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## From the Field - PC Iran - 7-21

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PCIA BOARD NEWSLETTER

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**Men with Cattle at a Hitchhiking Stop in Mountains Between Isfahan & Shiraz. Spring 1966**

Photograph by Ed Hunley (Semnan, 1965/66)

## From The Field - PCIA Board Newsletter

July, 2021

“Out beyond ideas of wrongdoing and rightdoing, there is a field. I will meet you there.” Jalal ad-Din Rumi

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

### **Living Our Lives - and Taking Future-Oriented Action**

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

Life has been coming on full force recently and one result was that *From the Field* (aka *FTF*) had to miss its June issue. Our sincere apologies. The main impediment to that June issue was having the elevator break down in our condo while we were out to dinner. There is only one elevator, we live on the 9<sup>th</sup> floor, Mike has mobility issues, and that was the weekend I was to write the newsletter. We spent 6 days away from home, and *From the Field* did not get written, but the good news is, *FTF* is back in your inbox this month.

Life – and death – continued to unfold. PCIA board member John Holehan Mashhad, 1967-71) suddenly passed away on June 21, at his home in Troy, NY. The board and other PCIA members who knew John are grappling with this shocking and tragic news. John was the lead on our strategic planning process, lending his strong planning, writing, and collaborative skills to help PCIA define its direction for the foreseeable future. This document, this Plan, is John’s legacy to

the Iran Peace Corps community. He was also a critical part of the editing team for *KhabarNameh*. Read more about John in the piece by Genna Wangsness elsewhere in this newsletter.

Also in June, Portland and the Pacific Northwest were powerfully reminded of the impact of climate change. An unprecedented heat wave broke Portland's previous record high of 107 three days in a row last week, first 108, then 112, and finally 116 on Monday, 6/28. The world is suffering together as Planet Earth struggles mightily to balance herself against the challenges we humans have increasingly thrown at her over the last couple of centuries. As we head into another fire season, and a hurricane season, as we face biodiversity loss, plastic pollution, deforestation, and hunger, it is clear that world peace will remain elusive as well. Those of us who care about the Iranian people, and about all people yearning for an end to conflict, must grapple with the fact that climate change impacts good governance, economic development, and the sharing of resources. To help in the cause of peace, we must do our utmost to stem climate change.

To twist an old saying, climate change is what happens while we're living life. And as climate change reaches a critical point, it is imperative that each one of us takes a step, an action, to help turn it around. Right now. This summer. While we live our lives.

Peace,  
Jackie

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**Dooreh-ye Ketaab, PCIA's Book Discussion Group**  
**By Jackie Spurlock (Abadeh, Riz/Zarrinshahr, 1974-76) and Jim Goode (Tuyserkan, 1968-71)**

July's Dooreh will feature two books by Iran RPCVs! Please join us on **Wednesday, July 14 at 5:00 pm Pacific time** for a discussion of *The Face of Iran Before* (2020) by Dennis Briskin (Arak, 1967-69) and *Yekke Bude Yekke Na Bude* (1975) by Alice Phinney Preston (Kerman, 1965-67).

**PLEASE NOTE: These two works will be read together for a single discussion session.**

**NOTE #2:** Dennis Briskin's book is a stunning work of black & white photos of Iran in the 1960's. Dennis is discounting the hardcover book from \$72 to \$60 plus tax and shipping (check or PayPal) via media mail for PCIA members. To get the discount, first [email Dennis](#) to establish the cost, then order directly from his website: [www.TheFaceofIran.com](http://www.TheFaceofIran.com). The book is also available in a PDF format for \$10, which comes in the form of a Dropbox link. [Email Dennis](#) to inquire about the pdf.

**NOTE #3:** Alice Phinney was in her 60's when she served as a PCV in Kerman (1965-67). *Yekke Bude Yekke Na Bude* is her Peace Corps memoir. The book is out of print, so may be a little hard to find. **The easiest way to access this book is to [email Jim Goode](#) for a (free) pdf of the book.** Another option is to keep checking sites like [Amazon](#); [AbeBooks](#); and [eBay](#), which occasionally have copies. And finally, Jackie is willing to facilitate an exchange, so if you have a title to loan, or need to borrow a copy, please [email her](#). DO NOT send any books to Jackie!

