



# Buralarda

Newsletter of Arkadaşlar, Friends of Turkey Number 21, SEPTEMBER, 2004

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**ARKADASLAR WEBSITE: [HTTP://WWW.ARKADASLAR.INFO](http://www.arkadaslar.info)**

Have you been on our website lately? Webmaster Ellie LeBaron has been working overtime to make this an informative and interesting site. There are photos, constantly updated. There are stories (both amusing and embarrassing) that have been shared on the Listserv. There is information in abundance: Volunteer lists by group, Board meeting highlights, projects Arkadaslar supports in Turkey and much much more. Check in regularly to keep updated on what's happening with other Turkey RPCVs.

Sandy Pfunder (T-9) had taken the trouble to save and edit all the stories shared on the Listserv. He stopped on September 1 and reports that even with eliminated duplications, there are 461 pages of them. The stories however did not stop when he did. They still continue. Of course, that's not the only thing that comes through on the Listserv. Books by and about Turks are recommended by lots of people, news of upcoming events relating to Turkey are shared, and comments abound regarding the political and social situation in Turkey today. It's a great way to keep updated. Log on to **[ARKADASLAR FRIENDS@YAHOOGROUPS.COM](mailto:ARKADASLAR_FRIENDS@YAHOOGROUPS.COM)**.

It's Cumhuriyet Bayram time again. Have you planned your annual get together yet? There's a list of those who have later in the newsletter. They're being held all over the country. We had a big increase in the number last year and would like to have another. You know it's fun to get together, reminisce, and eat good Turkish food. If there's not a restaurant in your area, get out the old American Cook in Turkey and have a potluck. Supermarkets these days even feature some Turkish style food, especially baklava. So have a good glass of wine, dessert, and coffee or tea. Don't forget to write up the experience for publication in BURALARDA.

To reach Buralarda  
or submit an article  
Marcia Gnuse, Editor

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A REMEMBRANCE OF CAROL  
SIDWA LERMAN

*by Roberta Harrison T-7*

When I saw Carol's name in BURALARDA, I felt compelled to write a few words about this exceptional young lady. I first met Carol at Portland State, where I had the privilege of rooming with her. She was a star in my life, with her shining personality and contagious smile.

I was sent to Peace Corps/Washington for additional training (PC Volunteer Secretary) and was hoping I could share quarters with Peggy Mokres and Carol Sidwa when I arrived in Turkey. That was not to be, as Peg and Carol were sent to Denizli before I ventured to magic Turkey.

Carol lived on the Jersey shore and I had the opportunity to fly up there a few times and visit with her. One time I was the only passenger in the small plane, with my own pilot and co-pilot. Carol and I had a good laugh about that. She always laughed and I know she is smiling down on all of us and our wonderful memories of a time and place we all hold so dear. I love you Carol, God Speed.....

IN MEMORIAM - LARRY BEST

Larry (T-8) passed away May 6, following a long illness. Larry's family invites you to "celebrate Larry's life, remember the zest with which he lived it, and reflect upon the ways in which he touched us all!"

After Peace Corps, Larry worked for the Michigan Commission for the Blind,

eventually retiring as Deputy Director. He also volunteered at Woldumar Nature Center, recycling programs and on pledge drives for a local public TV station. His avocation was barber shop quartetsinging with the Capitol Area Chordsman. He also enjoyed caning chairs and gardening.

Patrick Cannon, State Director, Michigan Commission for the Blind wrote: "Professionally and personally, Larry approached each day with high energy, enthusiasm and a relentless commitment to excellence. His engaging personality, humor and musical talent won him the respect and affection of all who had the privilege of knowing Larry, and he will be dearly missed."

VISITING TURKEY

*by Kathy Markley Scruggs, T-2*

We just got back from a wonderful 2 weeks in Turkey and wish we could have benefitted from the deletion of zeroes in the Lira. We kept confusing the *bes yuz bin* bill with *bes milyon*. Nevertheless, it was also a bit of devil-may-care fun dispensing *milyons* freely. We were last there 15 years ago and we were surprised by the growth of cities and towns as well as the traffic, but were pleased whenever we found some of the best stuff unchanged.

