

Buralarda

The Newsletter of Arkadaşlar, Friends of Turkey



Number 29, February 2010

Researching Memories of Peace Corps Volunteers in Turkey

By Dr. Zafer Parlak



Dr. Zafer Parlak with his students from Izmir University

Until a few years ago, what I happened to know about the Turkey PCV's was based on the 40-year-old Cold War rhetoric that disregarded and underestimated the idealism of young people and the power of individuals to make a difference.

I was totally ignorant of the enormous impact that their 2-3 year experience in Turkey had on the volunteers. I had never thought of the PCVs in Turkey as individuals until I read the text of a speech, *Reunions are not for Sissies*, by RPCV Albert Nekimken (TEFL, 1966-68, Tokat): "We may be on our way to becoming a mere historical footnote, but we will go out singing *Zeki Müren* songs, quoting *Aziz Nesin*, eating *baklava* and fighting the misinformation spread by all those who either don't know, or who don't want to know Turkey as we do. We leave it to history to judge who was brainwashed by whom."

It was Nekimken's words that urged me to present a paper at a cultural studies seminar at Ege University. I felt that the volunteers had to be given a voice, and that their stories and experiences had to be recorded. I decided to contact as many RPCVs as possible and record their stories, before I, too, become a footnote in the dusty pages of history. The popularity of my presentations led me to my book project, and the invaluable support of the Board of Directors of Arkadaşlar, who trusted my motives, has facilitated my research.

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So far about 240 Arkadaşlar have responded to my questionnaire. I owe a lot to all Arkadaşlar who have trusted me and devoted their time to my efforts for a fair representation of their more than forty-year old experiences in Turkey. *Hepinize çok teşekkür ederim. Ellerinize sağlık.*

Every letter and e-mail that I have received so far has given me new insight about the Peace Corps experience in Turkey. I have met and become *arkadaş* with a lot of PCVs, which is a great honor for me. I met and interviewed Kenneth Hill, Ron-Cathy-Sevim McCutcheon, Linda Scheffer, Betsy Çakır, Malcolm Pfunder and Marie Zeller in Turkey. I am especially grateful to the Arkadaşlar who shared their pictures, memoirs, diaries, personal letters and unpublished novels with me.

Despite the excitement and the overall joy it gives, the survey can sometimes be doleful. Deaths of John Hurd Willett and Carol Kocan, and Richard M. Schwartz, who had confided in me, saddened me deeply.

John had written about his interest in Turkey as follows: "Yes, I am still very interested in Turkey, especially its politics and literature. I often go to Turkish restaurants in Paris, where I live, and discuss current events in Turkey with the customers and personnel. Certain songs I used to hear on the bus rides, especially by Erol Büyükburç, have stayed with me to this day. I often log on to a Turkish music web site and listen to the songs. And when I meet Turks travelling abroad, I feel as if I've found a compatriot."

Sayın Arkadaşlar

By Mike Jewell



At the first 2010 meeting of the Arkadaşlar Board last month, I was struck by two things: our good fortune to have the continued energy and time of Board members to help sustain Arkadaşlar, and the vitality of our community as evidenced by year end 2009 membership at 395, plus the traffic on our listserv and website.

We have a busy year ahead. We urge you to renew your membership early, yani, bugün, to facilitate our planning by our April meeting for support of the projects to which we contribute.

A major effort this year will be organizing for the Global Peace Corps reunion here in DC for the 50th Anniversary of the Peace Corps to be held September 22 through the 25th of 2011! Those 85 or so of you who attended the last reunion in 1995 may remember what a fun and busy time that was. If you are interested in helping plan group-related or overall events, particularly DC area folks, please contact Sandy Anderson at turkeydost@aol.com. But be sure and mark those dates to come join us.

Yeni Yılınız Kutlu Olsun!

Mike Jewell
President



Dr. Zafer Parlak and family

Zafer Parlak is an assistant professor in the Dept. of American Culture and Literature, Izmir University, Izmir, Turkey.

His areas of interest include US foreign policy, US diplomatic history, American politics, Turkish-American Relations, and the US Peace Corps in Turkey. He is working on a book on the Peace Corps experience in Turkey.

