



June, 2020

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Travelers encountered on a bicycle trip from Semnan to Sari, 1967 (see article below)
Photo courtesy of Doug Schermer (Semnan, Shahrud, 1966-67)

From The Field - PCIA Board Newsletter

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

Jalal ad-Din Rumi

June, 2020

Ja-ye Jackie (Jackie's Place)

We Have Work to Do

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

Yesterday I participated in a profound exercise that leaves me almost without words, but that generated a depth of emotion and compassion that I can only try to bring into my life going forward. At my church service, in place of a prayer, we

were instructed to take 8 minutes and 46 seconds of silence, the length of time a policeman held his knee on George Floyd's neck as he pressed the life out of him. We were to breathe in suffering and breathe out compassion. I can only say that this affected me as deeply as anything I can remember. As I began to experience just how long 8 minutes and 46 seconds really is, I felt grief, outrage, and despair, but also compassion for all of us, our entire country and indeed our small world, going through this dark passage together. Perhaps many of you have also had the opportunity to do this.

In the last few days, I have attended several virtual webinars on racial justice and have felt my own awareness expanding. I am acutely aware that in my privileged bubble, I have not felt the challenges that people of color must navigate every day. My task now is just to listen and learn.

Here are a few of my takeaways in what will be, for me, a lifelong process:

- In a Town Hall with my Congressman, an Oregon State Senator, and the president of the Urban League of Portland, I heard about bills being introduced at both the state and national levels to begin to move toward a more just system, albeit baby steps, but steps nevertheless. I also learned that Ashland, Oregon has, for some time, been calling their police officers [Peace Officers](#). Something to consider.
- In a 2-hour Racial Justice Forum for [National Peace Corps Association](#) affiliate group leaders (PCIA is an affiliate), I heard an eloquent call from NPCA president Glenn Blumhorst for the Peace Corps community to show leadership in line with [Peace Corps' Three Goals](#), its values, and its long history of friendship and peace. We are rooted in equity, justice, and respect, and this makes us, by definition, changemakers. We are now being called to act strongly and decisively. We can, we must become more engaged and proactive. NPCA will be offering more online events as part of their work. I will be participating in these as I am able. Over 160 participants from affiliate groups all over the country joined in the discussion on what groups can do. It's easier for a geographic group, which has a physical community,

to take group action. The country of service groups, such as PCIA, are challenged by having widely dispersed memberships.

PCIA's board will be discussing this issue. The board is interested to hear [your thoughts and responses](#) to this national crisis, this opportunity for self-examination and search for solutions.

Peace,
Jackie

Note: Views expressed in Jackie's Place are Jackie's views alone, and not necessarily those of PCIA. **Letters to the editor** are always welcome.

Member Support

While We Sequester at Home..

By Jackie Spurlock

..staying connected is more important than ever. Check out the following PCIA-sponsored Zoom programs. We'll even help you get connected if you need help!

- **Dooreh-ye Ketaab.** A *dooreh* is a discussion group, and *ketaab* is of course, a book. This is our bi-monthly book club. See all the details above. New members always welcome. [Let us know](#) if you'd like to join us. Grab a copy of the next book and start reading!
- **Iran Issues Group.** Our newest offering, this is 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 conversational skills. Meeting on

the fourth Monday of every month at 5:00 pm PDT. [Let us know](#) if you'd like to join us.

..relations between Iran and the U.S. continue to unfold. Here are a few upcoming free virtual events where you can learn more:

- Tuesday, June 9, 7-8 pm EDT – National Iranian American Council – **Is Iran Weathering the COVID-19 Storm?** Will the coronavirus outbreak be the straw that breaks the back of Iran's economy? How are the Iranian people faring under the multiple crises faced by the country? And what does the crisis mean for U.S.-Iran relations? [Register here.](#)
- Wednesday, June 10, 9 am EDT – Atlantic Council – **Four-month countdown to the expiration of the UN arms embargo on Iran.** How will the world react? Whether the UN arms embargo on Iran expires or is extended will have major implications for the United States' partners, competitors, and the region. [Register here.](#)
- Wednesday, June 10, 5-6 pm EDT – National Peace Corps Association – **Effective Peace Corps Advocacy in the Time of COVID-19.** An interactive webinar with NPCA Advocacy Director Jonathan Pearson. [Register here.](#)
- Friday, June 12, 10-11 am EDT - Middle East Institute - **Writing Covid-19: Leading Middle Eastern Authors Reflect on the Pandemic.** Leading Middle Eastern authors **Elias Khoury** (*Gate of the Sun*), **Azar Nafisi** (*Reading Lolita in Tehran*), and **Ece Temelkuran** (*Women Who Blow on Knots*) will reflect on how the Covid-19 pandemic is re-shaping the world we live in with a focus on the Middle East. [Register here.](#)
- Monday, June 15, 7-8:30 pm EDT – Massachusetts Peace Action – **The Case Against Sanctions.** A growing body of research shows that economic sanctions have dire consequences for human populations, causing many deaths — sometimes more than armed conflicts — and increases in preventable disease. Experts argue that they violate international law. Studies show that they are generally not effective in achieving desired results. In this webinar, we will learn how economic sanctions work and

explore what can be done to curtail their use and attenuate their effect on human lives. [Register here.](#)

