

Buralarda

The Newsletter of Arkadaşlar, Friends of Turkey



Number 28, October 2009

Once and Always a Volunteer

By Peggy Hanson



John Gallivan, Sarge Shriver, Rick Ash, Ross Pritchard and Mike Jewell (Chris Hansen is in the back row.)

The picture tells much of the story: The time is January 1964. The town is Akhisar. It is cold even though the Aegean is not too many miles off through olive orchards that look dreary in the grayness. The almond blossoms that will be making small pink statements in the town are still months away. The rickety wagon bumping down the street is typical of the time; so is the half-starved horse.

Mike Jewell is the narrator of the historical part of this story; I'm just writing it down. This was midway through the second year of the Peace Corps in Turkey. The program had grown from the 39 originals in Turkey 1 to three groups totaling about 130 volunteers by the spring of 1964.

Sargent Shriver has come to visit volunteers in Turkey, dropping from the sky in a helicopter or

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arriving in a beat-up Peace Corps vehicle. His brother-in-law, President Kennedy, had been assassinated barely two months earlier. Neither the Turks nor the Peace Corps volunteers have fully recovered from the shock. Turkey 1 had actually been sent off in 1962 by the President himself, from the west lawn of the White House. We grieved together in Ankara when he was killed. Sarge Shriver, besides being our leader, was almost a relative.

Ross Pritchard is the director in Turkey at this time. The famous Dr. Chris Hansen, known for his wry sense of humor, is our Peace Corps medical staff member. Chris had won our apprehensive hearts during the health orientation when he instructed us to, "eat lettuce, eat

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on page 2*

Cumhuriyet Bayram Dinners – 2009

By Sandy Anderson

We will celebrate the Bayram at two new sites this year: Maine and Illinois! Reports are positive from people who attend, greet old friends and make new ones. Besides, the food is delicious. Below are the cities and sponsors of the planned dinners. Contact them with questions, offers to help, or just to let them know you are coming. İyi eğlenceler!

MAINE/NEW HAMPSHIRE: Sunday, October 25, 1:00, Mediterranean Grill, 10 School Street, Freeport, 207-865-1688. Betty Hanks Leonard. Also hosted by Ron and Lael Stegall.

MASSACHUSETTS/NEW ENGLAND: Sunday, October 25, 1:00, Brookline Family Restaurant, 305 Washington Street, Brookline, 617-277-4466. Lynn Maichle. Also hosted by Suzanne Rom and Margaret Fearey.

NEW YORK CITY: Sunday, November 1, 1:00 - 4:00, at a place to be determined. \$50, cash bar. Contact Bob McCord.

*Please see Cumhuriyet Bayram Dinners
on page 4*

Dear Arkadaşlar

By Mike Jewell



It is already eight months since I wrote in January urging Buralarda readers to renew memberships and keep connected! As we near the annual celebration of Cumhuriyet Bayram in 2009, I'm happy to report that even in the worst recession in most of our lifetimes, membership has increased to 378 from 358 last year. There are Bayram dinners taking place in 10 sites this year, and two of them, Maine and Illinois, are new. At this writing, the new Directory is close to publication and is full of new pictures and stories from our experiences in Turkey. The directory theme is "Then and Now," and will hopefully be mailed before the Bayram dinners. Sandy Anderson and Linda Scheffer deserve another huge THANK YOU for producing what promises to be our best Directory yet!

The Directory will be very helpful in the planning for a Turkey RPCV gathering coinciding with the Global Reunion - Peace Corps 50th anniversary being held, September 22-26, in 2011. It is another reminder that Turkey and our times there together really were something special.

Speaking of staying connected, Ellie LeBaron keeps adding new features to the website, which are described elsewhere in this edition and some of us are networking online through FaceBook or through WWW.PeaceCorpsConnect.com, a nice supplement to the listserv. Speaking of the listserv, thanks go to Sandy. Is it just me, or do the quality, depth and number of posts covering current and past topics concerning Turkey keep getting better? Finally, a note of gratitude to Steve Poppick and Peggy Hanson for revitalizing Buralarda.

