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# Persian Heritage

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## FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Each issue the editors and typesetter pressure me to complete my editorial in order for the magazine to go to print and each issue I put them off. They do not understand that I always wait until the last minute to write my editorial in order to know the latest developments within the Iranian community, the position it is in and what new "messiah" may be surfacing to take all of us to the shores of happiness, freedom, liberty and calm.

This time of year we are busy making arrangements for the ninth anniversary gala for *Persian Heritage*. This year the friends and the supporters of the magazine have been able to secure a Mercedes Benz for a lottery. Of course this is not the only event that will happen in October. It has also been brought to my attention that rumors are spreading that some in our community have chartered private planes, that they will fly over to Iran on October 1 and free Iran. The passengers on these flights will be led by one television personality. When will we ever learn our proper place in the policies of Iran?

A friend of mine was eager to sell the aforementioned lottery tickets to his non-Persian friends. He eagerly left my office with a stack of the tickets. The next day he called me and panic filled his voice.... "Why is it, Shahrokh, that every time we Persians try to do something nice, something comes out to spoil it?" I asked him what he was talking about and then he said, "Haven't you heard what CNN, FOX and the newspapers are saying? The United States has decided to invade Iran because of the turmoil in Najaf and will do this in order to make peace with Iraq!"

Calmly, I told him that this notion was absurd, after all what does a dispute between the west and the Iranian government have to do with Iranian Americans? We have lived in this country for so many years and are some of the most educated and peaceful citizens. We then hung up but I immediately wondered what Iranian Americans did wrong to make other Americans fear and loathe us. After a few minutes, the memories of the last twenty-three years was before me and I realized that we should not be surprised by this reaction. Furthermore, I am sorry and sad to say that with the way the Persian community is heading, even greater and additional emotional turmoil can be expected in the future.

Our treatment should be of no surprise. As individuals we are progressive and intuitive. These fine qualities have allowed us to pull ourselves out from unacceptable circumstances. As a group, we can also be progressive and intuitive. But our stubbornness and inability to work together far too often causes us to become paralyzed. We are becoming more stringent and unable to forget our individual agendas, this results in our destruction of any positive affect that can come from a group effort.

Though I believe what my friend stated above to be nonsense, I do believe that the West does have a plan for Iran. The plan is only known by those closely linked to both governments. Yet, Iranian television media, in the name of liberation, continue to raise a flag for us to follow. They rally us to lead an effort of liberating a country and people whose land we left voluntarily many years ago? They try to attract us with colorful words and speeches. They offer their military advice on how to defeat them and they write constitutions for them. Some believe that they can bring a change and bring down the government through prayer and peace missions. They believe they can propose a referendum that both Iran and the west will accept. These are the tools they will use to liberate the Iranian people in Iran. These are the tools they will use to bring equality to men and women. These are the tools they will use to give freedom of religion, politics, speech and press to all citizens. And, these are the tools they propose to use to put Islam into a closet and allow pre Islamic religion to flourish once again.

When I hear this, I become frightened. These unrealistic promises by television personalities and attacks on each other are regretful. How do they expect to get more established and educated viewers when what they offer fuels anger? How can they expect to accomplish anything when what they do destroys? How can they gain the confidence of 70 million people when they themselves are in such negative discourse? The Iranian people have a thirst for freedom, freedom we often take for granted. But, to direct them in this manner will likely result in the Iranian people lying in a pool of their own blood.

If these television personalities think that the people of Iran will lay a red carpet



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for their arrival, they are underestimating their integrity. They are not naive and un-informed as we too often believe. They are unlikely to follow the directions of these television personalities, who encourage them to turn off their lights, blow their horns and spread tar on the roads to prevent the advancement of the police to demonstrate their hatred for the government.

If they think the people of Iran will see the promises of these television personalities different from the promises of free gas, electricity and water offered twenty-five years ago, then they are naive.

The people of Iran are smarter and prouder than this! And, if we do not want to lose our integrity of the people of Iran, we had better take our arguments and differences inside. We must learn to accept and enjoy our new life as Persian Americans. Most of us, as I stated earlier, came here by choice. It is here that we created our second and third generation. Though separated by distance and years from Iran, we remain proud of our heritage and our culture. We invite non-Persians into our home in friendship and accept them as the husbands and wives of our children. We are eager to teach them and our grandchildren our culture and traditions.

Living outside of Iran doesn't make us less Iranian and we should not be labeled as such. For more than thirty years we have lived outside of Iran and fought hard to rise against a list of indignities. We also should not be labeled as traitors and agents of a foreign government. This type of language is sad and destructive. It will weaken our power as a community instead of empowering us to create a better life in the United States. A life, I wish to be filled with love, friendship and void of the indignities we have suffered for so long; a good future for our children and theirs to follow, one of peace.

Persians cannot turn a blind eye to history. We must look to other immigrant's and see the results their courses have taken. For instance, the Cubans assisted with foreign governments in the hopes of overthrowing their current regime. Did they succeed? No, their political, economic and military actions proved futile. When this was realized, they dropped their impossible dream and established themselves in their new community. Once established they gained the respect deserved and the respect needed to eventually gain the admiration of those they left behind.

Like the Cubans, we too must realize the realities of life. We must stop suffering from the guilt of our departure. We have done nothing wrong. We must begin to enjoy our new life but, never forget where it began. I believe in my heart our acceptance of this will have a ripple effect and slowly the wishes we have and the dreams we have for those we left behind, will come true. Leave those individuals who wish to stay away from a political agenda be free to continue to support their culture without the fear of being labeled. Shame on all of us, who have acted in this manner.

In closing, I beg the television leaders and others fighting the same cause to leave out from your equation, those who want to hold on to their traditions and culture and use it in a way to benefit all Iranians, instead of working toward a dream that may result in more blood to flow and hearts to break. We all want and wish for a better and freer Iran, but the change must be made by those who suffer daily from its present perils; for, they are the ones who thirst and yearn for a better tomorrow. They will make the appropriate sacrifices to turn their dream into a reality.

*Shahrokh Alavi*

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# TURKEY SHOULD RECOGNIZE THE ASSYRIAN GENOCIDE OF 1915

Sabri Atman

*Assyrian Star*, Spring 2004

## THE DENIAL SYNDROME

Whether committed in Africa, Asia or Europe, the common feature of all genocides is that they are denied by the perpetrators. This also applies to Turkey, which denies that in 1915, the "Ittihat and Terakki" (Union and Progress) regime, under the Ottoman Empire, planned, organized, and executed a systematic genocide. In Rwanda almost one million Tutsis were massacred in less than three months. Many of the Hutu perpetrators were arrested and incarcerated. What do they say about their actions? The "so-called genocide." This term has always been omnipresent in the writings of those who support the official Turkish narrative.

