On April 22, 1970, the first Earth Day was held across the United States, mainly on college and university campuses. As the organizer for that event in Southern California, I am excited to see that the tradition continues. This is truly an American “happening” because most of the rest of the world celebrates World Environment Day on June 5. And it was done in a grassroots manner, pre-internet and cell phones. While there was a national office, we basically used them to buy buttons, bumper stickers, posters, and t-shirts. We did everything locally regarding this “Environmental Teach-In.” But now you can join in the celebrations which continue in this April.

In 2012, Educational Communications’ Ecology Center of Southern California and Earth Cultures Project will have a table at the Beverly Hills Earth Day Celebration April 15 from 9 to 1. Check your local cities for events on April 21 and 22. There will be a festival from the 20-22 in Santa Monica and from the 21-22 in Topanga. Don’t forget my talk on April 21 (see separate announcement). Amigos de Bolsa Chica in Huntington Beach from 10 to 3 will have a fun run/walk plus nature walks at the Ecological Reserve. Most libraries have free talks so ask your local branch what is happening at their site and in your community. And most parks and nature centers will have special hikes, walks, and talks. Throughout the month there are green building conferences, business sustainability summits and other talks, symposia, and performances. Check them out.

Unlike some of the “fancy, expensive”

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We call this newsletter “Culturally Speaking” and human culture is highly dependant on our ability to use Language. Of course we speak in many tongues that evolve, borrow from each other, divide into different languages, and sometimes become extinct.

So for the month of April I’m reminded of a classic piece of English literature that is almost unreadable to speakers of 21st century English, the Canterbury Tales by Geoffrey Chaucer who lived in the 1300’s. I titled this piece with his opening line “whan that Aprille with his shoures sote” which means: “when that April with its wet showers”.

OK, “whan” for when isn’t too big a stretch to comprehend, add a syllable to April making “aPREEla”, “SHOO rus” for showers and what in the world is “sote”?

“Sote” (pronounced SO-ta) means wet and gave us the words “sot” (a drunk) and “besotted” (intoxicated with love). Seven hundred years can make a lot of difference in a language!

Go back a thousand years and what is called “Old English” or “Anglo-Saxon” is incomprehensible to anyone who has not studied it as a foreign language! For example: “ure gedaeghwamliche hlaf syle us to-daeg” which is “give us this day our daily bread”! Broken down this is:  

- ure=our
- gedaeghwamliche=daily
- hlaf=loaf (hence bread)
- syle=give (may be related to “sell”) 
- us=us (yay! The only word in this sentence that hasn’t changed its appearance - but, it’s pronounced “oos”) 
- to-daeg=today (pronounced “toe-da-ee”).

Now you have something to ponder during the shoures of Aprille while awaiting the floures of May!
FLAMENCO
by Assieh “La Mora”

Flamenco originated within the Gypsies and its geographical birthplace is Andalusia, Spain. The word appears in literature in the late 1700s, yet, we do not have any valid written record of the music prior to second half of the 1900s. Flamenco is often improvised and spontaneous and is compared with Jazz.

The singing, guitar and dance are the 3 most important elements of this art.

Despite many theories about the origin of this art, what is obvious, is a definite influence of other cultural music and dance in flamenco and one of them is definitely the influence of music from Persia. As an Iranian flamenco dancer, teacher and choreographer, I was always fascinated by the connection between Iranian traditional folk music and dance and flamenco. The similarities which I experienced, made me reach deeper into the history of this art: An energetic and passionate combination of singing, guitar, dance, clapping and colorful costumes.

The influence of the 9th century Persian poet and musician, Zyriab, who settled in the city of Cordoba in southern Spain, in the music of Spain can’t be denied. In fact he established a school of music in Cordoba and made the city an important center for music. Zyriab’s composition are said to be found in many Flamenco songs. He is also credited with introducing to Spain the Persian lute which according to some, later become the Spanish guitar. Paco de Lucia, the flamenco phenomenon in the 1990s, has dedicated his album “Zyryab” to Zyriab . . .” Shiraz-born poet/musician.”

I grew up among musicians and singers, mainly traditional and folk. Being Kurd on my father’s side, naturally I was also introduced to Kurdish music and dance which is quite dynamic in rhythm as well as colorful in presentation . . So my first encounter with flamenco was quite interesting because I felt very close to it. Even though I could not understand Spanish, I was able to feel their singing. Later on, when I began teaching flamenco, I realized that my Iranian students had felt the same connection once they were introduced to flamenco.

