

# KhabarNameh

## خبرنامه



Newsletter of the Peace Corps Iran Association  
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### FROM THE EDITOR

Joan Gaughan (Rasht/Lahijan1964-66)



We Zoomed!!! Our first (and, hopefully, only) on-line conference went off successfully. If there were any glitches, I, for one, didn't notice them. The first six articles in this issue are summaries of the proceedings, but thanks to **Doug Schermer**, sessions of the conference are also available online at [www.peacecorpsiran.org](http://www.peacecorpsiran.org). We are grateful to the PCIA President **Jeanette Gottlieb** and to the other people who arranged the conference and also to those who run the many recurring programs of PCIA. I want to draw your particular attention to the first article on Page 2 which describes the work of the Task Force, which lost one of its most active members when **John Holehan** died in June. If our mission and vision are to survive, it will be due largely to the dedication of these kind people.

Perhaps more than anyone, **John Krauskopf** has taken on the task of keeping our stories alive, as **Jim Goode**'s review of John's *Memories and Insights* shows. **Tagi Sagafi-nejad** tells a delightful story of his grandmother and mother, and finally, just in time for those two lovely November feasts, **Jashn-e Mehregan** and **Thanksgiving**, a recipe for making absolutely perfect Iranian *chello* from "Chef Babri."

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## **INTRODUCTION**

**by President Jeanette Gottlieb**

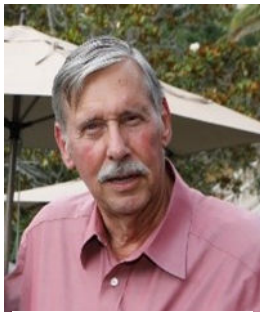
Summarized by Steve Gottlieb (Shiraz, 1965-67)



It has been forty-five years since the last volunteers left Iran. As PCIA President Jeanette Gottlieb pointed out, rather than walk gently into the sunset, the Board believes that “many of us want to see our vision and mission continue in some form.” The breakout session on the future of PCIA was designed to enlist the membership in the search for a way forward. Jeanette pointed out that the session had been recorded for viewing, so comments and suggestions continue to be welcomed.

## **THE FUTURE OF PCIA**

Summarized by Ed Seiders (Noshahr/Chalus, 1967-70) and Carolyn Yale (Shiraz, 1975-76)



Ed Seiders

The current membership of PCIA, consisting primarily of returned volunteers and staff who served in Iran, is aging, and at some point, we will not have enough members to maintain the organization in its present form. The current age range for members is sixty to eighty years. At the same time, we believe that our mission to advance peace and understanding between the U.S. and Iran through education, outreach, and advocacy is important and needs to continue. PCIA has been and continues to be a success story.



Carolyn Yale

PCIA’s Board engaged a consultant, Telesto Strategies, LLC, to guide us through the process of planning for the future. In April 2021, on the recommendations of Telesto, the Board agreed to proceed with a basic plan. A complete summary of the recommendations that have been reviewed by the Board are at the PCIA website: [www.peacecorpsiran.org](http://www.peacecorpsiran.org)

So far, the Board has considered three basic directions for the future of PCIA. These are:

- 1) Sunset PCIA at an appropriate time and find a suitable cause to receive any remaining assets.
- 2) Affiliate with another organization which has a similar vision and mission.
- 3) Strengthen the organization by bringing in individuals who are dedicated to continuing the mission but are not returned volunteers and staff who served in Iran. Iranian-Americans and their children may be good candidates for this.

There may be other approaches that have not yet been examined. For any approach, we do not want to lose the history of the Peace Corps’ service in Iran. Therefore, we currently have an

agreement with American University to turn over our archives to them. Any available PCIA funds could be used to create an endowment for something related to PCIA's mission.

We need to examine what PCIA has to offer in order to decide what approach to take. If the decision is to affiliate with another organization, then we need to develop a set of criteria for what we are seeking in such a relationship.

Until now the process has been carried out by a task group consisting of members of PCIA's Board; however, in order to produce a detailed plan to define our way forward a wider group is needed. We need to hear from people who are willing and able to complete the development of the plan, and we will be scheduling meetings in the near future. For any of those interested, contact Carolyn Yale at [carolyn@peacecorpsiran.org](mailto:carolyn@peacecorpsiran.org).

### **THE NPCA at 60: DIRECTOR GLEN BLUMHORST**

Summarized by Steve Gottlieb (Shiraz, 1965-67)



NPCA Director Blumhorst

In the process of introducing Executive Director and CEO of NPCA, Glen Blumhorst, President Jeanette Gottlieb expressed her appreciation for the NPCA affiliate leaders' meetings, and pointed out that NPCA has become a vehicle not just for country and regional groups, but also for volunteer activities and activity-based groups, such as the Peace Corps Committee for Refugees, and the Museum of the Peace Corps Experience. She urged looking into NPCA for ways to continue service in addition to Iranian-American matters.