In Istanbul, we had the most helpful staff at the Ambassador Hotel in SultanAhmet, \$68 a dbl. They went above and beyond traditional hospitality inviting us into the cramped office to use the computer (free of charge) and tel whenever we needed. Max had lost his wallet in Brussels the night before we

Mehmet Pasa hotel was a disaster.  
Don't stay there.

Time and time again Turks went way out of their way to help us. We rented a car from Avis to pick up in Bursa and then returned it in Istanbul. Avis picked up the car in SultanAhmet. Max was an incredible match to the Turks on the road, even in Istanbul. You have to be assertive and defensive at the same time. Getting twisted in the *Kurtulus* neighborhood meant driving into an unmarked deadend (you know those streets that turn into steps with a tree in the middle?) to avoid the roads that descend just like roller coasters. Everyone loved giving us directions to get back onto Cumhuriyet--and some of them were accurate!

Three terrorist bombs went off our next to last night, one at a hotel just steps away from the Ambassador, 2 dead. PKK claimed credit. That was scary, but living so close to the Pentagon we can't be deterred from traveling to Turkey or anyplace else.

When we finally get to retire we'll go back in cooler weather.

#### NEW BOOK -- DANCING WITH THE DOG

Susan Calhoun Kennedy (T-8) has just published a new book of her poetry. Susan lives in California where she "plays the dumbek, raises goats, and belly dances." She also teaches poetry in the California Poets in the Schools program. Her previous book was entitled Cazadero Poems.

Reviewer Bill Witherup calls Susan "one of the most sensual poets writing today."

The new book is available through Philos Press, <http://www.philospress.org> or 8038-A N. Bicentennial Loop SE---Lacey, Wa. 98503-1708.

#### RECOMMENDED BOOKS

*submitted by unibit@travel-net.com*

Snow by Orhan Pamuk; Knopf; 448 pages; \$26.

The Saint of Incipient Insanities by Elif Shafak; Farrar, Straus and Giroux; 368 pages; \$25.

Orhan Pamuk is the leading contemporary interpreter of Turkish society to the western world: his novels, now invariably translated into English explore the dilemmas and divisions of a land that is both east and west, Islamist and secular, rich and poor, ancient and modern, and much more besides. Some of his earlier explorations of Turkish identity have been hard going, not eased by their translators. But his latest novel, "Kar" or "Snow," the first to be translated by Maureen Freely, an American raised in Istanbul, is one of his most accessible.

Set in the 1990s in the bleak north-eastern city of Kars, the novel is an account of the tensions between Turkey's urban secularist elite and their long-derided (and vastly underestimated) Islamic-minded opponents. It is also a tragic love story, a thriller and, more broadly, a dark journey into familiar Pamuk territory: faith, identity, betrayal and solitude.

arrived in Turkey so we had some important calls to make to VISA. The staff surprised us with a tray holding a cake, with candle, and bottle of sparkling wine and 2 flutes on my birthday! We also stayed at the Armada and that was lovely, but the Ambassador's staff and proximity to Blue Mosque, etc. was preferable.

We found the new *Koc* museum interesting and the restaurant delicious. Thanks to Carol LaMotte for suggesting a visit to Miniaturk. It was just delightful. Miniaturk was so clean, convenient, (good food) and with good commentary. We loved seeing so many families explaining the models of historic sites to their kids and thereby learning so much of the history and cultures of Anatolia.

I was glad to see the *simitci* still balancing his tray on his head in Ankara and *cayci* still bringing trays of tea for customers in shops, but couldn't get used to being served tea in a cup at restaurants or seeing so many young women in scarves. On the other hand, tattoos, body piercings, and tight spaghetti-strap tops were highly visible. Women in bright *shalvar* were still working in the fields, but also some were driving tractors. The cucumbers, tomatoes, olives, and white cheese for breakfast are all so delicious. How does the Turkish tea never get bitter? The sleek malls with food courts amazed us (*Diabetik Baklava!*) as did the 6-lane divided toll road Istanbul-Ankara. Many of the bathrooms had "modern" toilets but we still had to use too many dirty "a la turka" facilities even at toll road rest stops.

The size of Bursa and Bandirma was bewildering as were the Carlsberg beer awnings at sidewalk cafes. I never thought I'd see the word "gonulluleri" in print, but there was a large group of youths escorted by volunteer teachers who wore *Kizilay Gonulluleri* t-shirts. They brought kids from the east to Bursa for 2 weeks of camp. Bursa is still "yesil" but also very polluted. Don't miss the new Kent city museum in Bursa. It's right downtown near the *heykal*. Glad to see Iznik and Lake Sapanca. Safranbolu was spiffed up. I now have before and after pictures of the Han.