Discussing the Assyrian or Armenian [ed. Pontic Greeks] genocide tops the list of current taboos. But just as it is in all countries, there are two different opinions on this topic. On the one hand, there are those who support the official government position; on the other is the group that pursues the interest of the people and claims that it is necessary for Turkey to come to grips with its recent history. These two perspectives on history existed in the past as well. There were those who planned the genocide in detail, and others who resisted the genocide and sheltered Christians in their homes at the risk of their own lives.

## THE GOOD AND THE BAD

Seykh Fethullah was a well known Muslim cleric in the region of Mardin. Many Assyrians honor his memory to this day. His portrait hangs on the wall of Deyro d-Zaferan, an ancient monastery in Mardin, because he saved a large number of Assyrians. The symbolic value of having his portrait in the monastery can be explained as follows: there were bad Turks, and also good Turks. This applies to both Germany and Rwanda. Throughout world history, it has been good versus evil.

To understand the 1915 genocide that was committed against its Assyrians, Armenians, and Greeks, it's important to review briefly Ottoman Empire history in the last century. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Ottoman state was unable to implement the reforms that European countries had been adopting. It struggled with modernity and was labeled the "Sick Man of Europe." Many nations in the European part of the Empire seceded and gained their independence. It was in this context that the Assyrians lived in their ancestral lands in Southeast Turkey, namely in the regions of Mardin, Urfa, Harput, Diyarbakir, Van, Bitlis, and Hakkari. When First World War broke out, Assyrian national consciousness wasn't as developed as that of the Armenians. The war provided the Ottoman government with the unique opportunity to rid itself of its Christian minorities. They would be cleansed from the social and economic fabric of Ottoman society. And it is precisely this destruction, re-

sulting from deliberate, systematic plans emanating from the central authority that must be called **Genocide**.

## WHERE ARE THEY?

In this Genocide, hundreds of thousands of people were brutally slaughtered with no mercy. Women and children were not spared. Many people were thrown alive into water wells, which were later sealed. People were put on boats, then thrown into the deep seas as food for fish. Hundreds of thousands of people were massacred by swords (symbolized in our language by the word *Seyfo*, meaning sword). Women were raped, parents were butchered in the presence of their children. Hundreds of thousands of people were intentionally left to die of hunger and thirst in the wilderness of Mesopotamia. Great pains, great tragedies befell our people. [ed. The Assyrians suffered too from their traditional enemies, the Kurds, who, organized in the Hamidiya irregulars, marauded through Assyrian villages in Tur Abdin and the Hakkari Mountains and destroyed a centuries old Christian community, repeating the massacres they had been conducting for several centuries.]

Prior to the First World War, the population of Turkey was fourteen million, of which four and a half million were Christians (Assyrians, Armenians and Greeks). In other words, thirty three percent of the population was Christian. Today, the total Christian population in Turkey is a mere one tenth of one percent of the population (0.01 %). Where are they?

What happened to these people? What happened to the Assyrians, Armenians and Greeks? Where did they disappear? Would not this diversity of people be a great wealth to a country? Then, what happened to Turkey's greatest asset, its ethnic diversity? The annihilation of this mosaic of colors and diversity was **deliberately and strategically** accomplished. This genocide against the Assyrians and other Christian people was **planned, designed and systematically** carried out. More than two million people were massacred and over two million people were forced out. No human being witnessing wars, massacres and tortures taking place in many parts of the world today, has the right to think that our appeal for recognition of a supposedly forgotten Genocide that occurred a long time ago is meaningless. This is not right. Genocide is a crime against humanity and there is no statutory limitation on a crime such as this. Such a crime should not be forgotten and if it is to be forgotten, it can lead to its repetition. During the Second World War, when Hitler committed Genocide against the Jews, Gypsies and other groups, it was said sarcastically "who remembers the Genocide of the Armenian people today?" It is clear to everyone that Hitler saw an opportunity due to the **silence, ignorance and neglect** of the international community regarding the Armenians.

If international opinion had not overlooked the Genocide of our people under the shadows of the First World War, would Hitler have been able to implement a second Genocide in the shadows of the Second World War? This is why we are speaking to the silent majority.

The aim of bringing the issue of past genocides to the forefront and discussing it is not just to condemn. This cry is equally important for people from different religions, races and cultures coexisting in democratic societies and living in security. It is clear that the massacres and the genocides that have been carried out to date share a unique characteristic, which is that they were all implemented in undemocratic countries and by forces opposing democracy. **It is therefore important for us to know in**

**what kind of society and world we would like to live!**

Do we want to live in a society of equality and brotherhood between people from different racial, religious and ethnic backgrounds; or, in societies where brutal forces do not show even a modicum of tolerance? The source of the problem is not the diversity of ethnic backgrounds. The source of the real problem is the inability to accept and tolerate diversity and equality!

This is what Turkey did in the shadow of the First World War.

**THE INFIDEL MASSACRE**

Kemal Yalçın is a Turkish author living in Germany. Yalçın conducted interviews on the Genocide with many Armenians and Assyrians. His book contains a passage about an old man that aptly summarizes the emotions and thoughts of many Assyrians. The old man spoke as follows:

"Few of us have witnessed that great, horrible catastrophe. But its wounds shaped our memories. I suffer even from its memory! Even though we didn't experience those frightful days, those caravans to death, we bear their scars on us. And what did those who experienced those days do? In our region the killing of the Armenians was delegated to the Kurds. Everybody knows this. The Kurds use the term "The infidel massacre." (I have to point out that the term "infidel" (gâvur) is a condescending term to depict Christians.) I'm by no means accusing all Kurds or Turks. My anger is directed to those who planned this catastrophe in detail. I will be relieved when all this is brought to light and reality acknowledged I don't hate the Turks or the Kurds at all! I don't feel like calling people to admit responsibility or taking revenge at all! There are both good and bad Turks and Kurds. My problem, my anger is with those who created the Genocide. They have to be ashamed of themselves! God will have them punished!"

These are the emotions and thoughts of the Assyrians, as well. Our issue is with those who planned and implemented the Genocide. You may think that we are wasting our time, the perpetrators of that Genocide are all dead; yes, they are. The modern Republic of Turkey was founded on their heritage. Turkey was homogenized, and this was solely due to the Genocide. It is not an exaggeration to claim that the economic prosperity of successive political elites in Turkey could only be realized because of the elimination of the Christians. And I'm not aware of any serious research on this topic in Turkey, so far.

