unofficial title of "Father of HVI", given to me by this industry, is something that I have cherished, and was proud of.

Tell us about your company and the reasons you retired?

Our company which was established in 1945 in a garage in Knoxville TN has an interesting history. In 1990, Spinlab was acquired by Uster Technologies which was a renowned international Swiss company also specializing in textiles quality control instrumentation. From 2002 thru 2012, we went thru two management buy outs, an IPO on Swiss Stock Exchange, and finally a 100% buy out by Toyota Industries. In 2015 after 46 years of service, I retired. The reason as you asked was it was finally time to spend more time with my family!

After so many years of living in the United States do you still remain attached to your Persian culture?

Although I have lived a significant portion of my life in the US, I am strongly connected to my native culture. I consider myself lucky to have had the opportunity to experience two vastly different cultures, and to live the best of both. As an Iranian, family and friends' ties are especially important.

My wonderful wife, Janice, is a retired executive as VP of Human Resources in our company. She along with our 3 children understand, appreciate, and are

supportive. They believe these unique circumstances have also enriched their lives in some aspects.

Is there any advice you would give to the younger generation?

The advice that I would have for young people in America, would be what I had preached for a long time... open your horizons beyond this land and to this ever-integrating world, learn and try to adopt the best of cultures. Appreciate and respect the differences. And yes, hard work does pay off!

Is there anything you would do differently?

While, like most, I would do some things differently if I were to start my life over. But none enough to change the happiness and contentment I feel today. Being retired and able to spend time with our family and four grandchildren is the best that I could ask for. I consider myself lucky for the opportunities that life has presented to me, but again I must admit without hard work the desired results would not have been achieved.

One final question, I know you have a passion for cars how did it begin?

You had asked about my love for cars which started when I was still young. My Uncle Saeed recognized this passion and would hold me in his lap while I drove his jeep outside of the town. Today, the passion is still there, and I enjoy driving my small collection of American and Italian sports cars.

Thank you.

**Advertise
Here:
(973)
471-4283
www.persian-heritage.com**



HOWZ-E SOLTAN SALT LAKE IN QOM, IRAN TURNS RED

ISNA PHOTO

Ahmad Zohrabi

ISNA June 2, 2020

Howz-e Soltan Salt Lake is located in Qom Province of Iran. Because of heavy rainfalls, more tributaries fed the Lake in spring and as a result, the water level of Howz-e Soltan Salt Lake increased. The rapid growth of algae in the Lake that react with the evaporation of water, turned Howz-e Soltan Salt Lake red. The algae produce beta carotene during the reaction so that the water of the Lake turns red.

The Salt Lake, known as Hoz-e Sultan, was built in 1883 (about 1261 solar years) and was built by the construction of the Tehran-Qom roadscape. The lake has penetrated 5 layers apart from each other up to a depth of 42 m from the ground and captures 240 square kilometers. The saline layers are up to 20 meters thick and are separated from clay soils with a brown to gray color. Some experts have considered this phenomenon as a wetland, and even the name is listed in the list of five lakes in Qom province, which has been approved by the Ramsar Convention. On the other hand, at the site of the Sultan's pond, the water level is zero and so it can be considered as a super-glint. The level of static or piezometric is the highest level of groundwater on a specific surface in the basement. This attraction is also known by the names of Qom Lake, Kevinamak, Saveh Lake and Shahi Lake, but do not mistake! This is not the famous Salt Lake of Qom. Qom Salt Lake is much larger and is located in southeastern Qom.

Howz-e Sultan, a lonely Salt Lake in

the heart of Iran, resembles a gigantic natural mirror as its shallow water covers a vast plain of salt deposits. It is the epicenter of a relatively rich fauna as well.

Sprawled about 40 kilometers northward of the city of Qom and adjacent to the Qom – Tehran highway, the lake is said to be a suitable place for breeding a kind of shrimp, called Armita. Covering 37,075 hectares with an altitude of about 720 meters above sea level, the lake is considered as one of the lowest parts of the Iranian plateau. Shour, Ghara-Chai, and Varamin are amongst rivers that discharge into the lake. The latter come from southern parts of Tehran Province. Melting snows and some seasonal rainfalls contribute to the inputs as well. The lake assumes different characteristics, sizes, and shapes in various seasons of the year so that its attractiveness varies from time to time.

It is composed of two main interconnected segments. The western part is named after the lake itself and the eastern one is called Hoz-e Moreh. Both become chockfull of water in rainy season. The region is a haven for some breeds of migratory birds, the majority of them come from the north Caspian countries. There can be found footprints of houbara, pigeon, grey goose, mallard, duck, ruddy shelduck, stork, flamingo, falconers, grey goose, stork and different kinds of eagles. Mammals like rabbit, rat, fox and sometimes deer can be spotted near the lake. According to researches, there are more than

240 species of valuable aerobic creatures such as algae, bacteria, and mushrooms. Best timing for visiting this lake starts from late autumn through early spring.

The passage through the lake is so interesting that many people spend 5 hours of their time to reach the end. The polished surface of the lake has, like its natural mirror, expanded in the wilderness bed and created a special effect. So, watch yourself in the biggest natural mirror in Iran. Photographing this scene takes many photographers to capture beautiful images. Some also ride in the bike and off-road groups and travel across the lake.

In addition to salt, deposits of Sultan Hussein consist of gypsum, marl, and clay. In addition to these sediments, the numerous and diverse types of salt-loving bacteria in the soils of the region have also been studied. Some of these bacteria are unique and their genetic and physiological properties enhance the likelihood of the presence of enzymes, antibiotics and valuable microbial products. Types of diatoms (monocellular algae) are also the first food producers in aquatic ecosystems in saline waters in the area that can be used in animal nutrition in the case of mass production. The best time to go to the lake is early spring and mid-fall because in the rest of the year you will not be safe from extreme cold or intense sunlight or you will not have the chance to see the lake. Spring: The weather goes to the moderate region, but as the spring passes, the heat goes to the prevailing region.

Like any other immigrants, the story of my life is unique. Is it an enigma? I feel entangled in a precarious position. Loving both my countries and at the same time having significant issues with each. However, I don't believe that I stand alone in such a web of confusion. It is my firm conviction that I am, either, seeking something much higher in social, ethical and moral values than any of my two countries can provide, or I am needlessly critical and idealistic.

