



- [Member Login](#)
- [Give Now](#)



December 2020

In This Issue

Strength in Numbers
Jackie Spurlock

Dooreh-ye Ketaab
Jim Goode

Peace Corps Iran Documentary Update
Bill Brandon

Board News

We Get Mail

And More...



Yazd Minaret, 1967

Photo by Tom Putnam (Yazd, Darab, 1967-69)

Ja-ye Jackie (Jackie's Place)

Strength in Numbers

By Jackie Spurlock (Abadeh, Riz/ZarrinShahr, 1974-76)

If there's one thing made clear during the tumult of 2020, it's that the old world order is at a crossroads. Of course we've known for a long time that the Iran we lived in is only a memory. Now it is also clear that we are invited to participate in rebuilding our own country.

The other thing we've learned is that there is strength in numbers. By coming together, we can confront systemic racism, climate change, and political polarization. The spread of covid can be slowed by the

actions we take as a society. When we respond together to societal problems, our actions can change the world.

PCIA exists to be a voice for your concerns, to advocate for peace and mutual understanding with Iran, the country we love and yet are so frustrated with. Because there is strength in numbers, we advocate as an organization. There is also strength in each individual voice. We support you in finding yours and we help you amplify it. We also help you stay informed, in order to bolster your opinions. We help you connect and interact with others who like you, have lived in Iran and still care.

PCIA is currently in the midst of a strategic planning process to learn whether our goals are still spot on and to determine how we can be most effective in meeting those goals. We will be surveying you, the membership early next year to get your input. Meanwhile, we invite you to consider getting more involved with PCIA. Is there an aspect of our work that calls to you? Let us know, we can use you! Your knowledge and skills that can literally help change the world. Remember, there is strength in numbers!

May you and your family have a joyful and healthy holiday season. And here's to peace in the new year - both for the world and in our hearts.

Jackie

Dooreh-ye Ketaab, PCIA's Book Discussion Group

By Jim Goode and Jackie Spurlock

On Wednesday, January 13, 5:00pm Pacific time (8:00 Eastern), we'll be discussing [*Believers: Love and Death in Tehran*](#), a brand-new thriller by PCIA member John Limbert (Sanandaj, 1964-66) and Marc Grossman. Pick up a copy on Amazon and start reading! Both authors will join us for the discussion. [Here is a link to the authors speaking](#) to the Dallas (TX) World Affairs Council.

Here are the rest of the books and authors selected by members of *Dooreh-ye Ketaab* for 2021:

- March 10 – Harris, Kevan. [*A Social Revolution: Politics and the Welfare State in Iran*](#). (2017)
- May 12 – Maghbouleh, Neda. [*The Limits of Whiteness: Iranian Americans and the Everyday Politics of Race*](#). (2017)
- July 14 – Briskin, Dennis (RPCV). [*The Face of Iran Before*](#). (2020) AND Phinney, Alice Preston (RPCV). [*Yekke bude yekke na bude*](#). (1975) **PLEASE NOTE: These two works will be read together for a single discussion session.**
- September 8 – Bahrapour, Tara. [*To See and See Again*](#). (1999)
- November 10 – Azar, Shokoofeh. [*The Enlightenment of the Greengage Tree*](#).(2020)

All dates are Wednesdays. All living authors have agreed to join us for the discussion of their books.

Last year we had some great discussions, and we are looking forward to another interesting year. We will meet as previously at 5pm Pacific Time (8pm Eastern) on the Zoom platform. If you have not yet attended a Dooreh, [email us](#) to be included on the invite list. Hope you will join us as often as you can. Please let one of us know if you have any questions.

Happy holidays,

[Jim Goode](#) (Tuysarkan, 1968-1971) and [Jackie Spurlock](#) (Abadeh, Riz, 1974-76)

Peace Corps Iran Documentary Update

By **Bill Brandon** (Shiraz, 1964-66) and **Jackie Spurlock** (Abadeh, Riz/Zarrinshahr, 1974-76)

The PCIA team collaborating with Y Knot Production LLC of New York on the documentary film “Iran Peace Corps Heritage” reports that the project is moving ahead. A screening survey has been finalized and will be sent to a subset of our members in December or early in the new year. The filmmakers have already had rewarding conversations with a number of PCIA members and friends with particular access to our heritage, including Genna Stead Wangsness, John Krauskopf, and [Jasamin Rostam-Kolayi](#), who spoke at our last convention in San Diego.

Board News

- **Advocacy**

Shortly after the election, the board sent a letter to President Elect Joe Biden and Vice-president Elect Kamala Harris, congratulating them on their election, encouraging them to return the United States to full compliance with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), and going forward, to use diplomacy and not military coercion "to create a just and more stable situation in the Middle East." The full letter can be read [here](#).

- **Conference Update**

The board continues to consider options for PCIA’s next conference, with the goal of deciding very soon. Members will be kept informed in this newsletter and on our website as decisions are made. For questions or comments about PCIA’s next conference, please contact [Jeanette Gottlieb](#).

- **Fundraiser - INTERNATIONAL CALENDAR available from RPCVs of Madison, WI**

This year, PCIA is participating in [RPCVs of Wisconsin-Madison’s annual calendar fundraiser](#). For 33 years, their [International Calendar](#) has highlighted the work of Peace Corps Volunteers around the world. Sales have raised more than \$1.4 million to support development projects. Learn more about the Madison RPCV group and view next year's calendar [here](#).

