

[Skip to Main Content](#)



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



March 2021

In This Issue

New Beginnings
Jackie Spurlock

PCIA Nowruz Celebration

Jeanette Gottlieb

Dooreh-ye Ketaab
Jim Goode

Board News

Member News

And More...



Boys By a Stream

Firuzkuh, 1968

Alexander Patico (Firuzkuh, 1968-69)

Ja-ye Jackie (Jackie's Place)

New Beginnings

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

Eid-e shoma mobarak! As winter winds down, the pandemic eases up, and the Biden administration settles into their new digs in Washington, DC, it's a time for new beginnings. And what better way to celebrate than NowRuz?! It seems Iranians got it right long ago when they chose the Spring Equinox as the turning of the new year, and this year, they are actually turning into a new century – 1400. (As an aside, Mike and I, like many of you, were there in 1976 when the Shah adopted the birth of Cyrus as the origin of the Iranian calendar, and the year changed overnight from 1355 to 2535. Talk about big leaps. And mass confusion. I've already referred to three different calendars just in this paragraph. No wonder the people revolted!)

This year, PCIA is getting into the NowRuz spirit with a virtual NowRuz celebration on Saturday, March 20, at 10:00am Pacific time (1:00 Eastern). We hope you'll join us! Just shoot an email to [Doug](#) or [Jeanette](#) to get on the invite list.

As the season changes, I am hopeful for this new year. I've had my first covid vaccination, with the second one coming soon. My granddaughter is headed back to school and there are a couple of new babies in our extended family. President Biden has promised to improve our relations with Iran. And in Portland, after our recent huge winter storm, the electricity is back on. Let's celebrate the return of the light, both locally and globally, in the spirit of NowRuz.

Peace, Jackie

PCIA NowRuz Celebration, Saturday, March 20!

By Jeanette Gottlieb (Noshahr, Hamadan, 1965-67)

Join us virtually on March 20th for music, dancing, poetry, stories, and a *haft sin* table to welcome the Iranian new year. The fun starts at 10:00 AM Pacific (1:00 PM Eastern).

To receive a Zoom link, it will be necessary for you to log in to www.peacecorpsiran.org and reserve your free tickets on the Events page. Do not delay. Registration is limited to 50, because we are in virtual learning mode. We'll email a Zoom link to all who are registered.

To reserve your free tickets, please click [HERE](#). Questions? Contact [Doug Schermer](#) or [Jeanette Gottlieb](#).

Dooreh-ye Ketaab (PCIA's Book Discussion Group)

By Jackie Spurlock and Jim Goode

Coming up this week! On Wednesday March 10 at 5pm Pacific (8pm Eastern), we'll be discussing

[*A Social Revolution: Politics and the Welfare State in Iran*](#), by Kevan Harris, a 2017 examination of the Islamic Republic of Iran's unique system for taking care of its citizens. Dr. Harris will be joining us for

the discussion. Here is a link to a [presentation he made at the Atlantic Council](#) in 2017 about his research that the book is based on.

Here are the other books and authors we'll be reading in 2021:

- May 12 – Maghbouleh, Neda. [The Limits of Whiteness: Iranian Americans and the Everyday Politics of Race](#) (2017)
- July 14 – Briskin, Dennis (Arak, 1967-69). [The Face of Iran Before](#) (2020) AND Phinney, Alice Preston (Kerman, 1965-67). [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; time is 5:00pm Pacific (8:00pm Eastern). We meet on Zoom. All living authors have agreed to join us for the discussion of their books.

The *Dooreh* is open to all. You do not have to be a PCIA member or a Returned Peace Corps Volunteer. If you have not yet attended a *Dooreh*, [email us](#) to be included on the Zoom invite list. If you have participated in previous *Dooreh* meetings, we have you in the list, you're good! Please let one of us know if you have any questions.