The rationals for immigration are as diverse as are the immigrants. They emigrate from their homeland in search of a better life, or looking for freedom from persecutions, and or seeking to enjoy the deserving spirit of humanity.

After spending almost two-thirds of my life in the United States, I am haunted by the thoughts if I made the right decision to emigrate from my birthplace. Correct, I moved to a much better environment for raising my children, having the ability to live freely, and not being afraid to express my beliefs. Most importantly, I wanted to get away from dishonest, corrupt and unpatriotic politicians who for their own gain were conniving with foreign powers.

Did I get what I was pursuing? The clear answer to that question is both yes and no. Much better in some ways, and nothing to exult about, in others. I discovered, long ago, that people are the same and crossing the ocean would not make them any different. Many of the politicians are just as dishonest as those in my birth state.

Holding on to the power overrides their duties to the nation and the country. They are more of a servant to their party than a subject to the motherland (Fatherland). I came to realize that the more they scream of patriotism, the less patriotic they are. They very well resemble those pilfers, carrying the stolen goods while scream-



MY ADOPTED COUNTRY An Immigrant's Reflection

H. Guilak, M.D.

ing "Catch that Thief."

I was bitterly surprised to note that in the field of education, contrary to my beliefs, the elementary and secondary schooling in my country of birth was far superior to what I have seen in my adopted country. In the former, much emphasis was made on literature, science, math, history, and geography. For my children, who had their education in our adopted country, I saw very little acceptable basic training to my satisfaction, in the elementary and secondary schools.

However, to an astonishing surprise, there was more emphasis on football, baseball, basketball. Stretching Karl Marx's Remark, "the opiate of the masses." I am an ardent supporter of sports programs in schools, but for the students' health benefit only. In other words, they should constitute hor d'oeuvre or a dessert and not replacing the main course, where the outcome will be the

severest form of abdominal colic.

On the political ground, and in my view, I saw in the U.S., a variant of the despicable situation of my birth country. While growing up, for us, reading newspapers was a must. In our household, we subscribed to two major daily papers, mornings and afternoons editions. We were getting weekly publications of a different sort. Discussions of regular events were welcomed and encouraged. Our journals were deprived of funny pages and thanks to God we did not have to deal with sports sections.

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and in our neck of the wood, the Americans were considered a neutral party. Based on their prior performances, a number of those early Americans became our favorites. Due to their diligence and to their sacrifices in Iran, they were our idols. The respect for the Americans reached to

the point that during the Nationalization of the Iranian Oil in the early 1950s, every one of us, firmly believed, that if the British ever decide to attack our country, the United States will support our cause. A dream which was shattered by Eisenhower coup d'état in 1953. He blasted our fragile democracy to pieces, screaming that the US wanted to bring freedom to Iran!

During my childhood, I have witnessed the love and concerns of the American healthcare professionals in my hometown of Rasht, in northern Iran. I was taken many times to the American Presbyterian Hospital. Locally, better known as the Frame Hospital, in honor of its first and most distinguished physician, Dr. John Frame, a real physician who helped the native for over fifty years, and who died and is buried among those that he served and loved and who loved him.

The story of these people was recounted to us by our parents. When I was older and could read and write, I was given the writings about Americans like Howard C. Baskerville, who was sent as a Presbyterian teacher to Tabriz (northwest of the country). During the siege of the city by the forces of the central government, instigated by the Russians, he joined his students who were fighting the Shah's army. He was killed on his first attempt defending the city and its inhabitants.

I read about individuals like William Shuster who tried hard to rectify the disastrous financial system of my country, created by the Anglo-Russians cooperation or their animosity toward each other.

Shuster had met all kind of obstructions, including the accusation of being a Baha'i, an idea fomented by the British. The government forced his resignation through an internal coup d'état.

I became aware of men

like Dr. Samuel Jordan, nicknamed Mr. Chips of Tehran, and learned of his efforts in modernizing our educational system. Dr. Arthur Upham Pope, Dr. Phyllis Ackerman and Dr. Jay Gluck who tried to educate the Europeans and the Americans of the unmatched Iranian civilization, and unfortunately to no avail. I had the chance to correspond and talk with Dr. Gluck, a few years before his death. He gave me valuable suggestions about my book.

The action of these people and the likes of them reminded me what John Quincy Adams said on the Independence Day of July 4, 1821: "Wherever the standard of freedom and independence has been or shall be unfurled, there will her heart, her benedictions and her prayers be. But she goes not abroad in search of monsters to destroy.

She is the well-wisher to the freedom and the independence of all. She is the champion and vindicator only of her own. She will recommend the general cause, by the countenance of her voice and the benignant sympathy of her example.... Her glory is not dominion, but liberty. Her march is the march of mind. She has a spear and a shield; but the motto upon her shield is Freedom, Independence, Peace...."

Alas, we have forgotten what those great early Americans thought us! Our policies have rotated one hundred and eighty degrees. We made our name odious to the world populace. We bring the people needing us nothing but disaster and misery. Our lack of foresight in international affairs overcomes our good intention.

In the mid-1950s when I arrived in the US as a young man, I was seeking the Americans that I had read about. I met a lovely lady, Ms. Lou Nora Spiller, who adopted me as her son, (sort of). She was an immortal living soul of love and

humanity. Her devotion and her benevolence to mankind were unparalleled, and her understanding and compassion of the underprivileged were indisputable. Through her, I made the acquaintance of Senator Ralph Yarborough and many of his staff. The senator was a man of unblemished integrity that we don't have the likes of him these days.

While I was in Charlottesville, during my fellowship at the University of Virginia, I had the chance to visit him on many occasions. He was unique in his understanding of the world's problems, specifically those of the Middle East. What a treasure he was.

While at Baylor, I met and received substantial assistance and help from so many people that I am not able to name them all. They were members of the Faculty as well as my colleagues in training. Most of them are gone now. However, I have the memories to remind me of their superior moral and ethics. Returning to Houston, as an immigrant in 1970, I sensed a horrifying change in the horizon.

I became worried about the future of my adopted country. One of the striking differences that I saw was, at least and in part, due to the loss of the family values, apparent even in the highly-educated class.

I remember vividly, a discussion that I had at lunchtime in the Spring Branch Memorial Hospital.

One of the well-known and respected internists, Dr. D. L., could not believe and agree that we were helping our son with his car's payment.

He addressed Nahid and said, "Nahid, is he telling us the truth, or is just pulling our leg?"

"He is telling you the whole truth," Nahid replied.

