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**Breakfast Gathering, Peace Corps Iran Reunion, Portland State University, August 5-7, 2011**  
Photograph by National Peace Corps Association

## **From The Field - PCIA Board Newsletter**

August, 2021

“Out beyond ideas of wrongdoing and rightdoing, there is a field. I will meet you there.”

Jalal ad-Din Rumi

**Dear Douglas**

***Ja-ye Jackie (Jackie's Place)***

**The Future of PCIA**

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

This weekend marks the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of PCIA's founding event – the reunion of Peace Corps Iran volunteers, staff, and friends in Portland, OR, August 5-7, 2011. If you were there, I know you remember the joy and fun, the nostalgia, and the overriding desire to find realistic hope.

After that weekend, participants used the energy, momentum, and funds generated to create Peace Corps Iran Association. PCIA was incorporated in 2012 with the goals of preserving the history of PC Iran while moving forward with [Peace Corps Third Goal](#) activities that help Americans to better understand Iran.

Over the past 10 years, PCIA has grown into a vibrant organization that offers meaningful activities to its almost 1,000 members. Book groups, current events discussion groups, newsletters, a website, social media presence, and perhaps our proudest accomplishment, five biennial conferences (about to become six!), all jam-packed with information about Iran and Peace Corps Iran, and always offering memorable opportunities for reconnecting with each other.

Peace Corps was in Iran from 1962 to 1976. Every Iran RPCV is a senior now. Our memorial book of those who have passed away is getting longer. What is to become of PCIA in the coming years? Will we end with a bang or a whimper, or will we find a way to go on?

This is the question the Board has been considering over the last year. With the help of consulting firm [Telesto Strategy](#), we are developing a plan that will carry us forward. Key elements will most likely include a turn to face outward, meaning we will be more focused on helping Americans understand Iranians, and less focused on the Peace Corps element of our history. We will seek partner organizations who share our purpose and work with them to accomplish our goals. In the long term, we might decide to merge with such a partner. But that is yet to be determined. For now, we are developing a three-year plan for this turning outward, including identifying possible partners and funding sources, and communicating our new direction to our members and other stakeholders. Read more about this planning

process and the future of PCIA in the piece by Carolyn Yale elsewhere in this newsletter.

We invite you to join us in this new, exciting effort. All hands on deck! Our session on The Future of PCIA at the upcoming virtual conference on October 2 (see below) will provide information, seek your input, and offer plenty of ways you can get involved. This is your organization, and you can help ensure that our mission and goals continue to help make a better world for our grandchildren and descendants. See you on Zoom on October 2!

Peace,  
Jackie

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## **Looking Back to a Path Forward: A PCIA Virtual Conference - Saturday, 10/2/21**

PCIA's sixth biennial conference will be held virtually, on Zoom, on Saturday, October 2, 2021. You will receive an email alert when registration information becomes available on our website – very soon! Meanwhile here's an [introductory blurb](#). It's time to save the date! You can expect to hear from an illustrious lineup of Iran experts and members of the Iran Peace Corps community, including John Ghazvinian, author of *America and Iran: A History, 1720 to the Present*; [Sina Toossi](#), Senior Research Analyst at the National Iranian American Council (NIAC); and PCIA members, [Ambassador John Limbert](#), and [Dr. Tagi Sagafi-Nejad](#), to name a few. There will be an information session on PCIA's future planning project, a Persian conversation session, and a preview showing of the documentary being created by filmmakers Abbas Motlagh and Hossein Mahallati about Peace Corps Iran. Questions? Email conference organizer [Jeanette Gottlieb](#).

We'll see you there. Meanwhile mark your calendar!

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## **Planning for The Future of PCIA**

**By Carolyn Yale (Shiraz, 1974-75)**

Only a decade ago a group of Iran Peace Corps volunteers came together in Portland Oregon for a brief conference that became the seed for the Peace Corps Iran Association. The appeal of that gathering in Portland was in large part to revive friendships and memories of service in Iran, but the shared interest in improving relations between the people of America and Iran inspired a broader course of action. In only a decade the Association has greatly expanded both membership and programs affirming our vision, all inspired and led by our members – all members of the Peace Corps Iran community. The evolving scope of that vision – our history as volunteers to present-day advocacy -- will be featured at the virtual PCIA conference on October 2, 2021.

PCIA as we know it today – an organization comprising (by and large) volunteers and staff from the Peace Corps era -- cannot continue indefinitely, but our mission can continue for years beyond the passing of the founding RPCV membership. With this goal in mind, the Board of Directors is reaching out to all members to help shape the future of PCIA. The direction taken and changes agreed to depend on member leadership and participation. We may find new opportunities for outreach by working with other organizations. One thing is certain: PCIA will build on its strengths – that is, on the existing activities that define our Association.

