



Photo by Sean Naderzad

Three young dancers from the Niosha Dance Academy waiting to perform.

WVC Celebrates Norouz

Iran-Afghan New Year crowd throngs cafeteria

Christine Krause
Managing Editor

Festivities for Norouz (“New Day”), the Iran-Afghan New Year holiday celebrating the incipient spring season, took place on March 19 at West Valley College. It was an unequivocal roaring success.

The event took place in the Campus Center and was scheduled to run from noon to 2:30 pm. Admission was free and the Campus Center was packed with observers and participants, peaking in attendance at about 300 people. Iranian men could be seen greeting each other with ardent kisses in the Middle Eastern tradition, on alternating sides of the face. Families and students alike were gathered to enjoy the revelry.

It appeared that WVC’s entire Iranian student population and innumerable other non-Iranian onlookers were present, clapping enthusiastically in time to the music.

Gorgeous and elaborate folk dance routines were performed by the Niosha Dance Academy.

The dance company was composed mainly of young women; a group of small children also performed, which resulted in an array of dances ranging from seductive to charming.

Live music on some traditional Middle Eastern percussion instruments (the Daf, a frame drum, and a Tonback, a goblet drum) accompanied vocal performances. Also given was an address introducing some Persian New Year customs. For example, an explanation of Sofreh Haft Seen, or the seven foods traditionally served that begin with the letter “s”, was provided. Tea was served, along with Persian pastries.

Work by the well-loved Persian poet Haafez was read by Maryam Fard, once a West Valley student herself. She commented that this year’s turnout was much more impressive than 2008’s, thanks in part to improved financial support. Her own experience at WVC helped her get acquainted with “many of the resources on campus.”

“I really like to give back to my community,” confessed Fard.

Other than one over-enthusiastic toddler wandering onstage during a performance, all appeared to go very smoothly. He was promptly and safely removed.