



**November, 2020**

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**East Meets West. Ghom.**  
Watercolor painting by Marilyn Shayegan (Tehran, 1970-72)

## 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

November, 2020

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

## **Life Goes On, Here and There**

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

As we enter a new era in American politics and in our country's history, may we all turn in the direction of healing, of respect, of racial justice and equality, and of diplomacy in our international relations. May we increase our efforts to stem the catastrophic effects of climate change. And regardless of our political leanings, may we begin to mend the dangerously torn fabric of American society. Before I retired from public library work, I was involved with bringing community members together at the library for civic engagement. Through a quarterly program called Forum @ the Library, citizens deliberated with each other on issues of local and national interest. Nowadays I am following the work of an organization called [Living Room Conversations](#), whose website states that "healing divides starts with conversation". Their conversation guides on dozens of different topics facilitate connection between people despite their differences. For me, the idea is not to change anybody's mind, but simply to hear them and allow them to hear me in an open, nonthreatening manner. In this way, we build respect, understanding, and even friendship. Just what we want to do with the Iranian people, by the way. And when someone feels they are being heard, they are more willing to open their own mind and listen. The process leads to an informed electorate, which leads to better citizenship.

On a different note, did you know you can send flowers to someone you know and love in Iran? Despite the sanctions, I recently sent flowers to a former student of mine who lives in Shiraz. She is struggling with the recent death of her daughter in an auto accident near Abadan. Her daughter left a two-year-old little girl as well as her husband, who has now moved to Shiraz so the whole family can help raise the child. Their pain is heartbreaking. Through the help of an Iranian friend in Canada I located a company in Sweden called **Golbazar** (for English, click on USD, which stands for "US dollars", in the upper right corner) and was able to purchase flowers from them using PayPal. Golbazar then ordered the flowers from a florist in

Shiraz and had them delivered, all within just a couple of days. The family was deeply touched.

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

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

We just finished another year of the Dooreh! Current Dooreh members recently completed a survey to select the titles to be read in 2021. We are now compiling the results and scheduling the discussions. We'll publish the new list for you in next month's newsletter, so you'll have time to procure and read January's book. Look forward to a great lineup for 2021!

If you have not yet attended a Dooreh but would like to, please send email to [Jim Goode](#) or [Doug Schermer](#) to be added to the Dooreh mailing list.

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### **Peace Corps Iran Documentary Gets Off Ground**

Previously reported plans for a documentary film about the work of the Peace Corps in Iran are progressing. Instead of surveying the entire membership, the screening survey will be sent to a subset of the membership. A smaller number of responses makes it easier to collect the in-depth qualitative information needed. If you want to receive a survey about contributing visual materials or interviews, please contact [Bill Brandon](#) (Shiraz, 1964-66) or [Jackie Spurlock](#) using the subject line "Survey Request." The award-winning film-maker, writer and actor [Abbas Motlagh](#) is responsible for the artistic decisions.

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## **Board News**

- **Strategic Planning - Status update**

PCIA's existing strategic plan does not address the issue of succession planning other than discussing the distribution of PCIA assets when the organization closes shop. The current membership is an aging body of Peace Corps volunteers that served in Iran between 44 and 58 years ago. The board sees value in developing a "successor" group that would continue to promote Iran-America relations and issues and, beyond that, Middle East peace, and world peace built around the Peace Corps vision of 60 years ago.

To accomplish this goal we started a strategic planning process to find a professional consultant to assist our efforts. Following an extensive proposal solicitation process, the PCIA Board has contracted with [Telesto Strategy LLP](#) to develop our Strategic Plan. The contracted services to be provided include the following:

1. Examine PCIA's current condition, activities and administrative structure.
2. Perform a comprehensive SWOT analysis by examining the *strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats* to the current condition, activities and structure of PCIA. The SWOT should be conducted with the participation of the membership through interviews or surveys designed and implemented by Telesto.
3. Survey PCIA membership to ascertain a preferred direction for the organization over the next ten years. Develop a succession plan that achieves the desired outcome.
4. Develop a transition Strategic Plan based on the analysis of elements 1 through 3 above. Determine what is needed to support any recommended or desired changes.

Members can expect to be included in the process by receiving a digital survey (see element 3 above) sometime early in the new year.

For additional information or questions about PCIA's strategic planning work, please contact [John Holehan](#) (Mashhad, 1967-71).

- **Conference Update**

The board continues to consider options for PCIA's next conference, with the goal of deciding very soon. Members will be kept informed in this newsletter and on our website as decisions are made.

For questions or comments about PCIA's next conference, please contact [Jeanette Gottlieb](#).

- **New Website – Search for Your Friends**

In addition to interesting content and photos about Iran and PCIA, our new website includes a member directory. You can search for other members by first name, last name, last name in Iran, group number, training site, or years of service. However, you must log in as a PCIA member to access this feature. Here's how:

1. Go to [www.peacecorpsiran.org](http://www.peacecorpsiran.org)
2. Enter your email address in the MEMBER LOGIN field.
3. Be sure to use the same email address Jackie used to send you this issue of *From the Field*.
4. If you do not yet have a password, click on "Forgot my password" to receive a new password.

5. Change that password to one you can remember.

To search the directory, on the home page click on the WHO WE ARE tab. Then click on MEMBER DIRECTORY. In the quick search field, enter the name you want to search for. (Just for fun, try searching for yourself!)

For further information or questions about PCIA's online member directory, please contact [Doug Schermer](#).

- **Advocacy**

1. In October, PCIA signed on to **this letter** to Secretaries Steve Mnuchin (Treasury) and Mike Pompeo (State) urging a worldwide temporary general license to allow coronavirus-related humanitarian trade to flow to U.S. sanctioned-countries, including Iran.
2. Immediately after election results became clear, PCIA began drafting a letter to President-elect Biden congratulating him on his victory and urging him to give top priority to making good on his commitment to rejoin the JCPOA, stressing that this must be done on the basis of compliance-for-compliance.

