

Iran Today: Quest for New Narratives

The University of Texas at Austin - May 28-30, 2015

Program-at-a-glance

The full Program - session summaries, presenter profiles, and information about the conference and Austin - can be viewed and downloaded from the PCIA website: www.peacecorpsiran.org.

Why Austin? In the summer of 1965 The University of Texas at Austin took on the task of Peace Corps Iran training, and hundreds of trainees, young and old, women and men, took a step out of their comfort zone to learn about a country named Iran located 7,500 miles from Austin that many had never heard of. Almost 50 years to the day that trainees arrived for the first Iran training program at UT Austin, we return to recall our Peace Corps days and share memories.

Quest for New Narratives

There is a wealth of information about Iran – on the Internet, in books and magazines, lectures and conferences at universities, and on television and radio. We are on information overload. So why is PCIA joining the fray? We want to help you frame this information in such a way that you can become a part of the solution. Building your own narrative will take you in a new direction that can help the world – and change your life.

PCIA's great strength is that our members have experience and knowledge about Iran that is not available to most Americans. This conference is about how we can leverage that experience and knowledge to make a difference.

Jackie Spurlock, President, PCIA Board of Directors

From start to finish this Reunion/Conference has been a collaborative effort, led by volunteers. THANK YOU to all who have contributed time, talent, and donations. Credits are listed in full at www.peacecorpsiran.org

We wish especially to acknowledge support for the Persian Room
The Society of Iranian American Women in Austin for hands-on assistance
The National Peace Corps Association for an Education Small Grant.

Finally, we thank our sponsor at The University - The Center for Middle Eastern Studies – and their dedicated staff. Working with them on this challenging project has been a pleasure.



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Iran Today: Quest for New Narratives
May 28-30, 2015 - The University of Texas at Austin

current as of May 17, 2015

Wednesday, May 27 - San Jacinto Residence Hall

1 pm - 9 pm Piano Lounge

Conference Registration
Dinner on your own, with friends old and new

Thursday, May 28 - San Jacinto Residence Hall Conference Center

8:00 - 8:30	Ground floor atrium	Registration Continues - Continental Breakfast
8:30 - 9:00	Plenary Session Multipurpose ABC	Opening and Introductions Jackie Spurlock (RPCV Abadeh, Riz), President, PCIA Board of Directors Karin Wilkins, Director, Center for Middle Eastern Studies, The University of Texas at Austin Glenn Blumhorst, President, National Peace Corps Association
9:00 - 10:15	Plenary Session Multipurpose ABC	American Views of Iran - Iranian Views of America: Symbolic Estrangement in Action William O. Beeman, University of Minnesota Introduced by the Society of Iranian American Women in Austin
10:30 - 12:00	Multipurpose AB	Fifty Years of Peace Corps. Performance poem Meleia Egger, Peace Corps, Third Goal Specialist <i>followed by</i> Two-Way Gift: What Iran Peace Corps Volunteers Brought Back to America Mary Catherine Bateson, Boston College
	Multipurpose C	New Iranian Narratives in Persian Texts Three talks and discussion, moderated by Bijan Afkami, Bijan International, Austin Appreciation as Appropriation: Narrativized Persians in Edward Browne's <i>A Year Amongst the Persians</i> Mehdi Torabian, The University of Texas at Austin The Role of the Periphery in Reinventing Iran: The Case of Haj Zeyn al-Abedin Maragheh'i Mardin Aminpour, The University of Texas at Austin Time and Trauma: Cinematic Narratives of the Iran-Iraq War Maryam Shariati, The University of Texas at Austin
	Room 208 - 210	Youth in Iran: Life Style and Politics. Debate Nariman Mostafavi and Mohsen Jalali, University of Massachusetts Amherst
12:00- 1:00	Atrium	Box Lunch
1:00 -2:15	Multipurpose A	Peace Corps Iran: The Early Years. Panel discussion John H. Lorentz (RPCV Karaj), Shawnee State University; Richard Eaton (RPCV Tabriz), University of Arizona; Thomas M. Ricks (RPCV Mashhad, Mahabad), ret. Villanova University; Chris Speake (RPCV, Rezaiyeh)
	Multipurpose B	Women Potters in Iran: Illustrated Talk on Contemporary Potters Rahaleh Filsoofi, Florida Atlantic University
	Multipurpose C	Persian Art as Culture: A New Iranian Narrative. Slides Michael Craig Hillmann (RPCV Mashhad; PC Iran Staff, Karaj, Tehran), The University of Texas at Austin
2:30 - 3:45	Multipurpose A	Days of Revolution: "Aliabad" of Shiraz in Iran and the World Mary Elaine Hegland (RPCV Mahabad, Gorgan), Santa Clara University
	Multipurpose C	Peace Corps Women's Experience in Iran. Roundtable discussion Sally Moskol, RPCV Tehran; Marie Mitchell, RPCV Mahalat; Kathleen Macleod, RPCV Tehran, Gorgan Moderated by Ann Johnston, RPCV Shiraz
	Room 204-206	** Persian Refresher Session 1: Using the Persian for America(ns) ® Textbook Series Michael Craig Hillmann (RPCV Mashhad; PC Iran Staff, Karaj, Tehran), The University of Texas at Austin
4:00 - 5:30	Multipurpose A	Peace Corps in Iran: A History and In-Depth Look at the Later Years Jasamin Rostam-Kolayi, California State University, Fullerton; Paul Barker, RPCV Bidokht, Shiraz, Tehran; Warren Sawyer, former Peace Corps Iran Country Director; Paul Zimmerman, former Peace Corps Iran Country Director; Jo Floyd, former United Nations Volunteer, Shiraz
4:00 - 5:15	Multipurpose B	A Common Bond: Three Americans in Iran Howard Baskerville and Curtis Harnack Thomas M. Ricks (RPCV Mashhad, Mahabad), ret. Villanova University Terence O'Donnell John H. Lorentz (RPCV Karaj), Shawnee State University
	Multipurpose C	Defining and Developing Approaches to Building the ICMS Legacy in a Global Context A Roundtable Discussion Organized by Iran Center for Management Studies Graduates Jay Ahuja, Retired, Austin; Tamila Nikazm, Austin Energy; Reza Rezaee, Austin Community College. Moderated by James K. Owen, West Texas A&M University
	Room 204-206	Getting Published Moderated by John Krauskopf, RPCV Ahwaz

5:15 - 6:00 Room 208-210 **Step-by-Step Toward Meeting God: Spoken Poetry**
Mostafa Rahbar, University of Tennessee

6:00 - 8:00 Multipurpose ABC
6:30 - 11:00

Cash Bar
Pizza and Iranian Films

Friday, May 29

8:00 - 8:45 Atrium **San Jacinto Residence Hall - Continental Breakfast**

Morning Sessions in University Teaching Center

9:00 - 10:15 UTC - 2.102A **Iran's Mediatic Diplomacy with the West: War by Other Means**
Hamid Naficy, Northwestern University

UTC - 3.110 **Traveling in Iran Today**
Thomas M. Ricks (RPCV Mashhad, Mahabad), ret. Villanova University; John H. Lorentz (RPCV Karaj), Shawnee State University; Doug Meyer, RPCV Semnan, Karaj; Norma Lee Nichols-Mahdavi, Iran Custom Travel. Moderated by Ann Johnston, RPCV Shiraz

10:30 - 12:00 UTC - 2.102A **Iranian and American Narratives: Personal Witness, Engagement and Community**
Mary Catherine Bateson, Boston College; William O. Beeman, University of Minnesota; Hamid Naficy, Northwestern University; John Limbert (RPCV Sanandaj), U.S. Naval Academy. Moderated by Ann Johnston, RPCV Shiraz

UTC - 3.104 **Iranian Contemporary Architecture -- Looking Forward and Backward. Panel**
Soroush Farzin-Moghadam, University of Massachusetts Amherst; Naser Shahsavari, University of Shahid Beheshti; Arman Hadilou, SCB Architects, San Francisco

10:30 - 11:30 UTC - 3.110 **Peace Corps Global Presenters Training**
Meleia Egger, Peace Corps, Third Goal Specialist

**Friday, May 29 - Lunch, Afternoon Sessions and Persian Room
in San Jacinto Residence Hall Conference Center**

12:00 - 1:00 Atrium **Box Lunch**

Sessions

1:00 - 2:30 Room 208-210 **Peace Corps Story Telling: A Spoken Word Workshop**
Meleia Egger, Peace Corps, Third Goal Specialist

2:45 - 3:45 Room 208 -210 **Sunni and Shia Views of Figurative Imagery**
Thomas Klobe (RPCV Alang, Kordkouei,Gorgan), University of Hawaii

Room 204 ****Persian Refresher Session 2: Using *Persian of Today*, 1,2**
Anousha Shahsavari, The University of Texas at Austin

2:45-4:45 Room 206 **Author Readings**
Moderated by John Krauskopf, RPCV Ahwaz

1:00 - 5:00 Multipurpose ABC **Persian Room (schedule on the following page)**

Dinner on the town. Dine at local restaurants in groups large and small, with friends old and new.