The effects of the Genocide of 1915 were both economical and political. The present political elite are still denying the Genocide by asserting the following thesis: "the event is a historical event, leave it to the historians." If Turkey really wanted to leave it to the historians, it would have been more tolerant of dissenting academics such as Taner Akçam. But we all know that it is impossible for any historian to speak freely and write about the Genocide.

With respect to this event, Turkey is far from being a democratic society. Democratic societies don't have taboos. The descendants of Assyrian, Armenian and Greek victims of the 1915 Genocide demand acknowledgement and apologies within the framework of international law. Without these concessions it is inappropriate for Turkey to accede to the European Union. We think that acknowledgement of the Genocide should be a precondition for membership of the European Union. Aside from this, Turkey will benefit greatly from seriously scrutinizing this dark part of its history because it will receive more international respect. Denial will only bring the opposite.

Acknowledgement of the Genocide does not only imply

societal maturity, but will also prevent future outbreaks of violence and persecution. Turkey's reckoning with its past, respect for human rights and going forward with democratization will prove to be an asset for the entire world.

**DENIAL IS TO BE KILLED TWICE**

The Assyrian genocide is not very well known globally. An unknown and denied Genocide inflicts great emotional pain on us, the children of the victims. Many of our contemporary societal problems can be traced to the Genocide. Even though the democratic world has failed to prevent the Genocide committed against our people, it has to cooperate to alleviate the problems we are facing today. A first step is to promote the study of the Assyrian genocide.

Where and when committed, Genocide remains Genocide. It will survive the traces of time. The historical profession is not only an exercise in constructing the where and what. It is also a means of coping with the past. Past genocides have to be understood and condemned in order to prevent future genocides. And this is precisely why the Assyrian Genocide should be known and considered. History shapes the world's future foundation.

Those who suggest we should forget about the Genocide are having difficulties understanding us. They have no idea of the socio-economic, political and psychological effects of genocides. "Forget about it," is their advice. But is forgetting that easy? We lost two thirds of our population in 1915. We were uprooted from our motherland. The remnants of the Genocide were cast into distant parts of the world. Today we are struggling for our sheer existence as a people. How can we forget about all this?

Concerning my personal experiences, I saw my grandfather often crying when I was about 7 or 8 years old. I was a child and couldn't attach any meaning to my grandfather's crying. I just knew he missed his 3 brothers. That's all I really knew. But I have just learned the details of his agony three months ago from a 97-year old woman whom I met in Germany. She told me that all of my grandfather's brothers were killed in the Genocide of 1915, and that he mourned them for the rest of his life.

Since I only recently found out about this, I have had many dreams of my late grandfather, who passed away 30 years ago. They are telling us to forget about all this. How can I forget this? How can I forget my grandfather, my village, my homeland, my loved ones? All of this is my personal story, and it is impossible for me to forget about these tragedies. Of course, the deceased cart never be returned. But Turkey owes us an apology.

\* Mr. Sabri Atman is an Assyrian Genocide scholar and author, who is originally from Tur Abdin, Turkey and currently residing in Holland. He has given numerous lectures on the Assyrian Genocide in many European countries.

The Ohio State University College of Engineering has announced that Dr. Hojjat Adeli has been named to the Abba G. Livhtenstein Professorship in Civil Engineering.

Dr. Adeli has been a keynote/ Plenary Lecturer at 49 international conferences in 30 countries and the 1998 winner of the Ohio State Distinguished Scholar Award.



# OMAR KHAYYAM

Davood Rahni

Omar Khayam was born in Nishapur in the Province of Khorasan in Iran in the latter part of 11<sup>th</sup> century AD. He was considered "The King of Wisdom"; he died in 1123 AD. Although known most prominently in Iran and the West for his philosophically entrenched quatrains (rubais = chahar nimbeiti) poems translated into at minimum 125 languages, it is his mathematical, astronomical, historical, philosophical and medical treatises that he would have yearned to be famous for; the English translation of his quatrains by the British Poet Edward Fitzgerald (1809-1883) that preluded the "Persian nightingale" is the most well known version as he translated them contextually into the British culture of the era.

It is common for Iranian poets to take their name from their occupation. For example, Attar, "the medicine man," Assar, "the oil presser," and Khayyam means "tent maker". He was Omar the son of Abraham the tent maker; his surname nomenclature practice was also the norm in the west. He worked in that trade at one time but he was favored by the king (Sultan), Malik Shah. Omar Khayyam rejected the royal court life in favor of scientific curiosity investigations and literary pursuits.

He was commissioned by Malek Shah and accepted to devise the most accurate solar calendar known to date that superseded earlier calendars commissioned by Pope Gregory XII's revision of Julian Calendar.

Here is a more elaborate biography of Khayyam by no one better than Edward Fitzgerald himself.

D. Rahni

## BIOGRAPHY OF OMAR KHAYYAM By Edward J. Fitzgerald

### Omar Khayyam, The Astronomer-Poet of Persia

Omar Khayyam was born at Naishapur in Khorassan in the latter half of our eleventh, and died within the first quarter of our twelfth century. The slender story of his life is curiously twined with that of two other very considerable figures in their time and country: one of whom tells the story of all three. This was Nizam ul Mulk, Vizier to Alp Arslan the son, and Malik Shah the grandson, of Toghrul Beg the Tartar, who had wrested Persia from the feeble Successor of Mahmud the Great, and founded the Seljukian Dynasty which finally roused Europe into the Crusades. This Nizam ul Mulk, in his Wasiyat — or Testament — which he wrote and left as a memorial for future statesmen—relates the following, as quoted in the *Calcutta Review*, No. 59, from Mirkhond's *History of the Assassins*.

