



Language Connection

DLS Cultural Event: "Spotlight on Afghanistan"

Please join us for our fourth "Spotlight on the World" event, which focuses on Afghanistan and the Afghan culture. A buffet lunch will be served.

Date: Tuesday, May 19, 2009

Time: 12:00 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Location: Diplomatic Language Services, 1901 N. Ft Myer Drive, 6th Floor, Arlington, VA 22209.

We have the pleasure of welcoming our Dari and Pashto Curriculum Development teams to present on the history, languages, culture and customs of Afghanistan.



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New Faces at DLS by Tiffany Williams

As the new year quickly unfolds, there have been a few new bright additions to the DLS staff.

Nahid Jahed, our new Pashto Curriculum intern, was born in Kabul, Afghanistan, and raised in Mazar-I-Sharif. Nahid came to the US in 2000 where she started from 5th grade. She will pursue a major in International Relations and a minor in Social Sciences at George Mason University for the fall 2009 semester. She is fluent in Dari and Farsi, and knowledgeable in Urdu, Hindi, and Spanish. Before working at DLS, she has had many interesting jobs, which included being a cashier, a librarian, a sales associate, a make-up artist for Smashbox, to now a Pashto Post Basic Curriculum Intern and a Student Services Coordinator Intern. Nahid loves the wonderful work environment and the amazing people she encounters on a daily basis at DLS.



Nahid Jahed, Shafiq Stanikzai, Kristina Bykova

He worked with the US Army as a cultural advisor, communicator, and coordinator, maintaining proper health care in Afghanistan. Through his employment with the U.S. Army, he received his special immigrant visa, Green Card, and ultimately, permission to immigrate to the USA. On January 25, 2008, he moved to the United States. Shafiq joined the DLS team as a Pashto language instructor in August 2008, and has smoothly

transitioned into the new role of a Pashto WTE Curriculum Development Specialist.

Kristina Bykova, our new Junior Accountant, was born in Moscow, Russia. She came to the United States at 15 years old and graduated from Bethlehem Baptist Christian Academy in 2002. After high school, she went to Northern Virginia Community College and got her degree in Business Administration. In the summer of 2008, she had her first exhibition in Moscow, where she presented her artwork (glass painting, similar to stained glass). In her spare time Kristina enjoys travelling, gardening, painting, and reading.

Shafiqullah Stanikzai, a WTE Pashto Curriculum Developer, was born in Kutab Khail, a district of Lugar province, Afghanistan. Shafiq graduated from Kabul Medical University in Afghanistan.

Special points of interest:

- Spotlight on Afghanistan
- New Staff Members
- Afghan Languages
- DLS Testing

Languages of Afghanistan by Safia Jahed

Pashto and Dari (Afghan Persian/Farsi) are the official languages of Afghanistan. Pashto (also written Pashtu) was declared the National Language of the country during the beginning of Zahir Shah's reign; however, Dari has always been used for business and government transactions. Both belong to the Indo-European group of languages.

According to US government estimates, approximately 35% of the Afghan population speaks Pashto, and about 50% speaks Dari. Turkic languages (Uzbek and Turkmen) are spoken by about 11% of the population. There are also numerous other languages spoken in the country (Baluchi, Pashai, Nuristani), and bilingualism is very common.

Both Pashto and Dari are written primarily with the Arabic alphabet, however, there are some modifications. Pashto Literature saw a massive rise in development in the 17th century,

mostly due to poets like Khushal Khan Khattak, who is known today as the national poet of Afghanistan. Other noteworthy Pashto poets in history were Rahman Baba, and the founder of the modern Afghan nation, Ahmad Shah Abdali.

Dari also has an extensive amount of literature, and actually, some of the worlds greatest poems have been written in Dari. Dari poems by Jalaluddin Rumi have been translated from their original Dari versions to numerous other languages and are widely read even in the west. Many powerful kingdoms of the past such as those of the Moghuls in India, primarily used Dari in their royal courts.



Recipe of the Month: Boulanee by Tiffany Williams



This month we invite you to try your hand at preparing an exquisite dish from Afghanistan!

Ingredients:

1 Package square eggroll wrappers
Corn oil
Mashed Potatoes
1 or 2 large potatoes 1/2 tsp. salt

1/2 tsp. coriander
1/2 tsp. cayenne pepper
1/2 bunch chopped cilantro
4 green onions, chopped.
Beef
1 lb. ground beef
1/2 tsp. freshly ground black pepper
1/2 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. coriander

Instructions:

Boil potatoes in their skin until soft. Peel and mash.

Add salt, coriander, cayenne pepper, cilantro and green onions and mix.

Meanwhile:

Brown ground beef with pepper, salt and coriander.

Mix ground beef with mashed potatoes. Let cool.

