

Guest
VIEW

In remembrance

Saying farewell to a dear grandmother

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On Aug. 31, 1997, the world lost one of its greatest ladies to old age. This great lady was my dear and beloved grandmother, whose real name was Najmesadat Mohseni Ghaemmaghiani, but was known to her 12 grandchildren as "Mamani". That was a unique and original nickname for a unique and original individual. Our Mamani was quite a special grandmother; she was not your typical old grandmother with white hair. Even though she was old in appearance, she was truly young at heart. She was the picture of life itself. She would have brightened and revived any room with her presence, her personality, her sometimes awkward movements and her absolutely funny words. Although she was not trying to be funny, this talent was just in her genes. She could cheer you up instantly by the things she said. She was the best therapist I ever had while growing up.

Mamani had a deep passion for life and her family. She had devoted her entire life to her four daughters and their families after she was widowed in her mid-30s. No one and nothing else mattered to her as much as her children.

Mamani was as strong as a mountain. By far, she was the strongest person I have known all my life. She was my role model. When I was growing up, I admired her strength, both physical and emotional, and wished to grow up to be as strong as her. I do not know whether my wish has come true or not, because luckily, I have not had to face any of the tragedies that Mamani encountered in her life as a young woman: the loss of her husband and her three beloved sons. Life made her a fighter, and after each tragedy she grew taller and stronger.

Mamani was an extraordinary woman - lively, intelligent, open-minded, frank, strong, compassionate, kind, funny and independent until the end. She had such a great sense of humor that allowed us to laugh with and at her. She was not highly educated, but she didn't let that cripple her mind by clinging onto old traditions and rules. She had a brilliant mind that would not shy away from change and breakage of the old rules. I personally was surprised to find her so open-minded under that chador.

She did not have any easy life, but Mamani made the best of it through her positive and cheerful attitude. She proved that one does not need to have piles of money to live a happy life. It is all in one's atti-

tude. One can not buy happiness.

Mamani was a pioneer feminist. At a time when my mother was encouraging me to consider marriage at the age of 17 and to sacrifice my independence, Mamani told me directly and bluntly not to listen to my mother and pursue my education first. She strongly believed that a woman would be at the mercy of men without an education, and that it was imperative that I go to college and get the highest degree I could. She wanted me to be independent; to be independent of men for my livelihood, to be my own master, to be my own woman. I have followed her advice ever since.

One time I asked her why she kept wishing me to get old by saying, "Ellahe peer she naneh," instead of wishing me to stay young! Now I know what she was wishing for and she was right! I remember the big bulky eyeglasses that had deformed the sides of her nose. I remember her cursing when my mother was late coming home from a party. I remember the position of her hands when she needed badly to relieve herself but was too far away from the bathroom. I remember her insisting on watching TV only to fall asleep after five minutes. I remember her waking me at night with her loud snoring! I remember all the little safety pins that she always had attached to her undergarments and clothes. I

remember the collection of her colorful scarves. I remember the wooden cabinet in her kitchen that she had painted over and over again. I remember the episode in which she had the old medical ritual of glass, cotton balls and fire performed on her back, while leaning on a chair set up in the middle of her small pool ("Hoze") at her house in Zarrina'al. I remember her courageously defending her pantry against continuous attacks by her candy-seeking grandchildren. I remember her constantly adjusting the volume of her hearing aid. I even remember her hilarious looks with a clothes pin attached to the tip of her nose to prevent it from drooping even farther. I remember the way she walked, tilting to the left and right, like a duck. I remember her head covered in a mixture of raw eggs and cooked chickpeas in order to prevent further hair loss. I remember her unfulfilled wish of having a physician among her grandchildren, who ultimately became artists, engineers, and doctors (of the wrong kind). And above all, I remember her as my friend.

Mamani was not a great cook, but I loved the way she fixed this soup called "Gooshtabeh" and of course, everybody knew she was the master of "Halva." The last time she made Halva for us was in 1986 in Ann Arbor, Mich., the last time we

saw her.