We continue to offer support to projects in Turkey that advance education, economic and social development. For 2009, we provided \$11,000 to six projects and helped disseminate information on two additional worthy projects. As contributions to non-profit charitable causes have fallen dramatically in this period of global economic turmoil, recipients have noted that our modest support takes on added importance! I urge you rejoin in January 2010 and to support the Board decision to add a small increase to annual membership dues (\$20 to \$25 for singles and \$30 to \$35 for couples) to maintain Arkadaslar and to support these projects.

Neyise, Bayramınız kutlu olsun!

Once and Always a Volunteer

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lettuce by all means, ... but boil it first."

Dick Goodwin, a former White House aide and the husband of Doris Kearns Goodwin, is also along on the visit. The whole group is escorted by Mike Jewell, erstwhile volunteer leader and later staff—this time, to Akhisar to visit volunteers (and later Field Officers) John Gallivan and Rick Ash—whose death while rafting in Turkey cast a pall over the Peace Corps in 1967.

Mike was a teacher, Volunteer Leader, then a Field Officer and Administrative Officer on staff. He remembers driving all over the western half of Turkey, then in the east, visiting volunteers at their sites. It was lonely most of the time. He had to maneuver the precipices of Ardahan-Artvin; drive through the heat of Urfa and Diyarbakır; avoid unlit wagon-carts at night in the southwest. Once, while driving between Erzurum and Trabzon on Christmas Eve day, putting chains on and taking them off, depending on the altitude, one of the chains snapped and twisted and he couldn't get it off. A truck stopped and two men tried to help. Finally, one man said, "C'mon. Let's go. We'll be here all night."

"No," said the other driver. "This man is a guest in our country. We will stay until he can leave." And they did. It was a perfect metaphor for so many acts of kindness shown to us during our Peace Corps years: Turkish hospitality.

Since returning home Mike has exhibited the same attitude toward others in need. He spent many years, both as a government employee and as a volunteer and NGO director, working with the Washington area homeless. In 1998, he managed a Homeless Veterans Project, to which AmeriCorps devoted 20 volunteers each year. Mike says about one-third of homeless people are veterans. His wife Nanci started volunteering and later became Director, establishing a residence for 36 previously homeless veterans in Washington.

Mike joined the federal Office of Refugee Resettlement as a support contractor. Mike and Nanci remain busy with other projects in retirement. In a flashback to the past, Mike is teaching ESL in Reston! As usual, he is becoming involved with his students, mostly refugees, trying to help them outside the classroom. He hopes to be a volunteer for life as his own tribute to the spirit, commitment and energy that President Kennedy and Sargent Shriver brought to the successful launch of the Peace Corps.

Buralarda is published 2-3 times per year, İnşallah, by Arkadaşlar - Friends of Turkey, an organization of Returned Peace Corps Volunteers and staff members who served in Turkey during the 1960's and other aficionados of Turkey, and its people, food and culture. Articles of interest may be sent to: Co-Editors: Peggy Hanson (hanusa2@yahoo.com) and Stephan Poppick (Stephan.poppick@gmail.com)

In Memoriam:

Carol Kocan (T-08)

“There is an old black and white picture sitting in our library. In this picture you can see this young woman in her twenties, so young and full of life. It is Carol. She is sitting on a wall and behind her you can see part of Istanbul. Every day I come home and look at this picture and every time I think the same thing; ‘Boy, she looks like the same Carol I met three decades later’. It is true, she did not change one bit. I know she had the same qualities when she was twenty. She loved people and animals, helped them both. She loved Turkey and Turkish people. She was an honest, determined, hard working person who tried to teach and show everyone how they can be good. She was as close to a perfect human being as I can think.” Mehmet/Demet/Deniz Canan Kerpisci
Bourbonnais, IL

“When Carol left the Peace Corps, she started a career with the Girl Scouts. She would remain with the organization for more than 40 years. During that time, she held a number of management positions including Communications Director for the Girl Scout council that served Chicago’s southern suburbs.