Memories of PC Volunteers

Continued from page 1

Carol remembered her first days in Ereğli, Konya as: *"It was sometimes hard to walk the line between two worlds. We would sometimes be followed by little boys while walking down the street, with them yelling "Alman! Alman!.. At first, feeling isolated and wondering what I had committed myself to. Being thought by some - a few - as just rich and perhaps immoral Americans (thanks to movies) with some unknown negative reason for being in Turkey."*

And I had an appointment with Richard M Schwartz: *"Next time I'm on my way to Didim, I'll stop by to visit. I'm currently dealing with some health issues but hope to be in Turkey before the end of this year. My last visit was in 2002.....much too long ago."*

They had close friends in Turkey and were able to speak Turkish. May they rest in Peace - *Allah rahmet eylesin.*

Almost all of the former volunteers who answered my survey felt positive about their experiences. Most of them had linguistic and cultural problems which required a long adaptation period. They are still interested in Turkey and Turkish culture. They believe that their contribution to Turkey's development has been positive. Almost all respondents agreed that the activities of the Peace Corps could have been organized better and that they met ungrounded suspicions.

Recently two Ph.D. candidates have contacted me to help them with their dissertations on the Peace Corps. Also, a young film director and I plan to shoot a documentary of the Peace Corps in Turkey, and I have already interviewed some volunteers.

Sayın Arkadaşlar,

As the second chapter of the book will comprise how the PCVs were/are perceived by Turks, I have started surveying the Turks as well. However, it is not easy to find your co-villagers, colleagues and students who remember you. I would be grateful if you provided me with some names, e-mail addresses and phone numbers. Please continue supporting our common project with your stories, pictures and documents.

I expect to complete the book by September, 2010, before the fiftieth anniversary of the Peace Corps. I would be very grateful if you informed other *arkadaşlar* about the project and encourage their participation. I can send you a copy of the questionnaire upon request.

Please remember that you have a house in Izmir, Turkey. **Please contact me at: zafer.parlak@yahoo.com** Saygılarımla,... Dr. Zafer Parlak

Izmir University, Dept. of American Culture and Literature

Land Preserve Donation in Maine Honors Peace Corps

By Joanne Omang, (T-4)

Four Turkey RPCV families have helped keep the Peace Corps in the news in Maine through their donation to a local land conservancy of some wooded acreage that has become a popular hiking area.

Known as the Peace Corps Preserve, the 54-acre parcel runs between a rural road and the Goose River, a meandering stream that is part of the Medomak River watershed in Waldoboro, in mid-coast Maine.

Jordan Scepaniski, Joanne Omang and the late Michael Scholnick, all T-4, and Mary Jo Del Vecchio Good, T-6, along with her husband Byron Good, pooled all their available savings in 1971 to buy the land and an adjacent six acres holding a four-bedroom house, an old barn and a pond. The cost was \$22,500.

Living at the time in Cambridge, Boston and Chicago, they used the place for weekends and vacations, winter and summer, together and separately. They made many improvements in the house but especially loved walking in the pine forest area that bordered Goose River.

"We had lots of great parties there, with spectacular feasts of Turkish food, games in the barn, bonfires on the lawn and ice hockey on the pond," Omang remembered. "Everybody around there called it the Peace Corps house."

The group, all still good friends, sold the house and barn in 2001 and donated the undeveloped land to the Medomak Valley Land Trust, which now protects it as woodland wildlife



Angela Costanza Warner (T-4) and Sally & Dennis Copeland (T-4)
Visit the Peace Corps Preserve in Waldoboro, Maine

habitat. The Central Maine Land Trust seeks to conserve natural, recreational, scenic and traditional land-use values of the Medomak River watershed area. Over the next few years, its volunteers cleared paths through the Peace Corps Preserve along the bubbling river, featuring areas the donors used to call "Sunny Glade" and "Mary Jo's Rocks." With profusions of spring wildflowers, the paths are well used by area residents, mushroom hunters and birdwatchers.

Asked by the land trust to name the donation, the group decided to call it the Peace Corps Preserve to honor the Peace Corps for bringing them together as arkadaşlar in the 1960s. The group said in a joint statement, "Even the Peace Corps would agree that some places just shouldn't be developed."