"One of the greatest of the wise men of Khorassan was the Imam Mowaffak of Naishapur, a man highly honored and revered,—may God rejoice his soul; his illustrious years exceeded eighty-five, and it was the universal belief that every boy who read the Koran or studied the traditions in his presence, would assuredly attain to honor and happiness. For this cause did my father send me from Tus to Naishapur with Abd-us-samad, the doctor of law, that I might employ myself in studying and learning under the guidance of that illustrious teacher. Towards me he ever turned an eye of favor and kindness, and as his pupil I felt for him extreme affection and devotion, so that I passed four years in his service. When I first came there, I found two other pupils of mine own age newly arrived, Hakim Omar Khayyam, and the ill-fated Ben Sabbah. Both were endowed with sharpness of wit and the highest natural

powers; and we three formed a close friendship together. When the Imam rose from his lectures, they used to join me, and we repeated to each other the lessons we had heard. Now Omar was a native of Naishapur, while Hasan Ben Sabbah's father was one Ali, a man of austere life and practise, but heretical in his creed and doctrine. One day Hasan said to me and to Khayyam, "It is a universal belief that the pupils of the Imam Mowaffak will attain to fortune. Now, even if we all do not attain thereto, without doubt one of us will; what then shall be our mutual pledge and bond?" We answered, "Be it what you please." "Well," he said, "let us make a vow, that to whomsoever this fortune falls, he shall share it equally with the rest, and reserve no pre-eminence for himself." "Be it so," we both replied, and on those terms we mutually pledged our words. Years rolled on, and I went from Khorassan to Transoxiana, and wandered to Ghazni and Cabul; and when I returned, I was invested with office, and rose to be administrator of affairs during the Sultanate of Sultan Alp Arslan."

"He goes on to state, that years passed by, and both his old school-friends found him out, and came and claimed a share in his good fortune, according to the school-day vow. The Vizier was generous and kept his word. Hasan demanded a place in the government, which the Sultan granted at the Vizier's request; but discontented with a gradual rise, he plunged into the maze of intrigue of an oriental court, and, failing in a base attempt to supplant his benefactor, he was disgraced and fell. After many mishaps and wanderings, Hasan became the head of the Persian sect of the Ismailians, a party of fanatics who had long murmured in obscurity, but rose to an evil eminence under the guidance of his strong and evil will. In A.D. 1090, he seized the castle of Alamut, in the province of Rudbar, which lies in the mountainous tract south of the Caspian Sea; and it was from this mountain home he obtained that evil celebrity among the Crusaders as the OLD MAN OF THE MOUNTAINS, and spread terror through the Mohammedan world; and it is yet disputed where the word Assassin, which they have left in the language of modern Europe as their dark memorial, is derived from the hashish, or opiate of hemp-leaves (the Indian bhang), with which they maddened themselves to the sullen pitch of oriental desperation, or from the name of the founder

of the dynasty, whom we have seen in his quiet collegiate days, at Naishapur. One of the countless victims of the Assassin's dagger was Nizam ul Mulk himself, the old school-boy friend.

"Omar Khayyam also came to the Vizier to claim his share; but not to ask for title or office. 'The greatest boon you can confer on me,' he said, 'is to let me live in a corner under the shadow of your fortune, to spread wide the advantages of Science, and pray for your long life and prosperity.' The Vizier tells us, that when he found Omar was really sincere in his refusal, he pressed him no further, but granted him a yearly pension of 1200 mithkals of gold from the treasury of Naishapur.

"At Naishapur thus lived and died Omar Khayyam, 'busied,' adds the Vizier, 'in winning knowledge of every kind, and especially in Astronomy, wherein he attained to a very high pre-eminence. Under the Sultanate of Malik Shah, he came to Merv, and obtained great praise for his proficiency in science, and the Sultan showered favors upon him.'

"When the Malik Shah determined to reform the calendar, Omar was one of the eight learned men employed to do it; the result was the Jalali era (so called from Jalal-ud-din, one of the king's names)—'a computation of time,' says Gibbon, 'which surpasses the Julian, and approaches the accuracy of the Gregorian style.' He is also the author of some astronomical tables, entitled 'Ziji-Malikshahi,' and the French have lately republished and translated an Arabic Treatise of his on Algebra.

"His Takhallus or poetical name (Khayyam) signifies a Tent-maker, and he is said to have at one time exercised that trade, perhaps before Nizam-ul-Mulk's generosity raised him to independence. Many Persian poets similarly derive their names from their occupations; thus we have Attar, 'a druggist,' Assar, 'an oil presser,' etc. Omar himself alludes to his name in the following whimsical lines:—

*"Khayyam, who stitched the tents of science,  
Has fallen in grief's furnace and been suddenly burned;  
The shears of fate have cut the tent ropes of his life,  
And the broker of hope has sold him for nothing!"*

"We have only one more anecdote to give of his Life, and that relates to the close; it is told in the anonymous preface which is sometimes prefixed to his poems; it has been printed in Persian in the Appendix to Hyde's *Veterum Persarum Religio*, p. 499; and D'Herbelot alludes to it in his *Bibliothèque*, under *Khiam*. —

"It is written in the chronicles of the ancients that this King of the Wise, Omar Khayyam, died at Naishapur in the year of the Hegira, 517 (A.D. 1123); in science he was unrivaled,—the very paragon of his age. Khwajah Nizami of Samarcand, who was one of his pupils, relates the following story: "I often used to hold con-

stone was hidden under them."

Thus far—without fear of trespass—from the *Calcutta Review*. The writer of it, on reading in India this story of Omar's grave, was reminded, he says, of Cicero's account of finding Archimedes' Tomb at Syracuse, buried in grass and weeds. I think Thorwaldsen desired to have roses grow over him; a wish religiously fulfilled for him to the present day, I believe. However, to return to Omar.

Though the Sultan "shower'd favors upon him," Omar's Epicurean audacity of thought and speech caused him to be regarded askance in his own time and country. He is said to have been especially hated and dreaded by the Sufis, whose practise

he ridiculed, and whose Faith amounts to little more than his own, when stript of the mysticism and formal recognition of Islamism under which Omar would not hide. Their poets, including Hafiz, who are (with the exception of Firdausi) the most considerable in Persia, borrowed largely, indeed, of Omar's material, but turning it to a mystical use more convenient to themselves and the people they addressed; a people quite as quick of doubt as of belief; as keen of bodily sense as of intellectual; and delighting in a cloudy composition of both, in which they could float luxuriously between heaven and earth, and this world and the next, on the wings of a poetical expression, that might serve indifferently for either. Omar was too honest of heart as well of head for this. Having failed (however mistakenly) of finding any providence but destiny, and any world but this, he set about making the most of it; preferring rather to soothe the soul through the senses into acquiescence with things as he saw

them, than to perplex it with vain disquietude after what they might be. It has been seen, however, that his worldly ambition was not exorbitant; and he very likely takes a humorous or perverse pleasure in exalting the gratification of sense above that of the intellect, in which he must have taken great delight, although it failed to answer the questions in which he, in common with all men, was most vitally interested.

For whatever reason, however, Omar



versations with my teacher, Omar Khayyam, in a garden; and one day he said to me, 'My tomb shall be in a spot where the north wind may scatter roses over it.' I wondered at the words he spake, but I knew that his were no idle words.