Glen Blumhorst has been a regular attendee at our biennial meetings. He expressed his admiration for our programs, and wants to help Peace Corps be its best and build the programs of returned volunteers. He then took us on a whirlwind tour of the ways that NPCA helps and can help PCIA and our individual missions. It is well-worth exploring their website at [peacecorpsconnect.org](http://peacecorpsconnect.org) to catch what I missed!

NPCA promotes the public face of Peace Corps, such as the commemoration of the founding by Bill Moyers, William Josephson, and JFK's great-nephew, Joseph Kennedy III. NPCA is providing *A Towering Task* about the volunteer experience to PBS for broadcast.

NPCA works in Washington to promote the re-funding and improvement of Peace Corps authorizing legislation, coordinating op-eds by many RPCVs around the country, working to insert provisions to permit the Peace Corps logo on obituaries and graves, and improve volunteer compensation. It has been working on RPCVs return to this country, including that made necessary by the evacuation from countries of service occasioned by the Covid pandemic.

In addition to country and regional groups, NPCA assists 185 issue groups, including those focused on the environment, women, peace, and refugees. It made the SilkStart web hosting platform available to member organizations. (PCIA recently transitioned to Silk Start with

considerable assistance from NPCA, and used it to facilitate this conference. SilkStart also facilitates finding members.)

NPCA assists in short term assignments including Peace Corps Response, programs for farmers, and the Covid emergency. With Peace Corps Partnerships, it participates in joint fundraising for RPCVs in the field to enable them to complete projects, including those pending when volunteers were evacuated.

NPCA publishes *World View* about programs in which Peace Corps volunteers are involved. It is creating Peace Corps Place in Washington, D.C., with gathering space for meetings and a coffee shop as well as offices, and a Peace Corps memorial with seating.

**JOHN GHAZVINIAN, Author of *AMERICA and IRAN: A HISTORY. 1720-PRESENT***

With moderator Marcia Franklin of Idaho Public TV.

Summarized by Steve Gottlieb (Shiraz, 1965-67)



John Ghazvinian

John Ghazvinian was born in Iran but the family left when he was a year old. He earned his undergraduate degree from Brown and his Ph.D. from Oxford. He is currently the Executive Director of the Middle East Center at the University of Pennsylvania, a school with a long relationship with Iran.

Ghazvinian used both Iranian and American archives to write his book. Utilizing the Iranian National Archives presented its own idiosyncratic difficulties since the Iranian Departments of Defense and Foreign Affairs were exempt from the requirement to deposit their materials in its repository. Everyone was wearing masks, not because of Covid, but because of the musty odor arising from the fact that the archives had been stored in a swimming pool during the Revolution!

Ghazvinian stressed that he wrote his book partly because no one else has written an entire history of the long relationship between Iran and the United States, but also because he wanted to get away from the blame game and get beyond the relationship between the two governments to encompass relations of the peoples.

Nevertheless, Ghazvinian tells a story that certainly bears on the blame game. He pointed out that most books started in the 1940s because America had seen no strategic interests in entering “entangling alliances” before then. Iran, on the other hand, saw the U.S as anti-imperialistic, an independent third power to fend off the competition between Britain and Russia over Iran. The first treaty of friendship, signed in the 1950s, took five years to negotiate because Iran wanted to buy U.S. warships – to be manned by U.S. sailors under the U.S. flag! The U.S., with a history of isolationism, refused, wanting to leave Iran alone – until 1953.

When a viewer asked Ghazvinian to describe the biggest missed opportunity for reproachment between our countries, he answered that Iranian-American history is littered with missed opportunities, especially during the last thirty years. Iran worked hard to get American hostages in Lebanon released but when the Cold War ended, the U.S. decided it no longer needed to keep its promises to Iran, and Iran then drew the conclusion that American words could not be trusted.

For the younger generation, without historical memory and not steeped in hostility, Ghazvinian wrote Iranians into the American story. By the early twentieth century, Americans had found much that was fascinating in Persian history and culture, their Constitutional Revolution, and the founding of the first Iranian-American community in southside Chicago – a Christian community.

In response to a question from the audience, Ghazvinian explained that the University of Pennsylvania helped create Pahlavi (now Shiraz) University with support from the prime minister. (No doubt Mohammed Reza Shah was actively involved in getting it going as well.) When Ghazvinian went there, Shiraz University had a center dedicated to Arthur Upham Pope, an American historian of art and archeology who specialized in Persian art. Some of us may remember that Pope, who died in 1969, was working in Shiraz while we were in service there.

### **What Did and Did Not Get In**

Ghazvinian has lots of leftover material, especially of the early periods. There is no mention of the Peace Corps in the book. Ghazvinian said he had no good excuse but no room and added that it deserves serious separate treatment.

*Ed. Note:* A full review of Dr. Ghazvinian's book by the late John Holehan can be found in the previous (June 2021) issue of *KhabarNameh*.