"Why should you pay for your children's extra expenses?" He asked.

"Why not? You are a well

to do practitioner, you make good money. You most likely have accumulated substantial monetary reserve for the future. Where can you go wrong if you help your children at the start of their lives? Why we should act like some animals, and kick our offspring out of their nests as soon as they become of age? Furthermore, aren't they the beneficiaries of your wealth?

When you leave this world, would n't they inherit your accumulated worth? Help them to enjoy their youth and relish their enjoyments. Life is too short, Dr. D."

We have lost, in my view, our strength, "Our Family Ties, the basic pillar of any society." Grandly we tried hard to mimic the decadence of the Europeans, unreservedly different from our way life, our thinking, our moral and our ethics. Permissiveness became our standard for education. Like a pendulum, we went from one extreme to the other without evaluating the feasibility of

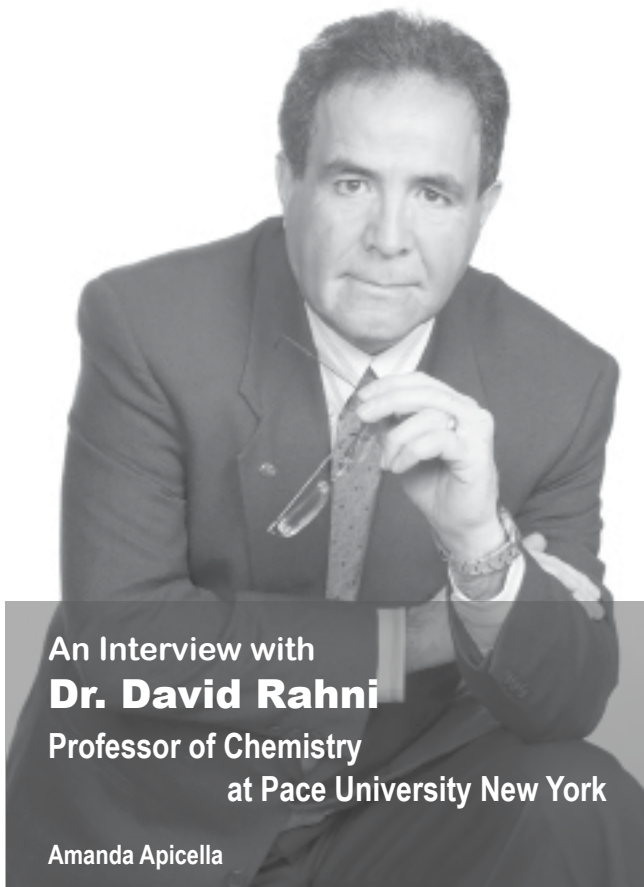
our action.

Money became our ultimate goal. Reaching that objective justified any means, legal or illegal; ethical, and or immoral.

I am a firm believer in a capitalist society. Not because it is without flaws, but there are none better. Its greatest strength lies in the creation of a competitive environment. However, on this road, with our exploitation, we went too far and created a state of "Runaway Capitalism" the most dangerous of all.

These are a few of the problems that as an immigrant, I am concerned, and which do not bring a feeling of wellbeing, satisfaction, and security, a reminder of my country of birth.

All said, our country, the United States of America, by far, is the best in the world. Reaching such a position was not easy, but maintaining it, is the hardest, requiring intelligence, sacrifices and true patriotism, a rare commodity.



An Interview with
Dr. David Rahni
 Professor of Chemistry
 at Pace University New York

Amanda Apicella

Thanks for sitting down to share with our readers where you grew up and walking us through your journey through life. How did your family and surroundings influence you in your formative years?

I was born in Tajrish Shemiran (Dezashib off Niavaran Street by the still standing firehouse) in Tehran IRAN, as the eldest of six siblings, including three sisters, the youngest of whom is sixteen years younger than me! We moved to Evin when I was just a toddler, to our still standing home alongside the Parkway, where after completing K-12 public schooling (Shahpour Tajrish High School) in Baghe Ferdows and receiving my chemistry degree from the National University, I moved to the U.S. in the summer of 1979 to “pursue” my (pre-/post-) doctoral studies just to return home upon graduation; one could surmise that my lifelong educational “pursuit” and permanent home return have not yet been fulfilled?! My living parents in their 80’s, born in Natanz, moved to Tehran as teenagers. My father was a school clerk, whom recorded and pen/abacus calculated grades and GPAs, and ultimately send grade-reports (karnameh) home to parents. Thus, education was deemed to be the key to upward socioeconomic mobility back then which may still apply anywhere today.

What pastime did you have while growing up in Evin Tehran?

Our pastime when teenagers was to play plastic ball soccer with small goal, or play taboukar, a baseball like game with a

home-made batting stick and tennis ball, *alak dolak*, and later hiking mountains often to Tochal peak (4200 meters) where I stayed in Palangchal, Kolakchal or Shirpala shelters. Beginning each mid-spring, we raided the fruit orchards in Evin to enjoy the bounties of *chaghleh badoom* (green almonds) and *gojeh* (green plums), mulberries, blackberries (shah-toot), cherries, pomegranates, apricots and peaches, pears and grapes, apples, quince, meddlers, and persimmons. Our hide and seek games spanning across dozens of homes, grain and vegetable fields and orchards, began every day at dusk and fizzled away at midnight! I had to conceal on a blind spot high on a tree to eat mulberries for hours. An easy source of packet money was to pick *bouteh* (dried pricked bushes) from the hillside now occupied by Evin Prison, and sell it to neighbors and drivers on the Parkway for fire festival, *Chaharshanbeh Souri*, and as the prelude to Nowruz! I completed the English National Institute evening diploma (12 semesters) at 16. When my father once bragged to his senior uncle Akbar at a Nowruz visit about my “overachievement”. The uncle looked at me for the first time and asked me one question: How would you say *Tokhmeh Kadoo* (pumpkin seeds) in English and as he was cracking them! He scolded my father of having wasted his money on a loser who claims to have an English diploma two years before high school diploma and yet does not know the name of such a simple snack!

What has been your personal key to success?

What were the biggest inspirations for your career?