Saturday, May 30 San Jacinto Residence Hall Conference Center

8:00 - 9:00 Atrium **Continental Breakfast**

9:00 - 10:15 Multipurpose ABC **The Road Back to Tehran: Undoing the Last Sixty Years**
Ambassador John Limbert (RPCV Sanandaj), U.S. Naval Academy

10:30 - 11:45 Multipurpose ABC **Translating Insight into Action: The Challenge to Citizens**
Plenary Session Discussion, Facilitated by Bijan Afkami, Afkami International, Austin

11:45 - 12:00 Multipurpose ABC **Closing Remarks, Acknowledgement of Participants, Sponsors and Supporters**
Jackie Spurlock (RPCV Abadeh, Riz), President, PCIA Board of Directors

**** Persian Refresher Sessions 1 and 2** introduce two sets of textbooks - *Persian of Iran Today* and the *Persian for America(ns) Textbook Series* - and demonstrate their use for self-study. If you plan to take a Refresher see online instructions at www.peacecorpsiran.org to preview material before class.

>> **Jasamin Rostam-Kolayi** will conduct oral histories of Peace Corps volunteers during the conference. Interview sign-ups are at the Conference Registration Table in San Jacinto Residence Hall.

>> We are pleased to host **Artists-in-Residence**: Raheleh Filsoofi, Reza Filsoofi, and Linda Behar.

FRIDAY AFTERNOON 1-5 p.m.

The Persian Room is open to the public.

It is a place to relax with a cup of tea and Iranian sweets served by the Society of Iranian American Women in Austin, make new acquaintances, reconnect with old friends, and enjoy the performances and displays.

Please join us and share memories and tales of Iran.

On Stage

- 1 - 1:30** **Peace Cylinder Project** - hands-on ceramic reproduction of the original Cyrus Cylinder to send a message of peace and tolerance. Repeated at 3 p.m.
- 2 - 2:30** **Mostafa Rahbar** - poetry reading from Omar Khayam
- 3 - 3:30** **Peace Cylinder Project** (second performance)
- 4 - 5:00** **Ravaan Persian Dance Group** – performance and dance workshop.

"Ravaan" has a dual meaning in Persian - flowing, and also 'spirit / psyche.'
Founded by Geeti Shirazi Mahajan in 2012, **Ravaan Persian Dance Group**

Displays

Oriental carpet display and recorded talk - a variety of Persian carpets provided by the **Kaskas Oriental Rug Gallery**.

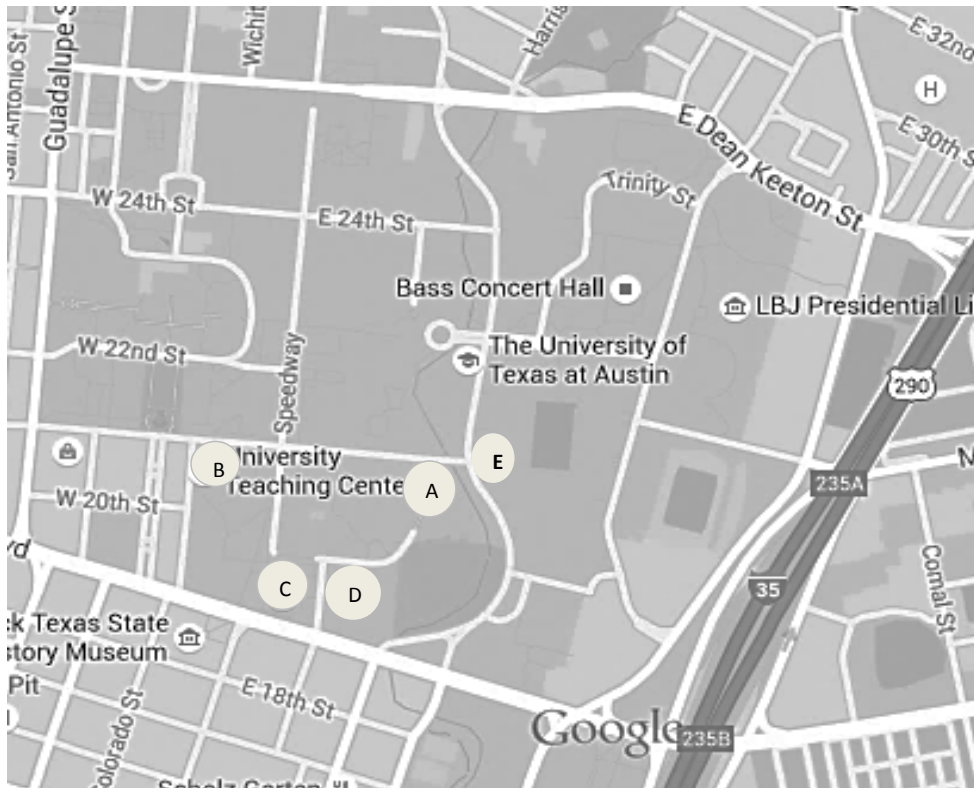
A PowerPoint show, "Cultural Content in Persian Carpet Designs," developed by Michael Hillmann, will play through the afternoon.

Iranian Postage Stamps - Iranian art, culture and history portrayed in postage stamps.

"Cultural Content in Iranian Postage Stamp Images," a PowerPoint presentation developed by Michael Hillmann, will be accompanied by poster board displays and an album of original postage stamps.

Exhibit tables: Travel: Iran Custom Travel, Norma Lee Nichols-Mahdavi; Global Exchange and others
National Peace Corps Association - A Towering Task film project
RPCV Iran Authors - John Krauskopf and other PCIA writers
PCIA Memorial Book - Genna Wangsness
Child Foundation - Bitra Raz

Mostafa Rahbar - demonstrations of watercolor painting, photography.



Conference Environs

- A** - San Jacinto Residence Hall: registration, lodging, breakfasts and lunches, conference sessions except for Friday morning
- B** - University Teaching Center (UTC) Friday morning sessions. 5 min. walk from San Jacinto
- C** - Blanton Museum of Art: cafe open 8 a.m. Thurs, Fri. Open from noon on Sat.
- D** - Brazos Parking Garage and taxi access via Brazos St.
- E** - Airport bus stop (21st St. / San Jacinto Blvd)
- Distance from San Jacinto to:
- UTC .3 mi.
 - Blanton Museum .3 mi.
 - Guadalupe St. (shops, food) .5

SESSION ABSTRACTS

American Views of Iran--Iranian Views of America: Symbolic Estrangement in Action

William O. Beeman.

The United States and Iran have been estranged for nearly forty years. Many people believe this estrangement to be a manifestation of substantive differences that divide the two nations. However in this presentation I will argue that the estrangement is largely symbolic. In the absence of sustained contact both nations have created images of each other that are distorted--filtered through the lenses of each other's respective cultures. The people of each nation have reacted to those images rather than reality. Returning to more reasoned contact at this stage is especially difficult because once the false images are believed by the public, the public distorts the facts to conform to those beliefs.

Author Readings

John Krauskopf, moderator.

This session is a continuation of PCIA's highly popular practice at our conferences of holding readings by Iran volunteers about their Peace Corps experiences. This is an opportunity to showcase your writing. Or just come and relax. Be prepared to be carried back to your Peace Corps days, listening to the humorous, insightful, lighthearted, and moving adventures of Iran Peace Corps volunteers back in the day. See the companion session, "Getting Published," below.

A Common Bond, Three Americans in Iran: Terence O'Donnell, Howard Baskerville and Curtis Harnack

John Lorentz and Tom Ricks.

The presenters will share their admiration for three Americans who, during their time in Iran, developed a special appreciation for the Iranian people and culture.

- **Terence O'Donnell**, the subject of Lorentz's talk, spent fifteen years of his life in Iran. This is the story of how that came to be, the man himself, and the origins, the nature and the publication of his unique book on Iran, *The Garden of the Brave in War*, which provides keen insight into the character and personality of the Iranian people.
- Thomas Ricks will draw parallels between Howard Baskerville's life and that of Curtis Harnack, both as teachers and as American observers of Iranian society and its political culture.
- **Howard Baskerville** lived and taught in 20th century Persia (1907 to 1909). His brief stay in Tabriz, Azerbaijan in the midst of the Iranian Constitutional Movement of 1906-1911 is remembered to this day by Iranians and, in his death, he is seen as the "martyred American who died for us." The presentation focuses on Baskerville's life in Tabriz, and how Peace Corps-like his life in Iran had become in terms of his political and social "awakening" to the Middle East world and to the global dimensions of U.S. diplomacy.
- **Curtis Harnack** arrived in Iran in the fall of 1958, on leave from Grinnell College, to begin his one-year Fulbright Scholarship grant at the University of Tabriz. With little orientation about Persian society or culture and even less preparation for a year among the Azeri Turks, Harnack nevertheless left with a lifetime of memories collected and articulated in his book, *Persian Lambs, Persian Lions: An American Odyssey in Iran* (NY, 1965). His narrative of the late 1950s amid the Cold War and pre-Peace Corps decade resonates with many astute insights, recalling Howard Baskerville's early 20th century account of Iranian society and culture, and a passion for self-determination and poetry.