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

Board News

- PCIA's next **Conference** will be held Saturday, October 2, 2021, from 12-8pm Eastern (9-5 Pacific). Content and registration information are being developed and will be shared as available. We look forward to seeing you then! Questions? [Jeanette Gottlieb](#)
- **Open Board Position.** There is an open position on PCIA's board. We encourage you to consider getting involved in this way. Please contact [Jeanette Gottlieb](#) or any other board member (emails at bottom of this newsletter) with questions about the commitment.
- **Strategic Planning Update.** The board is in week 11 of our strategic planning process with our consultants, [Telesto Strategy](#). A SWOT/SOAR analysis has just been completed and presented to the board. In the coming weeks, we will share with the membership the results of this 13-week project that will help chart PCIA's course for the next few years.
- **Advocacy News**
 - **Action Alerts.** The board sent this [Action Alert](#) to members on 2/24, asking them to urge their senators to cosponsor and support a bill that would set U.S. policy regarding re-entry to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).
 - **Statement.** On 2/13, PCIA released [this statement](#), encouraging the Biden administration to honor its commitment to diplomacy by taking prompt steps to return the U.S. to the JCPOA without reconditions.
 - **Letter.** PCIA was one of 32 signatories to [this letter](#), dated 3/3/21, urging President Biden to fulfill his campaign promise by rejoining the JCPOA.

Member News

- **Jim Whitaker** (Sari, 1964-66) has donated an item of his Peace Corps memorabilia to the [Museum of the Peace Corps Experience](#) (MPCE). The item, a Peace Corps Medical Kit is included in the Museum's new exhibition, [Peace Corps at 60: Inside the Volunteer Experience](#). This exhibit is sponsored jointly by the Museum of the Peace Corps Experience and American University Museum. You may view the exhibit catalog [here](#). Jim's medical kit is found on page 30. There is also a photo of Iran on the second to last page of the catalog. Jim says: "I'm thankful and relieved that my purloined medical kit and its associated story found the most appropriate possible home with MPCE, as otherwise it would have continued to reside, semi-forgotten, in one of my closets, only to likely be discarded by my heirs after my demise".

We Get Mail

- From **Fred Noland** (Isfahan, 1965-67) A belated note to tell you how impressed, indeed moved, I was when I read your latest comments in the PCIA newsletter. So much so that I sent it to our [Seattle-Isfahan \[Sister City\] board](#). Several members said they would like to receive future editions of the newsletter.
- From **Joel Hettger** (Tehran, 1970-72) **On Finding My First Apartment in Tehran**. I was officially sworn in as a Peace Corps Volunteer on September 14, 1970. With only 2 ½ months of Persian language training, I used the services of an Iranian realtor, Mr. Sadatmandi, who had no English language knowledge. He had worked at the *rangi*, a paint factory, for an Iranian, a Mr. Freddy. My Iranian supervisor, Shahla Sepheri, spoke in Persian to Mr. Sadatmandi to arrive at the rental price. Thus, I moved into my first apartment in Tehran. It was located between Boulevard Elizabeth and Khiabune Aryamehr on Khiabune Ghadessi. The nearest intersection was with Kouche Yas. I lived on the 3rd floor walkup over the *nafti*, who was also the landlord, a *haji*. He was known simply as *Haji*. I acquired my furniture from the defunct Fulbright House, near Tehran University, Mr. Freddy had been the accountant for the Fulbright House. My apartment had an *ab o bargh* number, water and electricity number, but no street address since it had failed safety inspection. *Gathch* (plaster) covered the inside of the apartment, but there was no facing over the bricks on the outside. Thus, I could see through very small holes to the outside. Across the street was the *Sazman-e ab o bargh*. The former reservoir attracted mosquitos. I paid for screens to be installed. I also had dark blue curtains installed. I purchased a wooden wardrobe. I slept on a folding cot. During the summer, the *nafti* and his family slept on the roof. The parapet was only one row of 3" bricks. One could easily fall off the roof at night. When I paid my monthly rent in cash, the *haji* would give me my receipt in Persian. He would open the door only a few inches to receive my cash. I waited five minutes for the written receipt. I subsequently heard from Freddy that Sadatmandi had reverted to a *bazari*. He had a five-day growth of *reesh*, beard.
- From **Glenn Blumhorst** (President and CEO, [National Peace Corps Association](#))
 - On March 1, Rep. John Garamendi (D-CA) reintroduced the Peace Corps Reauthorization Act. The legislation would provide additional federal funding and