My family was not materially rich; nonetheless, we were blessed with nurturing parents and tough love, surrounded by extended family and circle of friends. In fact, throughout my early life, we had to scavenge to make ends’ meet. Borrowing interest-free loans from the more distant affluent side of the family to build our first house and later to add a second floor to it, was a major impetus for the family’s upward mobility from the fringes of the poverty line. My father grudgingly took me once a year to Baab-Homayoun where he bought me a new suit for a few dollars before the New Year heralded by Nowruz; the sweet and sour nostalgia was that the suit was always a few sizes larger than my actual size but he would insist I would soon grow into it, which I never did! Amongst my friends were some even poorer than we were, but most were from the rapidly emerging aristocratic and extremely affluent technocrats, merchants, governments ministers, and a few with the royal lineage. Hence, like a great many other friends, from primary school onwards I recognized the need to work part-time and study full-time in order to break away from the vicious cycles of struggles.

Could you share with us a few more examples of odd jobs you held while in K-12 School and how you entered college?

Among a rather large number of odd jobs and apprenticeships (fruits picking, blacksmith, shoemaking, bakery, tutoring) I pursued to make a few pennies, golf caddying in the newly constructed 18-holes Royal Golf Club less than a mile from my home, was tough but rewarding. Later I served as an English interpreter at the annual summer International Trade Fair and Expositions across the Parkway. This experience allowed me to improve my English as my third language; of course after our native Persian, and a half-hazard Arabic! That said, my parents

instilled in me the importance of quality of life and a perpetual sense of reciprocity towards the community should far outweigh materialism; money is, we were told, a relative means to a comfortable existence, but must not overshadow over lives. Later, while still attending college, English became my bread and butter. I tutored private lessons, while managing 14 daily ESL classes at Armaghan Tarbiat K-9 School on Pahlavi Avenue. This historic school still stands alongside the sycamore lined avenue - a one of a kind in southwest Asia. Let me reiterate although I ranked among the few peers from 1st to 7th grades, I strayed down to a run of the mill student with repeat exams each August during 8th to 11th. Then, I finally completed diploma only by studying after Nowruz that year, to earn 17.5/20.0 GPA and passed Konkur to enter the university, a competitive entrance process for less than 10% high school graduates to enter.

Your fields of interest appear diverse and are seemingly unrelated to a layperson.... Could you highlight certain areas of particular interest to you?

Analytical chemistry, a modern branch of chemistry, which deals with “what specific substances are present, say in a bodily fluid or organ as in a physiologically native region (e.g., brain, kidney), how much of each substance is present, and how their fate relate to manifestation of specific disease or curing a malady at the molecular level,” is anchored to the development of biosensors. This has remained a major part of my research. Most my research contributions spans across probing fundamental questions in clinical, environmental, forensics, and medical challenges and as outlined in our book entitled, *Bioimaging in Neurodegeneration* as well as a prolific number of manuscripts on *progress in neuropsychopharmacology and biological psychiatry*. Opportunistically speaking, however, and in light of my recognized lack of access to cheap pre-/post-doctoral intellect and sophisticated instrumentation, I have collaboratively carried out mutually beneficial research projects with cross-disciplinary colleagues at myriad other universities (Oxford, Copenhagen, Rome, Florence, New Orleans, Stony Brook) as well as with peers at a number of corporate R&D centers and foundations (IBM, PEPSI, CIBA, AKZO-NOBEL, BASF, AMERICAN HEALTH FOUNDATION.)

You are a recipient of many awards. What has been your “secret of success?”

If there are any accolades that accompany an award, then the credit genuinely belongs to more than one individual; the students, peers and colleagues who inter-collaboratively brought a project to fruition are equally deserving. Life, without a perpetual path of learning, sharing, nurturing, imparting and a conscientious sense of advancing humanity and justice might have as well been a far less meaningful journey for us all, right?!

What are the avenues of research that you are exploring for the next few years?

I continue remaining abreast of, and contribute to, the much-anticipated integration of *in-vivo* biosensors in the human body for real-time monitoring, control, regulation and drug delivery in specific physiological organs. That said however, and as I am perambulating the final path of my career trajectory, I am

progressively taking more university administrative roles, while my scholarship is increasingly drawn to writing on the arts and culture, archaeology and history, science, environment and policy, poetry and prose, especially as these relate to Iran and southwest/south central Asia. Moreover, my goal is to play a more crucial role in propelling the Persian diaspora forward.

What are the lingering challenges and emerging opportunities in chemistry and education?

It is mind-boggling to compare the ever-expanding number of chemical molecules discovered or the chemical articles published; they currently stand at 50 and 100 million, respectively, compared to a mere one million words in the English language! For every chemical/scientific discovery, 100 new questions worthy of further investigation arise. The education and training of chemists is rapidly transforming, due in part to pedagogical innovation and instructional, computational and simulational technologies. It is, however, ironic that despite access to some of the best instructional technologies and pedagogical methodologies that science and math competencies for K-12 in the U.S. falls far behind countries like Iran, Vietnam or even North Korea. Luckily, thanks to a disproportionately large number of international (post-) doctoral students and immigrants, from war-torn nations, American universities have benefited from this international brain drain since WWII.

What is the biggest challenge that you have faced in your career?

Enriched with our historical heritage from our ancestral nation of Iran, we are indeed blessed to live here, where we have effectively raised our children and give back to our adopted land, AMRIKA (in Persian it pronounces as work for life!) Yes, the US is the best place there is with all its opportunities and challenges. However, the lingering impasse between the governments in Iran and the U.S. over the past four decades, have negatively impacted advancing our career prospects. This is especially true for the achieving mid- to upper-career level opportunities aspired by exemplary Iranian-Americans. One might argue that this is, to a certain extent, self-inflicted (induced by low self-esteem) or perhaps due to relentless politically-charged rhetoric by the media from both sides. The fact still remains, the same propaganda turns the tides of public opinion and turns decision-makers against people of Iran and, by extension, against Iranian-Americans. The result is over-achievement by Iranian-Americans in education and superior career advancement through hard work, and as they defy the odds to advance. Despite overachievement, many in our community opt for less risky career paths to mix in and be *a bigger fish in a smaller pond per se*. I opted for exactly that, but in the long run it enabled me to strike a balance between job and community and family roles. So, many of us live our entire lives between a twilight rock and a hard place, none of which we have ever had anything to do with....

You are or have been actively involved at a leadership level in many organizations Why you are so passionate about the community and what do you believe the future holds?