Spain’s famous poet and writer Federico Garcia Lorca (1898-1936) called flamenco one of the most gigantic inventions of the Spanish people. The tragic lyrics and tones of flamenco clearly reflect the suffering of the gypsy people.

During that first 1970 event, I organized 1,000 bicyclists to ride down Wilshire Boulevard in Los Angeles to promote alternative transportation. Finally the area is developing some bike paths. We didn’t bother to get permits because bicycles are legal on the roads. And we had fun, too, wearing gas masks and parading around as our favorite animal friends (unlike so many of the new expos and programs that I attend where a business suit is proper attire). Nonetheless, the 2012 Earth Day events should be worth going to. Most have free speakers and music, literature tables, and children’s activities.

There has been a shift in cultural attitudes toward protecting our earth, living more sustainability, and having a smaller footprint on the planet. Please do your part and join in this cultural experience.
Have a good (or bad) food memory, recipe or restaurant? Write to us (200 words or less) at: culturallyspeaking@earthculturesproject.org. You may see it published!

Good flavors are all a matter of opinion. Take dogs for instance. Actually, I probably don’t even have to put it into words. Suffice it to say that if you have a cat and a dog, make sure to empty the sandbox immediately after the cat uses it.

People all over the world have their own idea of delicacy. Termites, intestines, and blood (Masai, not vampires) . . . the flavors delight us.

One very cold, wet night in December, after performing gypsy dances in the mud at the wedding of an unnamed very famous musician, my friend and I went back to her house wet and freezing. Her mother served us the most delicious Estonian traditional hot spiced red wine. It really hit the spot. As we sat and talked and warmed up, I felt something at my feet. It was their dog, happily eating the mud off my shoes! Each to his own.

--Nickie Hovhannessian

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As always, don’t forget the hungry.

www.freerice.com

Play a free game and rice will be donated to those who need it!

FreeRice is a non-profit website run by the United Nations World Food Programme.

Some Upcoming Events in Southern California

John Bilezikjian is “America’s Oud Virtuoso.” Mr. Bilezikjian may be the most prominent Oudist of his generation. He is a master Oudist who has elevated this instrument to the concert stage as well as continues to perform as a folk musician. He has performed for some 51 years on this ancient eleven stringed Persian fretless instrument dating back some 2,000 years. The Oud is performed with an eagle’s quill. See below for John’s performance schedule.

Market at the Casbah Middle Eastern Dance Festival
April 14 11:30am - 6 pm -- John plays at 2:30pm
Orangethorpe United Methodist Church
2351 W. Orangethorpe Ave., Fullerton, CA.
http://www.marketatthecasbah.com/

April 15 & 29 (Usually twice a month)
Olympus Greek Tavern, 6304 Laurel Canyon, North Hollywood, (818) 766-4100 call to confirm dates & times Reservations required, $15 minimum charge, food and drink available

First Tuesday of the Month 7:30 PM to 9:30 PM
Casablanca Restaurant, 6030 Paseo del Norte, Carlsbad, CA. 92008
(760) 603-9672 Belly Dancing and Folk Dancing

Third Thursday, Every other Month 8:30 PM to 11:30 PM
Tango Del Rey, 3567 Del Rey St., San Diego, CA. 92109 (858) 794-2687
With featured and guest belly dancers and Frank Lazzaro and Dave Dhillon

http://dantzrecords.com

MECDA of Los Angeles invites you to join Seraphim Mora & John Bilezikjian at the original Renaissance Pleasure Faire weekends April 7th - May 20th Celebrating 50 years of Eastern and Near Eastern Music & Belly Dance

Santa Fe Dam Recreation Area Irwindale, CA • Ph: 626.969.4750
www.renfair.com • Renaissance Pleasure Faire • April 7 to May 20
MORE UPCOMING EVENTS IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Anita and the Yanks broke into the Celtic rock music scene in 2008 and have built an impressive fan base in and around the Los Angeles area. Lead singer, guitarist Anita Mansfield and Bryan Dobbs mandolin player started out as a duo and they picked up Ryan Dean (drums) Damon Stout (bass) and Pat D’Arcy (uilleann pipes) along the way, featuring special guests Rachel Grace and Chris Loken on violin.

