

SpongeBob loves Cyma Zarghami

Iranian woman understands what American kids want—and she gives it to them

IranTimes: Do you love SpongeBob Squarepants? Do you hate SpongeBob SquarePants? Either way, take it up with Cyma Zarghami. It's to her credit—or blame—that SpongeBob is so ubiquitous. The president of Nickelodeon, the popular TV station with children that brings SpongeBob into your living room, is an Iranian-born woman who joined the channel as a scheduling clerk in 1985, and then quickly moved up in the ranks. Cyma Zarghami is the second-oldest of four children of an Iranian-born doctor, Ghoram, and a Scottish-born nurse, Catherine. Zarghami was born in Iran, moved with her family to Canada, and then settled in Englewood, New Jersey, before relocating to New York City, where she currently lives with her stage manager husband, George Oberfol, and their three sons, Liam, Ethan and Rupert. In 1980, Zarghami enrolled at The University of Vermont in Burlington as an elementary education major, but switched her major to English. Although never completing her degree, Zarghami was later awarded an honorary diploma by the University of Vermont College of Education and Social Services in 2000—20 years after she first enrolled. After leaving the university, Zarghami traveled across Europe and then returned to Burlington to work for Business Digest magazine. Zarghami began her career at Nickelodeon 17 years ago, rising through the ranks to play key roles in the company's marketing partnerships, initiatives and growth, including the launch of Nickelodeon in the UK in 1993 and Nick at Nite's TV Land in 1996. That same year, Zarghami was named executive vice president and general manager of Nickelodeon. Simultaneously, the Iranian-American executive directs the network's support of company-wide initiatives, including Let's Just Play and the Kids Pick the President campaign. In 2004, the position of president of Nickelodeon Television was created for Zarghami; in that role, she oversaw production and development for the network, along with marketing, programming and creative initiatives. After the January 2006 resignation of former Nickelodeon Networks President Herb Scannell,



Zarghami took over as president of the newly formed Kids & Family Group, which includes Nickelodeon, Nick at Nite, Nick Movies, Noggin, The N and Nicktoons TV. That same year, Zarghami was named Woman of the Year by Women in Cable Telecommunications. In her current position, Zarghami oversees all of Nickelodeon's television businesses, including Nickelodeon's digital services: Noggin, The N, Nickelodeon Games and Sports (Nick GAS) and Nicktoons. Zarghami continues to oversee all program production and development for the television businesses, as well as marketing, programming and creative work. Under Zarghami's leadership, Nickelodeon has been top-rated among all basic cable networks for more than eight consecutive years; the network is rated number-one for kids on Saturday mornings, surpassing all broadcast and cable competition. Zarghami, who formerly served on the board of the Children's Museum of Manhattan, has managed a continuous string of hits at Nickelodeon, including taking SpongeBob SquarePants to new heights, making The Fairly OddParents Nick's newest hit, and building Dora the Explorer into the number-one preschool program in commercial television. Most recently, Zarghami revamped Nickelodeon's Rugrats franchise by launching its spin-off series All Grown Up to the highest ratings in the network's history.

Jobrani gets role on new ABC show

IranTimes: Iranian-American comedian Maz Jobrani has landed a recurring role in a new television series on ABC. On Wednesdays beginning March 18, the comedy series "Better Off Ted" will air with Jobrani featuring in five of the first 13 episodes. The series is an American single-camera office situation comedy—similar to "The Office." The show stars Andrea Anders, Malcolm Barrett, Jay Harrington, Portia de Rossi, Jonathan Slavin, Isabella Acres and Maz Jobrani, who plays Doctor Bhamba. The show focuses on Ted, the single-parent head of Research and Development at Veridian Dynamics—a large and corrupt multinational corporation. At Veridian, Ted oversees two research scientists, Lem and Phil, and head tester Linda, whom he has romantic feelings for. His boss, Veronica, is an emotionless woman with whom he once had an affair. After the company cryogenically freezes one of the research scientists, Ted begins to question the company's objectives. Throughout the show, Ted talks to the camera to narrate the show's events. Jobrani was last on a regularly scheduled network comedy in 2007. He played an Indian immigrant taxi driver on ABC's "Knights of Prosperity." The show was about a bunch of misfits who formed a gang to get rich by robbing Mick Jagger. The program



did great with the critics, but was kayoed in the ratings when it was put opposite the monster killer of the airwaves: "American Idol." Jobrani's show never made it to a second season. In addition to his recurring role in the new ABC series, Jobrani is continuing his "Brown and Friendly" tour across the United States. The tour recently took him to San Francisco, Sacramento and Chico State. Over March, April and May, Jobrani will continue his tour going to Houston, Texas, Tempe, Arizona, Washington, D.C., and Irvine, California. More information is at: <http://www.mazjobrani.com/>

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Congress will...

Year; Whereas Nowruz embodies the tradition that each individual's thinking, speaking, and conduct should always be virtuous, and the ideal of compassion for our fellow human beings regardless of ethnicity or religion, and symbolizes a time of renewal and community; Whereas the United States is a melting pot of ethnicities and religion and Nowruz contributes the richness of American culture and is consistent with our founding principles of peace and prosperity for all; Whereas in 539 B.C., Cyrus the Great established one of the earliest charters on human rights, which abolished slavery and allowed for freedom of religion, and this marker in Iranian history has had significant impact on the respect for human rights that Iranian-Americans carry today; Whereas Nowruz serves to remind the United States of the many noteworthy and last-

ing contributions of Iranian-Americans to the social and economic fabric of society in the United States; Whereas Iranian-Americans continue to make contributions in all sectors of American public life, including as government, military, and law enforcement officials working to uphold the Constitution of the United States and to protect all people in the United States; Whereas Iranian-Americans are vibrant, peaceful, and lawabiding citizens, many of whom are Baha'i, Christian, Jewish, Muslim, and Zoroastrian faiths; and Whereas the Iranian-American community continues to enrich the tapestry of the diversity in the United States: Now, therefore, be it Resolved, That the House of Representatives— (1) recognizes the cultural and historical significance of Nowruz; (2) expresses its appreciation for the contributions of Iranian-Americans to society in the United States in observance of Nowruz; and (3) wishes Iranian-Americans and the people of Iran and all those who observe this holiday a prosperous new year.