..update your Persian cooking skills with these online cooking classes:

- A free 5-part email series to help you master Persian and Mediterranean cuisine. You've gotta love the name of this website - Unicorns in the Kitchen! [Register here.](#)
- A Zoom class being offered "for a donation", a fundraiser hosted by Seattle-Isfahan Sister City Advocacy (SISCA) to benefit food-insecure families and children in the U.S. and Iran. Taught by SISCA board member Omid Roustaei, "The Caspian Chef". Saturday, June 20, 10:00 am PDT. [More information and registration here.](#)

..get involved with PCIA. We are compiling a list of jobs for members who have time to volunteer with us. We'll share the list soon, but meanwhile, if you've thought about what you could contribute to PCIA, things you'd like to do within the organization, please [let us know!](#) We need you.

Dooreh-ye Ketaab, PCIA's Book Discussion Group

By Jim Goode (Tuysarkan, 1968-71)

Please join us on Zoom, on Wednesday, July 8 for a discussion of *Daughter of Persia*, Sattareh Farmanfarmaian's memoir of growing up in Tehran during the 1920's and '30's. Her father was a leading Iranian figure under Shah Reza Pahlavi. He had 8 wives, and Sattareh had a wonderful childhood raised in the harem. As a young adult she studied at the University of Southern California, then returned home to start the first school of social work in Iran. This is a fascinating look at Iran's 20th century history all the way up through the revolution, through a personal lens.

Here's a look at our discussion titles through the end of 2020:

July 8—Sattareh Farmanfarman, with Dona Munker, *Daughter of Persia* (Professor Nasrin Rahimieh, UC Irvine, will lead the discussion)

September 9—Jay Crook, *Ambling Through Life**

November 11, Carole Jerome, *The Man in the Mirror* (discussion leader TBD) Note: This book is out of print and an affordable copy may be hard to find. We suggest you start looking for your copy now! And if you are in touch with Carole Jerome, could you please **let us know**?

* Indicates author will participate in book discussion

All dates are Wednesdays. Meeting time is always 5pm Pacific Time (8pm Eastern). Meetings are held on Zoom.

Questions? Suggestions for 2021 discussion titles? Email **Jim** or **Jackie**.

If you have not yet attended a Dooreh, please ask **Doug Schermer** (Semnan, 1966-67) to add you to the Zoom list. If you have been a member of previous Dooreh discussions, we have you in the list, you're good!

Historian Report

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

PCIA's database has names of about 75 volunteers that have no group association. Perhaps you recognize some of the names listed here from G to P. If so, contact me at genna@peacecorpsiran.org

Giovanello	Joseph	Lehman	Joanna
Giusti	John	Leonard	Dave
Grubbs	Mary	Litow	Joseph
Hansink	Richard	Lynch	Tom

Herschfield	Steven and Susan	Martin	Steven
Hoenig	Leo	Miltenberger	Edward
Johnson	Stuart	Mouhibian	Hagop (Jack)
Johnson	Lane	Mowbray	James
Johnston	Judith	Murphy	David
Kelly	Lawrence		
Klein	Siegfried	Parman	Kathryn
Kuhr	Harriet	Peterson	Kathleen
Lamperski	David	Pikul	Mary Jo

I continue to research and write the history of Peace Corps Iran, a chronological record of groups that served from 1962-76. If you would like your experiences to be included, now is a good time to [contact me](#) to arrange the best way to collaborate. For a balanced history, examples of all types of experiences need telling—do not be afraid to offer your unique story.

Board News

PCIA Business

Message from Board Member Kathleen MacLeod (Tehran, Gorgan, 1964-66)

The **Publication Distribution Task Force** is looking for a volunteer to create a list of organizations to whom to promote our publications, including *From the Field*, *Advocacy Bulletin*, *KhabarNameh*, and books written by PCIA members. We need contact information for Middle East Studies Departments, World Affairs Councils, Rotary Clubs, local RPCV groups, and others. Someone who likes to do computer searches and is looking for diversion during COVID-19, should contact Task Force Chair, [Kathleen MacLeod](#).

Message from Board Member Doug Schermer (Semnan, 1966-67)

New Website Under Construction

Construction crews are currently busy building a new website for PCIA. It will have a new, modern look with enhanced features and content. Ribbon cutting will be sometime in the fall. Doug Schermer, webmaster, is working on structural elements, while Jackie Spurlock is leading a team of writers to provide informative content.