resources to advance the Peace Corps' mission around the world and better support current, returning, and Returned Peace Corps Volunteers. "This bipartisan legislation would also provide the resources necessary for the redeployment of Peace Corps volunteers once it is safe to do so after the COVID-19 pandemic subsides," [Garamendi said in a release](#), "with the **goal of reaching 10,000 Volunteers** serving annually around the world."

- After a successful series of virtual district office meetings with lawmakers this past fall, we will be gearing up for nationwide activities during Days of Peace Corps Advocacy, throughout the months of March and April. [Follow this link and sign up to be among the first to step forward to lead Days of Advocacy activities in your region.](#) Take the lead organizing a virtual district meeting with your elected representatives. Organize a virtual letter writing night. Plan a statewide training on how to be an effective advocate for the Peace Corps. A stronger, better and redeployed Peace Corps begins with you! You won't need to come to Washington, DC. You can be a leader from the comfort of your home.
 - From **Anne Baker** (Vice-President, National Peace Corps Association) Do you know a **Peace Corps Kid**? Julie Early Sifuentes, founder of the NPCA affiliate group Peace Corps Kids, is looking for people and families to participate in a book project. Julie, whose father served in Peru in the 1960s and whose mother is Peruvian, started Peace Corps Kids to build community among multicultural people and families who have come together through the Peace Corps experience. So far, the group has members who have family roots in 21 countries. The book will be a compilation of essays, interviews, and photos that reflect the experiences of multicultural people and families that were born through the Peace Corps experience. You can see some examples of these stories at www.peacecorpskids.com and on Instagram @peacecorpskids. Please pass this information along to people and families who might be interested and encourage them to participate. You can contact Julie at julie@peacecorpskids.com if you have any questions or are interested in being part of the project.
-

Iran Issues Discussion Group

By **John Salamack (Bojnoord, 1965-67)**

Ever wish you had someone to discuss Iran issues with? What's going on over there and why do Iran and the U.S. behave the way they do? Is there anyone who is actually interested in my opinion?

The answer to that last question is yes! PCIA offers a monthly friendly discussion of current events having to do with Iran. All are welcome. You don't have to be an expert, or even know much at all. Bring your interest, your questions, your opinions, and your love of conversation. Meetings are on the fourth Monday of every month at 5:00 pm PDT. The next one will be on Monday, March 22. If you have never attended the PCIA Iran Issues Discussion Group and would like to receive a Zoom link, [let us know](#).

Mark Your Calendar!