To wrap the boulanee, take an eggroll wrapper and place it on a flat and clean surface.

Put a spoonful of filling in the middle of the eggroll wrapper.

Wet the edges of the wrapper and close, making a triangle.

Fold the ends of the triangle into the pastry, making a small envelope.

Flatten with your hand.

Heat oil and fry the boulanee on medium heat, until brown on both sides, about 4-5 minutes.

Serve this dish with tomato sauce or yogurt sauce and enjoy!

The Spice Revolution by Dr. Nabi Misdaq



For those in position of power and authority, my message has always been simple: Don't think of Afghanistan as a monolithic country. Afghanistan is home to many tribal and ethnic groups; nearly half of the country is covered with mountains with majestic peaks; wild rivers flow in all directions and hundred of valleys, most of which have their own micro-climates, with varied food and grains specific to those valleys. Thus, it is not surprising that people from different parts of the country have developed different ways of life.

In order for the international community to help Afghans out of the current situation, Afghanistan needs relevant and sustainable assistance. In order to do away with poppies, which are forbidden in Islam and cause great damage especially to the youth around the world, Afghans need tools for success. For example, programs might introduce saffron bulbs to the west and southwest of the country where large numbers of people have access to land. Another method would be to introduce improved seeds, not just of wheat but of other cereals and vegetables, in the north

where people own more than the average amount of land. Furthermore, the introduction of the Kashmir goat to central and southeast mountainous areas, where people have large herds, would be another relevant solution. In this way, the country could become self-sufficient in food production, and the cash from saffron and Kashmir wool could bring in enough money to improve standards of living so that families could start sending their children to schools rather than using them as additional labor in the fields.



I am happy to say that so far the idea of saffron has been taken up, and Herat is becoming the first site for the pilot program. Saffron is a bulb which takes four years to mature, but then lasts for seven years. Presently, one mature bulb costs \$3. Saffron is traditionally used in rice to give it a wonderful aroma and golden color. It is also used in fabric dye and perfume. However, recently, research has been extended to assess its healing properties, and also

the pharmaceutical industry is looking into its anti-carcinogen qualities. Thus, it may soon be grown to be used not only in the culinary dishes of China, India and the rest of Asia, but also for medicinal purposes. Afghanistan for the first time will have a legal crop and compete with the Iranian market, which has traditionally been the only major supplier of saffron. Thus far, 16 out of 34 provinces have been identified as places where saffron can be grown. Last year, Herat farmers produced a yield of eight kilograms, which brought far more cash for the landowner and the pickers than poppies would have done. Once the farmers discover that one kilo of saffron fetches as much as \$1400, few will continue with the cursed forbidden poppy plants.

Afghans are now looking, not to kilograms of saffron, but to tons of saffron production per year. I am hoping that someone will also introduce the Kashmir goat so that some of the remaining provinces will also be weaned from poppies.



Testing at DLS by Monique Roske

Diplomatic Language Services has the capability and experience in developing special test formats to accurately assess the language skills of U.S. Government and private-sector individuals.

DLS language testing is based on the Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) Guidelines.

DLS has over 19 years of experience as a main language testing facility for agencies of the U.S. Federal Government and the Military. In addition, many private corporations and NGOs use DLS' testing expertise as well.

The U.S. Government uses two major ILR-based language proficiency tests:

1) The DLPT is a Department of Defense test administered to military personnel.

2) The Foreign Service Institute (FSI) tests civilian U.S. Government employees and some military personnel.

DLS testing, which follows the FSI protocol, assesses candidates' specific foreign-language skills in speaking, listening comprehension and reading. The tests usually last from 1 hour to 1 ½ hours and are administered by a native speaker and a DLS examiner (Language Training Supervisor). DLS offers Language Proficiency Certification for each test; in addition, we also offer written guidance for the candidates, clarifying their strong and weak points and how to best improve their language proficiency. All tests are digitally recorded.

DLS' large pool of foreign-language professionals and the flexibility inherent in DLS' day-to-day operations allow face-to-face or remote testing in all languages at very short notice.

For over 20 years, Diplomatic Language Services (DLS) has been a **leading full-service provider of language services to U.S. Government, military and commercial clients.** Since 1985, DLS has provided over 1.5 million class hours of language training, and more than 30 million words in translation.

In 1999, DLS was the **first language service company to be awarded a GSA Schedule** and in 2001 the Department of Defense selected DLS to translate the Osama Bin Laden tapes for public release. **More than 150 language professionals** currently support our wide range of on- and off-site language and cultural training, government-authorized testing, curriculum development, translation and interpretation services.

For all services provided, DLS uses the same **approach** to meet and exceed client expectations: unparalleled service **quality** and **responsiveness.**



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