When Carol passed away on June 9, 2008, the Board of Directors of the Girl Scouts of South Cook County passed a resolution dedicating the Communications Room at its Friendship Center in Country Club Hills, IL to Carol’s memory. Girl Scout events offered at the Friendship Center focus on issue-oriented programs affecting the personal development of girls in today’s society, gender equity, body image, media messages, and appreciation of diversity. It seemed a perfect venue for Carol’s memorial.”

Donna Rahn-Thamm



William Joseph “Joe” Isaacs (T-10)

William Joseph Isaacs, 64, passed away Friday, January 23, 2009. He lived most of his adult life in Columbia, South Carolina.

Those of his fellow Turkey-10 volunteers remember him as a serious but fun-loving guy who survived our travails with humor and grace.

A note from his site-partner, Anne Walshe: “Joe and I were in Aslanbeyli, a village of 600 about 60 miles east of Kayseri. I’m remembering going to Jerusalem with him for Christmas in 1966. We flew from Adana to Beirut and took a taxi for \$5 through Damascus and Amman...Joe was grilled at the Syrian border about his religion...We had anticipated that because of his last name...and even though we had ‘papers’ from our embassy attesting to the fact that we were Christians, they detained him for an hour or more!”

A graduate of the College of William and Mary and the University of South Carolina School of Law, he had a long and outstanding legal career. As chief of the Consumer Fraud and Anti-Trust Section of the attorney general’s office during the McLeod administration, as well as creator of its Child Support Division, he was a champion of the unrepresented. After leaving the attorney general’s office in 1983, he was in private practice for over twenty-five years and founded the firm of Isaacs and Alley. He earned the “AV” rating from Martindale-Hubbell in recognition of the highest legal ability and ethical standards. As a public and private lawyer, his integrity, fearlessness and common sense were unmatched.

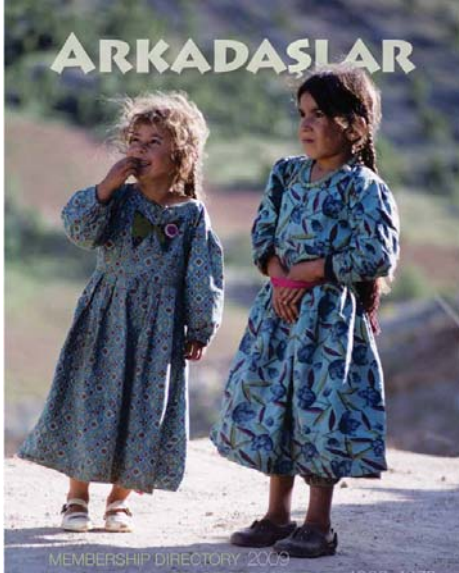
from The State newspaper, Columbia SC

Joe, on right, on his way to Aslanbeyli village
August 1966



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.

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 will be published this fall. It is built around the theme of what Turkey was like then, and what it is like now.

- 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 pay their dues in 2009 or 2010.

Cumhuriyet Bayram Dinners – 2009

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WASHINGTON, DC: Sunday, October 25, 5:30-8:00, at Kazan's Restaurant, 6813 Redmond Drive, McLean, VA. \$45. Linda Scheffer. Also hosted by Mary Helen Madden.

NORTH CAROLINA/SOUTH CAROLINA: Saturday, November 7, time to be determined, at home of Lea Wells and Jordan Scepanski, Chapel Hill.

FLORIDA: If you are interested in attending this year's Bayram dinner, contact Paul & Magali Kirwan, Winter Park.

ILLINOIS: Sunday, October 25, 1:00 - 5:00, potluck at the home of Susan Holm and David Wexler, Peoria.

WISCONSIN: Saturday, October 17, 6:00, potluck at the home of Russ & Liz Whitesel, Madison. Also hosted by Ef Frankel.

OREGON: If you are interested in attending this year's Bayram dinner, contact Melissa Stewart.

WASHINGTON: Saturday, October 24, 4:00, potluck at the home of Dale & Ruth Hultengren, Shoreline.

To contact any of the people above, check the addresses in your directory or contact [Sandy Anderson](#).

