



PEACE CORPS

IRAN ASSOCIATION

انجمن گروه صلح ایران

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Shiraz Street Scene, 2006
Alex Patco (Firuzkuh, 1968-69)

Ja-ye Jackie (Jackie's Place)

On the Cusp of a New Year: New Perspectives and Callings? By Jackie Spurlock (Abadeh, Riz/ZarrinShahr, 1974-76)

Happy new year! After the extraordinary year that was 2020, we all have opportunities for personal growth and change. The pause that has been imposed on us, the interruption of our lives, allows and practically commands us to look within and adjust our course, or expand our horizons.

Each of us has unique qualities that we can and should share with the world. As PCIA members, our interest in, and knowledge of, Iran and its people surpasses that of most Americans. If our Peace Corps experience has left us with a desire for peace and mutual understanding, this is one of our personal gifts. Please consider sharing it in your own individual way. Never has the need been greater.

I am not asking you to become a writer, immerse yourself in politics, or even leave your home during a pandemic. What I am asking is that you look within your heart and find what you yourself feel called to

do. PCIA is here to help you put that calling into action. Feel free to bounce your ideas off us; volunteer on one of our many political or nonpolitical projects; use our resources to find an old friend; or maybe join our Dooreh book group or Iran Issues discussion group to learn more about present-day Iran.

Everyone's calling will be different, but everyone can help improve Iran relations by following their heart. Here is an [op-ed by Iran I volunteer, Donna Shalala \(Mollasani, 1962-64\)](#) on how Peace Corps changed her life and how she still responds to the call of her heart. Ms Shalala has just completed a term serving as the US Representative from Florida's District 27. She is not asking you to run for Congress, but rather, to search your heart for how you can bring your love for Iran and its people into the awareness of those around you. Just a little bit more than what you are already doing.

Peace, Jackie

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

By Jackie Spurlock and Jim Goode

On Wednesday, January 13, at 5:00 pm Pacific time (8:00pm Eastern), we'll be discussing [Believers: Love and Death in Tehran](#), a new (2020) thriller by PCIA member John Limbert (Sanandaj, 1964-66) and Marc Grossman. It's not too late to pick up a copy and start reading. You won't be able to put it down! 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 other 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 (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). We meet on Zoom. All living authors have agreed to join us for the discussion of their books.

Last year we had some great discussions, and we're excited about the titles we have coming up this year. If you have not yet attended a *Dooreh*, [email us](#) to be included on the 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, 1974-76)

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Iran Issues Discussion Group

By Jackie Spurlock and John Salamack

Ever wished 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 Mon, January 25. [Let us know](#) if you'd like to join us so we can send you a Zoom link.

Board News

- **Skip Auld leaves board**

Last month, board member Skip Auld (Mahallat, 1973-74) submitted his resignation from the board, saying in part:

“As much as my heart is with the work of PCIA, I'm afraid I just cannot continue serving on the board. I value everything about the organization. Actually, I'm amazed and astounded that such a great organization even exists!

As you know, my day job [as CEO of Anne Arundel County Public Library in Annapolis MD] is demanding and requires a great deal of time, energy, and highly focused effort. With regret and a bit of sadness, I'm submitting my resignation from the board, effective immediately. I look forward to attending the next and future in-person conferences!”

The board is sorry to see Skip go and wishes him continued success in his endeavors. This does mean that there is a vacancy on the board. As you consider your search for meaningful engagement during this critical and historic time (see Jackie's piece at top of this newsletter!) you might find that a term on the PCIA board fills the bill. Please give it a thought and contact President [Jeanette Gottlieb](#) or another board member (emails at bottom of this newsletter) with any questions.

- **Save the Date – October 16, 2021**

PCIA Virtual Conference. Due to the uncertainty created by the coronavirus, PCIA will be holding a virtual conference this year, sometime in fall, 2021. We are looking forward to an in-person meeting in 2022 in Chicago. Please send your program ideas to [President Jeanette Gottlieb](#).

- **Strategic Planning**

In October, the board began working on long-term strategic planning with [Telesto Strategy](#), our consulting firm. Telesto has interviewed PCIA's board members and reviewed our activities, mission, and goals. Their next step will be to seek input from our membership at large. A survey will be sent out by PCIA (not Telesto) so that no member information will be shared. We hope that everyone who receives the survey will fill it out and return it. It is critical that we plan well for the future of PCIA and its membership. Questions? Contact PCIA's Strat Planning Team Leader & board member [John Holehan](#) or President [Jeanette Gottlieb](#).