## **BASKERVILLE INSTITUTE CONVERSATION SERIES**

By Joan Gaughan (Rasht/Lahijan, 1964-66)

The aim of the Baskerville Institute sounds like it could have come from a PCIA handbook if we had such a thing: "To preserve, strengthen, enhance, and promote bonds of friendship between the Iranian and American peoples." So it should come as no surprise that there is a Peace Corps Iran connection in that **John Limbert** sits on the Baskerville Institute Board or that the Institute's executive director, **Bahman Baktiari**, agreed to participate in the second plenary session of this Zoom conference (see the summary of that session below) or that the host of the Institute's monthly conversations is **Matthew Shannon**, who spoke about American missionaries in Iran at the San Diego conference in 2019.

On December 13, from 12 to 1:30 (MST), **Jim Goode** (Tuysarkan, (1968-71) will further that connection when he discusses his book, *Living, Loving Iran. A Memoir* published this year by Mazda. (See the book blurb on page 11.) The full list of the Baskerville Institute's events for 2020-2021 as well as the link to register for them can be accessed at [baskervilleinstitute.org/events](http://baskervilleinstitute.org/events).

## **IRANIAN-AMERICAN RELATIONS TODAY and TOMORROW**

Summarized by Fraser Lang (Isfahan/Tehran, 1968-70)



John Limbert

This was an informative discussion involving Iran Peace Corps volunteer and former ambassador **John Limbert** as moderator, with **Sina Toossi** representing the National Iranian American Council and **Bahman Baktiari** from the Baskerville Institute.

The panel addressed the question of what gesture by the United States might improve the tense relationship between the two countries. The suggestion by Professor Baktiari was that a humanitarian move by the United States related to Covid 19 could send a signal that might open the door to an improvement in the relationship. Covid hit Iran exceptionally hard, and the sanctions have prevented access to medical supplies and basic goods. Even freeing some frozen Iranian funds to be spent on humanitarian efforts could make a difference. As Professor Toossi observed: “The two sides are at a standoff, and someone needs to make the first move.”



Sina Toossi

That said, the panel members did not offer much optimism for improved relations now or in the future. Hard line forces in both countries reject any accommodation. Moreover, the Biden administration has thus far failed to deliver on its campaign promise of pursuing improved relations and a return to the nuclear agreement.

From Iran’s viewpoint, it is difficult to imagine that the new government elected just months ago would see the appeal of returning to an agreement with which they had abided, only to have the United States under President Trump precipitously withdraw.



Bahman Baktiari

Complicating the situation is America’s strong support for Saudi Arabia and Israel, who have both opposed Iran at every turn. Although Saudi Arabia is participating in a limited opening, Israel remains obdurate in its hostility to the country. Baktiari noted that the three hundred thousand Iranian Jewish immigrants in Israel remain a critical force in Israeli politics and adamantly oppose any accommodation between the two countries.

“As to the current situation with Afghanistan,” Limbert said, “in a reasonable world – and I wish we lived in a reasonable world – Iran and the United States would be in conversations to pursue their mutual interests in this volatile country. Instead, leading figures in the United States call for regime change in Iran, sanctions grow every more damaging to the Iranian population, and the ultra-conservative forces have achieved control over the legislative, judicial, and executive branches of government.”

The panel cited a number of historical events such as the 1953 overthrow of Mossadegh and the embassy takeover in 1978 as critical turning points in the deterioration of relations. All three panelists expressed deep regret at what they saw as a series of missed opportunities by both sides to improve relations.

Why have relations between Iran and America been so difficult for so long? Why is it so impossible to see change? Despite the obvious and logical shared benefits of an improvement, none of the panelists anticipated a more promising relationship in the foreseeable future.

### **W. MORGAN SHUSTER and HOWARD BASKERVILLE**

Summarized by Doug Meyer (Semnan, 1967-68)

“Shuster and Baskerville.” Almost sounds like a movie title, doesn’t it?

Nope. It was a pair of presentations at PCIA via Zoom by Joan Gaughan and Tom Ricks about two Americans who found themselves in Iran (then called ‘Persia’) in the early days of the twentieth century, both in some fairly impossible circumstances.



Morgan Shuster

And no, they didn’t collaborate, and although they came from somewhat similar Ivy League backgrounds, they could not have known each other (although Shuster did know of Baskerville’s death). Each of their missions was cut short by tragedy, with intrigue, action, and adventure and, in Baskerville’s case, even a slight suggestion of romance. I saw Shuster’s screenplay being written perhaps by Graham Greene, while Baskerville might have been played by Harrison Ford.



Howard Baskerville

Persia was a weak country with an economy dominated by the Russians and the British, and with a newly organized but bankrupt constitutional government. Morgan Shuster’s brief mission in 1911 at the invitation of its democratically elected Majlis (parliament) was designed to bring financial stability to that government which was often run on the principles of graft and grift. Howard Baskerville’s mission was literally that: he was from a family of missionaries and attached to the Presbyterian mission in Tabriz where he would be killed in a failed attempt to break a siege of that city in 1909.