Days of Revolution: "Aliabad" of Shiraz in Iran and in the World in the 20th and 21st Centuries

Mary Elaine Hegland.

How do local politics and so-called ordinary people affect national and international politics? Living in an Iranian village she calls “Aliabad,” in close interaction with residents during periods between 1978 and 2014, allowed Mary Elaine Hegland to examine how national and international politics have affected people on the ground. Politics—the English and American-engineered coup against Prime Minister Mossadeq and the Kennedy pressure for land reform—brought about political conflict in Aliabad. In the 1960s and 1970s, Aliabad villagers became increasingly incorporated into nearby Shiraz and Iranian economy, society, and politics. The decades following have seen the villagers becoming knowledgeable about and connected with the international world as well. Laptops, email, YouTube, the Internet, satellite dishes, emigration, and travel bring them into closer contact with the outside world. But financial opportunities brought about by land reform and the oil boom economy, combined with incompetent government and the sanctions against Iran have a downside. People complain about materialism, competition for extravagance, corruption, selfishness, inability to trust anyone, conflict within families, decline of morality, and dissatisfaction. They worry about unemployment—so many young men are unemployed—and the future, and they are relatively open about their complaints. They ask many questions about life in the U.S. and how to get a visa. (Slides will illustrate the changes in Aliabad from 1978 through 2014.)

Defining and Developing Approaches to Building the Iran Center for Management Studies: Legacy in a Global Context

Organized by Jay Ahuja, Tamila Nikazm, Reza Rezaee. Moderated by James K Owens.

The Iran Center for Management Studies (ICMS), based in Tehran, was established in 1971 to provide graduate level training for future managerial and leadership positions in business, government, and other organizations in Iran. The concept and curriculum of ICMS was modeled after the Harvard Business School (HBS) and its academic standards were set accordingly, with the faculty mainly composed of teaching HBS professors on leave from Harvard. The original ICMS program ceased operations in 1980. In its ten years of existence, the management school graduated some 500 Iranian and international students now living across the globe. The ICMS alumni held their first reunion in 1989 in Cambridge, Massachusetts. The most recent gathering was held in May 2014 in Istanbul, Turkey, with some 60 graduates and spouses in attendance. Today’s session, while not a reunion, will follow up on Legacy initiatives envisioned in Istanbul as well as other topics of contemporary interest. The session will address some challenges similarly faced by Peace Corps Iran Association. The roundtable comprises ICMS graduates interested in defining their ICMS (1972-1980) experience and recommending future activities to perpetuate that legacy.

Fifty Years of Peace Corps: Performance Poem

Meleia Egger.

Meleia wrote this poem in summer of 2011 in honor of the 50th Anniversary of Peace Corps when she was still a Peace Corps recruiter. Although she wrote it for recruitment, she finds that it often resonates strongly with Returned Peace Corps Volunteers and the whole Peace Corps family. We hope it speaks to YOU!

Getting Published

John Krauskopf, moderator.

Spend an hour with writer and other published authors as they chart a course for getting your writing published. John, whose special interest is capturing the Peace Corps Iran legacy, is currently collecting stories to create an anthology of Peace Corps Iran volunteer writings.

Iranian and American Narratives: Personal Witness, Engagement and Community

Mary Catherine Bateson, William O. Beeman, John Limbert, Hamid Naficy. Moderator, Ann Johnston.

This session brings together four speakers with very different backgrounds and professional perspectives in a discussion designed to help us all examine how Americans and Iranians, and our governments, understand each other. With moderator Ann Johnston, the panel will consider questions such as: What keeps the existing narratives (beliefs, stereotypes, and assumptions) alive in discussions about Iran, and in Iranian perceptions of America? What changes in existing narratives would provide a better basis for better relations between our countries and citizens? How do we go about changing narratives that are counterproductive but deeply entrenched?

Iranian Contemporary Architecture: Looking Forward and Backward

Arman Hadilou, Soroush Farzinmoghadam, Naser Shahsavari.

Contemporary architecture in Iran has been affected by the Revolution and can be divided into two main epochs: the modernity brought by the first generations of modern architects educated in western countries, and the era after the Revolution when conservative architects have sought solutions in Islamic architecture. We are now seeing the emergence of young architects graduating from national universities. In this session, the presenters will review Iran's contemporary architecture and discuss cultural and technical transformations that have influenced it. Despite the differences, one thing is certain: Iranian architects have struggled to find a middle ground that can answer functional necessities and resolve the conflict between modernism and tradition.

Iran's Mediatic Diplomacy with the West: War by Other Means

Hamid Naficy.

With recent technological, communication media, and political revolutions, the standard definition of public diplomacy, which applied mainly to relations between sovereign states, no longer suffices. Instead a "new" public diplomacy has risen whereby powerful non-state actors, such as supranational organizations, sub-national actors, non-governmental organizations, and commercial companies, communicate and engage with foreign publics. This new definition has opened the way for Western and Iranian governments to tap not only into their own respective national media and pop cultures but also into the Iranian diaspora media and pop culture to convey their values to opposing governments, to their respective populations, and to the Iranian publics at home and in diaspora. It is thus that these domestic and diasporic publics have become important third and fourth players in this globalized mediatic public diplomacy. This has made for a very contested and combustible sort of public diplomacy with grave consequences for some of its practitioners. The talk is illustrated with video clips.

New Iranian Narratives in Persian Texts

Mardin Aminpour, Maryam Shariati, Mehdi Torabian. Moderator, Bijan Afkami.

- "Appreciation as Appropriation: Narrativized Persians in Edward Browne's *A Year Amongst the Persians*," Mehdi Torabian.

Edward G. Browne's travelogue called *A Year Amongst the Persians* (1893) is often invoked to leverage arguments for or against this famous Persianist Orientalist. This paper, however, shifts the focus from the author to the travelogue as a text with a complex and fluid narrative that resists rigid value-laden readings and places the text within a larger discursive field in which the narrative constantly pushes against the boundaries established by that field. While the discourse of Orientalism has tended to write its objects of study outside history, Browne's narrative rather registers a sustained fascination for the history of Iran. In fact, for Browne it is the history of the Persian people that holds the key to appreciating "the Persian mind." This paper concerns itself with the way the discourse of Orientalism, inclined to dehistoricize its objects, functions in the face of a fascination with history.

- “The Role of the Periphery in Reinventing Iran: The Case of Haj Zeyn al-Abedin Maragheh’i,” Mardin Aminpour.
Leading the list of the banned books of the Qajar era for its subversive potential of animating a popular national consciousness in opposition to despotic rule, Haj Zeyn al-Abedin’s fictional travelogue called *The Travel Diary of Ibrahim Beyg* (1895) is a pivotal Persian narrative in the process of making Iran and occupies a special place in nationalist scholarship on Iran. However, not a single work has done justice to the importance of the author’s life, the social context and the discourses that underpinned the narrative of this fictional autobiography. My paper examines *The Diary* against the author’s Kurdish ethnic background and his contact with European life and thoughts. I suggest that his life experience in exile and his acquaintance with European discourses coalesced to engender a comic-satirical portrait of Iran.
- “Time and Trauma: Cinematic Narratives of the Iran-Iraq War,” Maryam Shariati.
In his seminal essay, “Rhetoric of the Image” (1964), Roland Barthes establishes the core concepts and steps of the semiotic approach towards the study of image. He defines three semiotic codes in the pictorial text (the linguistic, the coded iconic, and the non-coded iconic) and analyzes the functions of the linguistic message through the discussion of “anchorage” and “relay.” Drawing on the rich intertextuality between word and image, this paper discusses the significant role of visual culture in the genre of Iranian war movies and focuses on two influential Iranian directors during 1980s, namely Bahram Bayzai and Mohsen Makhmalbaf, who have engaged with the traumatic experiences of the Iran-Iraq war (1980-88). Challenging the state’s official “sacred defense” narratives through questioning ideals and ideologies, these filmmakers examine the war’s social consequences and realities in an attempt to offer more inclusive narratives.

Peace Corps Global Presenters Training

Meleia Egger.

While there are big changes at Peace Corps, some things haven’t changed in 54 years. RPCVs have a wealth of personal experiences and cultural knowledge to share. But planning Peace Corps talks can be challenging--often RPCVs don’t know quite where to start. Attend this training to learn how to plan, execute, and enjoy your own Peace Corps activities. Talking about your Peace Corps experience to an interested audience can be extremely satisfying, keep you close to your experience, and allow for amazing learning and inspiration. Now, more than ever, Peace Corps is engaging with the RPCV community! Reconnect with the Peace Corps and challenge misperceptions about Iran.

Peace Corps in Iran: A History and In-Depth look at the Later Years

Jasamin Rostam-Kolayi, Paul Zimmerman, Warren Sawyer, Jo Floyd, Paul Barker. Moderator, Jeanette Gottlieb.