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

- **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 (8:00 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 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](#) (Tuyserkan, 1968-1971) and [Jackie Spurlock](#) (Abadeh, Riz/ZarrinShahr, 1974-76)

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**PCIA Publishes 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 during the period from 1962 to 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 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 thank you gift, you can use your PayPal account or credit card at our website's [secure donation page](#). To purchase a copy, send a check for \$28 to Ed Seiders, PCIA Treasurer, [3152 S Rockford Drive, Tulsa, OK 74105](#).

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### Mark Your Calendar!

- Wednesday, July 14, 5:00 pm Pacific (8:00 Eastern) [Dooreh-ye Ketaab](#) (PCIA's Book Discussion Group) – See details above.
- Monday, July 26, 5:00 pm Pacific (8:00 Eastern) **Iran Issues Discussion Group**. Moderated by [John Salamack](#) (Bojnurd, 1965-67). 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 Pacific time. If you have never attended the PCIA Iran Issues Discussion Group and would like to receive a Zoom link, [let us know](#). Questions? Email [John Salamack](#).
- [Saturday, October 2, 9:00am-5:00pm Pacific \(12:00-8:00pm Eastern\) PCIA Biennial Conference, held on Zoom. Details and registration information coming soon!](#) Questions? Email [Jeanette Gottlieb](#).

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### Board News

- **Death of Board Member John Holehan (Mashhad, 1967-71).** PCIA's board of directors sadly reports the death of John Holehan, an active and valuable member of PCIA's board for the past five years. John died unexpectedly at his home on Monday, June 21, and his funeral was held Monday, June 28 in Troy, New York. John served as the Strategic Plan Task Force Chair, and his absence will be keenly felt. He had just completed assembling the June issue of *KhabarNameh* where the lead article was his update on the status of the strategic plan. John was a calm and insightful presence on the board and in the planning group. He was a contributor who did not waste words; rather, what he had to say was always thoughtful. A member of Iran 18 and a volunteer for three years in Mashhad, John worked in the Khorasan Provincial Office for Surveying and Drafting. When the August 31, 1968 earthquake struck south Khorasan, John was one of the multitude of volunteers who worked tirelessly to assist. John's meticulous report of the distribution of food and supplies to remote villages, which described the devastation he and other volunteers saw, was read at his funeral and is available on PCIA's website: [Peace Corps in Iran Stories](#).
- **Board Welcomes 5 New Members.** Last month, these five new members were added to the PCIA Board of Directors: [Bill Brandon](#) (Shiraz, 1964-66); [Brad Hanson](#) (Khaf, Shiraz, 1973-76); [Fraser Lang](#) (Isfahan, Tehran, 1968-70); [Joe Mangi](#) (Malayer, 1966-68); [Kerry Segel](#) (Khonsar, Isfahan, (1969-73). [This expanded board will increase our capacity to implement the new strategic plan and direction for the organization. Welcome to all!](#)
- Also in June, the board said **farewell to [Kathleen MacLeod](#)** (Tehran, Gorgan 1964-66), whose vision and creative thinking enlightened the board during her five years of service. We wish her well as she continues in other avenues of public service. Kathleen says: "Oh, I'll be around. Can't get Peace Corps and Iran out of this girl. PCIA is in good hands with the enthusiasm and skills of the new Board members. It should be a fun transition."
- From **Genna Wangsness**, PCIA historian: I'm recruiting a couple of female volunteers with editing experience as readers for the history of Peace Corps in Iran. To express an interest and request information on the scope and breadth of the project, contact me at 386-748-4550 or [genna@peacecorpsiran.org](mailto:genna@peacecorpsiran.org).
- Also from **Genna**: Please remember to send PCIA your change of address when you move. As our members downsize, move to senior living, etc, we want to keep up with you! Send your change of address to [genna@peacecorpsiran.org](mailto:genna@peacecorpsiran.org). Also, please DO NOT throw away any old PC records or memorabilia. Genna is PCIA's historian and would love to receive them. Contact her at [genna@peacecorpsiran.org](mailto:genna@peacecorpsiran.org).