PCIA stands out among Returned Peace Corps groups for the commitment of volunteers and resulting scope of programs. In the weeks leading up to the conference there will be more information on our website and in *From the Field* about planning the future of PCIA and how you can get involved. At the conference we'll have a 1.5 hour afternoon session to take suggestions and answer questions. Update and discussion sessions will continue into 2022, as our planning proceeds. For questions about the Future of PCIA project, email [Carolyn Yale](#).

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***Dooreh-ye Ketaab*, PCIA's Book Discussion Group**

**By Jackie Spurlock (Abadeh, Riz/Zarrinshahr, 1974-76) and Jim Goode (Tuysarkan, 1968-71)**

September's *Dooreh* will feature the memoir of Tara Bahrampour, *To See and See Again*. Tara's father, Essie Bahrampour, an American trained architect, worked as a field officer to the Peace Corps municipal public works program in Iran in the 1970s, and many Iran PCVs knew him (and Tara as a child). That said, his Peace Corps experience is intentionally not mentioned in the book. Essie, who had grown up the son of a feudal lord, met Tara's mother while studying in America. Tara grew up moving between their two worlds, and as an adult returned to Iran to explore family ties. It's a beautifully written memoir of growing up in two cultures. Tara Bahrampour will join us for the discussion. Hope to see you on Zoom on **Wednesday, September 8, at 5:00 pm Pacific time (8:00 Eastern)** to discuss *To See and See Again*.

And here is the last book we'll be reading in 2021:

- November 10 – Azar, Shokoofeh. *The Enlightenment of the Greengage Tree* (2020). Shokoofeh Azar will join us for the discussion.

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 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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## **PCIA's New Anthology!**

PCIA is thrilled to announce the publication of its legacy project, ***Memories and Insights: Iran Through the Eyes of Peace Corps Volunteers.*** This volume brings together thirty-one authors who served in the Peace Corps in Iran between 1962 and 1976. Together their memories, essays, poems, and travelogues create a picture of a culture with a long and storied history. Edited by board member John Krauskopf (Ahvaz, Kermanshah, Arak, Babolsar, 1965-69), the book is being offered as a fundraiser for PCIA's many projects, including the upcoming October 2, 2021 virtual conference. For a donation of \$75.00 or more, PCIA will send you a copy as a thank you gift. To make a donation and claim your gift, you can use [PayPal](#), or your credit card at our website's [secure donation page](#). To purchase a copy without making a donation, send a check for \$28 to Ed Seiders, PCIA Treasurer, 3152 S Rockford Drive, Tulsa, OK 74105.

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## **Mark Your Calendar!**

- Monday, August 23, 5:00 pm Pacific (8:00 Eastern) **Iran Issues Discussion Group.** Moderated by [John Salamack](#) (Bojnurd, 1965-67). PCIA offers this 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 Pacific time. If you have never attended the PCIA Iran Issues Discussion Group and would like to receive the Zoom link, [let us know](#). Questions? Email [John Salamack](#).

- Wednesday, September 8, 5:00 pm Pacific (8:00 Eastern) **Dooreh-ye Ketaab** (PCIA's Book Discussion Group) – See details above.
- Saturday, October 2, 9:00am-5:00pm Pacific (12:00-8:00pm Eastern) [Looking Back to a Path Forward: PCIA's Biennial Conference](#), held on Zoom. Details and registration information coming soon! Questions? Email [Jeanette Gottlieb](#).

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## **We Get Mail**

- From **Atlantic Council**:
  - **Tuesday, Aug 17, 12:00pm (Eastern time)** - [Karun: The Tragedy of Iran's Longest River](#). This award-winning documentary from filmmaker Mohammad Ehsani traces the path and environs of the Karun River, which used to be an important source for agriculture and drinking water in Khuzestan. [Register here](#).
- From **Partnering for Peace, a grassroots effort led by members of the Peace Corps Community and Rotary Clubs around the world**:
  - September 20-26, 2021 - Rotary-Peace Corps Week - Speakers from the Peace Corps community are invited to share their experience and knowledge at their local Rotary Clubs. [Learn more here](#).
- **Letters to the Editor**

We received an unusually large and gratifying number of letters to the

editor this month. Here is a sampling:

