



From the desk of Editor

One Planet Only

We, as mankind and humanity, are the inhabitants of this planet. These lines you are reading are the product of many crossed-out words and sentences. Because for as long as I can remember, even since I was a young child in school, speaking my words have always been easier than writing them. This might be exactly why MehreGyiah's origins were founded in radio about 9 months ago on 670AM KIRN Radio Iran.

It makes me very happy to know that this first volume of MehreGyiah that you hold in your hands would not have been possible without the teamwork and unrelenting devotion of a like-minded group of dynamic individuals whose care and passion for Mother Nature made this possible. We always stood by one another, helped one another, and never quit on one another, knowing that our ultimate goal (saving Mother

Nature) was above and beyond it all.

Now: Why MehreGyiah?

30 years ago, the largest number of Iranians in over 1400 years were forced to say goodbye to their beloved "Iran Zamin" and emigrated to various corners of the world. As a result, these various "corners" around the world quickly became home to this newly-founded Diaspora. Although the Iranian Diaspora around the world is disconnected by distance, they are connected through media outlets such as television, radio, print etc. Sadly, such media outlets have often overlooked the subject of the Environment and Mother Nature. It should be the moral and societal duty of every society to protect and preserve its environment, and the Iranian Diaspora in countries around the world are no exception. Hence, in light of such duties, we see the birth of MehreGyiah.

Without an office, without headquarters, MehreGyiah is bound only by the environmental passion of its staff. The MehreGyiah family is honored to celebrate Persian Nowruz, the change of the seasons, the 9-month "anniversary" of the "MehreGyiah" Radio Show, and the first edition of MehreGyiah with all of its readers, listeners, and protectors and advocates of Mother Nature. We cherish your care and passion, and appreciate your support.

May this be the beginning of something beautiful...

"Nowruzetun Pirooz, Haroozetun Nowruz" (May your new year be prosperous, and every day be a new day)

Sincerely,

Shan Fazeli
Editor



Why the Amazon Rainforest is Vital for Our Survival

by Atossa Soltani

My passion for saving the world's forests began when I was 11 years old, during a trip my family and I took to the temperate rainforests of the Iranian Alborz Mountain range in Gilan and Mazandaran. Not long ago, a majority of the slopes in the Alborz were covered with temperate rainforests, which by definition are forests that are characterized by high rainfall of 55-80 inches per year. Going further back in time, ancient texts tell us, vast areas of northern Iran, Syria, Greece, Turkey, Jordan and Pakistan were covered by forests as well.

Today, only patches of that original ecosystem remain. Globally the world has lost more than half of its original forests. And most tragically, that loss has led to desertification, droughts, loss of indigenous cultures, extinction of species, war and conflict.

Through my work with indigenous communities from the Amazon to Australia, I've come to see that indigenous peoples today are the true guardians of the forest. Their

cultures have survived for tens of thousands of years precisely because one of their principle values is honoring the earth.

Most indigenous peoples view the Earth as their Mother and their lands as "sacred." They hold the view that current generations must consider the implications of their actions on seven future generations. Respect for all living things and the practice reciprocity -- always giving more than you receive-- are considered important ethos to live by. These are proving important values for humanity today.

Globally, tropical rainforests cover only 5 percent of the Earth's surface and occur along the Equator between the tropic of Cancer and Tropic of Capricorn (see map). These forests are the most biologically diverse ecosystems on the planet and play an important role in regulating our climate. Many of our foods and medicines originate in the rainforest. Consider that nearly one fourth of all modern

pharmaceuticals are derived from tropical plants.

Twenty years ago, I became aware of the issue and decided to dedicate my energy and creativity to protecting the world's remaining forests. In 1996, this work led me to start the nonprofit organization Amazon Watch, focused on protecting the tropical rainforests and defending the indigenous peoples of the Amazon Basin (www.amazonwatch.org).

Why the Amazon? The Amazon is the world's largest remaining tropical rainforest; an area nearly the size of the continental United States, where one fifth of all the world's freshwater is generated. Nearly 400 indigenous groups call the Amazon their home.

The importance of the Amazon Rainforest for the planet is undeniable. For example, there are more tree species in one hectare of Ecuadorean Amazon than in all of U.S. and Canada combined. In fact, nearly a third of all species on earth are found in the Amazon rainforest.





Scientists agree that the Amazon literally drives weather systems around the world. When it rains, water changes from liquid to vapor and back again and releases heat in the process. Consider that the tropical regions of the Earth receive 2/3

gas emissions.