My mother, who was at Mamani's bedside during her last 48 hours, heard her utter only these words during a brief period of semiconsciousness. "Aghdas, come! Aghdas, come!" Aghdas was her younger sister who had passed away fewer than two years before. I got goose bumps when I heard this because Mamani is now even closer to Aghdas than when they were both alive by sharing the same small piece of earth with her dear sister.

My dearest, beloved Mamani, I wish you a happy reunion with your husband, sons, Aghdas and all your other brothers and sisters who left you, one by one, over the past 40 years. I am going to miss you terribly. Life is not quite the same now that the jewel of the crown, the matriarch of our family is gone. It is the remembrance of your soothing words that has comforted me over the years, and will comfort me until I join you. I wish you knew of your impact on our lives. Unfortunately, life and circumstances separated us, and we, your grandchildren in exile, never had the opportunity to contribute to the happiness of your final years by visiting and helping you. Please forgive us.

Rest in peace my friend,
I love you.
Setareh

Alcohol advertising

Contrary to TV commercials, beer is not food



GREGG MADSEN is a senior news-editorial major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

Next time you're hungry, go ahead and knock off a couple of cold ones.

Beer, not burgers and fries. What you need to tame that empty stomach is a nice, longneck bottle of Budweiser.

Why not? Beer is a food, you know. That's what the esteemed folks at Anheuser-Busch would have us believe. Or haven't you been watching the latest advertisements to grace our televisions sets lately.

Perhaps you've noticed how almost every sporting event and most primetime television shows have been polluted with a miniature documentary about the long, storied tradition of the Busch dynasty in the beer business. With gentle sounds of a piano in the background and soft-ened photos of ages past, the current generation of Busch's proceed to tell America about the prestige and purity of their product.

"Beer is a food," August Busch IV announced during the commercial.

Something smells. Let's get down

to brass tacks here.

Beer is not a food. Beer, thanks to the alcohol inside of it, is much more qualified to be a drug than a food. In our society today, beer is much more of an epidemic than it is a food. But even worse than labeling beer a food is the overall tone of this advertising campaign. By showing their prestigious beer-making heritage, Anheuser-Busch is attempting to show us how respectable and decent its product is.

Don't buy it for a second. Maybe the student body at Louisiana State University could enlighten us a little on this subject. Perhaps the family of 20-year-old Benjamin Wynne, who died of acute alcohol poisoning recently, would want to tell us how much of a food they think beer is. And I'm sure that for them, the rich tradition of Anheuser-Busch erases the pain that alcohol brought to their lives.

We could ask anyone who has endured a life marred by the activities of an alcoholic. We could talk to the battered spouses and children, and ask them if they realized how special beer was because of its natural ingredients.

Of course, another good source we could talk to would be the thousands of people affected by the careless actions of drunken drivers. Maybe they can tell us how much they appreciate the honest, hard-working folks at Budweiser.

The real question that we should ask is how beer - and most all alcohol products - has managed to remain so accepted in our society?

What about cigarettes? Why

aren't they considered to be food, too? R.J. Reynolds has just as long and storied of a tradition as Anheuser-Busch, so why has the United States spent millions of dollars in the last few years trying to impose more restrictions upon the tobacco industry?

Tobacco, the last time I checked, is a crop, just like the hops that are used to make beer are a crop. Nicotine is addictive, just as alcohol is addictive. A chain smoker doesn't lose control of his emotions or lose his ability to function because of the mind-altering effects of a cigarette. But beer does cause its user to lose control. To my knowledge, there is no such disorder as acute-tobacco poisoning. We live in a society where television and radio cigarette advertisements are banned but beer advertisements aren't. Why the inconsistency?

It's clear we need to ask why beer and other alcohol products are advertised - even glorified - on television and radio. Who can deny the horrifying effects of alcohol on the human body? So why do we still have this advertising?

Anheuser-Busch is simply trying to sell its product with this new advertisement, I realize. But in so doing they have insulted our intelligence. No matter how traditional, how storied and how prestigious Anheuser-Busch may be, they are still producing a mind-numbing, body-controlling and life-killing drug. Don't be fooled into believing beer is a food. You can't sugar-coat that fact, no matter how hungry you might be.



MATT HANEY/DN