

# Buralarda

*The Newsletter of Arkadaşlar, Friends of Turkey*



Number 31, October 2010

## T-1 Reunion: On the Yol Again

By Peggy Hanson



In Gaziantep - Back row left to right: Meredith Park, George Park, Steve Allen, Jim Hanson, Joan Hammer Grant, and Linda Grom (wife of Terry Nichols) Front row: Judith Pritchard, Barbara Allen, Warren Pritchard, and Peggy Hanson

Reunions are always tricky. When it's been almost half a century since you first met, reunions can get downright strange. We see each other as 22 still. Sort of. Some of us still act 22, or try to.

Five of the Turkey 1's (Joan Hammer Grant, Warren Pritchard, George Park, Steve Allen and Peggy Hanson), plus spouses, met in Istanbul on September 8 for a tour around eastern Turkey. Slightly jet-lagged, we landed in Gaziantep a day later and headed on to Urfa, Diyarbakır, Mardin, Tatvan, Van, Doğubeyazıt, Kars, Rize and Trabzon. From there, we fly back to İstanbul for a few more delicious days.

I write this piece from Mardin, with the trip unfinished, for the sake of Buralarda's deadline!

## Cumhuriyet Bayram Dinners – 2010

By Sandy Anderson

This is an exciting time to be convening our Bayram dinners, mainly because 2011 is the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Peace Corps, and activities around the country will begin in March. Arkadaşlar will sponsor our own Global Reunion here in DC when Peace Corps holds its celebration – Sept. 22-25, 2011. So now is the time to start reconnecting and thinking about what we might want to do in our separate localities, possibly with other RPCV groups.

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I want to be sure to mention that our trip began on the last day of Ramazan, landed us in Gaziantep on Şeker Bayram, and took us through some serious PKK country enroute from Urfa to Mardin on the day of the referendum to reform the Constitution. Also, we were here for the US basketball victory over Turkey in İstanbul, but that didn't make waves in Mardin.

Everywhere we go in Turkey, President Obama is highly praised. In Mardin, I spoke with Kurdish, Syrian, Christian, and Turkish shopkeepers while having tea and perusing their wares. The Christian guy asked me if Obama were Christian or Muslim. The Kurdish one said, "Maybe he's so nice because he's a Muslim?" Turks often mention the old saying, "Hepimiz insamz...Obama understands that."

We are amazed at the development of Turkey's southeast since the construction of the Ataturk Dam on the Euphrates just a few years ago. The government has gone all out in converting what we remembered as

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on page 2*

Even with these plans for next year, this is again our chance to get together now, share stories, pictures and updates; and taste the delectable delights of one of the three major cuisines of the world – of course the best.

Below are the dinner locations and sponsors. Contact them to say you're coming, and ask if they need help!  
Afiyet Olsun!

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## On the Yol Again

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a poor, neglected, dry part of the country into fields of corn and wheat, olive groves, vineyards, and four-lane highways. Electric wires hum along the road near the border with Syria. In Kızıltepe, which has allegedly been a hotbed of PKK activity, we saw normal quiet activity for a Sunday and a new hospital being built. Yes, there was a water cannon strategically placed at an intersection, but no one manned it and we saw no military presence. We were interested to see some young women walking along the street in jeans and short-sleeved shirts, no head covering.

As we all now know, the referendum passed by a huge margin, virtually taking the military out of government, where it has been since Atatürk's day. It has some good elements, such as banning discrimination against women.

We are reveling in the famous fare of Antep and Urfa: green, plump pistachios; glorious baklava; kebabs to die for. Our hotels have been romantic: in Gaziantep a stone house built when Andrew Jackson was President boasting delightful courtyard with trees with birds and a fountain (minus water). In Urfa and Mardin, we lived in old *kervansarays*, wending our way down dark passages to small but comfortable rooms (except for the Pritchards, who had a palatial suite two nights!) and enjoying cool breezes on the patio. At each new hotel, Meredith Park takes out pieces of paper for us to draw lots for rooms—a tense moment every night.

Besides hotels and food and Turkish hospitality on all sides, highlights so far have included the castle and museum of Zeugma mosaics saved when Atatürk dam was built in Gaziantep; Harran, the town of beehive construction south of Urfa, the ancient city of Urfa in general, and especially the new excavations at Göbekli Tepe on a hill outside the city, where temple construction apparently took place 11 to 12,000 years ago! Think of it: 6000 years before Stonehenge, 8000 years before the Hittites...

The top of Göbekli Tepe attracts breezes that seem to blow from all directions and affords breathtaking views across the plain of Harran in one direction and mesas and valleys in the other. It is about 5 percent excavated, they think. In five years, the dirt road may well be paved and tourists allowed close to the etchings of animals on great stone plinths.

## Haydi Arkadaşlar

By Mike Jewell



My message to you for this edition is: first, get to a Bayram dinner late this month (see Sandy Anderson's listing in this edition) and second; set aside September 22-25, in 2011 to be in Washington DC for the Peace Corps 50th year global reunion. Respond early, once we get details out to you regarding this once in a lifetime weekend!!

Our membership has grown slightly this year to just over 400. Please remember to renew your membership in January. Finally, don't forget; we support some excellent projects in Turkey that would benefit from your contribution!

Hosca Kal,  
Mike Jewell

Bayramınız kutlu olsun!