In Memoriam:

Peggy Sagalewicz (Comeau) Ellig (T-8) died on November 17, 2007 in Santa Fe. Peggy worked in real estate; her husband was Robert Ellig. She had been married to Bob Comeau, and they had a daughter. Peggy taught TEFL in Trabzon.

Gary F. Smith (T-5) died on December 10, 2009 near Portland, OR. He had been married to Julie K. Smith Olson. They worked in Rural CD in Burdur.

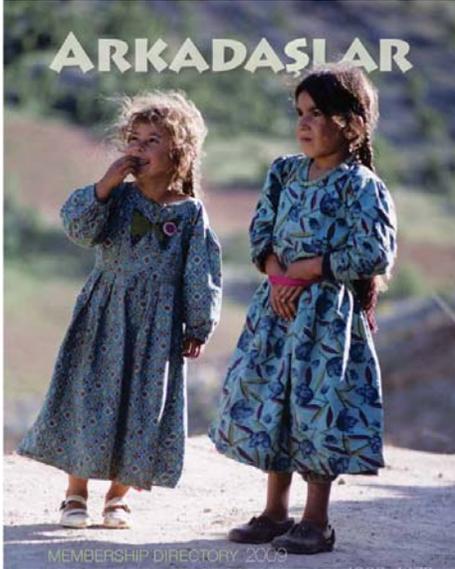
Richard M Schwartz (T-8) had lived in Houston and recently moved to North Carolina. He died September 28, 2009. He taught TEFL in Merzifon.

Ali Yonceova, the first staff member hired for PC-Turkey, died December 11, 2009 in Germany. He worked with the Peace Corps in Ankara 1961-62 and 1966-71.

Therm C Kaldahl (T-4) died on November 6, 2007. He and his wife, Peggy Mokres Kaldahl (T-7), were living in Bismarck, ND. He had taught TEFL in Kars and Denizli, and Peggy was in nursing in Denizli and Ankara.

Unfortunately, Buralarda has only limited space to commemorate the lives of these extraordinary Arkadaşlar. Check the website at www.arkadaslar.info for more information about them.

Renew Your Membership to Receive the New Arkadaşlar Directory



In addition to a complete, updated listing of names and contact information, we have included many stories and pictures in our new 2010 Arkadaşlar Directory, which was published last fall. It features:

- People doing interesting things
- Stories from the past and of more recent times
- How Turkey affected our lives, travel, careers ...

The personal stories and pictures help take us back to our lives in Turkey as well as to more recent experiences based on the friendships we formed. The directory is sent to all members who paid their dues in 2009 or who join us in 2010.

Membership renewal letters and forms were mailed out last fall. If you haven't sent it in, now is a good time to find it, complete it and send it in with a check! You can also find the form and mailing instructions on our website at:

http://www.arkadaslar.info/membership_form.htm

Or mail your \$25 dues check to Linda Scheffer.

Fofu's Kitchen: İskenderun to San Francisco

by Alison "Cindy" Wardle (T-2)

Fotin "Fofu" Onay was our neighbor and dear friend in İskenderun when we were Turkey - 2 English teachers from 1963 to '65 - a loong time ago. We've kept in touch and visited back and forth through the years and the vicissitudes of our lives: Fofu and her husband have recently moved from Flint, Michigan to San Francisco; I married an Italian and have been living in Italy since 1970.

Fofu befriended us right away on our arrival in her neighborhood in İskenderun. She spoke English and was helpful in all sorts of ways, and easily dispelled many moments of discouragement on our part with her highly developed sense of humor and infectious laugh.

My roommates, Margaret Simpson and Judy Johnson, and I were fresh out of college and completely clueless about anything having to do with the kitchen. Though younger than we were, Fofu had had years of experience feeding her widowed father and younger brother and sister. The very frequent hospitality extended by her family did a lot toward keeping us alive and well fed during those two years. It's not hard to imagine how much we appreciated being invited to share frequent meals with Fofu's family. Her dad used to beam around the table at us and say "The more you eat, the happier I am." Well, we must have made that kind man very happy indeed.