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## Member News

- [Joan Gaughan](#) (Lahijan, Rasht, 1964-66) is pleased to announce the publication of her book [The Shuster Mission to Iran: Leaving Something Worthwhile Behind](#). The book recounts the story of the 1911 mission of Morgan Shuster to Persia, to put its chaotic finances on a sound footing. Although he stayed less than 8 months, under Russian and British pressure, he was forced to make a decision that would affect not only his mission but the fate of the country he was trying to help. The book is available at [Amazon](#), [Barnes & Noble](#), [Walmart](#), and [Target](#).
- On June 15, member [Stephen Gottlieb](#) (Shiraz, 1965-67) spoke about Prejudice on his weekly radio program, broadcast on WAMC, Northeast Public Radio. [Listen to it here](#).

- This delightful [interview with Emily Wells Gianfortoni](#) (Lar, 1969-71) is a new addition to our website.

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## We Get Mail

- From National Peace Corps Association (NPCA) Executive Director **Glenn Blumhorst**:

The Institute for Economics and Peace has just released the [Global Peace Index for 2021](#). For 15 years, the index has tracked trends, correlations, and causes of peace and violence across the globe. The index also ranks countries from most peaceful to least peaceful; in 2021, that's the arc from Iceland to Afghanistan. Landing at 122 out of 163 countries is the United States. See where the countries in which Peace Corps Volunteers have served find themselves on the index. And take note of this, the report advises: "The key to building peacefulness in times of conflict and uncertainty is Positive Peace." That would be the "**attitudes, institutions, and structures that create and sustain peaceful societies**," words that resonate with a community focused on building peace and friendship. We'd also highlight these three takeaways: 1) **The global economic impact of violence was \$14.96 trillion in 2020**— equivalent to 11.6% of global GDP. 2) The **number of forcibly displaced people increased from just over 40 million in 2007, to over 84 million in 2020**. 3) The gap between the least and most [peaceful countries continues to grow](#). [Here's a video that summarizes the report's findings](#).

- From National Peace Corps Association (NPCA) Vice-President **Anne Baker**:
  - Polls are open for this year's NPCA Board of Directors elections.
  - Voting closes on July 16. [Learn more and vote](#).
  - [Many Faces of Peace Corps](#). Listen to interviews from RPCVs from many different countries in this new video from the Museum for the Peace Corps Experience and the Returned Peace Corps Volunteer Oral History project, both NPCA affiliate groups (as is PCIA).

- From **Jeanette Gottlieb**:

There is a crisis developing on the Iran border. As US troops withdraw from Afghanistan, thousand of Afghans who worked with and for our troops are being left behind, even though visas have been approved. NPCA is joining with the Peace Corps Community for Refugees and Friends of Afghanistan (two NPCA affiliate groups) to urge the White House to expedite the exodus of these Afghans who we promised would not be left behind. To send a letter to the White House go to [www.congressweb.com/NPCA](http://www.congressweb.com/NPCA). To learn more visit [nooneleft.org](http://nooneleft.org).

- From **Genna Wangsness**:

The close to 50 PCIA members living in Massachusetts can take note that the son of Pamela Brackett Downing (Tehran, 1972-73) is running for governor of Massachusetts in 2022. Ben Downing was elected a state senator at the age of 25 and served for ten years. Running as a

Democrat, with a B.A. in Political Science and an M.A. in Urban and Environmental Policy, he will be facing at least two Democratic women of color, so it will be an interesting race against the popular current two-term Republican governor, Charlie Baker, if he runs for another term.

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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](#), 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 MISSION STATEMENT

**Peace Corps Iran Association advances peace and understanding between Americans and Iranians through outreach, education and advocacy, and upholds the legacy of Peace Corps in Iran.**

**Adopted February, 2017.**

## 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, Feb. 2017*

## ADVOCACY COMMITTEE PURPOSE STATEMENT

Peace Corps Iran Association advocates for peace and understanding through education, outreach, and cultural diplomacy. *Adopted Feb. 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.
0. Tolerance and mutual respect form the foundation for peaceful interactions between countries and their citizens.
1. Bringing countries and their citizens into the global community through cultural

and economic ties reinforces international cooperation and reduces the likelihood of armed conflict.

2. Negotiation and diplomacy are essential to resolving international issues.
3. 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 of the 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 irrelevant. 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**

[Genna Wangsness](#), Historian (Shiraz, Tehran, 1965-71)

[Jim Goode](#), Dooreh Co-leader (Tuyserkan, 1968-71)

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

### **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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