

Iranian
American
Society of
Daytona Beach

ANNUAL
REPORT
2007 - 2008



IRANIAN AMERICAN SOCIETY



President's Report

Iranian American Society's eleventh year proved the most successful with numerous events for members and the community. We partnered with the Southeast Museum of Photography to host three photography exhibits. We also kicked off the Ancient Persia ~ Modern Iran Lecture Series in partnership with BCU, DSC, ERAU, SMP, WNDB Marc Bernier Show, and WDSC TV15. The lectures are free and open to the public and are taped for future broadcasts on WDSC. IAS was very lucky to be one of few selected sites for the *Wishes and Dreams* exhibit brought from Iran to the United States by Meridian International. *Wishes and Dreams* showcased the works of Iran's young artists. IAS in partnership with the Museum of Arts and Sciences added a second exhibit, *Nesting Dornas*, for the duration of the *Wishes and Dreams* exhibit. Our aim was to give viewers the ability to compare and contrast the works of Iranian Artists currently living in Iran and the works of Iranian Artists living abroad. *Safahan Music Group*, originally scheduled to come to Florida earlier in the year, was finally able to secure visas and travel to Daytona Beach in the same time period as the *Wishes & Dreams* exhibit. Although IAS lost the International Cultural Exchange grant, awarded by Florida Department of State, to host Safahan due to postponement of their trip, the Board of Directors of Iranian American Society together with all our project partners decided to combine these programs and schedule them within the same week. *Passport to Persia* was a week-long celebration of Iranian arts to showcase the rich culture and heritage of Iran and Iranians. IAS and all of its project part-

ners were successful in holding events in different locations including the Mori Hosseini Center, the Theatre Center and the Goddard Theater at Daytona State College; the Museum of Arts and Sciences; the Mary McLeod Performing Arts Center at Bethune-Cookman University; the Gale Lemerand Auditorium at Embry-Riddle and Westside Elementary School. Thousands of people were able to visit the art exhibits, enjoy Safahan's music, watch Iranian documentaries and the lectures on WDSC, discuss and view Marjan Satrapi's animated movie, *Persepolis*, along with documentaries from Noor Film Festival, buy ancient musical instruments, attend a lecture by Rudi Bakhtiar and Karim Sadjadpour, and enjoy other programs.

Through the generosity of our sponsors as well as a grant from Cultural Council of Volusia County, we were able to offer these programs for free or a nominal ticket price. The *Passport to Persia* week proved to be a huge success thanks to IAS members and our project partners who worked diligently to assure our events' success.

We have an exciting year planned for 2009. We just started Farsi classes for our members and hope to be able to offer it to the community at large by early next year. We will celebrate all traditional Iranian holidays and continue to offer educational lectures. We look forward to continuing and expanding our partnerships with the arts, cultural and educational institutions in Volusia and Flagler counties as well as other Iranian organizations throughout Florida.

Thank you for your continued support,
Forough B. Hosseini



PASSPORT *to Persia*

Passport to Persia was a celebration of Persian art and culture. The week-long program included art exhibits, music performances, documentaries, lectures, forums, and more. *Passport to Persia* has been the largest undertaking for Iranian American Society to date and IAS is very proud to have been able to provide the opportunity for our community members to experience Iran's rich history through art and cultural programs.

Ancient Persia~Modern Iran Lecture III

Rudi Bakhtiar, formerly an anchorwoman with CNN and Fox News along with *Karim Sadjadpour*, an associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and an expert in Iranian Politics and Society and a regular contributor to BBC World TV and Radio, CNN, NPR, PBS and others, were interviewed by Marc Bernier of the Marc Bernier Show. They discussed their experiences from their many years of travels throughout the Middle East and Iran for the purpose of reporting and writing articles. The lecture was aired live on WNDB 1150 and taped for future broadcasts on WDSC.



Wishes and Dreams: A New Generation of Artists Emerges in Iran

The *Wishes & Dreams* Art exhibit was on display at the Museum of Arts and Sciences from September 18th through November 7th, 2008. *Wishes & Dreams*, a collaboration by Meridian International Center and Tehran University's Art Gallery, featured the work of 28 emerging artists between the ages of 22 and 40. Major trends in the new art being produced by this generation: abstraction, portraiture, minimalism, and installation and video art, were on display.



