

For Immediate Release
Re: Persian New Year Festival, Berkeley
Event Date: Tuesday, March 16, 2010
Contact: Lisa Bullwinkel 510.548.5335

PRESS RELEASE

JUMP OVER THE BONFIRE AT THE PERSIAN NEW YEAR FESTIVAL

Berkeley, CA – Jump over a bonfire for “Chahrshanbeh Souri” on Tuesday, March 16, 2010, at Persian Center, 2029 Durant Avenue in Berkeley from 6–10pm to shake off the darkness of winter and welcome the lightness of spring, a Persian ritual passed down since ancient Zoroastrian times. The Persian New Year Festival is called Chahr–Shanbeh Souri, which in Persian literally means ‘Eve of Wednesday’ because the festival is always held on the last Wednesday of winter, just before the Vernal Equinox or first moment of spring.

In Iran (and parts of Afghanistan and India), it is customary for people to create bonfires in front of their homes throughout the neighborhood and jump over them as the sun sets. Since Persian Center owns it’s own ‘home’ at 2029 Durant Ave., it is thrilled to host this event for Iranian–Americans and all who have an interest in the culture. “Parents jump with their young ones who look wary of going near the flames. Sweethearts jump in tandem. Frat boys try to out leap one another in side–by–side races,” noted a festival attendee. By engaging the non–Persian community in the fire–jumping festival, the organization hopes to allow a glimpse into beautiful Persian traditions and the culture of the Iranian–American community in the US.

Inside the Persian Center, a traditional altar holds green grass, live goldfish, food and other items representative of spring called the “haftseen” or seven ‘s’ as each item on the table begins with the letter ‘s’. Persian music, food and craft vendors, cultural organizations, and children’s activities add to the experience and vendors and other sponsors are welcome. Sponsored by Persian Center, Staples, and the Presbytery of San Francisco, this is a free, family–friendly, non–alcoholic event held outdoors on Durant Avenue.

Persian Center is a non–profit, charitable 501(c3) organization whose mission is to create an environment in which to conduct social, cultural, educational, and recreational activities designed to strengthen the sense of identity and integrity of all Iranians and Iranian descendants, and to engage individuals interested in or related to Persian community and culture. It is one of a few secular Persian organizations in the United States. For more information contact www.PersianCenter.org or www.AnotherBullwinkelShow.com 510.548.5335.