Years after, when I chanced to revisit Naishapur, I went to his final resting-place, and lo! it was just outside a garden, and trees laden with fruit stretched their boughs over the garden wall, and dropped their flowers upon his tomb, so that the

as before said, has never been popular in his own country, and therefore has been but scantily transmitted abroad. The Mss. of his poems, mutilated beyond the average casualties of oriental transcription, are so rare in the East as scarce to have reached Westward at all, in spite of all the acquisitions of arms and science. There is no copy at the India House, none at the Bibliotheque Nationale of Paris. We know but of one in England: No. 140 of the Ouseley Mss. at the Bodleian, written at Shiraz, A.D. 1460. This contains but 158 Rubaiyat. One in the Asiatic Society's Library at Calcutta (of which we have a Copy), contains (and yet incomplete) 516, though swelled to that by all kinds of repetition and corruption. So Von Hammer speaks of his copy as containing about 200, while Dr. Sprenger catalogues the Lucknow Ms. at double that number.

The scribes, too, of the Oxford and Calcutta Mss. seem to do their work under a sort of protest; each beginning with a Tetrastich (whether genuine or not), taken out of its alphabetical order; the Oxford with one of apology; the Calcutta with one of expostulation, supposed (says a Notice prefixed to the Ms.) to have arisen from a dream, in which Omar's mother asked about his future fate. It may be rendered thus:—

*"O Thou who burn'st in Heart for those who burn  
In Hell, whose fires thyself shall feed in turn,  
How long be crying, 'Mercy on them, God!'  
Why, who art Thou to teach, and He to learn?"*

The Bodleian Quatrain pleads Pantheism by way of Justification.

*"If I myself upon a looser Creed  
Have loosely strung the Jewel of Good deed,  
Let this one thing for my Atonement plead:  
That One for Two I never did misread."*

The Reviewer, to whom I owe the particulars of Omar's life, concludes his review by comparing him with Lucretius, both as to natural temper and genius, and as acted upon by the circumstances in which he lived. Both indeed were men of subtle, strong, and cultivated intellect, fine imagination, and hearts passionate for truth and justice; who justly revolted from their country's false religion, and false, or foolish, devotion to it; but who fell short of replacing what they subverted by such better hope as others, with no better revelation to guide them, had

yet made a law to themselves. Lucretius indeed, with such material as Epicurus furnished, satisfied himself with the theory of a vast machine fortuitously constructed, and acting by a law that implied no legislator; and so composing himself into a Stoical rather than Epicurean severity of attitude, sat down to contemplate the mechanical drama of the universe which he was part actor in; himself and all about him (as in his own sublime description of the Roman Theater) discolored with the lurid reflex of the curtain suspended between the spectator and the sun. Omar, more desperate, or more careless of any so complicated system as resulted in nothing but hopeless necessity, flung his own genius and learning with a bitter or humorous jest into the general ruin which their insufficient glimpses only served to reveal; and, pretending sensual pleasure, as the serious purpose of life, only diverted himself with speculative problems of deity, destiny, matter and spirit, good and evil, and other such questions, easier to start than to run down, and the pursuit of which becomes a very weary sport at last!

With regard to the present translation. The original Rubaiyat (as, missing an Arabic Guttural, these Tetrastichs are more musically called) are independent stanzas, consisting each of four lines of equal, though varied, prosody; sometimes all rhyming, but oftener (as here imitated) the third line a blank. Somewhat as in the Greek Alcaic, where the penultimate line seems to lift and suspend the wave that falls over in the last. As usual with such kind of Oriental verse, the Rubaiyat follow one another according to alphabetic rhyme—a strange succession of grave and gay. Those here selected are strung into something of an eclogue, with perhaps a less than equal proportion of the "drink and make-merry," which (genuine or not) recurs over-frequently in the original. Either way, the result is sad enough: saddest perhaps when most ostentatiously merry: more apt to move sorrow than anger toward the old tentmaker, who, after vainly endeavoring to unshackle his steps from destiny, and to catch some authentic glimpse of TO-MORROW, fell back upon TO-DAY (which has outlasted so many to-morrows!) as the only ground he had got to stand upon, however momentarily slipping from under his feet.

*[From the Third Edition.]  
Edward J. Fitzgerald*

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In no other country do women live in such seclusion, and in none are they so strictly veiled, as in Persia. Europeans who have spent six months in that country, and have passed through every one of the large towns, may never have seen the face of a Persian woman. In Turkey the *yashmak*, or veil, is often diaphanous, and commonly it is only thick muslin. On the steamboats of the Bosphorus, or at Sweet Waters, it is not uncommon to see a Turkish woman remove her veil and smoke a cigarette. Nothing of the sort happens in the presence of a European in Persia, and the veil is always composed of perfectly opaque cambric, with a small piece of delicately woven "insertion" about the eyes. This cambric mask is usually long enough to fall below the waist. It is tied round the head with tapes on quitting the house, and the "chudder," a loose envelope of dark blue cambric, or of black silk, is afterwards thrown over the head and person. Every woman in Persia wears, out of doors, large trousers of the same material, confined at the ankles, so that her appearance in the street is that of a bundle of indigo-coloured cambric or of black silk, the face being invariably covered with white cambric. It is not possible to conceive a less graceful or perhaps a more disguising costume. No domino at a fancy dress ball, no painted mask, could so surely prevent recognition as the outdoor dress of a Persian woman. It has doubtless been adopted and is enforced by Oriental fashion, for the reason, that it is the nearest possible approach to the defeat of coquetry. It is against the teaching of the precepts of Mahommed for a woman to wear in public any dress which displays her shape. The Persian costume is fully obedient to that rule. In Turkey there is diversity of colour. A bevy of Turkish ladies, seated on the ground, are as gay as a flower-bed, or as a set of harlequin teacups. But in Persia, fashion inexorably limits women to a choice of two colours — indigo and black. The indoor costume of a Persian lady, concerning which a European can speak from the testimony of his countrywomen, appears indelicate. In the "anderoon," which is the women's quarter of a Persian house, the full dress of a Persian lady much resembles that of a ballet girl, with, however, the exception that the Persian lady's legs are rarely covered. In the anderoons of Persian palaces, the princesses are thus attired, or rather unattired, and the strict fashion is for the short skirts to stand out after the manner