Why did Peace Corps leave Iran in 1976? It is impossible to consider that question without considering why Peace Corps was brought to Iran in the first place, the role of Peace Corps in the White Revolution, and the social context of Iran in the 1960’s and 1970’s. This panel explores various perspectives on Peace Corps’ years in Iran. Jasamin Rostam-Kolayi will begin by presenting an overview of her postdoctoral research on the history of the Peace Corps’ program in Iran from its origins in 1962 to its end in 1976. She frames this often forgotten and marginalized fourteen-year history in light of the diplomatic history of U.S.-Iran relations; the expansion of education, urbanization, and economic development in Iran; and the increasing U.S. presence in Iran in the 1960’s and 1970’s. The remaining four panelists then focus on the later years of Peace Corps in Iran.

Peace Corps Iran: The Early Years

Richard Eaton, John Lorentz, Thomas M. Ricks, Chris Speake.

The beginning of the Peace Corps in Iran was marked by a hybrid administrative structure that was decidedly un-Peace Corps like, and by the lack of any precedent. The presence of the first PCV groups coincided with the origins of Peace Corps Iran under the guidance of the first director, William Cousins. Several volunteers from these early groups provide their perspectives on this development and observations on their own experiences as "pioneers."

Peace Corps Pledge

Meleia Egger.

In 2014 Peace Corps Director Carrie Hessler-Radelet asked Meleia to write a pledge in the spirit of Peace Corps designed for volunteers starting their country assignments. The Pledge is now official, and PCIA is honored that that she will debut it here, at the *Iran Today* conference. The first use by new volunteers is set for later in summer 2015.

Peace Corps Story Telling: A Spoken Word Workshop

Meleia Egger.

Iran RPCVs have some of the most compelling, funny, and moving stories from one of the most fascinating and poorly understood places on earth. However, RPCVs sometimes feel overwhelmed when sharing their stories from service. Learn how to find, craft, and tell your story in a way that transports and entertains your audience. In this interactive session, RPCVs will come away with one well-honed story and the tools to work on more! Your narratives can humanize Iran, and make your stories personal and memorable.

Peace Corps Women's Experience in Iran

Kathleen Macleod, Marie Mitchell, Sally Moskol. Moderator, Ann Johnston.

Women had unique experiences as Peace Corps volunteers in Iran. Our panelists include women who served in both the early and latter days of Peace Corps' tenure in Iran, in both urban and rural environment. They will share their stories of what they learned, and how they adapted in such a challenging cultural environment. We'll also learn how their experiences in Iran shaped their lives after Peace Corps, as they consider such questions as the difficulties of adapting to Persian culture, how cultural attitudes towards women affected their work and roles as Peace Corps volunteers, and 'take-aways' to subsequent experiences.

Peace Cylinder Project

Raheleh Filsoofi, Reza Filsoofi and Linda Behar.

At all times peace is a fragile idea, but especially now as the potential for conflict between Israel and Iran intensifies. The artists, Linda Behar, a Jewish immigrant, and Raheleh T. Filsoofi, an Iranian immigrant, intend to bring diverse communities together for conversation and to send a message of tolerance and acceptance throughout the world. The Peace Cylinder Project uses a ceramic replica of the original Cyrus cylinder with the declaration engraved on the surface and a wooden roller covered by a polymer plate to hold the last chapter of the *Book of Esther* in Hebrew. These are used together in a 'performance' to create prints on clay and paper. The rolling of these devices underscores the importance of the message that each text bears, and the similarity of each act of printing is intended to reflect the common themes and the universal significance that each text tells in its own way.

Persian Art as Culture: A New Iranian Narrative

Michael Craig Hillmann.

Persian Art as Culture: A New Iranian Narrative presents images and accompanying commentary on these ten subjects: (1) Iranian kings, (2) Persepolis, (3) Islam in Iran, (4) Persian calligraphy, (5)

Esfahân's Royal Square, (6) Iranian spring and gardens depicted in art, (7) women and love in Iranian art, (8) Iranian painting since the 1600s, (9) Iranian architecture since the early 1900s, and (10) horses in 2,500 years of Iranian art. *Persian Art as Culture* situates art objects and forms in a cultural context that draws attention to how and why those art objects and forms resonate for Iranians today, and endeavors to facilitate identification and appreciation of underlying cultural messages and artistic impulses in Iranian art objects and forms that seem essential in any definition of Persianness or Iranianness in those Iranians who produce and enjoy Iranian art.

Persian Refresher 1: Using the Persian for America(ns)® textbook series

Michael Craig Hillmann. (See NOTE.)

Persian Refresher 2: Using *Persian of Iran Today* 1, 2

Anousha Shahsavari.

NOTE: Conference participants have been asked to sign up in advance for refresher courses and to download pre-course materials and bring them to the session. The sessions are independent each other.

The Road Back to Tehran: Undoing the Last Sixty Years

Ambassador John Limbert.

How do we find our way back to Tehran over a road strewn with the wreckage of the last 35-years of disastrous American-Iranian relations? How do we build something better? We can neither undo nor forget the past. But if we are going to clear the road of its ugly obstacles—hostages, dead airline passengers, victims of terrorism—we have to both admit they exist and then stop making them a reason for not clearing the road. Perhaps the first step is empathy, which will require Americans to remember more and Iranians to remember less.

Step-by-Step Toward Meeting God

Mostafa Rahbar.

In this presentation, Mostafa Rahbar recites important segments of a poem by Rumi in Persian and English along with his translation of these segments. He also sings these poems in Masnavi form. Mostafa explains:

I was born to parents with little formal education in a small town that is now the provincial capital of the province of Semnan. Although my father had finished only elementary school, he was a renowned artist and very well versed in Persian literature and music. In my childhood, he recited a lot of poetry to us, and having been a musician in his youth, he taught me the different “dastgahs” (modes of Persian music). In school, we had to memorize and recite many long poems, which I still remember. I fell in love with Persian poetry at a young age and started memorizing long ghazals by Hafez, Sa’di, Rumi and many other classical poets; knowing music, I started singing the poetry that I had memorized. I was particularly interested in Rumi and sang Masnavi, which is a stylized mode of singing Rumi’s poetry from his book of Masnavi. In third grade we had to memorize a very long poem entitled, “Moses and the Shepherd Boy,” a captivating story of the encounter of Moses and a shepherd boy. This is truly Rumi’s masterpiece about religious tolerance and the “meaning” of God.

Sunni and Shia Views of Figurative Imagery

Thomas Klobe.

Aniconism is a proscription against the creation of images of living beings. In Islam the issue of figurative imagery is two-fold: 1) the dilemma of the artist assuming the life-giving qualities reserved only for God, and 2) the danger of the image being revered and taking on almost magic powers. While the Quran condemns idolatry, it does not explicitly prohibit the depiction of living figures. Interdictions of figurative representation are present in the Hadith, compiled in the 2nd century of the Islamic era, and

are based on the teachings and the life of the Prophet. Sunni thought is generally more explicit against the depiction of human beings, whereas Shia Islam often takes a more relaxed view toward representation. However, from experience in Iran, we know that on an individual level great diversity of thinking exists depending on the believer's strictness or liberal tendencies. This talk will be accompanied by photographs and stories garnered from Peace Corps experiences in rural northern Iran. The audience will be invited to share their experience.

Translating Insight to Action: the Challenge to Citizens

Facilitator, Bijan Afkami.

Over the previous two days presentations have prompted us to reflect on the value and relevance of Peace Corps and its ethics of tolerance and service. This Saturday morning gathering invites everyone to explore what we can do to overcome barriers to better relations between the people of Iran and the United States. How can we be ambassadors? Peace Corps Iran Association invites your suggestions for honing its future programs and activities.

Travelling in Iran Today

John Lorentz, Douglas Meyer, Norma Lee Nichols-Mahdavi, Thomas M. Ricks. Moderator, Ann Johnston.

Join four experienced travelers as they share their recent journeys in Iran. You'll be amazed at how much has changed, yet remained the same, in the past 50 years. Get your questions about traveling to Iran answered, and learn tips for your own next adventure!

Two-Way Gift: What Iran Peace Corps Volunteers Brought Back to America

Mary Catherine Bateson.

This session will consist of a report on some 80 responses to the brief survey of former volunteers about their Iran experience and how it has affected their lives. For many, perhaps most, it was a "life-changing experience." What did Iran give to them and through them to the United States? How has the presence of returning PCVs affected the United States? How might their experience influence their choices looking forward? And how should the United States value this ongoing legacy of the Kennedy years as we move into a global future?

Women Potters in Iran

Raheleh Filsoofi.

Pottery is a tradition in Iran dating back thousands of years. During field trips to her native Iran, ceramic artist Raheleh Filsoofi has focused on women potters living in villages in western and northern Iran. She brings to the conference a slide show and talk that describe the lives and creative work of women producing pottery of both practical use and sculptural appeal. While clay holds the memory of ancient cultural traditions, it also serves as a liberating force in contemporary Iranian society.

Youth in Iran

Mohsen Jalali, Nariman Mostafavi.

Sociologists debate the significance of the fact that Iranian youth are rapidly adopting the post-modern values of the free world, giving up religious or national traditions of previous generations. This radical change is perceived by the majority to be happening against the will of a ruling theocracy and as a result of the growing role of social media and open dialogs with the outside world. These changes in life style appear to be counter to the prescriptions of the dominant religious elite. However, may there be some benefit to the ruling elite? Might the elite see an advantage, for example, in changes that dampen youths' interest and involvement in politics?