- Once again, a fabulous newsletter, full of useful information and resources. I always enjoy reading it. I'm so sorry to read about John Holehan's passing. He was an integral part of your Board of Directors and will surely be missed. May I plan to join you for your virtual conference? I've penciled it in on my calendar. Thank you for all the great work your group is doing. Warm regards, **Glenn Blumhorst**, [National Peace Corps Association](#) **President & CEO**
- Thanks for the newsletter. Very hot also in Bakersfield but low humidity. We get the pollution from China. We close our factories and oil fields in California to import from China, and then also get their pollution. **Jamie Swidecki (Rezaiyeh, 1973-74)**
- Thanks for using my photo [on the newsletter]. It does have sort of a dream quality; like the observer is there, but not really. The trees have been **pollarded**, a traditional and sustainable forestry management practice. Best regards, **Ed Hunley (Semnan, 1965-66)**
- Thanks for that marvelous photo by Ed Hunley! **Roger Doughty (Isfahan, 1973-75)**
- Really nice Ja-ye Jackie. Thanks for that, **Jeff Curtis (Somehsara, Qeshm Island, 1967-70)**
- I commend your mention of the catastrophe facing us and the planet, due to human-induced climate change and ecosystems destruction. **Jim Whitaker (Fuman, Sari, 1964-66)**
- I very much enjoyed seeing Emily Wells' (Lar, 1969-71) interview in the recent issue. Of course, we knew her as McIntire back in the day. **Best wishes, John Limbert (Sanandaj, 1964-66)**
- It is with great sadness that I read the news of John Holehan's (Mashhad, 1967-71) passing. I had limited contact with John in recent years as we each were busy in our own circles but will always remember with pleasure the six months in 1969 that I lived in Mashhad and shared the house there with John, and Roger Cavanna. John was the thoughtful, funny guy who always had time

and energy to keep us going after work. Good pool and darts player at the university guest house and good friend. Best funny memory was John's sleuthing out from our wonderful cook that the strange tasting hamburgers one week were actually camel burgers she had creatively substituted since the price of beef had suddenly gone up and broken our weekly food shopping budget. Rest in peace, John.

**Tom Huf (Babolsar, Mashhad, Tehran, 1967-71)**

- There is an article in the *NY Times*, July 4, 2021, by Jonathan Holloway called "Enlist the Young", about compulsory national service. I have been talking about this for 50 years. This idea would be worthwhile of our support. Sincerely, **Steven Ormenyi (Zahedan, Tehran, 1967-69)**
- Thank you for your informative newsletter. The [Dooreh] books sound so interesting this time. Also, for those who are Kurdish inclined, the Kurdish arm of Voice of America aired a little spot on me and my book recently: خاتم مارگریٹ کان و پھرتوو کھکھی له باره ی  
کوردهوه **Margy Kahn**, American writer and linguist, author of *Children of the Jinn: In Search of the Kurds and Their Country*.
- I'm on an annual family vacation with kids and grandkids in Rehobeth, Delaware, a beach town on the Atlantic Ocean. Rehobeth is the summer home of the President and Jill Biden. So, I go into the bookstore on Main Street and there is Jill Biden with several bodyguards. I was wearing my brand new spiffy blue and white Peace Corps hat. I asked one of the bodyguards if I could have a word with the First Lady to give my Peace Corps hat to her to give to the president. He said sure, go ahead. I asked her to thank the President for supporting the Peace Corps and offered my hat as a gift. She said she couldn't accept the hat but would deliver the message. She said of course the President supports the Peace Corps! The bodyguard laughed and said the hat looks better on me anyway. So, if I weren't wearing my spiffy new Peace Corps hat I never would have had the opportunity to advocate for the Peace Corps with the First Lady. Thanks for letting me share my Delaware

vacation story. Take care, **Joe Mangi, PCIA Board Member (Malayer, 1966-68)**

PCIA welcomes your thoughts and comments on anything you see in *From the Field*. [Click here to submit](#).

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### **Shopping on Amazon More These Days?**

Check out [AmazonSmile](#). It's a simple and automatic way to support PCIA, at no cost to you. When you shop at [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com), you'll find the exact same prices and shopping experience as at Amazon.com, with the added bonus that Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price to PCIA.

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### **Submit Your Photos**

#### **Message from Jackie**

Each month, *From the Field* features a photo submitted by one of our members. We invite you to [submit your own photos](#) of Iran, from either your Peace Corps years or recent trips. Thanks to everyone who has submitted recently. It will take a few months, but we plan to use them all.

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### **Find Us on Facebook**

For some time, we have had a lively **Facebook group**, with over 400 members. We post articles, photos, questions, and comments about Peace Corps in Iran or Iran itself. We invite you to [click here](#) and ask to join. Be sure and answer the membership question you will see there. We will accept your request within a day or two, and you're in!