:: Red Lentil soup ::

Ingredients

2 cups of red lentils
 1 cup rice
 2 minced onions (you can put as a whole, if you like)
 4 to 5 big carrots
 1 tsp. cumin seeds
 Salt
 Olive oil
 6 or more cups of water

Directions:

Wash the lentils and rice, add water
 Grate the carrots and add to the pot with all the ingredients.
 Cook on slow heat, mixing with a spoon from time to time.
 Add lemon juice and cumin powder to the plates according to taste when serving.
 * You may blend the soup with a mixer after cooking if a thinner consistency is desired.

As Fofu explains it, she started her website "Fofu's Kitchen" to save on phone bills. Her three grown daughters all live on the West Coast of the US, and she was spending too much time and money dictating her recipes to them one by one over the phone, so she set up a website and started posting them online. The dishes include many of those we enjoyed back then, the delicious traditional southern Turkish and Syrian fare she was so good at preparing. Go to her website, www.fofoskitchen.com and see for yourselves... ve afiyet olsun!



Arkadaşlar Projects Make a Difference: C. Erik Olson Memorial Fund at the Hacettepe Pediatric Hospital, Ankara

By Valerie Olson

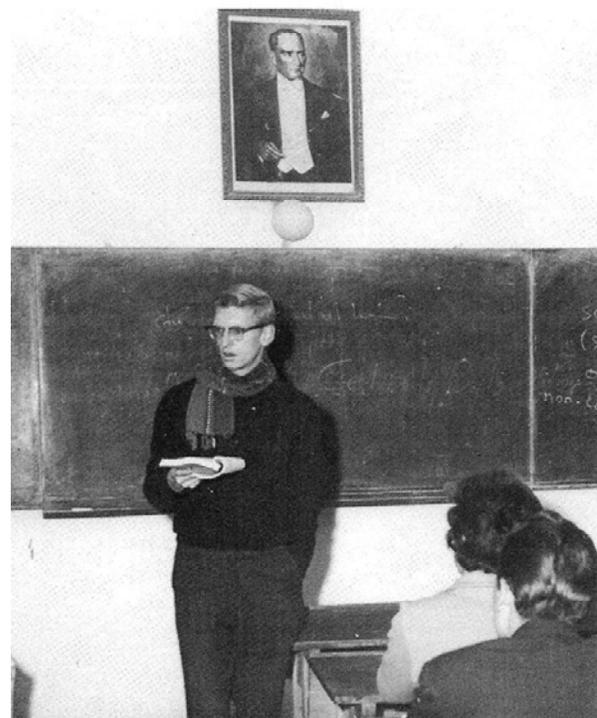
Since 1998 Arkadaşlar has maintained a memorial at Hacettepe Pediatric Hospital in Ankara in memory of my husband, Carl Erik Olson, a Turkey - 1 Volunteer who died in 1996. Gifts from Erik's Turkish friend, Demir Hamami, his father, Carl Marcus Olson, and other family members and friends were originally donated to the Department of Pediatric Neurology to establish the memorial. With these funds, the department was able to purchase vitally needed monitoring equipment to evaluate children with severe epilepsy. Children with epilepsy from all over Turkey come to this hospital department for evaluation. When refractory epilepsy is found, with the help of the monitoring equipment, an epilepsy team evaluates which children should undergo epileptic surgery to relieve their frequent or constant seizures.

In 1998, the laboratory where the monitoring equipment is installed was formally dedicated and marked with a plaque in memory of Erik. I was fortunate to be there for the dedication. A short article in Buralarda reported on this event. When I returned to the U.S., Dave Weinman suggested I tell the Arkadaşlar board of this endeavor, and the board has subsequently supported the laboratory's epilepsy monitoring work with donations in memory of Erik.

The next year, during a Turkey Peace Corps reunion trip to Turkey, some of the RPCVs and I again visited and toured this Pediatric Neurology Department, including the facility which Arkadaşlar supports. We saw the monitoring equipment installed in the sunny rooms where children were being evaluated and prepared for surgery. We met with Dr. Yavuz Renda, then the Dean of the Medical Faculty, to present a check from Arkadaşlar. The department was very grateful.