ABOUT OUR PRESENTERS

Afkami, Bijan

Bijan Afkami is the founder and president of Bijan International, a corporate training and coaching firm dedicated to creating extraordinary performance improvement in individuals and organizations. His book, *The One Percent Solution: Leadership Through Action*, focuses on incremental improvements with a common sense, no-nonsense approach to leadership skills. The book has been used as a textbook at Fortune 500 corporations. As a leader in his field, he has spent years researching and developing programs that teach people how to tap into their full potential and create extraordinary results in their lives. A dynamic presenter, Bijan imparts information and insights that are thought provoking and practical. He moves his audiences to action with wit, wisdom and contagious enthusiasm.

Ahuja, Jay

Jay Ahuja is a graduate of the Iran Center for Management Studies.

Aminpour, Mardin

Born in Sardasht, a small border town in Iranian Kurdistan, Aminpour completed his undergraduate studies in English literature at Tehran University. Subsequently, he came to the United States as a Fulbright Scholar to teach Persian at The University of Texas at Austin, where he is currently pursuing a PhD degree in Middle Eastern Studies. He has been teaching Persian for the past seven years at UT Austin. He has also written a Kurdish textbook and taught Kurdish to American college students. His research is focused on the social history of the Kurds, especially the impact of the processes of boundary-making on the Kurdish social structures and experience. His dissertation research will illuminate the transformation Kurdish communities underwent as the frontier zone of Kurdistan during the Qajar and Ottoman times gradually converted into bordered lands under Reza Shah of Iran and Mustafa Kemal of Turkey. Aminpour will specifically investigate the last phase of the border disputes between Iran and Turkey centered at Mount Ararat, where sustained Kurdish-Armenian resistance challenged the sovereignty of the two fledgling states.

Barker, Paul

Paul Barker was a Peace Corps volunteer in Iran from 1971-76. He taught English in Bidokht, Khorasan from 1971-73, then in the Tribal High School in Shiraz from 1973-75. From 1975-76 Paul served as a TEFL field officer and also conducted Peace Corps training programs in Bahrain. He earned a master's degree in Islamic Studies from the University of California, Los Angeles and a master's in teaching from Lewis and Clark College. He and his wife, Nora, worked in international relief and development work from 1982 until their retirement in 2014. This included eleven years of work in Afghanistan, as well as assignments in Sudan, Egypt, Ethiopia, West Bank/Gaza, and Tanzania. He made a return visit to Iran in 1999 and again with Nora in May 2014.

Bateson, Mary Catherine

Mary Catherine Bateson is an anthropologist and linguist. She grew up in New York City, spent her senior year of high school in Israel and learned Hebrew, then studied Arabic in college, receiving a PhD in Linguistics and Middle Eastern Studies from Harvard in 1963. She lived in Iran from 1972 to early 1979, learning Farsi, teaching anthropology at Damavand College, and becoming involved in higher education planning for the Ministry of Education. In the United States she has taught at Harvard, Amherst, and George Mason University. She also spent two years in the Philippines where she taught at the Ateneo de Manila, the Jesuit University. She is the author of several books dealing with life history

materials, including *With a Daughter's Eye: A Memoir of Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson* and *Composing a Life*. She is currently a visiting scholar at Boston College.

Beeman, William O.

William O. Beeman is Professor and Chair of the Department of Anthropology at the University of Minnesota, where he was department chair from 2007-2013, a position he resumed in 2014. Best known as a Middle East specialist for more than 30 years, he has also worked in Central Asia, the Caucasus, Japan, China and South Asia. Recognized for special expertise in Iranian culture and linguistics, he is the author or editor of more than 100 scholarly articles, 500 opinion pieces and fourteen books, including *Language, Status and Power in Iran*, and *The "Great Satan" vs. the "Mad Mullahs": How the United States and Iran Demonize Each Other*. He has been a consultant to the Department of State, the Department of Defense, the United Nations and the European Union on Middle Eastern affairs. He has also written extensively on music and performance traditions both in Western and non-Western traditions. His latest book on this topic is *Iranian Performance Traditions*. His co-authored book with Daniel Helfgot, *The Third Line: The Singer as Interpreter* has been widely used in teaching and research. His forthcoming book: *The Meistersingers: Opera Performance in Germany* centers on his experience as an opera performer in a leading German opera house.

Behar, Linda

Born in Venezuela and established in the U.S. since 2000, Linda Behar is an artist and civil engineer. Trained at the Academia Taller Arte y Fuego between 1994 and 1998, she went on to specialize in glass casting through studies in Italy and the U.S. An active participant in Venezuela's biennales, her work has appeared in solo and group shows here and abroad. Linda taught glass casting in Venezuela and at the University of Miami. She received her MFA in Printmaking at Florida Atlantic University in 2014, where she now teaches. Her current work includes computer graphic projects that question cultural norms.

Eaton, Richard

A member of the first Peace Corps volunteer group to Iran (1962-64), Dick was stationed about fifteen miles outside of Tabriz where he taught English at an agricultural normal school. In August 1963, he and two other volunteers decided to make an overland trip to India and back. Having lived the previous year in Iran, much of what they experienced in South Asia seemed astonishingly familiar. Ever since, Dick has sought to understand the endlessly fascinating relationship between Iran and India, mainly by exploring the extensive Persian-language historical sources scattered across South Asia. After receiving an MA from the University of Virginia in 1968 and a PhD from the University of Wisconsin in 1972, both in history, he went to the University of Arizona, where down to the present he has been teaching Middle Eastern and South Asian history. He has also published a dozen books on Iran, Islam, and India, the first of which was published in Tabriz after returning from that fateful, overland trip.

Egger, Meleia

Meleia Egger works in Washington, D.C., as the Peace Corps Third Goal Program Specialist / Returned Peace Corps Volunteer Group Liaison. In this role, she coordinates Peace Corps Week, and develops and supports Third Goal trainings, initiatives, and contests. Peace Corps has benefitted from her skills as a performance poet, storyteller, and writer. She is the author of the recently adopted Peace Corps Pledge. She also works with RPCV groups as their point of contact and resource inside the agency for their Third Goal efforts. Meleia served in Peace Corps Malawi as a biology teacher from 2007-2009. She originally hails from Madison, Wisconsin.

Farzin-Moghdam, Soroush

Soroush Farzin-Moghadam is a PhD candidate in Regional Planning and holds a Master of Architecture at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. He joined UMass Campus Planning as a graduate Green Building Researcher in January 2013. Soroush also holds a Bachelor of Architecture engineering from Shahid Behesti University (Tehran, 2006) and a Master of Science in Building Technology from Tarbiat Modares University (Tehran, 2010). He has collaborated with several architectural firms on projects ranging from residential complexes to airports and authored several articles about energy and urban modeling. His PhD research is focused on IUMAT (Integrated Urban Metabolism Analysis tool), a system-based sustainability analysis tool that will use urban operational system inputs to analyze overall sustainability.

Filsoofi, Raheleh

Raheleh received her MFA in Ceramics from Florida Atlantic University in 2014. Her work is steeped in cultural memory and displacement with regard to her native Iran and the way in which people construct identity through sight and sound. Her art extends to a variety of media. Through the use of sound, music, physical objects and video, she narrates stories of individual and collective experiences of displacement. She also does field research documenting traditional and contemporary ceramic art in Iran with particular focus on the current role of women in that field. Her work has been exhibited in Iran and the U.S.

Filsoofi, Reza

Born in Iran in 1973, Reza studied with several masters of traditional Persian music including Hossein Malek, Mohammad Javad Zarrabian, Masood Shoaari, and Arash Farhangfar. He is the founding director of Florida's Caravan Ensemble and has collaborated with and been featured in numerous music, dance, theater and visual arts programs. He plays the setar, daf, tonbak, and santoor.

Floyd, Jo

Jo Floyd (United Nations Volunteer) was an instructor at the Department of National Development at Pahlavi (later Shiraz) University from 1973-1976. Leaving Iran, she traveled extensively in Africa and Asia before working on several international projects in Washington, D.C. After completing graduate studies in business, she worked for several financial institutions before setting up her own consulting business. She was a board member (and business manager) of the University of California San Francisco Orchestra for many years and served as president of an ethnic arts organization for three years. She earned degrees from the University of Wisconsin (Madison) and the University of Pennsylvania (Wharton).

Hadilou, Arman

Associate Architect Arman Hadilou works as a project designer on high-rise residential towers at SCB Architects in San Francisco. Until recently, he worked for Miro Rivera Architects. His work focuses on the use of parametric modeling, digital fabrication, and simulation analysis. He has in-depth technical knowledge in various parametric modeling platforms and believes these tools can strengthen a designer's intuition while also increasing the designer's flexibility to respond to changes. Hadilou holds an undergraduate degree from Shahid Beheshti University (Tehran), a Master of Urban Design from Iran University of Science and Technology, and a Master of Architecture from the University of Texas at Austin, where he conducted lectures and workshops on advance design technology. His professional work contains a number of published and award winning projects that range in scale from buildings to products.