For further information or questions about PCIA's advocacy work, please contact [Paul Barker](#).

- **Fundraiser - INTERNATIONAL CALENDAR available from RPCVs of Madison, WI**

For 33 years, [RPCVs of Wisconsin-Madison](#) have published an [International Calendar](#) highlighting the work of Peace Corps Volunteers around the world. Sales

have raised more than \$1.4 million to support development projects. Learn more about the Madison RPCV group and view next year's calendar [here](#).

This year, PCIA will join in this project for the first time. Here is how it works:

1. Go to <http://www.rpcvcalendar.org/shop/> to place your order. (They also have notecards and peace cards.)
2. At check out, use this discount code **PC4PCIA**.
3. If you use your credit card to pay for your purchase, PCIA will receive 40% of the proceeds.
4. Orders are shipped immediately via USPS.

Thank you for supporting this RPCV project.

For further information or questions about PCIA's calendar fundraiser, please contact [Doug Schermer](#).

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## **We Get Mail**

- I loved the photos of the [Peace Corps Commemorative](#) in Washington D.C [FTF, October 2020] Thank you for the great story. I hope to get there to see it soon (when we're finally past all this Covid stuff). Peace, Jim Heideman (Mianeh, 1974-76)
- Regarding this ***Los Angeles Times* op-ed**
  - **The new website** is appealing and easy to navigate. Thank you for keeping the memory of Peace Corps Iran alive and well! In case you haven't seen the recent *Los Angeles Times* op-ed on what the Peace Corps meant to an Iranian family, I'm sharing it here. Please

take good care! --- Jasamin Rostam Kolayi, PhD, Cal State Fullerton (Oral historian and friend of PCIA)

- **This is an important article** for the Peace Corps and for immigration. You may have met Hassan Moghaddam, the father in this article and pictured on the left in the photo, at one of our reunions/conferences. He and his second wife Monir are dear friends of ours and great supporters of Peace Corps Iran! The Moghaddams were dear friends of ours in Iran. They were immensely helpful to us. Thanks to the article we are now in touch with Behrooz and hopefully, soon will be with his mother Farideh. --- Chris and Bill Speake (Rezaiyeh/Urmia, 1964-66)
- Two questions from **Noel Siver** (Shiraz, 1967-70):
  - Are there any PCIA members who served in Tabas? Two friends and I spent a day there in March 1970 and took a lot of photographs. In 1978 the town was devastated by an earthquake. I have made a photo book of the time we spent in Tabas. Ideally I would like to donate a copy of the photo book to a library or school in Tabas, or to the mayor's office, but do not know how to go about doing so. Any suggestions would be gratefully received.
  - In connection with three large cat claws (possibly Persian leopard from the vicinity of Bamou mountain northeast of Shiraz) that are set into metal mounts and would have been used as amulets, I have been in touch with an Iranian in the Department of Zoology at Oxford University. He is looking for photographs, diaries, reports, etc. from the 1960s and 1970s on nature and wildlife in Iran. Do you know of anyone in PCIA who might have such material? The only photograph I have is of a pelican in Bagh-e Golshan in Tabas.

To respond to either of Noel Siver's questions, send email here:

[noelsiver2@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:noelsiver2@yahoo.co.uk)

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## **While We Sequester at Home...**

**By Jackie Spurlock**

Here are some upcoming events you can enjoy in the comfort and safety of your own home.

- **We Are Many.** A film by Amir Amirani, available to rent on the National Iranian American Council's website. [Read about it and view the trailer](#) here. \$7
- [Farhang Foundation](#) and the [UCLA Film & Television Archive](#) are pleased to present filmmaker [Ehsan Khoshbakht's](#) illuminating essay film [Filmfarsi](#). Available for streaming November 13-19. \$10
- **[US and Iranian Strategies for a Biden Administration.](#)** Tuesday, November 17, 10:00 am (Eastern time) Webinar presented by the [Middle East Institute](#).
- **[Renewing Transatlantic Strategy on Iran.](#)** Wednesday, November 18, 9:30 am (Eastern time) Report presented by the [Atlantic Council's Future of Iran Initiative](#).
- **[Discussing Contemporary Iranian Art.](#)** Thursday, November 26, 17.30 (London time, GMT) Webinar presented by the [Iran Heritage Foundation](#).

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

Check out [AmazonSmile](#). It's a simple and automatic way to support PCIA, at no cost to you. When you shop at [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com), you'll find the exact same prices and shopping

experience as at Amazon.com, with the added bonus that Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price to PCIA.

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## Submit Your Photos

### Message from Jackie

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

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## Find Us on Facebook

For some time, we have had a lively **Facebook group**, now at almost 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 there. 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 (for example, the last 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.

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## 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 just the Bulletin [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, [click here](#). You will find that you must first join the National Peace Corps Association (it's free), and in doing that you will 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

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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*

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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.**

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**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)

Kathleen MacLeod, Secretary (Tehran, Gorgan, 1964-66)

Doug Schermer (Semnan, 1966-67)

John Holehan (Mashhad, 1967-71)

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

John Salamack (Bojnurd, 1965-67)

Marie Mitchell (Mahallat, 1974-75)

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

Skip Auld (Mahallat, 1973-74)

### **Other PCIA Leaders**

Genna Wangsness, Historian (Shiraz, Tehran, 1965-71)

Jim Goode, Dooreh Co-leader (Tuysarkan, 1968-71)

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

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### **About this email**

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](mailto:jackie@peacecorpsiran.org).