In each of these riveting presentations, we learned of the trials and tragedies of these two men. Although neither story ended happily, both men were heroes. Be sure to look for the video transcriptions on the PCIA web site.

## WHEN WE WERE TOGETHER

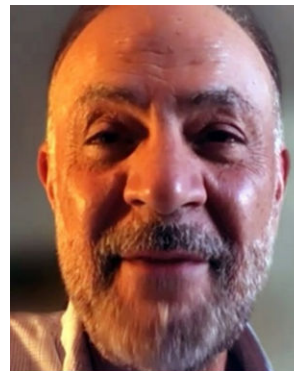
Film by Abbas Ahnad Motlagh and Hossein Mahallati.

Summarized by Kathleen Macleod (Tehran/Gorgan, 1964-66)



Abbas Motlagh

This session featured a panel discussion about the film, *When We Were Together*, produced by filmmakers, Hossein Mahallati and Abbas Motlagh of Y Knot Productions. A trailer for the film, still in production, was shown and a discussion followed, moderated by Professor Jasamin Rostan-Kolayi, Ph.D., a scholar of Peace Corps in Iran. She described the film as a dynamic way to tell our story in a way that doesn't come through in academic studies.



Hossein Mahallati

Why was the film made? Hossein was six years old when his father, an Islamic scholar who would later be recognized as Ayatollah Mahallati of Shiraz, met PCIA Board member Bill Brandon some fifty years ago. (See “A Divine Gift” in the February 2021 *KhabarNmeh* for the full story of Professor Brandon’s reunion with Hossein and his brother, Amin.) Besides the family connection, Hossein has a history in film production on educational channels. These dual interests led him to team up with Abbas Motlagh – who, among many other projects, has made fourteen documentaries and seven feature films – to make a documentary about the Peace Corps in Iran with input and help from PCIA members. It is a wide production with its own requirements. A multi-segment series is planned, each of which will be forty minutes in length.

The trailer, with lots of footage from the 1960s, features interviews with PCIA members about their motivations to serve, their memories, and reflections as Peace Corps volunteers. The motivations included avoiding the draft for the Vietnam War, serving in a country for peace, inspiration from John F. Kennedy and, for women, avoiding the glass ceiling in employment. Why Iran? Barkley Moore said, “I knew there was something for me.” Another RPCV was advised, “If you go to the Pacific Islands, you get sunsets and sunrises. If you go to Iran, you get 1000 years of culture!”

Last spring, PCIA supported a survey to find out members’ interest in being interviewed. Sixty members have responded so far. The plan is to include interviews from PCVs serving in all regions of Iran over the fourteen years of the Peace Corps presence in Iran. The filmmakers also tried to connect with Iranians in Iran who knew Peace Corps volunteers, but the Iranians do not feel safe being interviewed. They would love to show the documentary in Iran because the Peace Corps is currently unknown there. They are hoping BBC will air it. Negotiations with distributors to show it in the U.S. are also underway and suggestions are welcome. Eighty hours of interviews have been collected and a library for the collection is envisioned.

The experience of the Peace Corps in Iran was unique. It was not a tourist experience. Listening to our stories has been an incredible, emotional trip for Mahallati. It provides a refreshing narrative to the current political situation between the two countries. Politically, there's a decline in global curiosity on the part of elected representatives. As one of the discussants, **Pamella Cavanna** (Rezaiyeh/Tehran, 1968-69), pointed out, only 30% of Congress now have passports compared with the 75% who held them during the Peace Corps' presence in Iran. Also, although the Peace Corps deeply affected our subsequent lives and sometimes intersects with the lives of our children and grandchildren, many volunteers were unable to share their stories with their own loved ones because of a lack of shared interests. As Mahallati insisted, our stories are a "valuable treasure." It is urgent, he said, that, at both the personal and national level, our stories need to be told because, as the story of Bill Brandon's encounter with Hossein Mahallati and his brother reminds us, the commonplace activities of daily living in Iran apparently possessed much greater significance than we could have imagined.

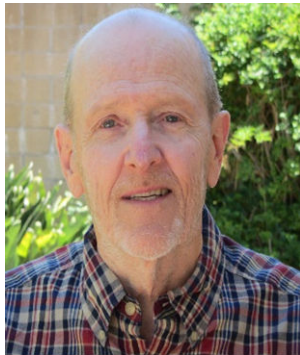
If you would like to be interviewed, please contact Bill Brandon at [Bill@peacecorpsiran.org](mailto:Bill@peacecorpsiran.org).

## **BOOKS, BOOKS**

Edited by Jim Goode (Tuysarkan, 1968-71)

### **Memories and Insights: Iran through the Eyes of Peace Corps Volunteers: A Legacy Project of the Peace Corps Iran Association**, edited by John Krauskopf.

The more I read memoirs and reminiscences of Peace Corps service in Iran, the more apparent it becomes just how unique was each volunteer's experience. There are, of course, many similarities, but in meaningful detail they always manage to surprise me. (This fact alone should encourage former Iran volunteers to write about their own service.)