Dark Quiet
Mina Azarmand

Focusing on the young and active art community in Iran, the exhibit demonstrated how the young active art community members are inspired by their long history and rich cultural heritage, as they try to reconcile it with the realities of today's Iran. The art scene in Iran is vibrant and extremely active. Much of the art in *Wishes & Dreams* was about the artists' dreams from the past or of the future. They look to

their historical past, their symbols and beliefs, wanting to preserve it, while also wondering about their future. The status of women in the country was a common theme, one which was not so evident in a previous collection brought over by Meridian in 2003, *A Breeze from the Gardens of Persia*. IAS and MOAS were also hosts to the *Breeze* exhibit where seven of the exhibiting artists joined us for the grand opening and held workshops and lectures for students in colleges and universities.

Traveling to Florida, exhibiting artists, Ms. Mina Azarmand and Mr. Hamed Sahihi, were able to attend the grand opening and various gallery talks to discuss their art, the exhibit and their experience as artists living in Iran.



Dreamer 2
Hamed Sahihi



PASSPORT to Persia

Nesting Dornas Exhibit

Dorna is the name of a mythical bird, a kind of crane, in Iranian folklore that immigrates and searches for love all of its life.



Taking It Off
Nargges Albekord

When it finds true love, the bird flies into a thorn bush and dies, having achieved its ultimate desire. The Iranian-American artists of Florida have organized a group named *Nesting Dornas* because they feel like a *Nesting Dorna* being away from their homeland. Two of *Nesting Dornas'* artists, Mrs. Roohee Mirbaha and Mrs.

Nargges Albekord, exhibited their work alongside the *Wishes and Dreams* exhibit at the Museum of Arts and Sciences from September 18th-November 7th, 2008. Exhibiting local work allowed the museum visitors to compare and contrast the works of Iranians living inside Iran with the works of Iranian artists living abroad. Both Mrs. Mirbaha and Mrs. Albekord donated a piece of their art for a live auction to benefit *Passport to Persia*.



Emerald of the Sea
Roohee Mirbaha

Safahan Music Group

Mr. Hamid Sheikhbahaie once again visited Florida, this time with an all female ensemble. It was a unique and exceptional privilege for Iranian American Society members to play hosts to one of very few all female ensembles from Iran. Because of the Islamic Republic's restrictions on female artists and performers, it is especially difficult for women musicians to practice and perform in Iran. It is because of these ladies' devotion and their passion for music that they have achieved so much.

Safahan Music Group has had many performances not only in Iran but also in various countries in Asia and Europe. This was their first visit to the United

States and Daytona Beach was their first stop. They also performed in other cities in Florida and other states as well. *Safahan* started their tour by performing at the *Passport to Persia* opening Gala. On Saturday, Sept 20th, the group performed at Bethune-Cookman University for the general public where students of every age, as well as teachers and employees of schools, were invited to attend for free. The *Safahan* musicians participated at Embry Riddle's Arts & Letters program, held a



workshop for Daytona State College students and made a special presentation for the Westside Elementary students.





PASSPORT to Persia

Persepolis Book Forum and Movie



The Mori Hosseini Center's theater was the venue for the *Persepolis* book discussion where a lively conversation was moderated by Dr. Claudette McFadden, VP for Student Affairs & Professor at Bethune-Cookman University. The book review was followed by a viewing of the Oscar nominated animation movie, *Persepolis*, based on Marjane Satrapi's book and directed by Satrapi and Vincent Paronnaud. *Persepolis* has been nominated and has won many awards such as the British Film Institute's Sutherland Trophy, Cannes Film Festival's Jury Prize, Cinemanila International film Festival Special Jury Prize and France's Cesar Awards, among many others.

Noor Festival Documentaries

Southeast Museum of Photography working with Iranian American Society has partnered with the *Noor Film Festival* to become a second site for this annual film festival. The documentaries were shown at the Theater in the Mori Hosseini Center throughout the *Passport to Persia* week.