A major hallmark of my tripartite activities in higher dura-

tion is multifaceted service, whereby advancing or contributing toward learned and professional societies, government advisory panels, and international development are primacy priority. The advancement of humanity and community, equality and harmony, and justice and peace, all anchored on altruism, philanthropy and volunteerism, is in our genetic makeup. These values can be gleaned from our Persian *literati* poems, prose and *ethos*, the philosophical doctrine for a balanced and meaningful life in a cohesive community.

So, I did nothing beyond the ordinary, except to learn from, and simply follow in the footsteps of our historical giants, including Ferdowsi, Rumi, Algorithm, Hafez, Sa'adi, Avicenna and Razes, as well as more contemporary ones like Forough Farrokhzad, Parvin Etessami, Ahmad Shamlou, Amir Kabir, Mohammad Moin, or the exemplary leaders among us in the U.S.

Can you share your thoughts on your Iranian-American identity? What does it mean to be an Iranian-American?

This is *where the rubber hits the road*. As much as we may conceal our ethnicity in reaction to xenophobic stereotyping and culture bashing in the US or fear of persecution elsewhere, through portraying ourselves as the more popular immigrants, Italians or Greeks, it is only becoming exemplary world/American citizens as great as the American apple pie, that we should proudly declare ourselves to be IRANIAN-AMERICANS. We cannot avoid the sheer fact that even after many generations, that we, to most mainstreamers, are perceived as Persian watch cats at best, and not the American watch dogs! Our conundrum is further exacerbated so long as the two governments of Iran and the U.S. fail to respect each other, embrace the free exchange of arts, culture, science, technology and remove trade embargos. My thoughts should not be misconstrued when I advocate for *saving the baby and bath*, while trusting people to peacefully and civilly cleanse the bath water!

I am not favoring any government or political system as they have all emerged at one short historical juncture, and disappeared over time. What's far more critical is to safeguard the dignity and the well-earned stature of a diverse people and their secular society, human and democratic constitutional rights, which are anchored on the sovereignty, security and heritage of a nation. Let me reiterate again, that our Persian ethnicity and culture (read Iran and Ireland) is complementary to our newly adopted naturalization in the U.S., both combined make us more resilient and confident in doing our very best in life and the community, and in the nation and beyond.

Having just returned from the Harvard Iranian Weekend Forum, the large and as usual most impressive attendees and speakers, several hundred in number, were charged with the theme "ENGAGE." Allow me to take the liberty to expand this theme with more consequential "E" words as ***Entice, Enrap-ture, Educate, Energize, ENGAGE, Enable, Empower, Effec-tuate, Enrich, and Implore***....The paradigm shift for a loosely held coalition of diverse Iranian American organizations, which could unite on a few hallmarks, such as empowering our Iranian American community and our future generations that the time to appreciate their ancestral heritage and culture is NOW. This is congruent with *E pluribus unum*, out of many, **ONE!**

Would you wish to share your last thought here with

readers?

Summarizing, I have confidence in our families and community in the diaspora, as well as our 85 million brethren back in Iran and five million of us in diaspora, who despite short-run trials and tribulations, will in the long run triumph and opt for socioeconomic and political progress and remain among the most vibrant and immensely contributing people to humanity across the pond. Our brothers and sisters have spread out across almost every continent since pre-historic times.

Irrespective of our diversity in faith or background, we are united in adhering to the golden rule of treating others as you wish to be treated, the golden rule of treating others as you expect to be treated, anchored on faith in the three Zoroastrian tenets of good thought, good words and good deeds. *Living Persian life the fullest*, no one could ever more masterfully encapsulate the Iranian ethos and life psyche than the 13th century Persian poet Sa'adi:

*All Humans are members of one frame,
since they all, from the same essence, came
When one frame member becomes distressed,
the others lose their desired rest
If thou feel'st not for others' misery,
the name Human, is no name for thee*

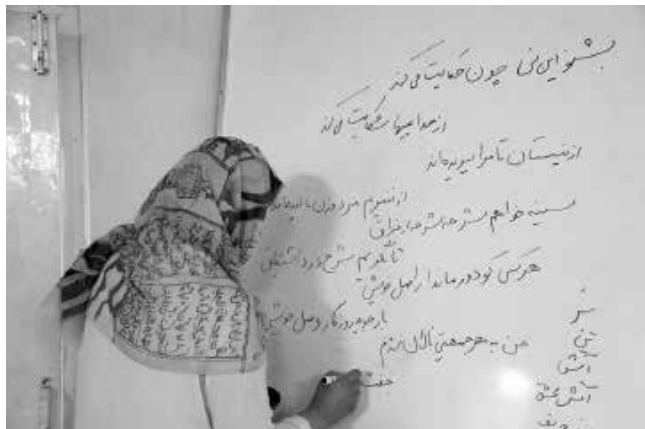
Professor Rahni, I thank you very much for your sharing perspectives in life and wish you all the best in your continued endeavors. And I thank you readers for being with us. Have a great day!

The Rich History of the Persian Language in India

Maryam Papi

Quart India on September 7, 2017

This article was first posted on Scroll.in. The article published in Kavehfarrokh.com has been slightly edited.



From the outset of the establishment of their rule in India, the British attitude towards Iran was ambivalent at best, and unfavorable towards the Persian language in particular. The English Education Act of 1835 essentially banned the teaching of Persian in India and its official use in Indian courts. Up to this time, Indians of diverse backgrounds (Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, etc.) were able to rely on Persian as a common Lingua Franca. Eliminating Persian was instrumental for the solidification of British rule over the Indian subcontinent. India's large and diverse population was now also cut off from a wide swathe of Persian-speakers in Central Asia, Afghanistan and Iran. To further weaken the bonds between India's Hindus, Muslim, Sikhs, etc. the British East Company also supported the promotion of extremist Islamist cults seeking to eliminate Persian and Indian cultural influences.

It is difficult to think of Persian as an Indian language today. Yet for hundreds of years, Farsi held sway as a language of administration and high culture across the subcontinent. It was brought in by Persophile central Asians during the 12th century, and played a role very similar to the one English does in modern India. So, in the 17th century, when the Marathi Shivaji wanted to communicate with Rajasthani Jai Singh, the general of the Mughal army in the Deccan, they used Farsi.

The elite of 19th century Bengal were bilingual in Farsi (Persian in English) and Bangla. Raja Rammohan Roy edited and wrote in a Farsi newspaper, and the favorite poet of Debendranath Tagore, Rabindranth's father, was Hafez, a 14th century poet from Iran. So impactful was Farsi's role that India's largest language today, Hindi, takes its name from a Farsi word meaning "Indian." With the coming of the Raj, English replaced Farsi, but pockets of the language still survive in India. This is an extract from the diary of a Persian teacher in Kolkata ...

