

Iranian wins re-election in California

Iran Times: Iranian-American Jimmy Delshad won re-election to the City Council of Beverly Hills last month and was set to be named mayor of the California city.

But electors gave Delshad, and other candidates, a shock. The election was not the dull cakewalk that had been anticipated.

Delshad, 66, and fellow incumbent Steve Webb were up for re-election. They were both endorsed by the three other City Council incumbents and were expected to win re-election easily over four challengers, two of whom were Iranian-American.

But the surprise was administered by Nancy Krasne. She attacked the entire City Council for its neighbourhood policies. And she came in first in the balloting.

Delshad came in second, with Webb just 86 votes further back. So Krasne and Delshad won seats, and Webb was eliminated.

Close behind Webb in fourth place was Iranian-American Maggie Soleimani, a lawyer who left Iran with her family when she was 15.

The other Iranian-American,

Shahram Melamed, a businessman who arrived from Iran in the late 70s, was far behind the crowd at the top, and last place finisher Lizz Monet Morales, a journalist, made no waves and received only 3 percent of the vote. Here are the vote totals:

Nancy Krasne	2679	23.5%
Jimmy Delshad	2443	21.9%
Steve Webb	2357	21.1%
Maggie Soleimani	2181	19.5%
Shahram Melamed	1173	10.5%
Lizza Monet Morales	339	3.0%

The City Council rotates the job of mayor each year with the senior member getting the nod first. Delshad, who has been vice mayor this past year, is slated to be formally elected mayor March 20. The city is run by a manager, so the mayor-ship is largely an honorary position.

Beverly Hills is about one fourth Iranian, mostly Jewish, and all three of the Iranians running for the City Council were Jewish.

The one thing controversial about Delshad was his proposal of last fall to make that world famous paean to shopping, Rodeo Drive, a pedestrian walkway cleared of Benzes and BMWs, not to mention more prosaic vehicles. Then the posh would have to actually walk to get to Bijan's, one of the Iranian owned splendours of Rodeo Drive, where, according to published reports, the average shopper drops \$100,000 on each visit.

But another issue popped up late in the campaign when the city clerk decided to print bilingual sample ballots, English and Persian. Many residents objected. Delshad said he was inundated with angry calls and quickly explained that he had nothing to do with the bilingual ballots and didn't like them. "The Iranian community is one of the most educated minorities in America and reads English well," he said. "The ballots only caused confusion and were an insult to many Iranian."

The ballot issue didn't appear to make any difference in the election since Delshad came out ahead of the non-Iranian incumbent, Webb. Krasne topped the field despite, or perhaps because of a nasty election eve mailer urging vot-



Jimmy Delshad

ers to "vote no on Nancy Krasne." The flier did not identify who had produced it, a violation of the law. Some residents angry at the anonymous, last minute attack thought the mailer may actually have helped Krasne.

Krasne was endorsed by the Beverly Hills North Homeowners Association, which accused both Delshad and Webb of ignoring residents' concerns. That may have been the difference in the election that boosted Krasne and cut the vote totals for both incumbents. That endorsement also distinguished Krasne from the three other challengers.

Delshad and Webb were both endorsed by the city's two weekly newspapers. Born in Shiraz, Delshad came to the United States in 1959 to attend university, graduated from California State at Northridge, and then went into the new computer industry. He moved to Beverly Hills 18 years ago and has long been active in civic affairs as well as in Jewish and Iranian organizations.

There are now seven Iranian-Americans holding elective office in North America, five in California and one each in Texas and Washington State.

They are: Sheila Meskin Hanson, who has the largest electorate of any Iranian-American as a Superior Court judge elected in November 2006 in Orange County, California, with a population of 3 million. Susan Etezadi, elected in June 2006 also as a Superior Court judge, in San Mateo County, with a population of 700,000 in northern California; Ross Mirkarimi, elected in 2004 as a county supervisor of San Francisco county, population 750,000; Farid Javandel, elected the same day to the city council of Albany, California, a town of 18,000 people on the east side of San Francisco Bay; Jimmy Delshad, elected in 2003 and re-elected last month to the city council in Beverly Hills, California, adjacent to Los Angeles and with a population of 34,000; Nezam Tooloee, elected city councilor in 2003 in Bainbridge Island, Washington, a town of 22,000 just across Puget Sound from Seattle; and Natasha Kamrani, who won election in December 2005 to one of nine seats on the Houston School Board, the nation's seventh largest school system and a city with a population of 2 million.