Hegland, Mary Elaine

Mary Hegland is Professor of Cultural and Middle Eastern Studies, Santa Clara University. She taught English as a second language in the girls' high school in Mahabad during her 1966-1968 Peace Corps service. She studied at New York University and State University of New York, Binghamton and traveled to Iran for her PhD research between June 1978 and December 1979, living through the Iranian Revolution in her village research site near Shiraz. In addition to her recent publication *Days of Revolution: Political Unrest in an Iranian Village* (2014), she has published translations of stories by Iranian Azerbaijan teacher and author Samad Behrangi (*The Little Black Fish and Other Modern Persian Stories by Samad Behrangi*). With Richard Antoun, she edited *Religious Resurgence: Contemporary Cases in Islam, Christianity, and Judaism*.

Hillmann, Michael Craig

Michael Craig Hillmann, Professor of Persian at The University of Texas at Austin, specializes in imaginative Persian literature as a window into Iranian culture, the nature of lyric poetry *qua* poetry, literary autobiography, and Iranian art. Hillmann's more recent projects are: the Persian for America(ns)[®] Textbook Series, consisting of *Persian Listening* (2008), *Persian Reading and Writing* (1010), *Persian Grammar and Verbs* (2012), and *Persian Conversation(s)* (2015); and a series of PowerPoint presentations on Iranian culture, among them: *Islam as Defined by Iranian Art, Symbols and Flags of Iran, Sufi Notions of God and Love in Rumi's Poetry, Iranian History through Slides of Mostly Art Objects, Cultural Content in Iranian Postage Stamp Images, and Persian Art as Culture: A New Iranian Narrative*. Among Hillmann's in-progress projects are a textbook called *Classics of Persian Poetry: A Primer for Students* and *The Love Song of M. Sadegh Hedayat*, a literary critical study of *The Blind Owl*. Samples of his writing, including several out-of-print books and scores of essays and Persian language lessons, are available online at www.utexas.Academia.edu/MichaelHillmann.

Jalali, Mohsen

Mohsen Jalali is a second-year PhD student in Political Science at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Prior to that he was a Fulbright Scholar at the Five College Consortium, teaching Persian and working on American pedagogy. He spent a year at Smith College doing a non-degree program in American Studies. Currently he is affiliated with Nonviolent Initiative for Democracy, an NGO based in Boston.

Johnston, Ann Buessing

Ann was an English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher in eight girl's high schools in Shiraz from 1965-1967 as a member of the Iran VI group. She worked with Iranian ESL teachers to improve instruction, taught demonstration classes for faculty, and developed summer programs for girls. Returning from Iran, she taught English as a foreign language for a number of years until, in 1981, she began the party supply business she has owned and managed for 34 years. Ann's experiences in Iran led her to become active in local politics, serving thirteen years on a local school board, eight years on the Stockton City Council, and four years as mayor of Stockton, California.

Krauskopf, John

John was in the Iran VI TEFL group that trained at The University of Texas at Austin in 1965. His Peace Corps site was Ahwaz. In 1968 and 69, he worked as an RPCV on Iran TEFL programs for the Experiment in International Living both stateside and in-country. After supervising a summer program in Arak, he joined the staff of a training program for architects, engineers and city planners in Babolsar. John retired after thirty-five years in cross-cultural education, the last part as director of an intensive ESL (English as a Second Language) Institute. He has been writing in three areas: Trains (a fascination with

electric rail that has resulted in two pieces published in a national magazine); Peace Corps/cross-cultural, with stories about Iran published in two Peace Corps anthologies; and a history of a resort property in Michigan. John also participated in the making of the Emmy award-winning documentary about the beginning of the Peace Corps, "The Passing of the Torch." John's book, *Iran – Stories from the Peace Corps*, was published in 2014. John is on the Board of Directors of Peace Corps Iran Association.

Klobe, Thomas John

Tom Klobe is professor emeritus of Islamic and Medieval Art and founding director of the University of Hawaii (UH) Art Gallery. During his 29-year tenure at UH he organized and designed over 200 exhibitions, five of which received the prestigious Print Casebook Award for Best in Exhibition Design in competition with major museums in the United States and abroad. He has authored twelve exhibition catalogues and was editor of 25 publications. His book *Exhibitions: Concept, Planning and Design* was published in 2012, and his most recent publication, *A Young American in Iran*, in 2014. Klobe was named a Living Treasure of Hawaii in 2005 and was the recipient of the Robert W. Clopton Award for Distinguished Community Service in 2003. In 1999 he was knighted by the Republic of France as a Chevalier of the Order of Arts and Letters for his contributions to the arts in France and Hawaii.

Limbert, John

John Limbert is Class of 1955 Professor of Middle Eastern Studies at the U.S. Naval Academy, where he teaches courses in history and political science. During a 34-year career in the United States Foreign Service he served mostly in the Middle East and Islamic Africa, including at posts in Iran, Iraq, Sudan, Algeria, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates. He was president of the American Foreign Service Association (2003-05) and ambassador to Mauritania (2000-03). In 2009-2010, while on leave from the Naval Academy, he served as Deputy Assistant Secretary, responsible for Iranian affairs, in the State Department's Bureau of Near East Affairs. A native of Washington, D.C., Limbert earned his BA, MA and PhD from Harvard University, the last degree in history and Middle Eastern studies. Before joining the Foreign Service he taught in Iran as a Peace Corps volunteer in Kurdistan (1964-66) and as an instructor at Shiraz University (1969-72). He has written numerous articles and books on Middle Eastern subjects including *Iran at War with History*, *Shiraz in the Age of Hafez*, and *Negotiating with Iran: Wrestling the Ghosts of History*. John Limbert holds the Department of State's highest award – the Distinguished Service Award – and the department's Award for Valor, which he received in 1981 after fourteen months as a hostage in Iran. His foreign languages are Persian, Arabic, and French. He is married to the former Parvaneh Tabibzadeh, and they have two children and four grandchildren

Lorentz, John

John was a Peace Corps volunteer in the early 1960s (Iran Group I) and has returned three times since to do research on a PhD dissertation, a visit as a Senior Fulbright-Hays Research Fellow (1975-76), and most recently as the tour scholar for a Distant Horizons Cultural Tour in April-May of 2014. He has a PhD from Princeton University in Near Eastern Studies (history) and earned his MA in Middle Eastern Studies from Harvard University. From 1971 to 1984 he held teaching and administrative positions at Portland State University before becoming the executive director of American Aid for Afghans and working as a consultant involving trade development and political risk analysis in the Middle East. In 1990, he joined Shawnee State University where he became Founding Director of the Center for International Programs and Activities and taught Middle East history. For the past six years he has been Associate Provost for International Education. He is fluent in Farsi and is the author of various articles on Iran and the books, *The Historical Dictionary of Iran* and *The A to Z of Iran*.

MacLeod, Kathleen

Kathleen was born and raised in San Diego, California where she continues to live. She graduated from San Diego State University with degrees in education and public administration. Kathleen was a TEFL volunteer in Group IV (64-66) first in Tehran for six months teaching at the UNESCO School of Social Work. She then moved to Gorgan, boarded with a midwife, and taught in a girls' high school. Post Peace Corps, she taught fifth grade for a school term in New Orleans, returned home to San Diego and worked for a War on Poverty program contractor for four years. These experiences segued into a 26-year career in public health with the County of San Diego with stints as Family Planning Coordinator and in Tobacco Control until retirement in 2000. She now "earns her pension" as an active volunteer in the League of Women Voters, urban planning, and community building.

Meyer, Doug

Three months before entering Peace Corps training in Fresno, California, Doug Meyer knew little about Iran, but he did know agriculture and wanted to live the Kennedy dream. The Peace Corps invited him to training in February 1967, and he began his service in Iran in July. After a year in Semnan, he transferred to the Agricultural Experiment Station in Karaj where he spent four months, leaving in October 1968. During that time he saw most parts of northern Iran. After leaving Iran for a half-year of backpacking in South and Southeast Asia, he returned to the United States, where he completed his studies in computer science. Since then he has lived four years in the Philippines and traveled to Europe and Africa numerous times. One of his more recent journeys was back to Iran, and to Semnan, in April 2014.

Meyer, JoAnn (Persian Room convenor)

JoAnn is a retired high school guidance counselor, the mother of two sons and wife of RPCV Doug Meyer. The Meyers currently live in Burnsville, Minnesota. During her tenure in education, JoAnn coordinated two exchange programs with her high school and sister schools in Changsha, China, and Kobe, Japan. She escorted students to these countries and hosted students and teachers on their visits to Minnesota. For eleven years JoAnn also worked for People to People, an organization started during the Dwight Eisenhower administration to foster friendship between nations. During this time she traveled extensively with high school students in Europe, Australia, and New Zealand. After hearing stories for many years from Doug about his Peace Corps experience and desire to someday return to Iran, they joined eight others and traveled to Iran in April of 2014. JoAnn immediately fell in love with the people, culture, history and beauty of the country.