In 2008, Iran bought much more from U.S.; U.S. bought much less from Iran

IranTimes: Two-way Iran-U.S. trade boomed last year, with Iran buying more U.S. goods by far than it ever has since trade resumed—but the United States bought less than it ever has this century. The huge shift was due almost entirely to Iran's need to import vast quantities of wheat because of the drought ravaging the country. Iran's imports of American goods rose 370 percent last year compared to 2007. But American imports of Iranian goods dropped 42 percent. U.S. purchases had been fairly steady over the years, ranging from \$140 million to \$180 million in the years from 2000 through 2007. But last year, purchases sank to



\$102 million, largely due to declining carpet buys. The U.S. embargo bans most purchases from Iran, allowing only Iranian food, textiles (meaning carpets), artwork and publications to enter the United States. Carpets have usually accounted for three-fourths of all American imports from Iran. President Bill Clinton banned almost all trade with Iran in 1995. In 1999, he lifted the embargo slightly. (And the 1999 figures in the table are just for a few months of that year.) Clinton acted under pressure from the wheat lobby, which felt the embargo had cost it a fortune. Iranian officials talked to American exporters and led them to believe that business would boom—but when Clinton allowed unlimited food sales, Iran refused to import any wheat at all. Until 2008. Iranian officials have publicly denied they are buying any American wheat, but almost every week shipping reports show another ship headed to Iran loaded with U.S. wheat. Iran periodically made large purchases of American corn over the years. And it bought U.S. cigarettes until the factory it was buying from in Macon, Georgia, closed in 2006. Iran also buys a wide variety of medical products. But Iran always made sure that it maintained a positive balance of payments with the United States, that is, it always made sure it sold more than it bought from the Americans, a politically important point with revolutionaries. But in 2008, that changed dramatically. Iran bought almost seven times as much from the United States as it sold to the United States. The Associated Press carried a story last year about the U.S. exports to Iran growing 17-fold under President George W. Bush. That garnered a great deal of attention—because many Americans did not like that. Actually, total Iran-American trade—even after the 2008 surge—is insignificant in the scheme of things. U.S. sales to Iran simply grew from in-

significant to minuscule. Sales to Iran in 2007 were less than 9/1000ths of 1 percent of the totality of the \$1.6 trillion worth of goods exported by the United States. The Associated Press chose to focus, however, on some of the oddities in the published list of exports, such as military goods. The Iran Times has reported these over the years and remarked that they were likely to be the result of data entry errors. For example, the AP story said Iran had bought \$106,635 worth of military rifles and \$8,760 in rifle parts during the Bush years. The Commerce Department went back through its records and later announced the rifles and parts were shipped to Iraq, not Iran. One of the oddest items in the list was \$13,000 for "aircraft launching gear and/or deck arrestors," which are used by planes taking off from or landing on aircraft carriers. Since Iran has no aircraft carriers, that sale had some people scratching their heads. The Commerce Department later said its check found that sale was actually to Italy. Another sale that has not yet been explained was for "aircraft" with a total value of \$19,600. But how many planes could one buy for that sum? The Associated Press did not look at imports, but the Iran Times has noted over the years that the U.S. import tabulation shows the United States buying "alcoholic beverages" from Iran for a total of \$1.6 million worth of booze since 2000, an impossibility given that Iran does not manufacture alcoholic beverages. (Sure, there is illicit Iranian booze, but it isn't exported legitimately through the official record-keeping system.) The published figures for exports to Iran in 2008 seemed to have been cleaned up. There are no aircraft or armament sales listed. However, the import figures were not scrubbed. The official statistics show the United States bought \$9,000 worth of alcoholic beverages from Iran last year.

Japan surprises all by allowing Iranian to stay

IranTimes: Japan's Justice Ministry has granted a one-year residence permit to an Iranian college student who had illegally stayed in the country for more than a decade. Maryam Amine, 20, of Takasaki, Gunma prefecture (province), had come to Japan with her family on short-term visas in 1990 and 1991 but settled there permanently. The Iranian family reported to the immigration authority in 1999 seeking permission to stay, but Tokyo deported her parents and younger Japanese-born sister. Maryam was allowed to stay to finish her education, but has now been given a one-year additional residence permit, something almost unheard of in Japan. Amine's lawyer, Satoko Kitamura, said it is rare for the ministry



to change a foreign national's status from a foreign student to a resident. Amine is expected to work as a nursery school teacher in the prefecture beginning in April.

برای درج آگهی در

ماهنامه پژواک

با ما تماس بگیرید و از مزایای استثنایی بهره ببرید.

(۴۰۸) ۶۱۵-۱۰۳۰

"First thing to do is let everyone know you are in the game. It's like when you get into a kid's swimming pool. You have to make a splash. The bigger the splash, the more people will want to know about what you are doing and the more successful you will be." Max Markson