Previously, Hooshang Nazarali, was elected in remote Madison County, Arkansas, population 14,000, as a justice of the peace, which is not a judicial office in Arkansas but the equivalent of a county supervisor. However, last year he was defeated for re-nomination and left office at the end of the year.

have originally been solely an animal disease. Zanjani says frankly that this is a legitimate concern. Others have a religious opposition to Zanjani's work, concerned a sheep with human cells could be more than a sheep. Zanjani doesn't entirely rule that out in the future. "There is no way for us to know," he told the New Scientist, "but at the level we are working with the animal [now], it's still a sheep."

San Francisco celebrates Nowruz, Persian New Year

Turquoise Bridges Foundation, for the 2nd year organized the 2nd annual Nowruz Celebration in the city and country of San Francisco on March 23rd, 2007.

The celebration was attended by several hundred Bay Area Iranian-Americans, members of the consular corps as well as elected and appointed officials from across the state.

The Iranian New Year, Nowruz, marks the coming of the vernal equinox of first day of spring in a symbolic celebration honoring the harmony between life nature.

The event included performances by Ballet Afsaneh, Ostad Nejad of the Nejad World Music Center, Nejad Daf ensemble, Seemorgh Choral ensemble, and Bazem Music Ensemble.

Mayor Gavin Newsome, Supervisor Ross Mirkarimi and Commissioner Nazly Mohajer were on hand to host the event on behalf of the City of San Francisco and pay tribute to the Bay Area's growing Iranian-American Community. In commemoration of Nowruz, Commissioner Nazly Mohajer, Chair of the event said "At a time when many of our political leaders seem to be focused on what divides us, it is important to find a common ground to bring the communities together and create opportunities for common understanding. The most

effective way to bring people together is to provide a common cultural experience. As we welcome the arrival of



spring and celebrate this season of rebirth and renewal, may this special holiday be one of cherishing relationships with family, friends and community. In these times of unprecedented challenge, let us renew our commitment to work together for awareness, tolerance and compassion around the globe."

Women now have their own taxicabs

Iran Times: An all-female taxi services has started operations in Tehran and hopes to have 300 radio-dispatched cabs on the road in the very near future.

Qom has had an all-female cab service since 2002, but efforts to start a similar service in the capital didn't bear fruit until December.

All the drivers are women and the cabs carry only female passengers and those passenger's young sons.

The Tehran service started December 23. More than two months later, the company only has 30 taxis in operation but will have 300 on the streets by this month if the auto-makers come through with deliveries of Prides and Peugeots as promised.

Hamid-Reza Bani-Jamali, managing director of the company, said, "We can't meet all the demand because of the small number of cars we have."

The segregated taxi service is driven by two concerns. One is ideological; conservatives are attracted by the philosophy of creating parallel, separate-but-



equal services for women, with, for example, women doctors serving only women in women's hospitals. Some even want male-only and female-only public parks created.

The other driver is crime and safety. Ten years ago, a man dubbed the "urban vampire" by the media posed as a taxi driver and raped, murdered and incinerated 11 Tehran women before he was caught. There is also the more common problem of women being harassed by men as they are shoe-horned into group taxis. Many Tehranis who are not ideologically-driven like the idea of cabs driven by women for women.

Vaziri record eases pain

For someone who had never competed in the 50m backstroke until March 28, Iranian-American Leila Vaziri turned in a stunning performance.

Vaziri added to the American teams' impressive haul of world records when she qualified fastest for the final.

The 21 year old, a 100m specialist, hit the wall in 28.16 sec, shaving .03 off the mark set by German Janine Pietsch in Berlin in May, 2005 after earlier lowering the world championship record to 28.25 in the heats.

Vaziri is on a mission after she bombed out in her pet 100m backstroke earlier. "That was the first time I'd swum 50 backstroke," Vaziri said. "I missed making the tip eight in the 100 back, so I'm ready to go for the 50 (gold)."

However she will have to watch out for Aliaksandra Herasimenia, of Belarus, who won the first semi final in 28.38. Australia's Tay Zimmer qualified seventh for the final in 28.78. "The world is spinning, that's pretty cool," said the 21 year old, who failed to make the 100m final. "I just put that behind me and had a new attitude." Queensland schoolgirl Emily Seebohm had another harsh lesson on what's needed to compete at the top level. Fastest qualifier



for the 100m final, the 14 year old schoolgirl never recovered from a slow start in the quicker second semifinal. Seebohm clocked 29.04, outside her personal best time, but she will learn from the experience.

France's Laure Manaudou, the 400m freestyle gold medallist, was thirst fastest qualifier from the heats. However she withdrew from the semifinals to concentrate on the 200m freestyle final, which she won in world record time.

Continued from page 44

Irani does ...

Zanjani says he understands the controversy. "But some of these animals have sustained us throughout life as food and now they are serving an even more noble cause."

A major practical concern is the fear diseases to which only sheep are subject could mutate into forms that infect people. HIV is believed to