Mitchell, Marie

Marie was a Peace Corps volunteer along with her husband in Mahallat (Markaz-e-Iran) from 1974-75. She taught English as a Foreign Language (EFL) to fifth grade girls. Following Peace Corps, she graduated from the School for International Training in Brattleboro, Vermont with an MAT in English as a Second Language. Then she and her husband returned to Iran. They taught EFL to Iranian Army Air Corps from 1976-78 in Esfahan. They left with the outbreak of the Revolution. She taught ESL/EFL, participated in special programs, and conducted teacher-training classes in the U.S. and abroad. She retired in 2013 as a senior lecturer at Arizona State University, Tempe.

Moskol, Sally

Sally grew up in Billings, Montana and attended college in Billings and at the University of Montana, Missoula. She started her teaching career in Billings and continued in Palo Alto, California, before joining the Peace Corps. She served as an English teacher at Tehran University and taught English

to women in a Jewish neighborhood. After leaving the Peace Corps, Sally lived in Madison, Wisconsin where she was an ESL teacher, hired to help build the ESL program in Madison public schools with another RPCV who had served in Colombia. In 1993, she moved back to Montana to help with the care of her mother. She now lives in Big Sky where she helped start a public library and has been on its board of directors for fourteen years.

Mostafavi, Nariman

Nariman Mostafavi is a PhD student in Building & Construction Technology at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. He was a member of Dafter Tahkim Vahdat (Office for Strengthening Unity) in Iran, and the deputy of the Student Association of Tehran Polytechnic (Amirkabir University). He has been interviewed by BBC, VOA, CNN, and other major news outlets on politics of Iran.

Naficy, Hamid

Naficy is Professor of Radio-Television-Film and the Hamad Bin Khalifa Al-Thani Professor in Communication at Northwestern University, where he also has an appointment with the Department of Art History. He is a leading authority in cultural studies of diaspora, exile, and postcolonial cinemas and media and of Iranian and Middle Eastern cinemas. Naficy has published and lectured extensively, nationally and internationally, on these and allied topics. His English language books are: *An Accented Cinema: Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking*; *Home, Exile, Homeland: Film, Media, and the Politics of Place*; *The Making of Exile Cultures: Iranian Television in Los Angeles*; *Otherness and the Media: the Ethnography of the Imagined and the Imaged* (co-edited); and *Iran Media Index*. His latest work is the award-winning four-volume book *A Social History of Iranian Cinema*, published in 2011-12. He has also published extensively in Persian, including a two-volume book on the documentary cinema theory and history, *Film-e Mostanad*. He has also produced and directed many educational and documentary films.

Nikazm, Tamila

A graduate of the Iran Center for Management Studies, Tamila Nikazm is the finance director at the public utility, Austin Energy.

Nichols-Mahdavi, Norma Lee

Norma Nichols-Mahdavi lived in Iran from 1959 to 1966, at the time married to an Iranian. She was president of the Foreign Wives Club and on the board of directors of the Tehran School of Social Work. In 1962 she established a cross-cultural consulting firm for foreigners moving to Iran. In the United States she continued with the Rockefeller Foundation. Other jobs have included marketing director for the Iranian National Tourist Organization and Iranian Handicrafts Center in New York; production of official government travel and cultural information for distribution world-wide; and, since 2007, association with IranCustomTravel.com. On May 12, she will return from leading her seventh sneakers-on-the-ground tour. Her degrees are in International Cultural and Development Studies (Cornell University and the New School in New York City).

Owens, James K.

A former professor of accounting and finance at the Iran Center for Management Studies, James Owen is currently professor of finance and Hodges Professor of Corporate Governance at West Texas A&M University.

Rahbar, Mostafa

Mostafa Rahbar was born in Semnan, Iran. After receiving his bachelor's degree in broadcasting from the University of Tennessee, he worked as producer/director of educational documentary programs

for National Iranian Radio and Television. While in Tehran, he translated several books and articles, into English or Farsi, on children and young adult literature for the Center for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults. Returning to the U.S., he earned his master's degree in Foreign Language Education from the University of Tennessee. He has been an instructor at the English Language Institute, University of Tennessee since 1980.

Rezaee, Reza

Reza, a graduate of the Iran Center for Management Studies, is now at Austin Community College.

Ricks, Thomas

Tom served in the Iran III TEFL program in Mashhad (1964) and in Mahabad (1965-66). He came back to the United States for graduate studies at Indiana University (Bloomington), with a master's degree in Persian Studies and a PhD in Middle East History. He returned to Iran in 1971 with his wife, Janice, to work on his thesis; eventually, they both taught at the Tehran International School (Iranzamin). In 1973, he and Jan returned to the States to continue their academic careers in Minnesota, in the D.C. area, and in Philadelphia. Tom also taught for two years at Birzeit University in the West Bank, Palestine before both retired from teaching. Tom has published a number of books and articles on the social and cultural history of modern Iran and Palestine. He is currently completing works on Howard C. Baskerville and Tabriz during the Iranian Constitutional Movement, and on the life of Sarah Wright McDowell, for nearly 40 years a social worker in Iran.

Rostam-Kolayi, Jasamin

Jasamin Rostam-Kolayi is an associate professor at California State University, Fullerton with a PhD in Modern Middle East History. Her journal publications cover late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century Iranian history, including U.S.-Iranian educational partnerships. At the International Society for Iranian Studies Conference in August 2014, Rostam-Kolayi gave a talk placing the Peace Corps in the context of the Pahlavi White Revolution and relations between the United States and Iran during that period. She is currently working on a journal article and book project on the history of the Peace Corps in Iran and, with this in mind, will be observing the conference activities as well as doing oral histories with interested Iran PCVs.

Sawyer, Warren

Warren Sawyer was Regional Director of the Peace Corps in northern India stationed in New Delhi from 1969 to 1971. In mid-1971 Warren, with wife Joan and five school-aged children, he moved to Tehran, where he was Country Director of Peace Corps Iran until mid-1974. After returning to the United States and completing graduate studies, he was managing partner in a real estate development partnership as well as serving on non-profit boards such as Habitat For Humanity International, where he chaired their international work. In 1992 Warren, with Joan and their eldest daughter Debbie, founded The Caleb Group, a non-profit affordable housing organization now spread around New England. Warren earned degrees at Gordon College and Harvard's Kennedy School.

Shahsavari, Anousha

Anousha Shahsavari, lecturer of Persian at The University of Texas at Austin, holds a BA degree in English Translation from Shiraz Azad University, received an MA in Applied Linguistics: Teaching Persian to Speakers of Other Languages from Shiraz University in 2005, and another MA in Second Language Acquisition and Application from the University of Maryland in 2009. She is the co-author of the two-volume, elementary Persian textbook, *Persian of Iran Today*, available in hard copy and online,

with online audio and video components. She has taught at the University of Maryland Persian Summer Institute and the UT Austin Persian Summer Language Institute. Shahsavari is currently working on *Persian of Iran Today–Functions*, a Persian language textbook for intermediate and advanced level students.

Shahsavari, Naser

Architect Naser Shahsavari is a faculty member at the University of Shahid Beheshti in Tehran, and a member of Tehran Construction Engineering Organization.

Shariati, Maryam

Maryam Shariati earned her BA and MA degrees in English Language and Literature in Iran before joining Brown University as a Fulbright scholar in 2007. Currently, she is a Ph.D. candidate in Comparative Literature and a Women and Gender Studies Portfolio candidate at the University of Texas at Austin. Her interdisciplinary research centers on Modern Iranian Cinema and Literature, French and British Literature, and the role of the Iranian intellectuals, especially women, in forming Iranian identity in the Western literary world. Her dissertation, “Staging Iranian Modernity: Authors in Search of Identity,” focuses on the complex web of cultural and national reconceptualization of modern Iranian drama and the role of the dialogic interactions with the European literary tradition in shaping the development of Iranian identity during the Pahlavi era. Maryam also has extensive experience teaching Persian as a second/foreign language at Brown University, UT Austin, and University of Wisconsin, Madison.

Speake, Chris

After graduating from U.C. Berkeley in 1963, Chris trained with Group 3 in Portland and served in Rezaieyeh (Urmia) in the TEFL program, 1964-66. She and her husband Bill were one of the few married couples to serve in the Peace Corps together. She feels that this helped them make friends with Iranian families more easily than single volunteers. Her interest in cooking resulted in her spending happy hours with Iranian women in their kitchens. Later, when Bill got a job in ESL with TWA and Saudi Arabian Airlines, the couple (now a family of three) moved to Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, where they spent the following nine years. Chris taught ESL in an American international school run by TWA. Her son Kareem was born in Beirut in 1970. The past 40 years have been spent on the Mendocino coast of northern California. Chris was a Resource Specialist for Mendocino Unified Schools and is now retired. She and Bill continue to cook, study languages and travel.