Jim Goode

This enjoyable anthology, published under the auspices of the Peace Corps Iran Association, is a case in point. Not only do the reflections gathered here present new experiences to delight in, but they also reveal that volunteers could respond very differently to similar situations. As I read through the collection, I found myself constantly

comparing my own experiences in Iran with what I was reading. Such a process contributes, I believe, to an even fuller understanding of one's own service all those years ago.

**John Krauskopf** (Ahwaz, 1965-67) has expertly organized the collection of prose and poetry by thirty-three former Iran volunteers. At the end of each entry, he has inserted a brief statement about the author along with a map showing where he or she served. I found this very helpful as I know only one of the contributors. I'm sure those less familiar with the geography of Iran will



John Krauskopf

welcome this reader-friendly addition. The collection opens with a brief history of the Peace Corps in Iran and ends with a short introduction to the Peace Corps Iran Association (PCIA). These, also, will provide important context for the general reader. Most of the pieces are short; I recommend reading a few at a time, then pausing to ponder, savor, reflect.

Although it seems clear why former Peace Corps volunteers might be drawn to this volume, we might well ask, what's in it for others? For me, the answer is that it provides a very different perspective on a country and a people about which far too many Americans know far too little. Should they venture into these pages, they will find few examples of the intolerance or wickedness that they might have expected. Exposure to these lively tales of everyday life – albeit in pre-revolutionary times – might trigger their interest in learning more about this far-off, yet critically important land.

Two pieces written by Iranians who had close associations with the Peace Corps are of particular interest. This is a good start; it would be a worthy goal to put together an entire volume of such reflections. Many of us, I think, could suggest suitable contacts, both here and in Iran.

Finally, a sensitive poem by one volunteer's daughter, reflecting on the triangular relationship between herself, her father, and his memories of Iran, raises another possibility. Are there other children of volunteers, I wonder, who would like to share their insights for a different collection? I know I plan to talk with my own adult children about how their parents' loving perspective on Iran might have affected them over the years. I find it hard to believe that we have never had that discussion.

In the meantime, PCIA continues to solicit our writings for future anthologies. These will have a lasting significance and provide an important part of the legacy of the volunteers of Peace Corps Iran.

**John Krauskopf's** superb collection of our stories, *Memories and Insights: Iran through the Eyes of Peace Corps Volunteers*, has just been published by the Peace Corps Iran Association. Congratulations, John. You can order your copy from John and benefit PCIA at the same time. Email [johnk@peacecorpsiran.org](mailto:johnk@peacecorpsiran.org).

“The need for returned PCVs to put their expertise to use in waking Americans up to what Iran really is has never been more pressing.”

--Jerome Clinton, Iran Peace Corps Association Newsletter, Number One, April 1988.

This is the blurb for Jim Goode's memoir to be featured at the Baskerville Institute's online discussion December 13.

The Baskerville Conversation Series Presents:

## "LIVING, LOVING IRAN: A MEMOIR"



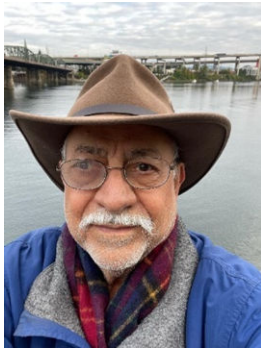
James Goode details his personal story of his experiences in 1968 in Iran as a Peace Corps Volunteer, assigned to teach English in the small, isolated town of Tuyserkan in western Iran. The friendships, experiences, and even love he finds in Iran helped him mature and gain confidence as an individual and made him who he is today. Iran continued to hold an important influence on him over his life and academic pursuits, even after his departure from the country.

As Goode witnessed the growing estrangement between the country of his birth and the country he had grown to love, he felt sorrow. He personally began to fight against the demonizing of Iran through talks, workshops, and writings, working steadily to show fellow Americans the wonders of Iran he had been privileged to know. This memoir continues that project. Nearly thirty years later came the opportunity for Goode to return to Iran. Would he find an unrecognizable Iran

### OF THE HAJ AND THE HIJAB

#### *My Grandmother's Haj and my Mother's Hijab "Emancipation"*

By Tagi Sagafi-nejad, on Mother's Day 2021 – Revised September 24, 2021



Tagi Sagafi-nejad

My mother, Bibi Tayebeh Sagafi, was one of four daughters of Akhund Mulla Mir Mohammed (the triple titles mean preacher, man of knowledge, and member of the upper echelon – the *Meer* family) and Hajiyeh Bibi Sagafi ("Hajiyeh" is a title earned by a woman who has made the Hajj pilgrimage). I am not certain exactly where and when my grandmother and my mother were born. Given the remoteness of their village, the primitive record-keeping, and the general state of underdevelopment, our history is limited to what our parents orally pass on to the next generation.

My grandmother was a *khan*, an honorific title reserved for the family of the local nobility. She came from the village of Khezri, some five miles away. The family was apparently Arab, but had resettled – perhaps by force some 800-900 years earlier – from nomadic settlements along the banks of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. They shared this legend with my other ancestors.