We also have a **Facebook page**, open to the whole world! Located [here](#), this is a public page that features news about Iran and PCIA. We add photos and videos regularly. The purpose of the FB page is to engage our visitors to consider Iran with a more complete and nuanced view, in the spirit of Peace Corps' Third Goal.

Hope to see you participating in both of our Facebook venues. Invite your friends too!

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## **We Accept Donations**

Supporting PCIA with your donations is crucial to our success because we don't charge dues. Donations support our biannual conferences (our next one will be [virtual on October 2, 2021](#)), as well as our many other advocacy, legacy, civic engagement, publishing, and member connection projects. If you are proud of your Peace Corps experience and believe that PCIA leverages and amplifies your ideals and your voice as an RPCV, we invite you to donate as you are able, either through [PayPal](#) or by [printing this form](#) and mailing it with a check. We are grateful.

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## **Membership**

Membership in PCIA is free (no dues). We welcome everyone who shares our values of peace, diplomacy, cultural understanding, and preserving the legacy of Peace Corps Iran. Members do not need to have served in the Peace Corps or lived in Iran. To become a member, [click here](#). You will find that you must first join the National Peace Corps Association

(it's free), and in doing so, you will then have the opportunity to join PCIA.

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### **PCIA'S VISION**

Achieve and maintain cultural understanding and peaceful relations between the U.S. and Iran. *Adopted April 9, 2021*

### **PCIA'S MISSION STATEMENT**

Building on the legacy of Peace Corps in Iran, Peace Corps Iran Association advances peace and understanding between Americans and Iranians through education, outreach, and advocacy. *Adopted April 9, 2021*

### **PCIA CORE VALUES**

- **Experience.** We value the experience and knowledge of Iran and its people that our members have acquired through Peace Corps. We seek to preserve and share the legacy of our experience. We believe the experience of living in another culture shaped our worldview and commitment to giving back.
- **Making a Difference.** We aspire to make a difference by speaking up in accordance with our mission and goals.
- **Diversity and Inclusion.** We value diversity of experience and opinion, and believe understanding is achieved through open mindedness, inclusiveness, and respectful dialogue.
- **Integrity, Accountability and Transparency.** We are accountable to our members and donors to ensure that our activities meet the highest ethical standards of organizational and personal integrity. We are good stewards of the time, talent, and treasure of our members and volunteers. We practice sound financial management. *Adopted February, 2017*

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## **ADVOCACY COMMITTEE PURPOSE STATEMENT**

Peace Corps Iran Association advocates for peace and understanding through education, outreach, and cultural diplomacy. *Adopted February, 2017*

## **PCIA GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

1. Understanding and acceptance of other people and cultures are the building blocks of friendship, inclusiveness and world peace. As citizens of a world power, Americans bear a special responsibility.
2. Tolerance and mutual respect form the foundation for peaceful interactions between countries and their citizens.
3. Bringing countries and their citizens into the global community through cultural and economic ties reinforces international cooperation and reduces the likelihood of armed conflict.
4. Negotiation and diplomacy are essential to resolving international issues.
5. Force is rarely justified in dealing with conflicts. Peace is built and sustained through voluntary agreement and consent.

The Principles will be used as guidelines for the Advocacy Bulletin and other advocacy activities. The board may speak for the Association in the sense of upholding our mission, values and principles. *Adopted June, 2017*

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**Peace Corps Iran Association is a registered 501(c)3 nonprofit based in Portland, OR. We are affiliated with the National Peace Corps Association.**

**Title:** *From the Field* comes from the Rumi quote at the top of each issue: "Out beyond ideas of wrongdoing and rightdoing, there is a field. I will meet you there." Jalal ad-Din Rumi. The idea is that PCIA is operating in a field that is outside the

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conflict between our two governments as to who is right and wrong. In that field we meet all those who, like us, find the conflict detrimental and dangerous. This newsletter is sent from that field.

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### **PCIA Board Members**

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)

Marie Mitchell, Secretary (Mahalat, 1974-75)

Bill Brandon (Shiraz, 1964-66)

Brad Hanson (Khaf, Shiraz, 1973-76)

Doug Schermer (Semnan, Shahrud, 1966-67)

Fraser Lang (Isfahan, Tehran, 1968-70)

Joe Mangi (Malayer, 1966-68)

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

John Salamack (Bojnurd, 1965-67)

Kerry Segel (Khonsar, Isfahan, 1969-73)

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

### **Other PCIA Leaders**

Carolyn Yale, Future of PCIA Planning Committee Chair (Shiraz, 1974-75)

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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### **About this email**

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### **Comments**

We welcome your thoughts and feedback. Please submit to [jackie@peacecorpsiran.org](mailto:jackie@peacecorpsiran.org).

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