Amazon Watch has been working with people of the forest to reverse these trends of destruction, and protect this global treasure for future generations. And I am

Petroleum clean up their toxic contamination in the Amazon regions of Ecuador and Peru. In Brazil, we are supporting dozens of indigenous and environmental organizations who are fighting to stop a number of massive hydroelectric



of the world's rainfall, thus, every day massive quantities of heat and vapor rise from the Amazon which contains nearly half of the world's rainforest, up into the atmosphere where it drives atmospheric circulations that transport rainfall and weather systems around the planet. And yet, despite all this, globally, a football field is mowed down every second. In the Amazon, we are losing 7 football-fields-per-minute. This is why globally carbon emissions from deforestation now make up 20 percent of all green house

pleased to say that wherever we work, we are making a significant difference, by tracking and publicizing new threats and supporting local people in securing their legal rights and defending their territories.

Specifically, Amazon Watch has been fighting oil and mining projects, large-scale dams, roads and other forms of large-scale industrial activities that lead to deforestation and forest degradation. We are engaged in campaigns demanding that Chevron and Occidental

dams including the Belo Monte which would be the third largest dam in the world. This and other proposed dam would flood hundreds of square miles of tropical forest and displace tens of thousands of people when less destructive alternatives are readily available.

Indigenous peoples are making immense sacrifices to defend their way of life and stand up to senseless destruction of their lands. Amazon Watch is providing fund-



ing, equipment and technical assistance to indigenous organizations to help them stand up to large multinational companies and the international banks that finance these projects. We help them file legal action in international courts and tell their stories in the global media.

But there is so much left to do in the fight to force corporations and governments to do the right thing. We need many more people to join the fight.

There are many ways to incorporate forest protection in various aspects of our lives. Here are some of the many ideas:

- Reduce energy consumption (drive less, switch to public transportation, get more fuel efficient cars, efficient appliances, install efficient light bulbs)
- Reduce wood and paper consumption
- Refuse to buy tropical hardwoods (like mahogany, teak, luan) unless it is from forest stewardship council certified source
- Eat less meat, support local and organic agriculture

- Work for change. Find ways to make what you do for a living be about contributing to environmentally sustainable and socially just world.

- Mining for gold and diamond is a serious problem, consider only investing in "used" or "vintage" jewelry or from truly sustainable sources.

- Donate or raise money to support forest protection groups like Amazon Watch, Greenpeace, Rainforest Action Network, Forest Ethics

- Volunteer for campaigns to get companies to become more environmentally and socially responsible

- Switch investments and banking to more socially responsible institutions. Consider moving to a local credit union or a greener bank like the New Resources Bank. Move our money to green energy, switch solar and wind power

- Support companies that donate to forest conservation (example: Essential Living Foods, CREDO long distance, look up 1% for the planet program)

- Urge our elected leaders to support strong climate protection legislation and switch subsidies from dirty energy projects (coal, oil, gas, large dams, nuclear) to clean renewable energy sources and energy efficiency.

Future generations are likely to ask if our generation did enough to avert a catastrophe from climate change, the rising oceans, the melting of glaciers, the mass extinction of species, and the collapse of forests, fisheries, and our food systems.

I truly believe that humanity's future survival depends on the actions that we choose to take or not take in our lifetime. In fact according to many experts, the next four to seven years could determine the course of humanity for the next 1,000 years.

We face daunting global challenges, but by the same token, we have an amazing opportunity to create a different world. And to make an ecological u-turn. We need many more people to join this fight, and there's no better time to do so that in the present.

Atossa Soltani is founder and executive director of Amazon Watch a non-profit organization working to protect the rainforest and advance the rights of indigenous peoples in the Amazon Basin. For more information see www.amazonwatch.org or write to atossa@amazonwatch.org or to Amazon Watch 221 Pine Street, 4th Floor, San Francisco, CA 94104.



**Exclusive Interview with My
Fabulous Eco-Friendly Girlfriend
Mariel Hemingway**

By wardrobe stylist Golriz Moeini



My dear friend Mariel Hemingway has been famous all her life. Having the name Hemingway, being the granddaughter of Ernest, and going to an elementary school named after him must have been something. Since she was a teenager from being nominated for both an Academy Award and Golden Globe for her talents in acting, to being a celebrated author. Above all that she is such a great person. She is always doing so much philanthropy for the environment, or teaching people skills to better their lives through food and exercise.