Long before I was born my grandmother had joined a caravan for a pilgrimage to Mecca (the *Hajj*). She told us later that the trip took about six months. The caravan of pilgrims rode camels south across Sistan-Baluchestan region and on to Karachi (originally referred to a place for renting camels, horses, and other travel



necessities) on the Indian Ocean. They sailed aboard a ship across the Indian Ocean to Jeddah on the Red Sea. Their caravan went on to Mecca on camelback. The photo on the previous page is of a metal cup she brought back from that trip.

We spent summers in her house, the “lower house” as we called it. The house had a courtyard through which flowed the village water headed for farms below, surrounded on all four sides with rooms, including two small and one large living room, a storage room where grains and other supplies were kept, and a large kitchen that took up most of one side of the house where we baked bread weekly and stored bushes and branches needed for firing up the *tanur* (tandoor). We had a rooster and five or six chickens; the latter would lay their eggs atop these bushes.

Legend has it that my mother’s father was an *akhund* (religious man or preacher), and so pious that his repeated reading of the Qur’an (which he ultimately memorized in its entirety) had caused his blindness. He was also very generous, having championed the building of a *houz* – watering hole – at the intersection of the communities of Bainabaj, Saghour, Kakhk, and Dashte Byaz, so thirsty travelers could catch a drink and get respite from the sun. It was known as the “Houz-e Molla Mir Mammad.” In later years it fell into disrepair, but I do remember sitting in the shadow of its entrance.

My mother was very pious. She was illiterate and could not even write her own name, using her fingerprint instead. Nonetheless, she “read” her Qur’an almost daily. I remember seeing her reading the Qur’an while whisking away the hens always begging for handouts! She must have memorized the Arabic characters and eventually became fluent in “reading” it! She also observed all religious holidays – quite religiously! One such practice involved trekking over to the nearby village of Karshek, which housed the grave of a saint, and served as a premier burial site for many of our ancestors, preferred to the normal cemetery. Visiting the graves of ancestors was both pious and obligatory.

Men were to wear a “Pahlavi” style hat. The photo at the right shows my father wearing such a hat. But for women the penalty for non-adherence to the prescribed rules of dress code was to have their chador ripped off and burned on the spot. “*That ought to teach them.*” This edict was Reza Shah’s emulation of his western neighbor Mustafa Kamal Pasha, Turkey’s ruler, and the shah’s contemporary. Both leaders were hell-bent on modernizing their respective countries – come hell or high water. In both countries, hell eventually came: the Islamic Revolution in Iran and Islamic resurgence in Turkey under Erdogan.

Having barely left Bainabaj on their short journey, the ladies encountered two gendarmes (rural police) on horseback. They attacked the hapless women, ripped off their chadors, and set them on fire right on the spot. The ladies were terrified, but learned their lesson.



Not quite! As soon as the gendarmes were gone, chadors came back. Ladies kept an abundant supply of spare chadors, some black, others in various designs, patterns, and colors. The “voluntary” hijab became mandatory after the 1979 Islamic Revolution, and as of the early decades of the twenty-first century, remained mandatory. Reza Shah must be rolling over in his desecrated grave.

Reza Shah was buried in the grounds of Shah Abdul-Azim, a minor saint, in Ray, a city south of Tehran. After the Islamic Revolution of 1979, his mausoleum was rumored to have been desecrated by Shaikh-cum-Ayatollah Khalkhali (nicknamed the “hanging judge” for ordering many killings at the advent of the Islamic Revolution) when he visited the Shah Abdul-Azim shrine triumphantly, and urinated on Reza Shah’s grave, thus demonstrating the highest form of revolutionary piety!

### **FROM THE ASHPAZ KHANAE**

By Chef “Babri”

#### ***Chello/Polo***

One does not have to be a gourmand to recognize that Persian *chello* is noticeably different from Chinese or Japanese rice, which is usually stickier than that made in Iran. Nor is Persian *chello* like Indian or Spanish rice, which also have their own textures.



There is a wide variety of ways to make Persian *chello*. Each household has its own individual way, its own special “tricks” for making it. Here is how I make it:

Soak long-grained rice, for example, Basmati, in water for 2-4 hours. You can soak it for a half hour, too, but the longer you soak it, the more the individual grains will separate. Wash it a few times and then put it into a pot and cover it with about 2 inches of water and bring it to a boil. When it is about half cooked – that is, when the grains are somewhat soft but not squishy, remove from the heat, strain the rice and rinse with cold water.

Rinse the pot and then heat a little bit of water and some olive oil in the pot. Add a pinch of saffron and stir that very slowly into the water and oil. Be careful. Remember water and oil don’t mix. Then stir in a bit of butter. You will have a reddish-yellow mixture.