Westside Elementary Persia Week

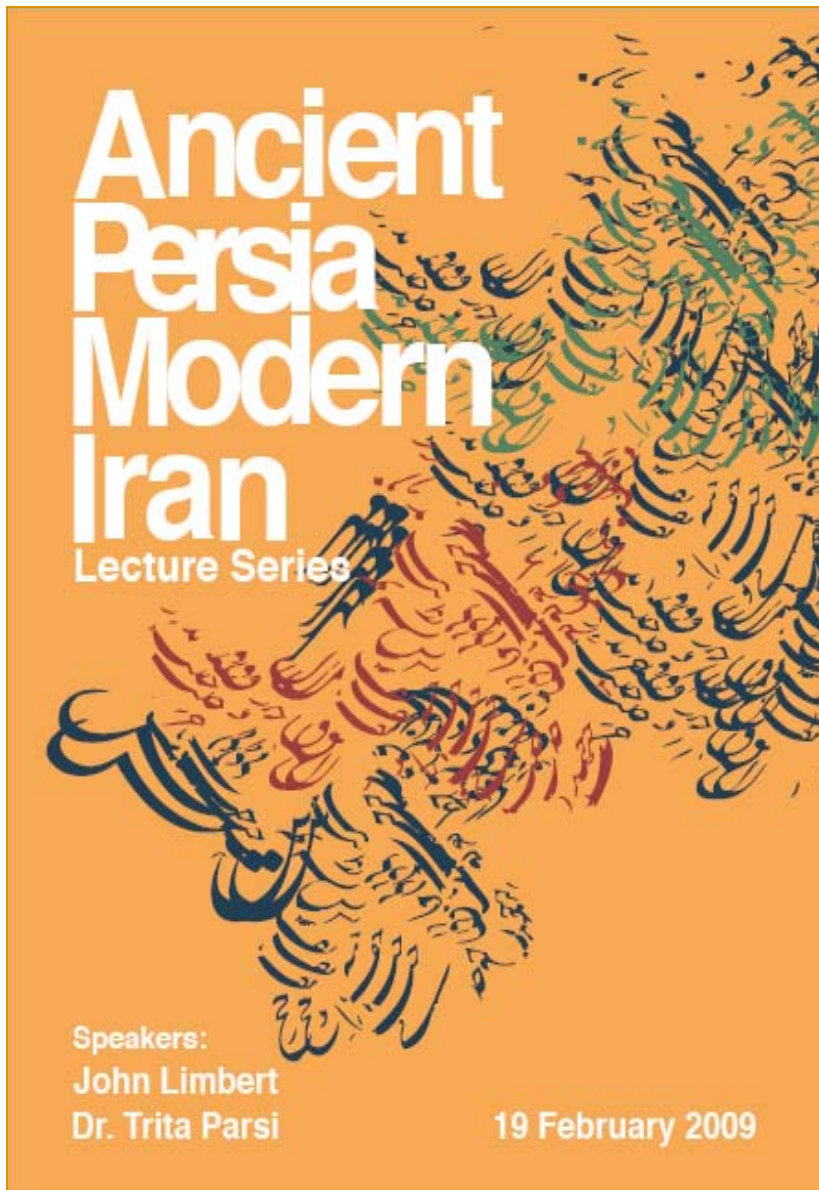
During Westside's Global Literacy in Education Program the students were exposed to a different culture each week. Manous Richey and Satra Ahmadzadeh participated in Westside Elementary's Persia Week.

Manous and Satra put together an informative presentation for the students on Iran. Manous, adorned in her beautiful traditional dress, entertained them with Persian music and dance...even giving the students a dance lesson. Curious and eager to learn, students asked interesting questions about geography, history, culture and people of Iran. To top off their presentation, Satra treated the students to ice cream sundaes.