Since then, there have been other visits by Arkadaşlar members, as well as correspondence and contacts from the present faculty in the department. Our support has been used to repair and maintain the monitoring equipment, to print educational pamphlets for families about common problems in child neurology, such as brief informative texts on convulsions, mental retardation, and epilepsy. They may produce an educational movie about how diseases in child neurology may, if suspected, be detected.

Over the years, Arkadaslar has donated \$13,500 to the C. Erik Olson Memorial Fund at the Hacettepe Pediatric Hospital. After Dr. Renda's retirement, Dr. Banu Anlar now heads the Department. In his latest correspondence, Dr. Anlar states: "There is a lot to do. Your contribution is a boost. It's great to have you, Arkadaşlar."



Erik Olson teaching English in Sivas in 1963.

When Erik returned to the US, he began an academic journey that resulted in his doctorate in biology from Johns Hopkins School of Public Health, and many years of professional service.

When Erik died in 1996, his friend, Demir Hamami, wanted to establish a memorial that would mark Erik's love of Turkey, his fondness for teaching children and his scientific interests. The Memorial Fund at Hacettepe Hospital Pediatric Neurology Unit was the result. It is supported by Arkadaşlar donations.

Cumhuriyet Bayram Dinners Held Around the Country in 2009

Boston: (by Margaret Fearey)

Massachusetts and Connecticut RPCVs and friends gathered at the Family Restaurant (a true Aile Lokantası) in Brookline, MA, to celebrate Bayram. We were a small but congenial group and truly enjoyed catching up with one another and Turkey, as well as enjoying the fabulous börek, yaprak dolması, mercimek çorbası, İskender, sütlaç, etc.

Luckily, John Clark (T-4) was in town for a visit from Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. Gene Blanchard, another T-4 was in attendance, as were two T-5s, Suzanne Rom and Mady Kenny. Lynn Maichle (T-16) and Margaret Fearey (T-12) joined the group, as well as Priscilla Murray (T-15), Curtis Runnels and Kathy Huber. Curtis has been to Turkey many times in an archeological capacity, and Kathy intends to visit in future.

İnşallah gelecek sene yine görüşürüz!

New York: (by Bob McCord)

The 2009 Bayram luncheon for the New York metropolitan area was held on Sunday, November 1 at the Turkuaz Restaurant at 2637 Broadway at 100th Street. About 30 Arkadaşlar and friends attended, including Turkish representatives from Bridges of Hope, an organization which serves libraries and schools in Turkey, and a guest of Virginia Kirkwood, Helen Lowman, who directed Peace Corps programs in Thailand and Mongolia. Some of the new attendees were Penny Tracy Miller (T-2) who is active in publishing and other activities, and Joel Levine (T-13) who teaches at the State University of New York at Stony Brook.

Each attendee briefly talked about their activities and Steve Poppick gave a review of Arkadaşlar's publishing program. He mentioned the new Arkadaşlar directory, issued in November 2009 thanks to Sandy Anderson (T-13), Linda Scheffer (T-8), Dick Janzig (T-15), and others. The directory is an invaluable source of information ranging from a definition of "Arkadaşlar" to listings of groups, current addresses, married or maiden names, PC sites in Turkey, the deceased, services, and much more.

As usual, the food, conversations and company were great!



Boston Bayram Photos:

Mady Boland Kenny (T-5),
Suzanne Grelson Rom (T-5),
Priscilla Murray (T-15)



Priscilla Murray, (T-15)
Gene Blanchard, (T-4)
John Clark (T-4)

Wisconsin: (by Eph Frankel)

For this year's Cumhuriyet Bayram dinner, Russ (T-9/8) and Liz Whitesel decided to host the event at their home in Madison. Eph Frankel (T-9) was co-host, in from Milwaukee. The idea was to have a more relaxed, personal time to be together and not to get shushed out of a restaurant.

Russ & Liz invited two Turkish families involved in study and work at the UW-Madison. Metem, a surgeon, his wife Istar, a micro-biology prof, and their daughter Bocu were there, along with Leyla, an international tax law school professor, with her daughter Idil. Also with Russ & Liz, Eph Frankel and wife Marian Vieux were there: daughter Alexander, in from Minneapolis for the event; and Dave (T-15) and Ann Wilson came too.