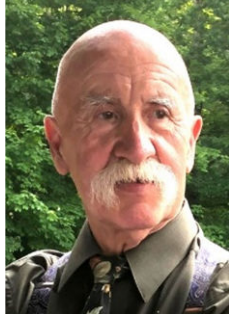
Put the rice back into the pot, cover it and cook on high for a few minutes, then turn the heat down to low so you don’t burn it and cook another 20-30 minutes.

When it’s done, take it out of the pot and flip it over so that the *tadig* is on the surface.

Then, *besamati* (cheers!)

## IN MEMORIAM

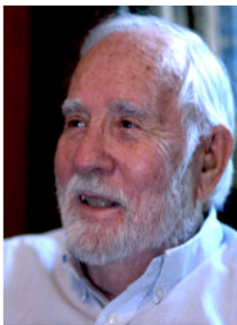
By Genna Stead Wangsness (Shiraz/Tehran, 1965-71)



**Harry E. Conklin** died from cancer in Massachusetts in hospice care on July 8, 2021. Following his graduation from Columbia University, he joined Peace Corps and served as a member of Iran 21 from 1968 to 1971 as an agriculture volunteer. Having grown up on a dairy farm, his assignments included time at a sheep feed lot in Varamin, outside of Tehran. Post Peace Corps, Harry graduated from Boston University with a law degree, practicing for forty years in and around Berkshire County. Harry is survived by his wife Ali Azarva Winston, her son Sergio Winston, his son Will Conklin (Amelia) and granddaughter Vera Cecelia. A Celebration of Life for Harry was held on August 14. “The mischievous twinkle in his eyes and his iconic mustache will be forever missed.”



**Laila Finnen** died on September 5, 2021, at the age of 78 in Inverness, Florida. Laila trained as a librarian in Oslo, Norway, and joined the Norwegian Peace Corps after college. Assigned to Iran in 1968, she lived in Tehran with Iran 13 volunteers Sue Beauvais and Mureleen Miller Benton. In Iran, she met and married her husband James L. Finnen, a mechanic working for Pan Am. In addition to Iran, they lived in Austria, Belgium, Jordan, Zaire, and Turkey before settling down in Florida in 1982, where Laila served as a librarian and school bus driver. At the time of her death, her husband James survived her along with relatives in Norway, two sons and their wives, and four grandchildren. Three weeks later, on September 25, **James Finnen** died at the age of 87.

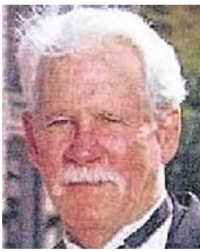


**Fred A. Harrington** died on August 4, 2021, of heart failure in New Mexico. Hired by Eskandar Firouz, head of Iran’s Department of the Environment, he supervised PCVs assigned to the department from 1970 to 1976. After obtaining a degree in wildlife biology in 1959, Harrington worked as a big-game biologist at New Mexico’s Game and Fish, eventually obtaining a PhD from Colorado State. Among his accomplishments at Iran’s DoE was writing Iran’s report for the UN Conference on the Human Environment held June 5-16, 1972, in Stockholm, Sweden. Returning to the U.S. in 1977, he worked for the Nature Conservancy and later for the Department of Energy, serving as head of the Ecology Division. In 2021, he received the Pasargad Heritage Foundation’s Nowruz Award.



Ireland Hospital in Fort Knox in urology, retiring in 2005.

**Donald Robert Hohman** died on September 22, 2021, in Elizabethtown, Kentucky. Mr. Hohman was one of 52 hostages taken at the American Embassy in Tehran, Iran, on Nov. 4, 1979, where he was held captive for 444 days and released on Jan. 20, 1981. As the only medical personnel at the American Embassy, he was expected to assist with any medical treatment for the other hostages. Despite the brutal conditions of captivity, Mr. Hohman remained resilient, providing care to many and saving the life of a fellow hostage. He had more than twenty-five years of service in the Army, retiring as an Army physicians' assistant, followed by service at



was a valuable and respected member of PCIA's board of directors. His wife Regina Water, whom he met in 2009, died in 2017. His first wife, Fati, their children Leila (Stephen) Jabour, and Jamshid (Nicole), survive him, along with four grandchildren and other relatives of his extended family.

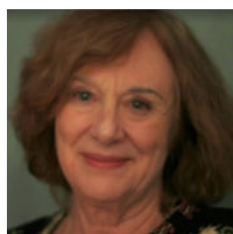
**John M. Holehan** died on June 21, 2021, at his home in Troy, New York. After receiving an AAS in civil technology in 1966, he attended Syracuse University for a year before joining Peace Corps and serving with Iran 18 in Mashhad's office of surveying and drafting for the Khorasan province. Following the 1968 Khorasan province earthquake, John spent two weeks with the central engineering office assessing damages to assist authorities plan reconstruction. John obtained a B.S. in urban planning from SUNY Empire State College, joined the City of Troy, retired as the commissioner of planning, and then opened his own business. For the past five years, John



**Martin Lynn "Marty" Johnson** died on April 22, 2021, at the age of 80 at his home in Bark River, Michigan following a lengthy illness. Marty was a member of the first group to serve in Iran beginning in 1962, where he worked in botany at the Rezaiyeh Agricultural School. His wife Diane, whom he married in 1964, served as a Peace Corps volunteer nurse in Tanganyika (Tanzania). In addition to his family, Marty loved reading, hunting, fishing, and music. Diane survived him, along with sons Kjell and Daren, Daren's wife Kristy, and four grandchildren, brother Kerwin and other relatives. Graveside services were in Mishicot Cemetery in Mishicot, Wisconsin.