IRELAND’S 32
Fri, Apr 6 9:30 PM - 1:30 AM
13721 Burbank Blvd
Van Nuys, CA 91401

MULDOONS PUB
Sun, Apr 22 2 PM - 4 PM
202 Newport Center Drive
Newport Beach, CA

FINN MC COOL’S IRISH PUB
Fri, Jun 1 10 PM - 1:30 AM
2702 Main St
Santa Monica, CA 90405

THE FORD AMPHITHEATRE
Sun, Sep 16 2580 Cahuenga Blvd. East, Los Angeles, CA 90068

ANITA AND THE YANKS

www.anitaandtheyanks.com

Always check with venues to confirm dates, times, and locations.

ASSIEH “LA MORA”

Assieh was born and raised in Iran. She started her Flamenco dance training at early age in Los Angeles and later in Spain at Amor de Dios Flamenco Dance Academy in Madrid with master teachers like; La Tati, Ciro, Carmela Greco, La Truco, Manolete and in Sevilla at Manolo Marin Dance Academy. She has also studied under private training of Angelita Vargas and Pepa Montes. She teaches at Gypsy Camp near Motor and National in Los Angeles. Call for class schedule: (310) 558-0746.

GYPSY FOLK ENSEMBLE

The Gypsy Folk Ensemble is a world dance performing company based in Los Angeles, California which was formed in 1978 to preserve, perform and teach traditional folk dances from countries around the world. See website for workshops and assemblies available.

www.gypsyfolkensemble.com
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MORE UPCOMING EVENTS SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

THE G2 GALLERY  
Nature & Wildlife Photography  
1503 Abbot Kinney Blvd.  
Venice, CA 90291

Ansel Adams  
February 21 - May 13

Cheryl Medow  
April 3 - May 13

Usually free, some charge for special events. See website for details.

www.theG2gallery.com

CONTRA-TIEMPO  
Tuesday April 3, 2012

CONTRA-TIEMPO, LA’s nationally and internationally acclaimed Urban Latin Dance Company, presents its Annual Charity Gala to raise $60,000, which will provide 10 under-served public schools in Los Angeles with much needed arts education and dance residencies. Come enjoy a night of dancing, food, drinks, silent auctions, and live music. 7pm-11pm -- La Fonda Supper Club2501 Wilshire Blvd Los Angeles, CA www.lafondasupperclub.com Get tickets now: http://contra-tiempo.org/events.html

AQUARIUM OF THE PACIFIC  
Friday, April 6, 2012  
Noche de Estrellas  
Latin-Themed Late Night  
6:30 p.m.-10:30 p.m.
Live Latin Music, Dancing, Dinner, & More. Party with the sea stars at the Aquarium’s Latin-themed Late Night.  
Cost: $14.95 per adult (12+), $13.95 per child (3-11), and free for kids ages 0-3 and Aquarium members (food and drinks sold separately)  
100 Aquarium Way, Long Beach, CA  
Info: 562-590-3100  
www.aquariumofpacific.org

“IN PARIS" - April 11 to April 21  
A groundbreaking new play based on a Russian romance!  
Mikhail Baryshnikov Anna Sinyakina  
The Broad Stage  
Santa Monica College Performing Arts Center, 1310 11th St., Santa Monica  
$50 to $175  
www.thebroadstage.com

FREE Spring Concert Series  
St. James Presbyterian Church  
19414 Ventura Blvd, Tarzana, 91356  
for information, call M-F 818-345-2057

Sunday, April 15, 2012 4:00 PM

THE ANDREEXPEDITION  
Music by Dominick Argento  
Vocals: Christian Nova;  
Piano: Frank Garvey
A musical retelling of the failed attempt by three Swedish explorers to be the first to reach the North Pole in a hydrogen balloon! The program will begin with a powerpoint visual presentation describing the journey and including images the men photographed in 1897

ANOUSHKA SHANKAR  
Bringing together the passionate and diverse music of Spain with the vibrant, ancient form of the Indian Classical tradition.

Luckman Fine Arts Complex  
Cal State LA  
5151 State University Drive  
Los Angeles  
April 21 8pm  
$25 to $40  
www.luckmanarts.org

FREE Brass Quintet Concert for  
MASTERS IN THE CHAPEL SERIES  
April 27th at 7:30 p.m.  
Members of the Los Angeles Philharmonic – James Wilt, trumpet; Christopher Still, trumpet; Eric Overholt, horn; James Miller, trombone; and Norman Pearson, tuba  
First Lutheran Church of Venice 815 Venice Boulevard, CA 90291  
www.flvenice.org/masters.html  
(310) 821-2740.