Russ and Liz had reached out to both these families as they were confronting all the unanticipated difficulties and stresses of integrating into a different culture. Special bonds were formed. Along with the home-hosting idea, this event was brilliantly pot-luck oriented, with everyone contributing ethnic food for a delicious dinner. There was a lot to eat and to talk about. The interaction and the event had again that special quality we all associate with the moments we experienced in Turkey.

The next day it was heart-warming to reflect that our friendships and our connections with Turks and Turkey would not be were it not for the Peace Corps. Forty-four years after leaving our assignments in Turkey, the Peace Corps experience and vision were very much alive and well in Wisconsin!

Visit the Website for more Bayram Dinner Stories and Photos!

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Cumhuriyet Bayram Dinners

Continued from Page 6

Florida: (by Paul Kirwan)

Ten Volunteers from Florida attended the 4th annual Cumhuriyet Bayram celebration at the Bosphorus Restaurant in Winter Park, Florida. The group enjoyed an outstanding luncheon amid stories of training, service and more recent adventures. Paul Kirwan (T-8) brought the new Arkadaşlar Directory which was a great hit, as was a letter from Lynda Özgür (T-6), who had organized previous celebrations, describing her recent trip through Turkey.



Susan Bayley (T-4), Julie and John Auer (T-8), Henry and Jean Webb (T-5), Paul (T-8) and Magali (Thai-40) Kirwan, Karen and Warren Master (T-12). Photo was taken by Carl Dean, Susan's husband.

Washington Metropolitan area

(by Linda Scheffer)

The Cumhuriyet Bayram Dinner was held on Sunday, October 25th, at the delightful Kazan Restaurant in McLean, VA. Kazan's is usually closed on Sundays, but the owner, Zeynel Uzun, always opens up the restaurant for our annual celebration. As usual, Zeynel provided us with a çok lezzetli meal of meze, döner kebab, tatlı, çay, kahve, ve beyaz ve kırmızı şarap. Anatolian Artisans sold their lovely Turkish wares, and there were Turkish carpets for sale, as well. Ken Hill (T-9) and the restaurant staff presided over the raffles of baskets of goodies, which raised \$262 for Arkadaşlar projects.

Sixty-three (63) people attended, and while most were from MD, VA, and DC, we also had people from PA, NJ, TN, CO, and WA. Margaret Hamill Patterson (T-4) came the farthest - from Spokane, WA. First-time newcomers to the dinner were: Jenny Nicklas Herre (T-16) and her husband, Jeff; Ken Marion (T-8) and his daughter, Minta Marion Trivette; and Sinan Denny-Brown, son of Myles and Neş'e Denny-Brown (T-8).

Mike Jewell (T-1), made welcoming remarks, and Kevin Quigley, President of the National Peace Corps Association (NPCA), also spoke. Linda Scheffer (T-8) gave a brief history of the 6 projects in Turkey to which Arkadaşlar contributes. Dave (Amca) Weinman made some concluding remarks and invited everyone to come back again next year.

Visit the Website for more Bayram Dinner Stories and Photos!

Join the Listserv – Visit the Website

By Steve Poppick

According to our records, over 580 of our almost 840 members receive their Arkadaşlar news solely from *Buralarda*.

If you are among this group, you've been missing out on some very interesting news, bits, pieces and themes of discussions that have ranged from listings of many cultural events and travel tips for Turkey, to lots of social and political issues.

Recent discussions have included political trends in Turkey, tips on good hotels & restaurants and anecdotes on our service. Some comments lead the discussion in very interesting directions, sparking ideas and bringing back a wide variety of personal memories.

To join the listserv, send an email request to Sandy Anderson at Turkeydost@aol.com.

If you join us online, you're in for a real treat, and we too will benefit from your contributions!



George Park (T-1) on top of Nemrut Dağı - 2009

Screenshot from our website Photo Gallery page:
<http://www.arkadaslar.info/>
**Check it out for great memories, travel tips,
 and up-to-date information!**

Arkadaşlar
c/o Linda Scheffer



Buralarda

The Newsletter of Arkadaşlar,
Friends of Turkey

We're on the Web!

Visit us at:

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?")