**Donna J. Patterson** died on August 28, 2021, at the age of 75. Born in Galion, Ohio, she obtained her R.N. degree from Maumee Valley School of Nursing in Toledo. Donna and her husband John were members of Iran 21 in Hamadan, where she worked as a nurse. Their Peace Corps service was followed later by six years in Saudi Arabia, where Donna served as a school nurse in Dhahran. She always felt grateful for the many vacations and travel experiences she shared with her family, and felt she lived a blessed life. Her three children, Donald, Shireen, and Courtney and their spouses survive her, along with six grandchildren. An infant son, Michael, predeceased her. John died in 2018.



**Nancy Gail Black Sagafi-nejad** died on September 27, 2021, in Portland, Oregon, from heart failure at the age of 83. As a member of Iran 7, Nancy served at Pahlavi University in Shiraz from 1965 to 1968, teaching art history, a new subject in the Department of History. She had earned a B.A. in Art History from Northwestern University and an M.A. in Art History at the University of Hawaii. On November 22, 1967, she married Tagi Sagafi-nejad at the Anglican church in Shiraz, St. Simon the Zealot, their reception hosted by Terry O'Donnell at his *Bagh-e Salar-e Jang*. Nancy was a Quaker and a member of the Eugene, Oregon Friends Meeting, where Tagi also attended when they lived in Eugene, the city to which they had planned to return in October. In 2012, Nancy published “Friends at the Bar: A Quaker View of Law, Conflict Resolution, and Legal Reform.” Nancy and Tagi were married for fifty-three years. Tagi and their sons, David and Jahan, were present during her last days.

### John Holehan Memorial Fund

Before his death, John had requested that donations be made to the Peace Corps Municipal Development Fund. The PCIA Board has contributed \$200 to that fund. Individuals who also wish to contribute can go online to: [MunicipalDevelopmentFund@peacecorps.gov](mailto:MunicipalDevelopmentFund@peacecorps.gov). Click on **Give to this fund** button and follow the on-screen directions. Be sure to designate that your donation is being given in memory of John Holehan, Iran RPCV.

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**Jashn-e Mehregan-e shoma Mobarak**

**Happy Thanksgiving**



This ancient Zoroastrian feast of gratitude in the month of Mehr, which sees the gathering of the harvest, coincides with our own feast of Thanksgiving. Despite the troubles of the past year, there have also been many blessings. We can still find the funny, the odd, the beautiful, and most of us can still skip over mud puddles – if they are small enough. That is good – very good.

**Plan Now to Support PCIA and Reduce your Taxes at the Same Time  
using a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD)**

A QCD lets you transfer your minimum required distribution (RMD) of funds from your IRA custodian, to a qualified charity. QCDs count toward satisfying your (RMDs) for the year.

A QCD is better than a deduction because the amount donated is not included as taxable income. Keeping your taxable income lower reduces your adjusted gross income.

Also, QCDs do not require that you itemize, which means you may decide to take advantage of the higher standard deduction while still using a QCD for charitable giving.

PCIA is eligible for this program. Our nonprofit tax ID is **45-4989757**. We receive several such donations each year and invite you to use QCD for your end of the year contribution.

Be sure to work with your financial institution to learn the specifics of how it manages QCD donations. A full description is on the Fidelity website at:

[Qualified Charitable Distributions \(QCDs\) | planning your IRA withdrawal | Fidelity](#)

**PEACE CORPS IRAN ASSOCIATION ON THE WEB**

Check out our website, [www.peacecorpsiran.org](http://www.peacecorpsiran.org). You will be surprised at all that is there including reports and videos from past conferences. From the home page, select “What we do” and then click on “Conferences” and make your selection.

Complete archives of PCIA publications including *From the Field*, *KhabarNameh*, and *Advocacy Bulletin* in PDF format are also there. From the home page, select “What we do” and then click on “Legacy.”

The most current version of the Memorial Book, edited by Genna Wangsness is there as well. Do not forget our Facebook Group which is managed by Jackie Spurlock. You can join at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/PeaceCorpsIranAssociation/>.

*From the Field* is a monthly email newsletter edited by Jackie Spurlock that features PCIA activities and other news. Paul Barker’s monthly email newsletter, *Advocacy Bulletin*, addresses current U.S. - Iran relations. You can subscribe to either or both by sending an email to our webmaster, [doug@peacecorpsiran.org](mailto:doug@peacecorpsiran.org), stating the newsletter(s) you wish to receive.