KOLKATA DIARY

This is my third visit to Kolkata and I am still overwhelmed with joy to see the city flourishing culturally. Kolkata's extreme paradoxes, an intellectual environment existing alongside deprivation, create a combination of joy and struggle. My most educated Indian friends are from Bengal. I can see many similarly educated people on the streets of Kolkata. Every day, on their way to work, these intellectuals walk past crowds of hawkers and people washing themselves under the municipal water taps. Everything is wet in the monsoon, yet water is still a relief for

people who live in the street.

Kolkata does not show its reality to a tourist who only goes to the Victoria Memorial or Birla Mandir—the real Kolkata is on its streets. Part of this reality is also buried in the South Park Street Cemetery. This is where people like Sir William Jones (1746-1794), the founder of the Asiatic Society and the father of Orientalism, and Henry Louis Vivian Derozio (1809-1831) have been laid to rest. I went to this cemetery in the heart of the city, on a weekend, along with a group of Farsi language students who were attending the summer school held in Lady Brabourne College. The students gathered next to Sir William Jones's tomb and listened to their professor, who was explaining how Jones had served oriental studies during his short life in the city.

PERSIAN AND BENGALI

Looking for the city's Persian legacies, the same group of students found their way to St John's Church, where Farsi inscriptions are engraved upon the structure. They recount the life and death of people like William Hamilton, the surgeon who served the Mughal emperor Farrukh Siyar in Delhi. Farsi was a major language in the subcontinent for several hundred years. Despite Bengali having many words in common with Farsi, in Bengal, there are no longer any native speakers of Farsi.

It is still taught in a few schools of Kolkata as an optional subject. Some colleges, such as Lady Brabourne and Maulana Azad, have Farsi departments. Hearing the Farsi words coming out of their classrooms, it seems as though the Bengali tongue has forgotten how to pronounce Farsi words. The students could not read the inscriptions on St John's Church, even though most were Muslims, familiar with Urdu.

At a two-week summer school in Lady Brabourne College, organized by the Institute of Indo-Persian Studies, 54 students from various colleges in Kolkata had the chance to learn Farsi from native speakers for the first time. Some students could recite Farsi poems but as a native Farsi speaker, I could not grasp anything they said. The students in the Bachelor's program as well as some completing their Master's had to go back to the Farsi alphabet, to learn its correct sound and to distinguish letters like "f" and "p," which were being pronounced in a similar way due to their vernacular accent.

Next, they moved on to the formation and usage of simple and complex Farsi words, and reading out Farsi text in a proper Farsi accent. On the fourth day, they began memorizing the ghazals of Hafez and Khusro and Iqbal. They also glimpsed the

magnificent worlds of Firdausi, Rumi, Hafiz, Khushro, and others.

Considering things from a wider perspective, I wondered how this poetry might change their lives. Would an understanding of Sufism in Farsi poetry create better human beings? The literature may change their world outlook. But what is more solid? The grammar of a language or the rules of a society?

TAGORE CONNECTION

I was teaching Farsi through films to familiarize students with the everyday life of Iran, and to improve their listening skills. To my surprise, I realised that the Farsi studies students did not know much about Iranian culture. They were not even familiar with well-known film directors from the country.

Some of my questions were answered at Rabindranath Tagore's house, another location the Farsi students visited as a part of the extracurricular program provided by the summer school. The house has been turned into a museum, and certain rooms have been used to depict the cultural interaction between Tagore's home country and some of those he visited. Each of these rooms serves as a reflection on the cultural connections between India and the country visited by him. There is no room dedicated, however, to the Indo-Iranian cultural connections of Tagore—despite his having traveled to Iran twice in a two-year period. Considering such negligence of Indo-Iranian heritage, it is no wonder that the Iranian Embassy and the Iranian Cultural Center in New Delhi made a minimal financial contribution to Kolkata's Farsi summer school.

PROMOTION VERSUS PRESERVATION

Iran might be the home of the Farsi language, but it is also spoken in countries like Afghanistan and Tajikistan. Despite having a claim over Farsi, the Iranian government does little to promote the language abroad. In a place like India, Farsi does not need to be promoted—it merely needs to be preserved. Most Farsi manuscripts lie unused and locked in Indian libraries and archives. The task of documenting, digitizing, and preserving these manuscripts is beyond the capabilities of Persian Studies Centers in India.

The future of the Farsi language in India is ambiguous. Efforts are underway by the president of IIPS, professor Syed Akhtar Husain, to revitalize the language as well as Indo-Persian culture. Husain refers to the glorious era of Persian in the sub-continent, during which valuable books, records, and documents were produced. He said:

"It is a pity that the current generations have kept themselves away from the vast treasure troves of Persian literature preserved in various libraries and archives in Bengal."

Persian  Heritage

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT:

**Contact our
CALIFORNIA BASED ADVERTISING AGENT
for your ads.**

973 471 4283

World Artists Welcoming Iran's First International Online Student Puppet Festival

"We have corresponded with most Iranian students and universities around the world, and fortunately, we have received a great response. So far, more than 30 plays have been submitted to the festival from about 12 countries."

The first 'virtual International puppet theatre festival' started its work on 9th May 2020 by enrolling participants'

works on Instagram page of the festival - @_iospf - and sharing works on the same page.

Bahram Behbahani, puppet theater artist and lecturer of the University of Tehran, who is the festival's consultant, said in an interview with HonarOnline about the purpose of holding the a virtual puppet theater festival: With coronavirus infections widespread and the closure of cultural and educational centers, student classrooms changed from face-to-face to online. Since most of the classes in the field of drama are practical and workshop, after starting the online classes, I realized that the appropriate conclusions may not be obtained from these classes. Based on this, we proposed to hold an internal festival of virtual puppet shows at the level of the country's universities and then globally. With the efforts of students and professors in the field of puppetry, the University of Tehran, Sureh, and Art Universities, the festival was established.

Behbahani said about the feedback of this festival in the world: Since the publication of the call in Persian and English, we have corresponded with most Iranian students and universities around the world, and fortunately we have received a great response. So far more than 30 plays have been submitted to the festival from about 12 countries and it will be more until the 26th of July. Due to the great response of the artists to the online puppet show festival, we will plan for the second period of the festival.