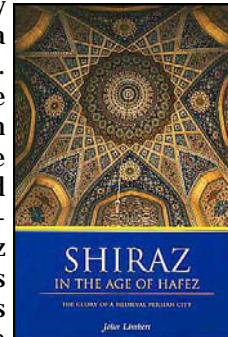
Passport to Persia

Ancient Persia ~ Modern Iran Lecture Series

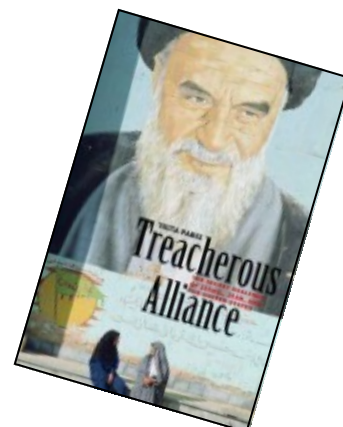
A poster for the 'Ancient Persia ~ Modern Iran Lecture Series'. The background is orange with intricate, colorful Persian calligraphy in blue, green, and red. The text 'Ancient Persia ~ Modern Iran' is written in large, white, sans-serif font, with 'Lecture Series' in a smaller font below it. At the bottom left, it lists the speakers: 'Speakers: John Limbert, Dr. Trita Parsi'. At the bottom right, it says '19 February 2009'.

Ancient Persia ~ Modern Iran Lecture IV is scheduled for Feb 19, 2009, with guests *Ambassador John Limbert* and *Dr. Trita Parsi*.

Ambassador Limbert, a former hostage held in Iran for 444 days, is a career Foreign Service Officer with overseas experience in Algeria, Djibouti, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates. He holds the Department of State's Meritorious Honor Award, Superior Honor Award and Award for Valor, among many others. *Ambassador Limbert* holds a BA, MA and PHD from Harvard University and is presently a Professor at the U.S. Naval Academy. He has taught in Iran both as a Peace Corps volunteer and as an English instructor at Shiraz University. He has written numerous articles on Middle Eastern subjects and has authored *Iran: At War with History* and his latest book *Shiraz: In the Age of Hafez*.



Dr. Trita Parsi is the author of *Treacherous Alliance – The Secret Dealings of Iran, Israel and the United States*. He was the recipient of the most significant award for a book on international affairs, the Council of Foreign Relations' 2008 Arthur Ross Silver Medallion award. *Dr. Parsi* wrote his Doctoral thesis on Israeli-Iranian relations at Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies and is heading the largest Iranian-American organization in the US, the National Iranian American Council.



Kiarostami and Kamel Photography Exhibit At Southeast Museum of Photography

Over 250 members, friends and guests joined Iranian American Society for Brunch to celebrate the Grand Opening of the *Kiarostami* and *Kamel* photography exhibit on Sunday, November 4, 2007. As a surprise for our guests, IAS presented the very talented and beloved musician, Mr. Anoushiravan Rohani, who dazzled the audience by playing the old favorites on the piano. For the 10-week duration of the exhibit, movies of Mr. Kiarostami were shown repeatedly at SMP Theater.



Abbas Kiarostami

Iranian photographer, artist and film director, *Abbas Kiarostami*, noted as one of the world's top ten most critically acclaimed directors in film, is known for the "Radical humanism" of his depictions of ordinary Iranians in his award-winning films, and for the austere, abstract and contemplative qualities of his photography.

This exhibit was drawn from four of his celebrated recent series with superb color and black and white prints. *Kiarostami*, through his photographs, sets out to distill a scene down to its simplest, lyrical essence.

Kiarostami's films are characterized by their thoughtful and philosophical mood, their view of ordinary people whose everyday lives reflect the depths of human feeling: by a visual simplicity and by the duality of modernity and tradition.

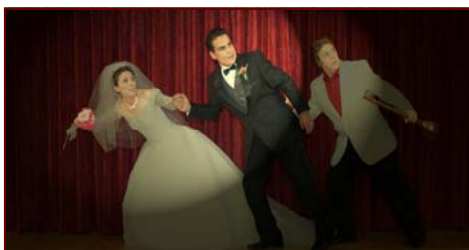
Shahrzad Kamel

A young, talented and exuberant Iranian American Photographer, *Shahrzad Kamel*, has held multiple exhibits in Turkey and United States.