In the Woody Allen film Manhattan, in which she was nominated for an Oscar at age 17 for her role as Tracy, Woody Allen had wrote that role for Mariel who was 16 at the time she played the part. Unknowing to Mariel, that is when she became a style icon at that instant. Every girl and woman wanted Mariel's preppy cool-care-free style as Tracy. Model, actress, author, mother, chef, caretaker, philanthropist, athlete, entrepreneur, yoga expert, instructor, therapist, spiritual teacher...and much more, still grounded and friendly as a kitten. She is no celebrity diva, she is instead mother nature herself living in Topanga surrounded by nature where she feels at home.

The following is my exclusive interview with her about her fashion choices. She is beautiful inside and out, radiant for her activity and balanced food choices, and has an innate sense of style that works best for her busy lifestyle. There are many reasons to love Mariel

Golriz Moeini

Hemingway. I just love her for all that she has brought to my life as a true friend. I have been her stylist

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Some kind of wonderful is not enough said about this gorgeous healthy, peppy blonde in her 40's, an inspiration to everyone who meets her.

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for almost four years, and it's a pleasure to work with her regarding fashion choices, as she is fun, and she cares about where the products are made, and how. That

is in tune with her entire eco-lifestyle decisions.

GM: Mariel, you have such an amazing figure. Fashion tends to come easy for someone your height with such an amazing body (I envy!). You are a celebrated author, model, actress, mother, environmentalist, philanthropist and entrepreneur among many other wonderful things. What are the challenges you face in fashion when it comes to trends?

Mariel: I think the challenge is always not being too trendy especially when you are not under 30... I love fashion but it has to be classic and me, and I like to think I can wear it for a while not just a season.

GM: Your days are about healthy living and effortless fun in an active lifestyle. You are an incredibly busy lady with lots of traveling for your books, brands, etc. What is your favorite piece of clothing you prefer to travel with and why?

Mariel: I love a great cashmere anything for travel I have a big grey scarf that is really more of a blanket... I love it!!! I also take with me American Apparel long sleeve tops and short ones that are long below the waist... that I wear with their three button capri's that is a staple for being in the gym or in a hotel room...

GM: You love mixing high-low fashion, which is my favorite thing to do, to put amazing brands with inexpensive ones.

What pleases you most when shopping in high end stores, the wearability of the product or just the luxury of having it?



Mariel: You buy a high end product and it feels good... the quality of the material is usually better and you can feel it and often it just seems to fit better.

GM: When I am shopping labels I always have to check where its made. What is the most important thing for you and why?

Mariel: American made or Europe... nothing from China or places where kids are working in sweat shops not to mention the carbon foot print... I just like supporting America during this crazy economic time.

GM: I remember I had trouble with the color chart you once used for shopping, because I think you look amazing in almost every color, and I know I was a real pain about that. What did you like most about the times we shopped together these past three years?

Mariel: You have a sense of style that is current that I don't and you suggest things for me that I would think "nah that will look horrible on me" and yet VOILA I was

wrong...ha ha.

GM: By the way I miss you, when are we shopping next?

Mariel: We are shopping SOON it is time for a Spring look. Miss you too my friend...

GM: Last question, what are you up to these days. Can you tell us what to look forward to with you in the future months?

Mariel: Mariel's kitchen Blisscuits are moments away from being launched my skin care line Tatchme is also coming out in the next few months and I am writing a NEW book with my partner and boyfriend Robert Williams on health, youth and happiness... It is going to be incredible!!! I am also producing A Moveable Feast as a film and that is FUN...what else oh and two TV shows that I can't speak of yet!!! lots of stuff...YAY.

GM: That all sounds fantastic Mariel! I will see you when we go shopping, can't wait.

Keep us posted on your blog. www.marielhemingway.com and

of course we can find you on Twitter @Marielhemingway.

Mariel's latest book on shelves was released in Spring 2009, and I had been the wardrobe stylist for the book. It is a great cook book, I highly recommend it, the recipes are easy, fun and delicious to make. Here is what these specialists had to say about the book:

"A deliciously grounded program for re-introducing the mind to the body." - Mehmet C. Oz, M.D., co-author of You: The Owner's Manual

"Her grandfather may have been one of the most prominent writers of the 20th century, but it is Mariel Hemingway who wrote the ultimate book on healthy living." - eDiets.com

"Mariel is not only beautiful inside and out, but she can cook too. This is a farm to table, locally grown guide to good simple eating. Deceptively delicious, any of these dishes should be bad for you, but they are not. Nice job, Mariel!" - Rachael Ray