A LADY IN OUTDOOR DRESS

## PERSIAN WOMEN

Taken from *Harpers Weekly*,  
June 6, 1885

of the *corps de ballet*. In Persia, obesity is considered charming, and, beside the invariable use of "khenna" to dye their toes' and fingers' ends deep red, the faces of *grandes dames* are usually painted, not with tints, but with patches of red and black. The use of hair dye is so common with both sexes in Persia that it is never remarked. But sometimes it has occurred to travellers that in Persia hair is but of

two shades — the blue-black of the raven's wing, or the red of "khenna." It may be said with tolerable safety that there is no such creature as a visibly grey-haired Persian from the Caspian Sea to the confines of India. The Persian etiquette concerning women is very strict. In a visit of ceremony no man approaches the anderoon, and he is also careful to avoid the slightest reference to the ladies of the house-

hold. Conversation always opens with complimentary inquiries as to the health of the visitor, together with formal compliments, all of which lid is, expected to reciprocate. But though a wife might be at the point of death it would be a breach of decorum for the male visitor to press inquiry in that direction. The same custom prevails in letter-writing. A Persian letter or despatch always opens with compliments. In place of our "Dear Sir," a Persian gentleman would commence somewhat in this way: — "To the exalted in dignity; to the glorious companion of honour, Mr. Jones! I write to inquire after your health, and am deeply anxious that all your days should pass happily, for you are good and perfect." This is so much a matter of form in all Persian writing, that in Blue Books containing despatches from the Ameer of Afghanistan, which are usually written in Persian, it may be noticed that every one begins with the words "After compliments," which is sometimes abridged to "A.C." — the irreducible minimum of this Oriental fashion. In no Mahomedan country are domestic slavery and polygamy so general as in Persia. Of course without a large immigration or importation of women, polygamy cannot in any country be universal, for nature, provides a practical equality of sexes, and so it, happens in Persia that polygamy promotes the appropriation of marriageable women by all but the poorest. In Persian streets and in travel, the women are in the landscape what the black-coated and chimney-potted Europeans are in the street scenery of the Western continent. In Persia it is the men who give the beauty of colour to the scene, clothed most gracefully in those delicate tints of green and -blue, of red and yellow, which the improving taste of Europe has learnt to love and to adopt. In the towns the traveller recognises in the people the characters of the tales of "The Arabian Nights." There is the handsome, stalwart porter, scratching his shaved head, with panting sunburnt breast, ready for any summons, including that of the veiled and always mysterious lady in blue or black envelope. There is the merchant from Bagdad or Tabriz, wearing the respectable turban of a pilgrim, or some other mark, to show that he has right to be greeted in the market place as "hadji." His green or white turban is spotless and ample, a cloak of fine cloth or cashmere, gold braided, bangs from his shoulders, and his tunic of purple or green is bound with a costly

silken sash of red and yellow, in which, probably, the case containing his reeds and ink-born for writing is thrust like a dagger. Everywhere is seen the priest, or mollah, mounted, when he can afford to ride, with, all the airs of a superior person, upon a white donkey. The tradesmen, all picturesque, sit smoking a "kalian" or reading the Koran upon the front planks of their stalls in the cool — or in winter the bitterly cold-bazaar, without any more apparent interest in their business than if it were a mere cloak for the supernatural concerns of their life in such another world as that in which moved the genii of those wonderful tales. Even without magic art there are in Persia always two mysteries. These are the veiled lady and the walled-up house. No foreigner may see even the eyes of a Persian woman of the middle and superior classes except by accident. She moves through the streets and bazaars, on her white donkey, or on foot; in complete disguise. In all her outdoor life she is a mystery. She may be young or old, white or black, fair or ugly — on a mission of sin, or upon an errand of mercy — no one knows who she is as she shuffles along upon red or yellow shoes which it is difficult to keep upon her feet, because the upper leather ends about the middle of the foot, and the heel is not confined. She, or her attendant slave, raises at some mud-walled house an iron knocker upon a door like that of a fortification, is admitted, the door is closed, and there is no window from which the women, the children, or slaves of that house can communicate with the outer world. It is a despotism within a despotism. Each one of these mud-walled houses is the seat of a sovereignty, practically irresponsible, and established and confirmed by the greatest power in Persia — that of the Koran. ■

## KISS ME

Shahzad Kavooosi Farzad

*I never sing  
but at this moment  
I'm singing a song softly  
a very old Iranian one  
that has been ding donging  
in my head*

*the music  
is moving toward me  
on waves from the past  
fresh and visible*

*my voice continues to find  
the forgotten verses of the song  
and discovers the stories  
bidden behind the lines*

*the song is a car that knows the routes  
a key to faded memories' gates  
I find antique loves, momentous souvenirs*

*the tone of the music wrapping the words  
pushes me  
I don't stop singing  
I continue and continue until I discover  
everything in this passage and meet  
everyone, one by one,*

*the song says:*

*"Kiss me, kiss me  
for the last time  
God save you in his arms  
for I'm going after my faith  
Spring is passed and pasts are passed  
and I'm going after my faith."*

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## INTERVIEW WITH MAHIN KHATAMEE

**Mahin Khatamee** is someone this community needs to meet. Besides being a devoted wife, mother and grandmother she is a devoted citizen, both to America and to her own culture. Since she was in high-school, her love for her Persian ethnicity and its promotion has been her goal. She gives from her heart and soul to this community and in return receives little thanks. When something needs to be accomplished, Mahin is there without question. Her sleepless nights and tiring days volunteering to promote Persian culture and organizations is given without any expectation. For many years she cooked for over 150 NoRouz (Persian New Year) in order to have the Persian tradition represented at an American catered affair. While she may not hold an affluent title in a Fortune 500 corporation, in the Persian community, she is one of our Commanders in Chief. It is for this reason that we wanted to introduce this gallant woman to you, a woman who is an example of social responsibility and a role model for all.



### *Why so much dedication to Persian culture?*

I believe that the secret of the survival of anything or anyone, anywhere in the world, is identity. Without it you have no individuality and without individuality there is no diversity. Without diversity there would be nothing. Identity survival is especially important for our community in the US. Remembering our cultural and traditions and teaching others about them will insure our survival as people in this wonderful hyphenated society.

### *And your journey as a Persian American began when?*

I was born in Teheran and after finishing primary school in 1963, I came to the US and stayed with my uncle. My high-school education continued in New Jersey; it was there that I met my husband, Dr. Massoud Khatamee. We have been married for thirty-eight wonderful years. After our marriage I completed my education at New York University in cytology.

### *Are there any outstanding memories of your high school years?*

Fortunately for me my memories for the most part have all been good. As for my high-school years, although I was homesick, my uncle and his wife were wonderful to me and provided me with everything I needed, especially love and encouragement.

