

# From the Field

December, 2021

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



Winter scene on a street leading to the girls' high school in Mahabad, 1969.  
Mary Hegland (Mahabad, 1967-69)

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

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

Each one of us can find a way to help save the world. We have only to look within, and listen to what our heart is telling us. I am not talking about waving placards in the street (unless you want to), or ranting against your elected leaders (unless you feel so called). I have just finished a book called *The Body Is Not an Apology*, in which the author, Sonya Renee Taylor, makes the case that we must begin with what she calls “radical self-love”. By loving ourselves and our (aging) bodies, no matter how difficult, and by respecting and honoring all bodies, no matter how different, we begin to repair our tattered collective humanity. All bodies, and the humans within, are to be seen and honored.

I’m guessing that most PCIA members, almost by definition, are on board with honoring the “collective humanity”, tattered or not, in Iran. Author Taylor asserts that bringing radical self-love into our interactions with the world alters us and therefore transforms organizations and community. I have been painfully disturbed at the world’s refusal to see Iranians as regular people. While it is imperative to change the political backdrop that creates this situation, it may be that the rest of us can help bring about a change in the world’s mindset by examining our own attitude and, “through a collective process, bring about a wide shift in perspective.” In other words, we start with ourselves, and as our hearts heal in many areas, we become part of a wide shift in perspective.

Peace,  
Jackie

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

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

Dooreh discussions are finished for 2021, and the votes are in and tallied for next year’s titles! Only the first two books for 2022 are actually scheduled as yet:

- **Wednesday, January 12, 5:00pm Pacific time (8pm Eastern): Goode, James. *Living, Loving Iran: A Memoir* (2021)** A tale of one American’s life-long interaction with Iran, its people and culture. From an immature Peace Corps volunteer, to married life in Iran’s second city and finally as a scholar of US-Iranian relations, the author focuses on what has fascinated him about this much-maligned but little understood land. This memoir, based on diaries and letters, presents selected details of a life-long relationship between the author and Iran.
- **Wednesday, March 9, 5:00pm Pacific time (8pm Eastern): Kahn, Margaret. *Children of the Jinn: The Story of My Search for the Kurds and their Country* (1980)** Kahn writes with the perspective of a cultural anthropologist who has found herself on a mission fraught with danger. She has many insights into human relations, implications for conflicting cultures, and the bond among women (across cultures). The book reminds us of Iran before the fall of the Shah, with our contemporary understanding that the war against the Kurdish peoples continues.

Here are the remaining four titles that were also chosen in the recent survey, but have not yet been scheduled. This is NOT necessarily the order they will be read in:

- Ansary, Nina. *Jewels of Allah: The Untold Story of Women in Iran* (2015)
- Bakhash, Shaul. *The Fall of Reza Shah* (2021)
- Gaughan, Joan. *The Shuster Mission to Iran: Leaving Something Worthwhile Behind* (2021)
- Pezeshkzad, Iraj. *Hafez in Love* (2021)

The Dooreh meets on the second Wednesday of every other month, usually January, March, May, July, September, and November.

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)

## PCIA's New Anthology

John Krauskopf (Ahwaz, Kermanshah, Arak, Babolsar, 1965-69), editor of the PCIA Anthology *Memories and Insights - Iran through the Eyes of Peace Corps Volunteers*, received the following note from an Iran RPCV who had just received her copy of the book.

"Imagine my delight when your [M & I] Stories arrived! I'm in Iran 1966-1968 ever since. Thank you so much for the perfect relief from the pandemic times we are experiencing just now."

You can order your copy by **visiting the PCIA website**. And wouldn't the anthology be a great gift for your Iranophile friends?

## Board News

Our Future of PCIA project continues. On Tuesday, December 7, a general meeting was held to seek input and involvement from the membership on what should become of PCIA as its members become too old to manage the organization.

Committee chair Carolyn Yale (Shiraz, 1974-75) says:

Our initiative to set a course for the *Future of PCIA* is moving forward. This effort, which was announced at the October conference, is guided by a core team that is looking for additional volunteers. Several dozen PCIA members attended a zoom meeting on December 7 at which Bill Brandon, Jackie Spurlock and Carolyn Yale introduced the approach we will take. We are organizing the planning around five workgroups. Basically, there are three possible ultimate outcomes for PCIA as members age out and die: 1) Partnering with a like-minded organization that would perpetuate our mission; 2) Expanding PCIA by reaching out to younger people and Iranian Americans sympathetic to our mission; and 3) A planned shutdown. A fourth group will examine PCIA as it is today with an eye to the future and/or conclusion of

current programs. The fifth group will look into ways in which we can build funds to support an endowment or program.