- [Iran Faces Old Challenges in a New Century](#) – Tuesday, March 9, 12:00-1:00pm Eastern (9:00 Pacific). March 21 – Nowruz – marks the beginning of a new century for Iranians who count their years according to the solar calendar. A discussion of the similarities and differences between the Iran of today and a century ago, and takeaways for the century ahead. Panel hosted by the [Atlantic Council's Future of Iran Initiative](#). A Zoom link will be sent to those who [register](#).
- [Regional Vision of the Gulf States: Iran](#) – Friday, March 12, 11:30am Eastern (8:30am Pacific) Sponsored by the [National Iranian America Council](#) (NIAC), [Gulf State Analytics](#), and [Center for Diplomatic Affairs and Political Studies](#), this is a conversation about the changing faces of the Gulf States and how the changing balance of power will ripple throughout the entire world. Join NIAC's Dr. Assal Rad, as she speaks with Dr. Seyed Kazem Sajjadpour and Prof. Dr. Nurşin Ateşoğlu Güney in a panel discussion moderated by Sina Azodi, a Fellow of the Atlantic Council. 🗳️ [RSVP here >](#)
- [Kings and Clerics in Modern Iranian History](#). – Saturday, March 13, 2:00-3:30pm Pacific (5:00pm Eastern) A lecture by Professor Abbas Amanat, Yale University. Presented by [Farhang Foundation](#) as part of the USC Iranian Studies Initiative Annual Distinguished Lecture Series. Event is free, [register here](#) for the Zoom link.
- [Child Foundation's Spring for Kindness](#) – Sunday, March 14, 5:00pm Pacific (8:00 Eastern) (Preshow beginning at 4:45pm Pacific.) Celebrate NowRuz and benefit nearly 7,000 children in Iran and Afghanistan. Renowned actress Tara Grammy will host [Child Foundation](#)'s first Spring for Kindness event. You won't want to miss Tara's comedic brilliance, the Nowruz entertainment, and a live auction to benefit Iranian and Afghan families in need. This online event is free to the public with a suggested donation of \$25 per person to support our sponsored students and their families facing prolonged pandemic woes and economic downturn. [Register here](#).
- [A Conversation with Iranian dissident immigrant Roya Hakakian](#) on her new book *A Beginner's Guide to America: for the Immigrant and the Curious* – Tuesday, March 16, 12:00pm Eastern (9:00am Pacific) The book provides insights into the immigrant experience from the perspective of a Jewish political refugee from revolutionary Iran, and an examination of how immigrants contribute to American culture and civic life. Sponsored by [Hudson Institute](#). This event will premiere LIVE on [this page](#) at 12:00pm Eastern time (9:00am Pacific).
- [Deadly Iran Sanctions: Lessons Learned from Iraq and Palestine](#) – Tuesday, March 16, 3:00-4:30pm Eastern (12:00pm Pacific) The sanctions and embargo on Iraq and Palestine respectively, have produced deadly consequences for their people and subject them to death and

despair. But how do these processes play out in real time? What are the lessons we can learn and understand from Iran's own experience with sanctions? Noura Erakat, Negar Mortazavi, Dr. Assal Rad, and Zainab Saleh will discuss in a panel conversation, hosted by No Sanctions on Iran with support from the [ITSRC](#), AGITATE!, MADRE, Jadaliyya, MERIP, Grassroots Global Justice Alliance, Code Pink, Femena, NIAC, and AROC. 📧 [RSVP here >](#)

- [Iranian Women's Film Festival](#) – March 8-31, 2021. Sponsored by [Iranian American Women Foundation](#). Presenting feature documentaries and fiction films by Iranian female filmmakers. This year's program includes a spotlight on Rakhshan Banietemad, one of Iran's most critically and internationally acclaimed filmmakers. Here is a [tip sheet](#) on how to access the films.

PCIA Board

Jeanette Gottlieb, *President* (Noshahr, Hamadan, 1965-67)

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 (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)

Open Position

Other PCIA Leaders

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

Jim Goode, *Dooreh Co-leader* (Tuyserkhan, 1968-71)

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

About this email

You have received this email because you are a member of [Peace Corps Iran Association](#) or have an interest in Iran. If you do not wish to receive future issues of *From the Field*, please use the unsubscribe link in the footer.

Comments

We welcome your thoughts and feedback. Please submit to jackie@peacecorpsiran.org.

Color key: Strong blue = links that you can click on

- **Subscribe to PCIA's Newsletters:**From the Field

Advocacy BulletinAction Alerts

Connect with us:

www.peacecorpsiran.org

[Facebook Page](#)

[Facebook Groupcommunications@peacecorpsiran.org](mailto:communications@peacecorpsiran.org)

Copyright © 2021 Peace Corps Iran Association, All rights reserved.

This email was sent by:

Peace Corps Iran Association
Unit 902 - 2211 SW Park Place
Portland, OR, 97205

You have received this email because you are a member or existing contact of **Peace Corps Iran Association**, a membership organization powered by SilkStart. [update notification preferences](#) [unsubscribe from this list](#)