Kamel fell in love with photography while working as an assistant to a Turkish documentary photographer. This job and growing up in countries other than her own that influenced her decision to focus on a career in photography. To *Shahrzad*, it was only through photographs that she could imagine life in Iran. Photographs brought to her a very touching and emotional awareness of a world and of lives so geographically far from her own, yet somehow so close on a humane level.

Shahrzad earned a BA in Geography and Politics from the University of London and a Masters in Arts from NYU. *Shahrzad* is currently living in New York and is working on a series of longer-term projects.

FARRAR-e-BOZORG PLAY



If you attended *Farrar-e-Bozorg*, Houshang Touzie's latest play, you might still be laughing! IAS was honored to be the debut location for this wonderfully humorous play held at The Theatre Center in DSC. This was the third time we hosted Workshop 77 Theater Group. Mr. Touzie's academy nominated wife and co-creator of Workshop 77, Shohreh Aghdashloo, acted in the first two plays held at Gale Lemerand Auditorium at ERAU.

2008 Chahar-Shanbeh-Soori

On Tuesday, March 18, 2008, members of the Iranian American Society gathered at Tom Renick Park in Ormond-by-the-Sea to celebrate the ancient Zoroastrian celebration of fire (Chahar-Shanbeh-



Soori). There was a bonfire on the beach, as well as, fireworks for children. Hotdogs, marshmallows, schnitzels, mixed nuts and soft drinks were provided while guests enjoyed vibrant Persian music. Approximately 60 attended the

event and everyone left smelling of smoke and ready to celebrate the traditional Persian New Year of Noruz, which was celebrated 3 days later.

The story behind the celebration is as follows: Ancient Iranians believed the guardian angels (Forouhars) and spirits of the dead would come down to earth within these ten days to visit their human counterparts. A major Spring-cleaning is carried out to welcome them with feasts and celebrations. Bonfires would be set on rooftops at night to indicate to the spirits and the angels that humans were ready to receive them. This was



called the Suri Festival. Modern Iranians still carry out the Spring-cleaning and celebrate 'Chahar Shanbeh Suri' (Wednesday Suri).

Bonfires are made and all people will jump over the fire. This is a purification rite and Iranians believe by going over the fire they will get rid of all their illnesses and misfortunes.



Annual General Membership Meeting

The Iranian American Society hosted a Sunday Brunch for its General Membership on September 7th at the Bahramis' home. A generous turnout of members were treated to a delicious Sunday Brunch, courtesy of Mohammad and Faye Bahrami. Members and their families had the opportunity to meet old friends and get acquainted with new members. The program included a surprise video of a Safahan performance presented as a preview for our upcoming *Passport to Persia Week*.

Annual Meeting and Board Member Elections

The Iranian American Society had its annual meeting and the board election for its general membership on Sunday March 9, 2008. Laleh and Moji Babazadeh hosted this event at their home. The members and their guests were treated to a delicious Sunday brunch, courtesy of the Babazadeh family. About 60 members attended this event and had the opportunity to visit and chat with each others. The program included an update of all the upcoming social events. The board election was the highlight of this gathering.

Farsi Classes

Under the leadership of an IAS Board member, Mrs. Shahla Zamiri, Farsi classes were started on Saturday, October 11, 2008 at City Island Library's Kids Auditorium. Classes are for students ages 4 years and up and meet once a week. Currently 18, students have signed up for Farsi classes. Four students for the 4 - 9 year old class and fourteen students for the older class. Mrs. Raana Attarran teaches the younger students and Mrs. Shahla Zamiri teaches the older students. The students are all excited and interested in learning Farsi.

IAS is planning to offer Farsi classes to Non-members starting in 2009.

Sizdeh Bedar Picnic

The celebration of Spring was capped off and enjoyed by an enthusiastic group at the Sizdeh Bedar Picnic at Breakaway Trails Park on April 6, 2008. Sizdeh Bedar marks the 13th day of Spring. Food was a buffet luncheon of traditional dishes. Fun activities were planned for all ages including a backgammon tournament.

1387 Noruz Gala



Noruz is the only day of the year when all Iranians of the world celebrate together. Irrespective of their religion, political affiliation, country of residence, etc., Iranians come together to observe the New Year or 'New Day,' as is the direct translation of the word 'Noruz.' Muslims, Christians, Bahais, Jews or atheists -- everyone can rejoice together, wholeheartedly, and as one.