If you can help on any of the above workgroups, or have questions/input, please contact [Carolyn Yale](#) and/or [Bill Brandon](#).

As we move forward with planning the future of PCIA, certain skills are needed:

### **Wanted: Expertise in Fundraising and Charitable Trusts**

Experience with organizational advancement or charitable giving is being sought by the Task Force on the Future of Peace Corps Iran Association (PCIA). We are forming a committee to examine the feasibility of establishing some kind of continuing PCIA endowment. While anyone with an interest in such an effort is encouraged to apply, Certified Fundraising Executives and attorneys with Trusts and Estate experience will be especially welcome. If interested, please email [Bill Brandon](#).

## **Iran Issues Discussion Group**

- **Monday, December 27, 5:00pm Pacific (8:00 Eastern)** Moderated by John Salamack (Bojnurd, 1965-67). PCIA offers this monthly virtual friendly discussion of current events having to do with Iran. All are welcome. Meetings are held on Zoom, on the fourth Monday of every month. 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](#).

## **We Get Mail**

- **Barkley Moore (Gonbad Kavoods, 1964-70)**. Last month we shared a message from RPCV Andrew Engelman (Ferdows, Sari, 1967-69) on his recent encounter in Paris with a rug dealer who had been a student of Barkley's in Gonbad Kavoods.

David Piercy (Gorgan, 1964-66) responded to that piece with this:

Barkley frequently visited Jack Starke (Gorgan, 1964-66) and me on his way to or from Gonbad Kavoods; Gorgan was a transportation hub and necessary stop. Barkley was deeply religious, never judgmental, and easily put up with our antics. He remembered and looked forward to visiting his old friends many years later, including my wife Kitty (Ethiopia, 1964-66) and me in Eugene, OR.

[This article](#) about Barkley and John Newton (Mashhad, 1964-69) in the *Oneida Mountaineer* arrived the other day. This publication, which Barkley signed me up for many, many years ago, is the newsletter of Oneida Baptist Institute where he was the beloved president.

And John Newton (Mashhad, 1964-69), who is pictured with Barkley Moore in the article linked in the previous paragraph, had this to say:

As the article says, Barkley was a remarkable human being, the most selfless, devoted, tireless, gutsiest and single-minded person I have ever known.

He was a legend in the Gonbad area, given an award by the central government and made an honorary citizen. And he became a legend in Kentucky too where he was named a "Kentucky Colonel."

In the 1970s and 80s, Barkley almost single-handedly resurrected OBI (Oneida Baptist Institute), his high school alma mater, a Christian boarding school created in 1899 and dedicated to ending the feuding and violence in the hills of southeastern Kentucky. Thanks to him, the school grew by leaps and bounds; even foreign students come to study, including several Iranian kids, along with the local Kentuckians.

Your anecdote about Andy Engelman meeting one of Barkley's former students in a Paris rug shop is "pure Barkley." Andy is also a friend of mine. I was his field officer in both Ferdows and Sari.

- **Atlantic Council, Thursday, December 9, 2021 – 2:00pm Eastern time (11:00am Pacific) – Is There a ‘Plan B’ for Iran? [More information and register here.](#)**
- **Mary Hegland (Mahabad, 1967-69)**, whose photo is shown at the top of this newsletter, was featured in [this piece in IranWire](#), in 2016.
- National Iranian American Council (NIAC) presents: **[A Very Cali Yalda. Sunday, December 19, 5:00pm Pacific \(8:00pm Eastern\).](#)** NIAC California chapters invite the entire NIAC family from across the country to join this virtual Yalda celebration. Yalda is the ancient Winter Solstice celebration of Iranian culture. This night will feature music, dance, poetry, *faal-e hafez*, and pomegranates with loved ones! **[More info and RSVP](#)** for the Zoom link!

- **2022 International Calendar Available Now at the NPCA Store**



**The International Calendar** produced by the Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCVs) of Wisconsin - Madison, is **now in stock at the National Peace Corps Association Store.** Combining photographs with demographic information about the countries where Volunteers have served, the calendar celebrates people and cultures across the globe — and the peace, friendship, and service that are at the heart of Peace Corps. Since 1988 the calendar has raised more than \$1.45 million in support of development projects at home and abroad — with many of those projects focused on children. For 2022, celebrate global friendship with the All Kids Edition of the calendar. Combine it with a set of handwritten notecards for **a special holiday gift set.**