We met the bekçis of the place, on whose land the ruins were found. Good, sturdy Anatolians with that genuineness that shines through the village brogue.

This afternoon we hoped to visit an Anatolian Artisans project here in Mardin, where women are trained to make a living making items that preserve the old Turkish patterns, but alas, we couldn't find it. We did go into a silver shop run by the Handicapped Society of Turkey and picked up lots of beautiful filigree silver presents.

Things we are looking forward to on this trip: a stop in Midyat, silver making capital of Turkey in the old days; another stop in Hasankeyf, which may or may not be flooded by a new dam; Lake Van and Akdamar Adası; Mount Ararat; the ancient Armenian capital, Ani; Georgian churches between Artvin and the Black Sea; the wonderful Greek monastery at Sümela near Trabzon; and one night in an Alpine valley in the Kaçkar Mountains.

For now, we are content to sit drinking tea on a terrace high above the plains stretching to Syria, shop for filigree silver at a cooperative that employs handicapped artisans, and contemplate how lucky we are to be back with the friends we knew *ta*, so long ago. In 2012, it will be our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary as Turkey I.

The good thing is, we don't feel a day older.

## Cumhuriyet Bayram Dinners – 2010: Locations and Contacts

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**MAINE/NEW HAMPSHIRE:** Sunday, October 24, 1:00, Mediterranean Grill, 10 School Street, Freeport, 207-865-1688.

**MASSACHUSETTS/NEW ENGLAND:** Sunday, October 31, 1:00, Brookline Family Restaurant, 305 Washington Street, Brookline, 617-277-4466.

**NEW YORK CITY:** Sunday, October 31, 12:00-3:00, Sahara's Turkish Cuisine, 513 Second Avenue, NYC (between 28<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup> Streets), 212-532-7601. \$40 - cash bar.

**WASHINGTON, DC:** Sunday, October 31, 5:30-8:00, at Kazan Restaurant, 6813 Redmond Drive, McLean, VA, 703-734-1960. \$45.

**NORTH CAROLINA/SOUTH CAROLINA:** Saturday, October 30, 6:00, at Something Different Restaurant, 1512-F Zoo Parkway, Asheboro, NC, 336-626-5707, <http://70.61.113.169:83/>.

**FLORIDA:** Saturday, October 30, 12:00, at the Anatolia Restaurant, 7600 Dr. Phillips Blvd, #108, Orlando, FL, 407-352-6766.

**OHIO:** Saturday, October 30, 1:00 at the Istanbul Turkish Grill, 2505 Professor Ave. (in Tremont), Cleveland, 216-298-4450, [www.grillistanbul.com](http://www.grillistanbul.com). Order from menu and bar.

**OREGON:** Sunday, November 7, 4:00, potluck.

**WASHINGTON:** Saturday, October 30, 4:00, potluck.

For more information on any of these dinners, including how to RSVP, contact [TurkeyDost@aol.com](mailto:TurkeyDost@aol.com).

## From the Listserv – a note from 1909

As promised, we editors are checking the listserv for unusual or especially interesting items posted by members. Dave Hopkins, Turkey I English teacher, Gaziantep and Giresun, produced one of our recent favorites:

"I have in my retirement spent some time considering my ancestors, as I am sure many of us have done.

One of them, a fellow named Alonzo Thornton, started a diary in 1861 and kept it going until about 1910. He lived in way upstate New York, a few miles south of the St. Lawrence River, in a village called De Peyster (not too far from Canton, where Saint Lawrence College is now located). A farming community largely and, as I had thought, pretty well out of the mainstream of civilization.

In perusing the diary recently, I ran across this entry he made in April, 1909:

*Sun. April 25 - Cloudy and cold all day. Froze again last night and today it began to rain and it is raining as I write this evening. Constantinople has fallen and Abdul Hamid is dethroned and the new government has been installed by the*

*Constitutionalists. It will now be a progressive government. "The Sick Man of Turkey" has been dead for some time but he did not know it. All that was needed was to push him over and a new ruler put in his place. He put up a bold fight to save his crown but most of his army was disloyal to him and after only six hours of hard fighting he had to capitulate. It was a needed change and all nations think it is a move for the best. Turkey may now grow into a new and modern nation and one that the world will have to reckon with. Turkey may profit by the example of Japan. Turkey has the material, the brains and maybe the spirit to make much of itself. It may go in a single jump by the upward work of what other nations have been centuries in doing. We can no longer speak of Turkey as a backward nation.*

I am impressed, in various ways:

- \* that even in 1909, before there were cars and electricity and such in De Peyster, the world was pretty well wired together, even in upstate NY; and
- \* that years before Atatürk, and a century before today, Alonzo got it so right; and
- \* that Turkey did indeed have the spirit, and did indeed go in a single jump by the work that has taken other nations centuries to accomplish -- and that they did not follow the example of Japan, at least militarily.

My thought for the day."



## **Buralarda**

The Newsletter of Arkadaşlar,  
Friends of Turkey

*We're on the Web!*

*Visit us at:*

*[www.arkadaslar.info/](http://www.arkadaslar.info/)*

*"Buralarda" means "hereabouts" or "somewhere around here" in Turkish.  
It comes from an early dialogue in some of our Turkish language lessons:*

*"Buralarda bir benzinci var mı?"*

*("Is there a gas station somewhere around here?")*