The director stated that according to the works received at the festival, artists have chosen countless techniques to present their works, which can often be followed and continued online. Currently 6 experts in puppetry and drama are selecting the winners of the first stage, and these selected works will be judged in the second stage by other judges.

Source: Honar Online



Please introduce yourself to our readers with a bit of your background.

Prior to introducing myself, I would like to thank *Persian Heritage Magazine* for giving me this opportunity and platform to tell my life story to its very well informed and knowledgeable global readers.

I was born in Tehran in the 40s and was raised in the city suburb of Shemiran. I had a wonderful childhood and early adult life. Our house was always full of visitors and guests, with lots of laughter and wonderful foods.

My father was from Ghochan, a small town hours away from the larger city of Mashhad. My mother is from Tehran. Our many traveling and local relatives, of whom there were many, were frequent visitors. My father would frequently bring home “hitchhikers”, mostly backpackers who needed a full meal, a shower, and a good night’s rest. My father would encourage my sister and me to listen to their stories and adventures of travel from foreign lands. My mother frequently referred to our house as the “caravan rest stop”. I have been married for nearly fifty years to my wife Cheryl whom I met in college, we have two wonderful children, Yasaman and Bejan, and blessed us with four grandchildren.

As a young man did you anticipate leaving Iran for United States? What was your experience in the States?

My mother and father always emphasized the value of a good education. My sister and I along with other grandchildren would spend summers at my grandparents’ residence in Ghochan. I recall my grandfather, Agha jon, after closing his medical office in his residence, would gather us around the dinner table giving life advice and telling historical stories. And my grandmother, Bebe jon, would recite relevant poetries to support my grandfather’s conclusions. As young children, we didn’t really care much for those stories telling gatherings. It was summertime and we wanted to play, but now I realize the true wisdom of those boring pre-dinner talks. Agha jon would say “no thief nor tyrant can steal nor confiscate your education, everything else is subject to loss”. Looking back now, he was so correct. I attended *Hadaf* High School in Tehran, selecting mathematics as the field of study. Unfortunately, I was



An Interview with
Hamid Ghorashi
Chemical Engineer & Inventor

Shahrokh Ahkami

As a child I witnessed the kindness, sharpness, friendliness and sweetness of Dr. Hamid Ghorashi. I was fascinated by him and pleased that our relationship remained close through all these years. Hamid’s father and uncle (who was the father of Hossein Ghorashi) were the first individuals from Ghochan, Iran to attend Tehran University. It is not a surprise that Hamid continued his educational path because of the support of his father and beautiful mother. At the end of reading Hamid and Hosseins interviews I am certain you will see the reasons they are the cover stories.

Shahrokh Ahkami

not smart and or committed enough to pass the college entrance exam to attend Tehran University, so leaving my homeland was my only option, but what country to travel to was a dilemma? As a teenager, I had the opportunity to meet a number of American Peace Corp volunteers and hitchhikers my father brought home, who left a lasting impression on me. I learned that their culture of inclusion and doing good deeds, was what I needed to broaden me as an individual. Then, I heard that the Turkish Embassy was offering an entrance exam to the Middle East Technical College which I took. And luckily, I was among a handful of Iranians who were admitted, and I also was offered a J.F. Kennedy Memorial Scholarship to attend college in Ankara, Turkey. I spent two years improving my English and basic sciences. And I also sought advice

from American professors as best college options to continue my Chemical Engineering training. I was told the top two universities were MIT and Wisconsin. To me, at that time, both were just names and points on a map. Additionally, I was told that Wisconsin’s student union offered beer on campus!

Two years later, I transferred to the University of Wisconsin. I found America to be mostly what I had hoped for: She was inviting, inclusive, tolerant, and friendly with unlimited opportunities. Essentially, I felt welcomed as a foreign student in a foreign land. Unfortunately, given the state of our current political environment, today’s America feels different than the one I discovered in the 60s.

Your grandparents were

physicians, your father a distinguished and decorated engineer, you followed your fathers path was there a reason for this?

You ask very in-depth and intriguing questions. I have not thought of the questions before. I, however, do recall family conversations on various educational options and paths. My father's advice was to try to be the best I can be in any field I picked. My mother's advice was to follow my passion. At the end, respect for my father, and continuation of family tradition cemented my engineering educational path.

Did you visit Iran often while in college? What were your travel home experiences?

While I was an undergraduate student, summers were when I traveled home to be pampered and fed well for my return back to college life. Days and summer would go by fast. I recall going to the bazaar in Tehran one summer day looking to buy henna for my girl friend which turned out to be an adventure! As students, we took lower cost college sponsored charter flights. These flights were mostly for students traveling during the summer holiday months. My return flight back to the US was mostly students coming back and majority of them on the flight, let's say, were in state of euphoria! On this return trip, the pilot announced that JFK airport international arrival terminal was crowded with too many inbound international flights and to avoid delays we would be diverted to the newly opened international airport in Bangor Maine. It turned out that we were the inaugural international flight landing and custom agents were a bit confused to say the least. The plan was to go through customs in Bangor back on plane to land in JFK airport domestic terminal. After a few routine questioning, the agent proceeded to go through my luggage and came across a two-pound bag of henna. He wanted to know what it was, and my limited knowledge of henna and explanation did not seem to satisfy his curiosity. I knew he was new to the job and making a big find would help advance his career. He continued to examine the bag and he said it smelled like weed, and I needed to be taken to a more private setting to be interviewed further! They proceeded to thoroughly examine and test my suspi-

cion package. By then I began to panic. What if henna being a plant based powder had narcotic property? Has it ever been tested as such? If a narcotic, I would be in big trouble! All sorts of horrifying images went through my mind. How would I explain my dilemma and potential demise to my family? The agent came back explaining that they were not familiar with henna, but their contact from JFK customs cleared up the misunderstanding. What relief! A traveling experience I never forgot.

After receiving your PhD where did you begin employment?

A: In the mid 70s, and while working on my thesis, General Motors Research Laboratory in Warren Michigan offered me a visiting scientist position. I considered that to be a great opportunity and learning experience. This was my first exposure to corporate science and applications research hierarchy. It became apparent that individuals within organizations behaved according to power, status, and job functions. Research was focused mostly and directed toward profits; individual talent and knowledge to advance technology and fundamental product performance were not considered. Being young and idealistic, I found that difficult to accept and adapt to.