ISRAEL’S 64TH INDEPENDENCE DAY FESTIVAL  
Rancho Park, Los Angeles  
April 29 10am to 6pm  
http://www.celebrateisraelfestival.com/

AQUARIUM OF THE PACIFIC  
Saturday & Sunday, April 28-29  
for International Children’s Day  
9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

The Aquarium of the Pacific’s seventh annual International Children’s Day is a special festival for kids. Celebrating the amazing talents of children of all cultures, this festival will feature international music and dance performances by kids. An international choir, Mexican folkloric dance, Pacific Islander, Cambodian, Chinese, and Japanese traditional dance, Native American song and dance, and West African drum and dance are among the children’s performances.

General admission--$24.95 adult (12+), $21.95 senior (62+), $13.95 child (3-11), and free for children under age three and Aquarium members.

100 Aquarium Way, Long Beach, CA  
Info: 562-590-3100  
www.aquariumofpacific.org

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The Broad Stage  
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www.thebroadstage.com

April 29 is  
International Dance Day!

Always check with venues to confirm dates, times, and locations.
This is Culturally Speaking, the monthly newsletter of the Earth Cultures Project, one of Educational Communications’ many projects focusing on “Education through the Arts.” Educational Communications is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. Volunteers and donations are always appreciated.

Earth Cultures is one of the projects of Educational Communications, a non-profit 501(c)(3), tax-exempt organization founded in 1958, dedicated to improving the quality of life on this planet. The organization produces documentaries and works with several performing groups and individuals through its Earth Cultures Project to promote cultural awareness and provide education through the arts.

Your donation will help bring the arts back to education under the Earth Cultures Project, or help fund other projects of Educational Communications. Volunteers are always needed in the office. If you are interested in volunteering please call (310) 559-9160.

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**MUSEUMS**
- The Autry National Center
  www.theautry.org
- Bowers Museum
  www.bowers.org
- Craft & Folk Art Museum
  www.cafam.org
- The Getty
  www.getty.edu
- Metropolitan Museum of Art
  (search the database for works of art, costumes & more)
  www.metmuseum.org/works_of_art/
- Museum of Latin American Art
  www.molaa.org
- Museum of Tolerance
  www.museumoftolerance.com
- Pacific Asia Museum
  www.pacificasiamuseum.org

**ARTS AND CULTURES**
- Smithsonian Magazine
  Arts & Cultures
  www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture
- Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage
  www.folklife.si.edu/
- BBC - Holidays Around the World and so much more!
  www.bbc.co.uk/naturehumanplanetexplorer/events_and_festivals
- Pulse of the Planet
  www.pulseplanetc.org

**FOREIGN LANGUAGES**
- BYKI
  Free language software downloads
  www.byki.com/
- FREELANG
  Free bilingual dictionary downloads
  www.freelang.net/

**MUSEUMS**
- The Autry National Center
  www.theautry.org
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- The Getty
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- Metropolitan Museum of Art
  (search the database for works of art, costumes & more)
  www.metmuseum.org/works_of_art/
- Museum of Latin American Art
  www.molaa.org
- Museum of Tolerance
  www.museumoftolerance.com
- Pacific Asia Museum
  www.pacificasiamuseum.org

**ONGOING ACTIVITIES IN THE LOS ANGELES AREA**
- Current Cultural Happenings
  Around Los Angeles
  groups.yahoo.com/group/caltechfolkdance
- Olvera Street in Los Angeles
  http://olvera-street.com
- Folkworks (click on “calendar”)
  www.folkworks.org/

**FOLK DANCE & FOLK MUSIC INFORMATION**
- Dick Oakes’ Folk Dance Pages
  www.phantomranch.net/folkdanc/folkdanc.htm
- Folkways (ethnic music)
  www.folkways.si.edu/index.aspx
- ARC Music (ethnic music CDs)
  www.arcmusic.co.uk

**CHILDREN’S BOOKS BY DK PUBLISHING**
- Complete Flags of the World
- My World, My Story:
  Life Stories from Teens from Around the World
- Homes Around the World
- Children Just Like Me
- A Life Like Mine

**CHILDREN’S MUSEUMS**
- http://kidspace museum.org

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(These links are for reference only and are not necessarily endorsed by Educational Communications)

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**Support the Arts & Education!**

**ABOUT THE EARTH CULTURES PROJECT**

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