### *Of course I must ask this question, you were going to high-school in the 60's did you suffer any adverse effects as a Persian? .*

Well, I must preempt my answer by stating that life in America was very different from Iran. During the time I was in high school this country was not wrapped up in the affairs of Iran. There were other foreign matters taking up time such as Korea and Vietnam, not to mention the cold war. And now to your question, I was one of the few Iranians in New Jersey and in my class. I don't think many of my teachers even knew where Iran was located. Often I had to draw a map.

In answer to your question I did not suffer from discrimination during my high-school years.

One of the memories that continue to make me smile was when I was asked to do the Haft Seen table in class. For those of your readers who do not know what Haft Seen is I would like to explain. It is a special table set up for our New Year, which celebrates spring and the rebirth of nature. The tables are traditionally ornate and have seven required items, each starting with the letter "s" in Persian. Not only did I have the opportunity to set up the display but I also got to share my Persian cooking with my classmates and taught them a little bit about my culture and traditions.

As far as bad memories in high-school it was the day JFK was shot. I was

in the classroom when the principal made the announcement over the loud speaker; we were all stunned. It was this day that I learned about the other side of America, one that was violent and racist.

### *Prior to this interview we discussed your family life. You informed me that you met your husband while you were living with your aunt and uncle. Together you have three daughters and four grandchildren. You also told me that you returned to Iran during the early years of your marriage, why did you go back?*

We were living in New York during my husband's residency. My first daughter, Pira, was born there. When he completed his residency we returned to Iran to live. While living there he completed his military service and I gave birth to our second daughter, Neda. We then returned to the U.S. and took up residence in New Jersey, where we remained for thirty years and it is there that we had our third daughter, Yalda.

### *When did you first become active in the Iranian community?*

Well, I guess you could go back to my Haft Seen table in high school. I have been and always will be in love with Ira-

nians and volunteer work. As you know after the revolution, a great many Iranians immigrated to the US. It was refreshing to see how everyone helped one another adjust in their new life. In New Jersey there was no organized Iranian association. My husband was an activist in social and humanitarian activities so I joined him. It is something we enjoy doing together.

**Twenty-three years ago, October 7, 1981, The Record, a New Jersey newspaper, ran an article, "East Meets West," in which your efforts in the community were discussed.**

The article you are talking about developed from a school fundraiser. It was an international type event. I had to cook ten different Persian dishes for ten different people and sell them. The dishes ended up bringing in \$1,000.00. I was so proud of the money raised but was happier for the ability to introduce yet another part of our wonderful culture to non-Persians.

The article was a real plus for Persian Americans and I remember right after it came out, a few Americans suggested I open a Persian restaurant and they would finance me. To this day I question why I decided not to take them up on their offer.

The years my children were in school were learning experiences for me. I was active in the Parent Teachers Association (PTA), which gave me the opportunity to learn how to organize and plan events.

**You have done wonderful things with a variety of Persian organizations such as Shiraz University Medical Science Association, do you volunteer outside of the Persian community?**

Oh yes I do other charity work and volunteer two days a week at a hospital.

**What do you find to be the most difficult thing about**

**organizing events?**

One of the most important events we, as Persians, can plan over the years is NoRouz galas. NoRouz is the Persian New Year and is celebrated in the same grandeur as American New Year I so enjoyed cooking for over 150 different events. I felt it important to have traditional Persian holiday food present at these affairs. Some how just having American faire did not make it NoRouz. I believe this is one occasion that can truly and positively promote our culture amongst ourselves and out side of the community.

What is disappointing is that often in organizing there are to many inflexible

ter for our elder community. So while a center is our goal at this time financially we have only been able to hold a few events a year.

**As a Persian American how do you see yourself and others like you in the US?**

Women in the US have fought bravely for their rights and have been successful in their efforts. I think that Persian American women have already and will continue to enhance the mix. We are, for the most part, very well educated and cultured. Just look at some of our contribution's Christiana Amanour, Roudy Bakhtiar, Assieh Namdar, Azar Naficy, Maryam Satrapour, etc. And, if I might add as women, Persian or not, we have a universal quality ... we listen and are willing to modify and negotiate. On that note, do not be surprised to see women, Persian and non-Persian women, holding more and more important positions in all professions. Sometimes I wonder how we are able to juggle it all but, that is the wonderful part of being a woman.

**What are your passions besides fund raising?**

Reading, poetry and I love to collect Persian art.

**In respect to Persian art, what roles do you think Persian art will play in the advancement of Persian culture in the US?**

Well before Persian art can have any impact in the United States it must have the support of our own community. That is an obligation we must all have. It is important to attend Persian exhibits and more importantly to bring someone with us who is outside of the community.

**When you say our obligation to support, do you mean we should finance them?**

Listen, if someone has the money to sponsor a Persian artist they should, most



personalities. You cannot let this stop your efforts. In fact, because of one situation I organized with friends of mine the Banou Association of New Jersey.

**How did this come to be?**

I developed the idea and thought about it after a discussion with an elderly lady who was lonely and had no one to speak with. The discussion triggered the thought of opening a senior citizen's cen-

of us are not that wealthy, but we are wealthy enough to purchase the artwork and attend and publicize exhibits. Again educating ourselves and others will have a positive impact on our community as a whole.

*Now, I would like to put you on the spot and ask you your opinion of Persian television?*

Of course, each of us has and is entitled to their opinion on this as well as other subjects. That should not mean that we are not willing to listen to the opinions of each other. On that note I will respond to your question. I believe that Persian programming is a necessity. It keeps the Persian language alive in our homes and community and brings us all a little closer. So in that respect they need to be supported. However, some programming warrants criticism because they are an insult to our intelligence. Some of the programs that begin as platforms of a discussion end up in heated and destructive arguments. These programs need some professional guidance. In my humble opinion I would like to see more educational programming.

*What closing words would you like to leave with our readers?*

I guess you are now providing me a forum to speak and I wish what I am about to say was profound. My closing words, however, will echo the same message of the others you have interviewed. Basically, I want to say that keeping our culture alive is one of the most important things we can give to our children, our community and this country. It is our worth and value. This will only be accomplished through a commitment to each other. I do not mean to say that we all have to think and act the same, that would actually be detrimental to us. But we do need to learn how to disagree and make that disagreement constructive, NOT destructive. We must learn how to entice the young, the old and those in the middle into making sacrifices to promote our culture. We must learn to do this tactfully. Most of all we need to appreciate and accentuate the positive things we find in one another rather than dwell on the negative. And, we need to spend less time on gossip and more time on productivity.