Torabian, Mehdi

Mehdi Torabian, who holds BA and MA degrees in English Language and Literature from the University of Tehran, is a PhD student in Comparative Literature at the University of Texas at Austin. During the 2006-07 school year he spent two semesters as a Fulbright Scholar at UT Austin, teaching Persian classes, helping with the development of the university’s Persian Program website, and writing his MA thesis, in which he interpreted Henry IV plays by Shakespeare from New Historicist perspectives. Torabian has written papers on a variety of topics related to Iranian history and culture, including the representation of Persians and Turks in Renaissance drama, censorship in Iranian cinema after the 1979 Revolution, and the significance of facial hair in the Islamic Republic. He has also worked on postcolonial literary studies; for his dissertation project he is currently working on English and French travelers in Iran during the Qajar period in the 19th century. He is particularly interested in the formation of the discipline of Iranian studies out of travelogues written by European travelers in Iran during that

period. He has been working as a teaching assistant in English and Persian programs at UT Austin since 2011.

Zimmerman, Paul.

Paul Zimmerman received his BA from Dartmouth in 1955 and a degree in law from Yale in 1958. He practiced law from 1958 until 1966. He served as Peace Corps Director in South India from 1966-68 and in Iran from 1968-71. On returning to the U.S., he served as Deputy Environmental Administrator for New York City. He was Founding Executive Director and counsel of Moped Association of America before returning to private law practice. From 1994-97 he lived in Nairobi, Kenya where he worked for U.N. agencies and his wife ran the East Africa office of a U.S. NGO. Since then he has been involved in volunteer work in the Washington, D.C. area.

Meet the Peace Corps Iran Association Board of Directors

Kendall Dudley

Sanandaj, Tehran (1967-69); Arlington, MA

I was in Sanandaj and Tehran as part of a city planning project creating maps to beautify the walls of mayors. Iran has been woven into my work and imagination ever since. As a student of Islamic architecture, I returned to photograph lesser known monuments, and these images are in many university and museum collections. Underlying my on-going 30-year work as a career and life design consultant and speaker has been a desire to help others find their equivalent life-altering "Iran experience." I also teach autobiography and lead writing and self-exploration trips to Morocco and Istanbul. My next program, *Writing For A Week in Istanbul*, takes off October 16, 2015! My novel *Speedway* will be published in 2016. www.kendalldudley.com.

Jeanette Grayson Gottlieb

Nowshahr, Hamadan (1965-67); Albany, NY

Jeanette was a Group VI (trained in Austin) TEFL volunteer from 1965-1967 in Nowshahr and Hamadan. In addition to English she organized after school activities for girls and taught first aid with the Iranian Red Cross. On returning to the US she married Steve Gottlieb a fellow volunteer (Pahlavi Group). As jobs took them to various places, she taught enrichment and ESL classes as a volunteer in inner city schools. In Albany, NY, serendipity led to a career in Aquatics instructions and management. Now semi-retired she teaches Aquatic courses and volunteers as an instructor trainer for the Red Cross. Steve and Jeanette were founding members of RPCVs of NENY and continue to actively participate in its many Third Goal initiatives.

Thomas Huf

Babolsar, Mashhad (1967-71); Amherst, MA

Tom's Peace Corps service began in in the agricultural Caspian town of Babolsar, where all of the social, economic and cultural contradictions of 1960s Iran were compressed into that small town experience. Later, in Mashhad and Tehran, Tom worked within a cultural environment comprising mostly Armenian-Iranian architects and engineers educated in Iran, Armenia, and Europe. Tom has graduate school training in Denmark and Cambridge, Massachusetts, in urban planning and design and is currently a Campus Planner at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, and serves on the PCIA Board of Directors. Tom is convener of the panels on Youth in Iran and Iranian Contemporary Architecture and was instrumental in engaging the Peace Cylinder trio, Raheleh and Reza Filsoofi, and Linda Behar.

John Krauskopf

Ahvaz, Babolsar, Arak (1965-69); San Francisco, CA

John was in the TEFL VI group that trained at The University of Texas at Austin in 1965. His volunteer service in Ahvaz was followed by staff positions in Arak and Babolsar. One of his current projects, documenting the legacy of PC Iran, is evident in two conference sessions: *Author Readings* and *Getting Published*. See the section of this program on presenters' biographies for more information about John.

Mary Marks

Kerman (1964-66); New York, NY

When it came time to leave Kerman in 1966 I wasn't ready to go. What would happen to all my Iran-specific lore? But back in the US, I toiled happily in a library on Native Americans, letting Iran slide into the background. But it wouldn't stay put. Retired, I revisited those seminal Peace Corps years, penning a memoir about life as a Kermani and reconnecting with my fellow volunteers through PCIA.

John Salamack

Bojnoord (1965-67); Albuquerque, NM

I joined the Peace Corps as a TEFL volunteer and, after training in Austin, TX, was assigned to teach in Bojnoord, Iran. My two years in Bojnoord were a life-changing experience. Not only did I learn about a culture vastly different from my own, I made life-long friends among the Iranians and Americans I met while in Iran. I continued to work internationally for the rest of my career throughout the Middle East, Africa and Europe. Now in semi-retirement, I am the Executive Director of Clothes Helping Kids, Inc. in Albuquerque, NM.

Doug Schermer*

Semnan, Shahrud (1966-67); Wayland, IA

Doug served in the OMRAN rural development program in Semnan where he worked on bath houses, schools, water supply systems, etc. Along with four other volunteers, their big project was a school in the mountains partially funded by the Peace Corps School-to-School program. After Peace Corps service, Doug began his career in education

as a sixth grade teacher, elementary principal, and superintendent of schools. He is now retired but active as treasurer of the Peace Corps Iran Association.

Jackie Spurlock*

Abadeh, Riz (1974-76); Portland, OR

As a Peace Corps volunteer Jackie taught English in Iranian public schools. After Peace Corps, she and husband Mike remained in Iran, where Jackie was a librarian at the University of Isfahan, returning home in 1978. Jackie and Mike have returned to Iran twice since Peace Corps, in 2006 and 2008. These trips were life changing, and they returned with a sense of urgency about countering the negative images of Iran in the press and media with a more informed and nuanced picture. They instigated the first reunion of Iran Peace Corps volunteers in over 25 years, held in Portland in 2011. From this event grew the Peace Corps Iran Association, formed in 2012; Jackie has been President since the inception. Jackie is passionate about improving understanding of Iranians on the part of Americans, defusing fear, educating, informing, and peacebuilding. She lives in Portland, Oregon and manages the public library in Vancouver, WA.

Carolyn Yale*

Shiraz (1974-75); Oakland, CA

I was one of three city planners who trained in Tehran and were then sent to Shiraz. I worked at the Fars Plan and Budget Office. After returning to California I completed a PhD in resource planning at UC Berkeley and spent many years at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency working on (but clearly not solving) California's water management woes. I find that exposure to a culture different from my own— whether it's Iran or agriculture in California's Central Valley—sharpens awareness of my own background and beliefs. If this sounds like reexamining narratives at the Conference, it's not accidental. Beyond being part of the Peace Corps Iran community, I love poetry and am determined to complete a book of my own work later this year.

*Has returned to Iran at least once in the years following Peace Corps and the Revolution.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We have many individuals and organizations to thank: This reunion / conference has come together through the efforts of volunteers, donor contributions, and the essential support of our sponsors. If we have missed anyone, we apologize—please know that we appreciate each and every contribution to an event enjoyed by many.

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- National Peace Corps Association – Education Small Grant for the Persian Room
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- Ann Taaffe - coordination
- Indiegogo campaign donors: Tami Buhrmaster, Pat Cathcart, Thomas Clarke, Jim Endicott, Bob Ericksen, Geraldine Gillio, Jeanette Gottlieb, Barbara Howard, Brenda Kaulback, Deirdre E Lawrence, John H. Lorentz, Kira Mardikes, Mary Marks, Sally Moskol, John Salamack, Jennifer B-C Seaver, Doug Schermer, Donley Smith, Robert Spitz, Jackie Spurlock, Fran Sullivan, Ann Taaffe, Mike and Jackie Spurlock, Carolyn Yale
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- Genna Wangsness – PCIA historian, Memorial Book, and Training Group Book
- Ruth Larimer - reunions
- Our many members and guests who volunteered as panelists and presenters
- Conference note takers
- Thomas Piller – photography
- Marcia Franklin – conference documentation
- Mike Spurlock – map
- Jasamin Rostam-Kolayi – assistance in session planning
- Kristi Stillwell - Peace Corps Recruiting Office, The University of Texas at Austin
- The many conference volunteers: room and display set up, guides, registration desk, room monitors, greeters at the Persian Room, equipment gurus, sign designers.

Persian Room

- Peace Cylinder Project / music – Raheleh Filsoofi, Reza Filsoofi, Linda Behar
- Ravaan Dancers
- Art and poetry – Mostafa Rahbar
- Travel – Iran Custom Travel, Norma Lee Nichols-Mahdavi; Global Exchange
- Child Foundation – schooling for children living in poverty; Bitra Raz
- Books and readings - John Krauskopf and RPCV authors

Conference planners / consultants

- Michael Craig Hillmann, local planning advisor, academic content consultant, and session convenor
- Carolyn Yale, Doug Schermer, Jackie Spurlock - Lead planners
- JoAnn Meyer, Persian Room and Volunteer Coordinator
- Board of Directors, PCIA – logistics and session planning
- Tom Huf – session convenor