Suggestions for what you would like to see on the website can be sent to [Doug](#) and/or [Jackie](#).

Member News

Regarding This Month's Photo..

By Doug Schermer (Semnan, Shahrud, 1966-67)

The four volunteers living in Semnan in 1967 made careful plans for Now Ruz. We would bicycle over the Alborz Mountains and spend a few days on the shore of the Caspian, a green respite from the brown Dasht-e Kavir. We had a map showing a road from Semnan to Shahmirzad to Sari. We had bicycles, sleeping bags, and food. I also brought my camera. It promised to be a great adventure. What could possibly go wrong?!

Read the full story on page 6 of the NoRuz 2017 edition of KhabarNameh. [Click here.](#)

We Get Mail

National Peace Corps Association

- NPCA and its President, Glenn Blumhorst, released [this statement](#) on 5/31, in response to the national crisis concerning racial injustice. Calling it a moral

issue, the statement draws heavily on the words of Sargent Shriver, who said:

"The Peace Corps is proof that deeply committed individuals can have a profound impact on the most difficult and intransigent of problems. Fuller proof is found in the civil rights movement."

- NPCA is leading the Peace Corps community in responding to this national crisis. One tool they have created for us is [this portal](#) for emailing our members of Congress. Give it a try!

Peter Bradley (Mashhad, 1965-67)

The Covid-19 pandemic has reminded several PCIA members about their experiences when Iran was dealing with cholera. Here is one by Peter Bradley.

Click to read it.

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.

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.

Find Us on Facebook

For some time, we have had a lively **Facebook group**, now at about 350 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. 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 there. Invite your friends too!

We Accept Donations

Supporting PCIA with your donations is crucial to our success because we don't charge dues. Donations support our biannual conferences (for example, the recent one in [San Diego, CA in October, 2019](#)), 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 an (optional) check. We are grateful.

Donate with [mail-in donation form](#).

Donate with [PayPal](#).

PCIA Publications

- ***KhabarNameh***, PCIA's official e-newsletter is published in February, June, and October. All PCIA members receive it. You may become a member [here](#). Back issues may be found [here](#). Editor [Joan Gaughan](#) (Lahijan, Rasht, 1964-66).
 - ***From the Field*** is the board's monthly e-newsletter. It is emailed to all members during the first weekend of every month. Back issues may be found [here](#). Editor [Jackie Spurlock](#) (Abadeh, Riz/Zarrinshahr, 1974-76).
 - ***Advocacy Bulletin***, covering Iran relations, opinion, analysis, and commentary, is published monthly and emailed to all members in the third week of the month. You may become a member [here](#). You may sign up for the Bulletin only [here](#). Back issues may be found [here](#). Editor [Paul Barker](#) (Bidokht, Shiraz, Tehran, 1971-76).
 - ***Action Alerts*** are sent out in response to urgent situations as they arise. Unlike the above three newsletters, *Action Alerts* are sent only to those who have requested them. If you would like to be added to our *Action Alert* mailing list, [please email us](#). Include your name and ask to be added to the *Action Alerts* list.
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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, [print this form](#), fill it out, and mail to the address on the form.

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.

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*

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

We invite you to share your thoughts on anything in this newsletter in our Facebook group or by [responding](#) to the editor.

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.

PCIA	Board	Members
Jeanette Gottlieb , President	(Noshahr, Hamadan,	1965-67)
Jackie Spurlock , Vice-President;	Dooreh Co-leader; <i>From the Field</i> Editor	(Abadeh, Riz/Zarrinshahr, 1974-76)
Ed Seiders , Treasurer	(Noshahr, Chalus,	1967-69)
Carolyn Yale , Secretary	(Shiraz,	1974-75)
Doug Schermer	(Semnan,	1966-67)
John Holehan	(Mashhad,	1967-71)
John Krauskopf (Ahwaz, Kermanshah, Arak, Babolsar,		1965-69)
John Salamack , Iran Issues Discussion Group Leader	(Bojnurd,	1965-67)
Kathleen MacLeod	(Tehran, Gorgan,	1964-66)
Paul Barker , <i>Advocacy Bulletin</i> Editor	(Bidokht, Shiraz, Tehran,	1971-76)
Skip Auld	(Borujerd,	1973-74)

Other	PCIA	Leaders
Genna Wangsness , Historian	(Shiraz, Tehran,	1965-71)
Jim Goode , Dooreh Co-leader	(Tuysarkan,	1968-71)
Joan Gaughan , <i>KhabarNameh</i> Editor	(Lahijan, Rasht,	1964-66)

About this email

You have received this email because you are a member of [Peace Corps Iran Association](#) or have an interest in Iran. If you do not wish to receive future issues of *From the Field*, please use the unsubscribe link in the footer.

Comments

We welcome your thoughts and feedback. Please submit to jackie@peacecorpsiran.org.

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