- **Privacy Policy**

At its December meeting, the board adopted a **Privacy Policy**, relating to our new website and the personal member information that is stored there. The Privacy Policy may be viewed [here](#). Please contact President [Jeanette Gottlieb](#) for any questions regarding privacy and PCIA.

- **Action Alerts & Advocacy**

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- On 12/13/20, PCIA issued this [Action Alert](#), encouraging members to “take action now to help provide President-elect Biden the political space and environment his administration will need to reenter soon after his inauguration January 20, 2021, the Iran nuclear agreement, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), on a compliance for compliance basis with no debilitating poison pill conditions. To receive *Action Alerts*, send a request to alerts@peacecorpsiran.org. They are published irregularly, as needed.
- On 12/14/20, a bipartisan group of over 50 American national security leaders, calling themselves the National Coalition to Prevent an Iranian Nuclear Weapon, issued [this statement](#) urging the incoming Biden Administration to rejoin the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) swiftly and without preconditions. The signers include former: Secretaries of Defense, William Perry and Chuck Hagel; Acting Secretary of State, Tom Shannon; Director of Central Intelligence Agency, John Brennan; Deputy Commander in Chief, U.S. European Command, General (ret.) Chuck Boyd; Acting Under Secretaries of State Thomas Pickering and Frank Wisner; U.S. Senators, Tom Daschle and Tim Wirth; U.S. Representatives, Lee Hamilton and David Dreier; U.S. Trade Representative Carla Hills; and Ambassadors, Anne Patterson, Ryan Crocker, Winston Lord, and Daniel Kurtzer. PCIA Member and Iran RPCV John Limbert (Sanandaj, 1964-66) was also a signer.

We Get Mail

- From **Jamie Swidecki** (Rezaiyeh, 1973-74), referring to the 12/20 issue of *From the Field*:

We all hope for peace. I hope no more endless wars for USA. 20 years in the Middle East. Friends with Iran a must.

- From [Carolyn Yale](#) (Shiraz, 1974-75).

Here's a fragment of one of my favorite Farrokhzad poems, *Window*. Translation is always a problem, but this works fairly well. The whole poem is much longer.

THE WINDOW

When my faith was hanging
by the weak thread of justice
and in the whole city
the hearts of my lamps were
being torn to pieces,
when the childlike eyes of my love
were being blindfolded by law's black kerchief,

and fountains of blood were gushing forth
from the distressed temples of desire,
when my life was no longer anything,
nothing but the tick-tock of a wall clock,
I discovered that I must,
that I absolutely had to
love madly.

[FOROUGH FARROKHZAD](#), Iran 1935 –1967

- From **National Peace Corps Association President Glenn Blumhorst & Anne Baker, 12/23 & 12/24 - Peace Corps News**
 - [Congress delivered a funding victory for Peace Corps in late December](#), holding steady on funding as the agency prepares for redeployment of Volunteers in 2021.
 - **Peace Corps Connect to the Future.** On a scale never seen before, the global evacuation of Volunteers brought to the fore some longstanding challenges for the agency and the broader Peace Corps community. All this called for an unparalleled response. So in summer 2020, National Peace Corps Association convened a series of national community discussions and a global ideas summit to ask some far-reaching questions about the future of Peace Corps in a changed world. The report provides specific and actionable recommendations for multiple stakeholders. We have been meeting with members of Congress, the presidential transition team, and staff at the agency for how to put these ideas into action. **The report stakes out work for the Peace Corps community**, especially as we begin 2021. [Read the full report](#) and [listen to a podcast about the report](#).
- From **Paul Pitzer** (Ahar, 1964-68)

I took your advice and contacted the [Museum of the Peace Corps Experience](#). They came here and took my trunk and quite a bit of the things that I offered. It is all headed there now. Thanks for the suggestion.

- From **Bill Beeman**, Professor of Anthropology, University of Minnesota

I appeared in a new podcast produced by media specialist Mahdi Ahmadi. It is in Persian. You may enjoy watching it. Here are the links:

1- [SPOTIFY](#)

2- [APPLE PODCAST](#)

3- [GOOGLE PODCAST](#)

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

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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