Preserving who and what we are will only bring good things. Thank you for this opportunity. ■

## WHAT LOVE IS ALL ABOUT

S. B. Shaw

It was a busy morning, approximately 8:30 a.m., when an elderly gentleman, in his 80's, arrived to have stitches removed from his thumb. He stated that he was in a hurry as he had an appointment at 9:00 am.

I took his vital signs and had him take a seat, knowing it would be over an hour before someone would be able to see him. I saw him looking at his watch and decided, since I was not busy with another patient, I would evaluate his wound.

On exam it was well healed, so I talked to one of the doctors, got the needed supplies to remove his sutures and redress his wound.

While taking care of his wound, we began to engage in conversation. I asked him if he had a doctor's appointment this morning, as he was in such a hurry.

The gentleman told me no, that he needed to go to the nursing home to eat breakfast with his wife.

I then inquired as to her health. He told me that she had been there for a while and that she was a victim of Alzheimer Disease. As we talked, and I finished dressing his wound, I asked if she would be worried if he was a bit late. He replied that she no longer knew who he was, that she had not recognized him in five years now.

I was surprised, and asked him. "And you still go every morning, even though she doesn't know who you are?" He smiled as he patted my hand and said. "She doesn't know me, but I still know who she is."

I had to hold back tears as he left, I had goose bumps on my arm, and thought, "That is the kind of love I want in my life."

True love is neither physical, nor romantic. True love is an acceptance of all that is, has been, will be, and will not be.

With all the jokes and fun that are in e-mails, sometimes there are some that come along that have an important message, and this is one of those kinds. Just had to share it with you all.

Oh, by the way, peace is seeing a sunset and knowing whom to thank.

"The happiest of people don't necessarily have the best of everything; they just make the best of everything that comes along their way."

*(from email)*

## DID YOU KNOW?

Tajiki Persian is said to belong to the new Iranian group of languages and is, like modern Persian, directly descended from Dari Persian. Tajiki Persian is the official language of Tajikistan and is spoken in parts of Uzbekistan, Gherghizestan and Kazakhstan. During the Soviet era an effort was made, mainly on the art of Tajiki scholar, S. Ayni and his students, to reconcile literary and vernacular forms of the language. The policy, at that time, was to free the Tajiki from the constraints of the past and bring it closer to the language of the people. Another possible reason for this could have been an attempt on part of the Soviets to play down the close relationship between modern and Tajiki Persian based on political motivations.

## THE 2003 STELLA AWARDS: CAN YOU IMAGINE?

It's once again time to review the winners of the annual Stella Awards. The Stellas are named after 81-year-old Stella Liebeck who spilled coffee on herself and successfully sued McDonald's. That case inspired the Stella Awards for the most frivolous successful lawsuits in the United States. Unfortunately the most recent lawsuit implicating McDonald's, the teens who allege that eating at McDonald's has made them fat, was filed after the 2002 award voting was closed. This suit will top the 2003 awards list without question.

### THIS YEAR'S AWARDS GO TO:

#### 5<sup>th</sup> place (Tied).

K. R. was awarded \$780,000 by a jury of her peers after breaking her ankle tripping over a toddler who was running inside a furniture store. The owners of the store were understandably surprised at the verdict, considering the misbehaving toddler was Ms. R's son.

#### 5<sup>th</sup> place (Tied).

19 year old C. T. won \$74,000 and medical expenses when his neighbor ran over his hand with a Honda Accord. Mr. Truman apparently did not notice there was someone at the wheel of the car when he was trying to steal the hubcaps.

#### 5<sup>th</sup> place (Tied).

T. D. was leaving a house he had just finished robbing by way of the garage. He was not able to get the garage door to go up since the automatic door opener was malfunctioning. He could not re-enter the house because the door connecting the house and garage locked when he pulled it shut. The family was on vacation and Mr. D. found himself locked in the garage for 8 days. He subsisted on a case of Pepsi he found and a large bag of dry dog food. He sued the homeowner's insurance claiming the situation caused him undue mental anguish. The Jury agreed to the tune of \$500,000.

#### 4<sup>th</sup> place.

J. W. was awarded \$14,500 and medical expenses after being bitten on the buttocks by his next-door neighbor's Beagle dog. The Beagle was on a chain in its owner's fenced yard. The award was less than sought because the jury felt the dog might have been a little provoked at the time as Mr. W., who had climbed over the fence into the yard, was shooting it repeatedly with a pellet gun.

#### 3<sup>rd</sup> place.

A Philadelphia restaurant was ordered to pay A. C. \$113,500 after she slipped on a soft drink and broke her coccyx (tailbone). The beverage was on the floor because Ms. C. had thrown it at her boyfriend 30 seconds earlier, during an argument.

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> place.

K. W. sued the owner of a Night Club in a neighboring city when she fell from the bathroom window to the floor and knocked out two of her front teeth. This occurred whilst Ms. W. was trying to sneak in the window of the Ladies Room to avoid paying the \$3.50 cover charge. She was awarded \$12,000 and dental expenses.

#### 1<sup>st</sup> Place.

This year's runaway winner was Mr. M. G. Mr. G. purchased a brand new Winnebago Motorhome. On his trip home from an OU football game, having driven onto the freeway, he set the cruise control at 70 mph and calmly left the driver's seat to go into the back and make himself a cup of coffee. Not surprisingly the RV left the freeway, crashed and overturned. Mr. G. sued Winnebago for not advising him in the owner's manual that he could not actually do this. The jury awarded him \$1,750,000 plus a new Winnebago Motorhome. The company actually changed their manuals on the basis of this suit just in case there were any other complete morons buying their recreational vehicles.

### DRESS CODE

Many of us "old folks" (those hovering near 40, over 40, or WAY over 40) are quite confused about how we should present ourselves. We're unsure about the kind of image we are projecting and whether or not we are correct as we try to be hip and conform to the trends and fashions that designers in NYC, California, and/or Paris inflict upon the world.

A study was made and it was decided that the following combinations DO NOT go together and thus should be avoided:

1. A nose ring and bifocals
2. Spiked hair and bald spots
3. A pierced tongue and dentures
4. Miniskirts and support hose
5. Ankle bracelets and corn pads
6. Speedos and cellulite
7. A belly button ring and a gall bladder surgery scar
8. Unbuttoned disco shirts and a heart monitor
9. Midriff shirts and a midriff bulge
10. Bikinis and liver spots
11. Short shorts and varicose veins
12. In-line skates and a walker
13. Thongs and Depends

Please keep these basic guidelines foremost in your mind when you shop.

*(Author unknown, taken from the Internet)*