Report & Photos from Boston – 2008

“Most of us could order our meals in Turkish and converse in that beautiful language! The restaurant not only provided a festive venue, with Turkish maps, flags, and even a Turkish wedding dress--all displayed on the walls--but also a warm and welcome setting where we could share memories and have a most enjoyable and stimulating afternoon. We look forward to the 2009 celebration.”

Suzanne Rom



Arkadaşlar Projects Make a Difference: The Araz Eğitim Özel School in Adana

by Sandy Anderson

Arkadaşlar has been working with the former Sevinç Abla School for special education students since 1993. Now called the Araz Eğitim Özel Okulu, it has served as a model for special education schools in Turkey for many years, and as a site for internships of future special education teachers.

The school was originally recommended to us by Al Nekimken, T-13, a friend of Sevinç and Turgut Eraslan. At the time, schools for students with special needs were rare in Turkey, with most children kept at home with their families. The school worked then with perhaps 50 school age children.

They are currently taught a normal curriculum if possible, along with personal care, social behaviors, and occupational skills. The students produce a wide variety of home accessories and decorations from which they receive a small portion of the proceeds. These activities help prepare them for regular employment. The emphasis is on Anatolian and Ottoman designs, so the students learn some of their heritage as they work on the projects. Several volunteers have visited the school over the years, including Sandy Anderson (T-13), Tom Blake (T-1), Helen Johnson (T-12), and Marianne and Jerry Leach (T-4).

“Twelve of our hearing-impaired students were admitted to university”

The school is supported by tuition as well as by grants from organizations such as Arkadaşlar, and by the Turkish government. Scholarships are available. The school began in a small multi-story home in Adana, with the older students helping to paint the walls in pastel colors. Along with the school's success, the program was expanded and a larger building was constructed.

Arkadaşlar has donated each year since 1993, for a total of over \$25,000. The Arkadaşlar who have visited the school found themselves treated as guests of honor. More about the school, its staff, and a series of pictures can be found at www.arazozelegitim.com.



A Letter from the School Director:

Dear Sandy,

It made me very happy to receive an e-mail message from you--and to see that you are still interested in my school.

I haven't been able to renovate my website since 2004. Nevertheless, it made an important contribution to our success with disadvantaged children in the Mediterranean region. During the Olympics, it won a gold medal. Also, we opened exhibitions of handwork in many of Turkey's provinces. Our school even has its own Facebook page with new photos. You are free to use them if you like.

Twelve of our hearing-impaired students were admitted to university and 80 students were able to continue their studies at regular schools as their students. Forty of our primary school students participate in "assimilation" programs at local elementary schools. I'm very proud of their successes--plus our workshop activities continue.

We would be extremely pleased to have you once again as our guests at the school.

Best regards,
Sevinç



Students displaying a thank you plaque that they made for Arkadaşlar

Observations on Change from a recent trip to Turkey

by Allan Gall



Allan Gall, Turkey I, just returned from a Ramazan visit to Turkey and had these observations on how things have changed since the '60's:

There are many observable physical changes and a lot that remains the same. Among the observable changes are the tractors everywhere. Clearly, almost all agriculture is done with tractor power. Donkeys and horses carrying loads and pulling carts are still an occasional sight, but they are better fed and they carry lighter loads, like an elderly couple coming home from the field.

Solar-powered water heaters on roofs are abundant in cities and towns, but also on the roofs of village houses—right next to the satellite TV dishes.

Empty plastic water bottles consumed by the rich and the less so, by tourist and local, by *fashionista* and the dark eyes peering from a moving black sack are everywhere, and recycling containers are nowhere.

Health consciousness, fitness consciousness are new. Lots of slogans about health on TV, on the radio, on billboards. People talk about it and appear to carry more weight, particularly noticeable in young, middle-class children—one unfortunate side effect of discretionary income spent on fast food and cola—cola, cola, cola everywhere.

People obey the no smoking signs, and bathrooms are everywhere—many exceptionally clean, even in the roadside gas stations. Roads are mostly excellent. And now there are speed traps and document checks. Breathalyzer checks are taken seriously.