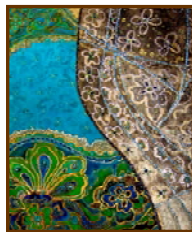
The Iranian American Society of Daytona Beach celebrated Noruz 1387 with a charming gala on March 29, 2008. Over 300 members & guests gathered to enjoy an evening of Art, Music, & delicious food.



The Babazadeh Gallery's newest exhibit, *"Persian Visions: Contemporary Photography from Iran,"* was unveiled that evening.

The 60 works of photography revealed a side of contemporary Iran unknown to many.

Also on display were works by internationally known artist Roohee Mirbaha. Currently maintaining her own studio in Sanford Florida, Roohee has held respected positions such as lead artist & consulting designer in the Sarasota ballet's production of *Zal & Roudabeh*. In fact, Roohee was the first dean of the College of Art in Iran.



No Iranian event would be complete without authentic Persian cuisine. Thanks to Neema Bahrami & his team, guests were able to enjoy many of the Persian favorites as

well as 'Sabzi Polo Mahi,' a traditional New Year dish of steamed rice with chopped parsley, dill & chives served with white fish. Dessert, including Baklava Cake and various Iranian pastries, were also a hit.

The evening really kicked off when Iranian pop music sensation, Shahram Solati, took the stage. His upbeat, lively music energized the crowd and before long both dance floors on either side of the stage were packed full. Iranians & non-Iranians alike danced the night away.



It was through the help of members and even some non-members, that this wonderful celebration was a huge success. The Iranian American Society of Daytona Beach is lucky to have so many wonderful and dedicated members. In fact, the society wanted to particularly honor Fariba Toutouchian and Marissa Buckley as the 2008 Members of the Year and the society's Vice-President, Mohammad Bahrami, as the society's Board Member of the Year.

May 1387 be a year filled with health, wealth, & happiness for all!

IAS Kids Camp 2008

From October 24 to 26, 2008, Iranian families from the Daytona Beach Area, Orlando, and Atlanta came together at the Lighthouse Key Resort & Spa in Orlando. This event was planned and organized for IAS Kids Club. The resort provided all the opportunities that adult and children needed to make this one of the most memorable events of its kind in recent years. Everyone enjoyed the luxury and amenities that the resort provided. Nestled on the shores of a 69-acre lake and less than 3 miles from the new entrance to Walt Disney World, Lighthouse Key Resort & Spa is conveniently located close to all the Theme Parks. Families stayed in two, three, or four-bedroom lakefront residences. Each family helped to prepare breakfast, lunch and dinner which were served in a separate unit everyday. The menu included khorosht bademjoon, khorosht ghormegh sabzi, loubia polo, khorosht karafs and many other dishes with Iranian flavor. Kids enjoyed socializing with their own peers while parents partied and danced the night away. It was a truly fun-filled adventure. On Sunday, everyone attended the Iranian-American Chamber of Commerce picnic in Orlando which complemented this fun weekend. See you all next year!



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Passport to Persia Sponsors

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Individuals, Families, Students and Senior Citizens

Family Membership	\$75	• Advance Ticket Purchase
Individual Membership	\$30	• Member-Priced Tickets for Events
Students and Senior Citizens Membership	\$15	• Invitation to Member Only Events
		• Staying informed of IAS activities through mailings/ e-mails of event news, newsletters and the Annual Report

Corporate Members

Corporate Membership - \$250

One Free Ticket to any ticketed event

Elite Corporate Membership - \$500

Two Free Tickets to any ticketed event

Executive Corporate Membership - \$1,000

Four Free Tickets to any ticketed event

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 - Staying informed of IAS activities through mailings/
e-mails of event news, newsletters and the Annual Report

Lifetime Members - \$1,100 (one-time)

- One Free Ticket to any Ticketed Event for Life
- Priority Advance Ticket Purchase
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- Staying informed of IAS activities through mailings/e-mails of event news, newsletters and the Annual Report

Iranian American Society of Daytona Beach

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