Here is how you can purchase a calendar and help PCIA – and RPCVs of Wisconsin-Madison – all at the same time:

1. Go to <http://www.rpcvcalendar.org/shop/> and place your order. (They also have notecards and peace cards.)
2. At check out, use this discount code **PC4PCIA**.
3. Use your credit card to pay for your purchase, and PCIA will receive 40% of the proceeds.

4. Orders are shipped immediately via USPS.

Thank you for supporting this RPCV project. For further information or questions about PCIA's calendar fundraiser, please contact [Doug Schermer](#).

We Get Mail

- From Noel Siver (Shiraz, 1967-70)

Among the replies I received to my two queries in [the November issue of] "From the Field" was one from Farhad Diba. He told me that he is donating his 70,000-volume collection of works in Western languages on Iran to the University of North Carolina. He is encouraging me to consider donating my photo book on Tabas to UNC.

- From Jay Albertini (Lar, 1967-69)

Thanks for all your work for PCIA. Though I've only made it to one reunion, I enjoy the newsletter and knowing about the organization's advocacy efforts.

- From Bruce Kelsh (Tehran, Shiraz, 1973-75)

I didn't know Walt Whitman appreciated Hafiz and Persian poetry until I came across this reference in a book I'm reading: <https://whitmanarchive.org/published/LG/1891/poems/390>

- From Filmmaker Jahangir Golestan-Parast

Now through December 31st, view Bam 6.6 online

December 26th marks the anniversary of the 2003 BAM earthquake which killed over 26,000 people. The United States, along with other countries and humanitarian organizations, sent resources to help, including trained dogs and medical personnel.

At the 2019 San Diego PCIA conference, [Jahangir Golestan-Parast](#) showed his documentary in which he tells the story of an American couple who were caught in the Bam earthquake. The audience was clearly moved by the way Iranians responded with kindness and compassion to the injuries and grief of their American guests.

Golestan-Parast has made the film available for online viewing until December 31st. You can read his letter to PCIA members, which contains the link to the film, by clicking [HERE](#).

- From National Peace Corps Association (NPCA)

["Peace Corps Connect to the Future,"](#) is a report released in November by a special NPCA advisory council putting forward community-driven ideas for how to reimagine, reshape, and retool Peace Corps for a changed world. *Foreign Policy* recently included news of the report's release in this Security Brief post asking **["What Will Biden's Foreign Policy Team Look](#)**

Like?” It lays out actions for the agency and Executive Branch, Congress, and the Peace Corps community, including NPCA.

- From Peace Corps Tales

Hello!! We are RPCV's from Madagascar '15-'18 who decided to take our free time during these times of covid-19 to create a podcast about Peace Corps stories. We wanted to show more of the funny or scary tales of Peace Corps service, and have been having a blast interviewing RPCVs. Our podcast is called Peace Corps Tales. It can be found on google podcast, anchor, apple podcast, spotify and other smaller platforms. There are currently 3 episodes and our goal is to make many more! 😊

Thus, we are working to gather more participants from the RPCV community to interview. The interest form for those who would like to be on the show is linked here:

<https://peacecorpstalespodcast.weebly.com/interest-form.html>

Thank you for reading this email and for passing it on!!

Warmest Wishes,

Karol & Salena

The Peace Corps Tales Podcast

- From Tom Klobe (Alang, Kordkoui, Gorgon, 1964-66)

Don't know if you would be interested in this, but I've been asked to do these lectures on Islam. While they are not specifically on Iran, I thought you should know. Yesterday's went well, I am told. They had a greater attendance than ever before. We'll see how many come back next week. Here's the newsletter announcement:

Next Monday Tom Klobe will continue the series on Islamic Art that he introduced this week. He will focus on Islamic Architecture. You are invited to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Islamic Architecture with Tom Klobe

Time: Dec 7, 2020 10:30 AM Hawaii time

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7707517712?pwd=Z0VRWVgva1FjamxSaHF1bi9adnFWQT09>

Meeting ID: 770 751 7712

Passcode: asianart

PCIA Board

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Jackie Spurlock, Vice-President; Dooreh Co-leader; *From the Field* Editor (Abadeh, Riz/Zarrinshahr, 1974-76)

Ed Seiders, Treasurer (Noshahr, Chalus, 1967-69)

Kathleen MacLeod, Secretary (Tehran, Gorgan, 1964-66)

Doug Schermer (Shahrud, Semnan, 1966-67)

John Holehan (Mashhad, 1967-71)

John Krauskopf (Ahwaz, Kermanshah, Arak, Babolsar, 1965-69)

John Salamack (Bojnurd, 1965-67)

Marie Mitchell (Mahallat, 1974-75)

Paul Barker, Advocacy Bulletin Editor (Bidokht, Shiraz, Tehran, 1971-76)

Skip Auld (Mahallat, 1973-74)

Other PCIA Leaders

Genna Wangsness, Historian (Shiraz, Tehran, 1965-71)

Jim Goode, Dooreh Co-leader (Tuysarkan, 1968-71)

Joan Gaughan, *KhabarNameh* Editor (Lahijan, Rasht, 1964-66)

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