Women wearing headscarves were in all but the most modern sections of the large cities, but even in rural areas, we saw few women with their scarves pulled across their faces. Almost no one anywhere was fully veiled. Many headscarves in smaller towns seemed worn as much to control a head of hair as to make a religious statement. Many of the young girls wore them stylishly, as much a fashion statement as a religious statement in appearance—along with make-up and fashionable western clothes. On a major street corner of conservative Konya, a young couple—she wearing a scarf—kissed openly.

On a walk in a small Anatolian town, I passed a stone mason covered in stone dust having a cell phone conversation. If the stone mason has one, who doesn't?

Fortunately, many things are unchanged, like food, which ranged from as good as I remembered to mediocre. Fruits and vegetables remain fabulous. It was the season of Crenshaw and watermelons, peaches, figs, grapes, pomegranates and apples. Tomatoes at every meal. Foreigners tend to get steered to the grilled meat dishes, but, to me, the best Turkish food is *güveç*. One of the joys of Ramazan was the *pide*—usually fresh, though not always. And we managed early one morning to get “hot” *simit* right from the *fırın*! Tea in genuine Turkish tea glasses—a highlight. Olives, tomatoes, *beyaz peynir*, jam, honey, and great bread and tea. I could do this for breakfast every day. And twice, *gözleme* freshly made before our eyes. And the flavor? Wow!

The general landscape and feel of the countryside was familiar. Lots of spring-fed fountains along the roadside, herds of sheep and goats, even herds of cattle that looked well-fed, an occasional man on a donkey or horse-drawn wagon, Kangal and mongrel dogs. Tractors taking people to and from the fields or carrying produce, acres and acres of Crenshaw melons waiting to be harvested, acres of sunflower heads bent and wrapped in scarves to protect the seeds from the birds proffering a visage of synchronized figures bent in harvesting the field, golden harvested wheat stubble as far as the eye can see. And winding within the brown landscape snake the green ribbons that mark creek and riverbeds bearing gardens and lined with the

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Observations on Change

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omnipresent oleaster (Russian olive) bushes/trees and a random assortment of birch, pine, locust, linden, sycamore, cedar and others. And the valleys leading to the coast are dense with vineyards and orchards with tempting roadside stands of fresh-picked fruits and vegetables.

In the small towns, there are still the individual shops with one person sitting on a stool outside waiting for customers. The small bakkals are still everywhere. The Kunduracı, the kuru yemişçi, the electrical stores, the eczanes. In the small towns, the kids still hang out sharing bicycles—though of improved quality—flying kites, playing with improvised cars, kicking soccer balls. The public spaces are still treated badly, full of trash. The little streams are clogged with plastic (they always had trash; it's just worse now). Yes, there are some newer houses and small apartment buildings, but many of the houses of the 60's are also still there and are occupied in the small towns. If you hang out at dusk, you witness the same return of the animals divided and herded into the gates.

To me, the people were the most unchanged. Everyone was helpful everywhere. I like to think I'm getting special treatment because I speak Turkish well, but I know from the reports of friends and others who have gone there, that everyone gets treated well.

In Istanbul, a carpet salesman asks politely if he can show me anything. We talk, and he mentions that he plays the saz. I observe that one of the sad things about our trip is that a dear friend who used to play the saz after evening meals had passed away. "Come, my friend across the street has a saz in his shop." A third shopkeeper joins us. Their friendship is evident, and it feels a privilege to be invited into their company for saz music. He plays; we listen. I am carried back to many evenings of great food, good rakı, and mournful love songs. He shows us pictures of the village where he grew up in a lovely dead-end canyon of greenery and agricultural richness. He says he is fasting now but will return to the village for the holiday following Ramazan for evenings of saz, food and rakı. "We will have a good time. You should come," he says, and I thank him for the honor. The encounter is maybe 20 minutes, but a highlight of our trip.

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.

It has been fascinating observing how when one or two members raise a point or pose a question, a stream-of-consciousness phenomenon sometimes takes over and the discussion leads in very interesting directions, sparking ideas and bringing back a wide variety of 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!



Photo of three Çayırıcı friends of Sandy Pfunder.
See more 2009 photos.

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



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?")