I recall an incident, when an engineer was reprimanded for his twenty four month designed battery lasting longer on average than twenty four months designed in failure rate! And I believed that science was for the greater good. I recall being in a meeting to evaluate a new potentially competitive automobile from Japan. Most of the meeting was spent down grading rather than acknowledging the attributes of this automobile. Finally it was my turn to express my findings. I focused my analysis on advantages and technology advancement. I conclude that this new car was designed to deliver both improved quality and value. My director then concluded the meeting by saying Americans would never buy a small car lacking chrome and shine! Their belief was that American's were different than the rest of the world. I knew then that I needed to find an employer that valued using technology and science to make life better, or as a minimum, do no harm. By the way, that car was made by an "unknown" Japanese Company Honda. And we all now know how that story went.

You ended up working for DuPont, how did that happen?

As mentioned earlier, I started looking for a different employer, one that would utilize scientific advances to create product to help society, which would also enhance earnings and the bottom line. Fortunately I finally, found a match within DuPont's vast research and development departments. Job market at that time was strong and potential employees like myself, could be and was selective of employers.

You had more than twenty amazing inventions from automotive parts to fighter pilots suits to fireman gears. I remember seeing one of your educational seminars where mannequins dressed differently were set a fire. Freightling and fascinating. Can you explain your involvement with these inventions?

As mentioned earlier, I believed that new products always needed to improve performance without creating disadvantages. For example, we all knew, and was a given, that fire fighters needed more protection from flame and heat. As first responders, the last thing they should be concerned with is their clothing performance. The need was how to best achieve more protection from heat and flame without creating negative issues. Classical solutions were to make suits thicker and bulkier and hence provide more insulation and protection. This approach quickly reached its limits as heavier suits created more heat stress and serious medical issues. Dilemma was how to do good without causing harm. The concept of my invention was very simple. Could we create a suit that under normal circumstance would be light weight and comfortable, but somehow changed its performance and protection level when needed? This concept faced barrage of questions and comments. "Are you looking for metamorphosis in a fire" "Are you seeking and looking a new pixy dust" Our years of training had taught us that there are no bad ideas, only lack of vision. One of my mentors used to say "I would achieve my goal if laws of physics are not violated". A year or so later, we had developed a new,

state of the art, light weight, and comfortable, firefighter suit when exposed to heat and flame would change its geometry by expanding and creating air pockets for better insulation.

This is one of my many achievements during the thirty plus years with DuPont. Needless to say these accomplishments required hard work, good luck, and lots of time to some extent they impacted my family life. I tried my utmost to be at home with my family as much as possible, but along the way I missed a few birthdays and sporting events. Years ago I told my grown children of my regrets, and to my great astonishment they replied that better to have missed a party or two, which helped to save a life. I guess it was well worth it.

From a large list of patents which do you find to have the most impact on people's lives and which one do you hold dearest?

My fire fighter suits that we discussed hold a special place in my mind and heart, and I am most proud of it. On the other hand, the one I hold dearest to me has least redeeming social value, but was my first patent. It is like one's first love as compared to one's true love. This first invention started when I was visiting scientist at General Motors Research Laboratories. As mentioned earlier, Japanese cars of early the 70s were light weight and fuel efficient compared to American ones having a big engine, with heavy, beautiful, shiny metal chrome plated interiors and exteriors. Gasoline prices were increasing and fuel efficiency became much more desirable. One obvious and immediate solution was to lower the weight by eliminating heavy metal parts and replacing them with molded plastic forms. However, the belief system was that customers wanted shiny metallic parts and not painted plastics. So, the immediate and somehow obvious approach was to somehow give plastics a shiny chrome surface. This could be achieved by creating a plastic surface that had strong and long lasting adhesion, and an affinity for metal plates. And hence, the genesis for first patent.

In life what do you believe was the most important influences?

I lived in Iran continuously for a mere seventeen years. I believe strongly that

those early years shaped my character and modified my DNA make up becoming the person I am today with short comings, achievements, and challenges.

My Persian culture and heritage taught me the value of, kindness, honesty, hard work, respect, and mostly humility. These values were drilled into me by family and their individual behaviors. My father and sister passed away at a relatively young age.

My mother's strong character and wisdom held the family together, and has continuously, to this date, been guiding me through life. I can say the most influence was the solid foundation build by my family and culture.

You remain connected to your Persian Culture, why does it remain an important part of your life?

You and your esteemed readers agree that our upbringing was like a furnace shaping metal of our characters and hence, we remain connected to the essence of our creation and characteristics. It is a part of who we are as a people and a nation.

If you had a group of young Americans in front of you what words of wisdom would

you give them as they make their life choices.

Wow! What an interesting and most timely question. I would tell them about my global learning during travels while giving lectures and seminars on protection from heat, flame, and electrical arc exposure. While at the same time, trying to immerse myself in local cultures and customs, so I can learn and grow. Now, I know without a shadow of a doubt America is and remains a beacon of hope.

Treasure her, fight to protect liberty, inclusion, and the acceptance that she offers. Resist entitlement culture, bigotry and hate. I saw too much of it in other nations. Don't be disillusioned. Follow your dreams and heart. Treasure moments you have with friends and family. And Godspeed.

Do you have any regrets in your life?

Another excellent question to close this most insightful interview. Regrets I like to share with you, hoping your younger readers learn from is: At times, I did not take the time needed to slow down and take the opportunity to tell more people along the way in my life "thank you for being who you are, and for that I love you".

Meet Dr. Ali A. Houshmand

Taken from Rowan University, the President's Office



Dr. Ali A. Houshmand became Rowan University's seventh president in 2012 after serving for approximately six years as provost/senior vice president, CEO and interim president.

Inaugurated Sept. 20, 2013, Houshmand is a dynamic leader whose personal connection with students, employees, alumni, government leaders, the business community and the public have become a hallmark of his presidency. A lifelong believer in the power of education, he holds masters and doctoral degrees in industrial and operations engineering and has applied an entrepreneurial approach to growing the University. Since becoming president he has sought to do this with four goals in mind: increasing access, improving quality, ensuring affordability and promoting economic development.

And his success is evident. Under Houshmand, Rowan has evolved from a well-regarded state school to a rising Carnegie-classified national research university with two medical schools and whose enrollment has grown from 11,000 students in 2012 to 19,000 students for Fall 2018, making Rowan the 7th fastest growing research university in the U.S.