Tunali Hilmi Caddesi in Ankara was chock-a-block with well-dressed folks enjoying the sidewalk cafes and shopping every night. We stayed at the Hotel Aldino, excellent. Trying to find the Temple of Augustus in Ulus was an adventure because there are still blocks and blocks with no women visible, almost no change from the 1960s.

It got too hot for us old folks on the plateau, so we canceled our plans for Kayseri and Konya and drove back to Istanbul. One cannot tire of looking at Ayasofya, the Blue Mosque and the Marmara everyday and evening from the *teras* of any of the hotels in SultanAhmet. The slow ferry up to Sariyer to the Sadberk museum was a treat. One huckster advised us to take the private fast boat tour because the regular ferry was "not practical."

Tea at the Ciragan Palas and at the Hilton, oh yes! The tiles at the Sokullu Mehmet Pasa mosque were the best, but a night at the Best Western Sokullu

PORTLAND BAYRAM



PORTLAND BAYRAM



AMCA & MARY HELEN MADDEN (7-10)

## **CUMHURİYET BAYRAM DINNERS - 2004**

Arkadaslar will be holding Bayram dinners at 9 sites this year. If you are interested in attending, please contact the appropriate dinner coordinatro to confirm your attendance and find out any arrangements not listed below.

Readers looking for a less intense taste of Turkey can turn to “The Saint of Incipient Insanities, the first novel written in English by Elif Shafak, an established writer with award-winning Turkish novels under her belt, who has been attacked for reviving Ottoman words, for her fascination with religion, and now for “betraying” her motherland by writing in English. Ms Shafak has woven a tragi-comic tapestry of quirky and lovable 20-somethings struggling to find themselves in America.

Mr. Pamuk was educated in English at an elite Istanbul private school; Ms Shafak was born in France and raised in Spain. Their books are as much a voyage of discovery for themselves as they are insiders’ insights of Turkey. Both seek to shatter stereotypes. Unlike Mr. Pamuk, through, Ms Shafak does it with ironic humour and warmth. In one of the funniest scenes in her latest book, Abed’s newly arrived (and devoutly Muslim) mother offers “round platters of sugar skulls” and “trays of werewolf claws” to inebriated guests at a Halloween party. Ms Shafak is well set to challenge Mr Pamuk as Turkey’s foremost contemporary novelist.

*submitted by Joshua Bear T-8*

Young Turk, love and death in a Turkish melting-pot, by Moris Farhi

Joshua sent the following review by Alev Adil of the Independent; London: 19 March 2004:

“The anxieties and fixations of adolescence are universal. Like teenagers today, the group of youngsters in mid-20th century Turkey whom Moris

Farhi brings to life in his latest novel are preoccupied by burgeoning sexual desires and the contradictory need to impress parents and peers. The secret rituals of growing up, the first crush, the bonds of friendship, the desire to understand and make one’s mark on the world, take place against the darker canvas of Turkish and European history between 1939 and 1959.

“Like the Turkish national identity he describes, Farhi’s novel is a mosaic of ethnicities: Jews, Armenians, Kurds, Gypsies, Greeks, Levantines, Pomaks. The weave of voices and stories that emerges speaks of the interconnections of fates. While their parents reconcile themselves to the betrayal of Atatürk’s idealistic vision of Turkish identity, the children have their own battles.....

“Both a novel of ideas and an entertaining adventure story, this is a prodigiously researched and lyrical celebration of the multicultural heritage of Turkish history. Young Turk recounts Turkey’s past, but also provides a vision of the present and future potential of Turkish national identity.”

*submitted by Joshua Bear T-8*

Portrait of a Turkish Family by Irfan Orga; paperback; Elan Press (2003)

Irfan Orga’s official birthday was March 1st 1908, though even he did not know the exact date, once suggesting that it could be as late as 1909. He came to England in 1942 on a three years posting from the Turkish airforce. While there he became romantically involved with a young Norman-Irish woman, Margaret Veronyca. ‘Living with a foreign

woman' was a crime in Turkey at the time, and Orga was stripped of his rank, forced out of the airforce, and eventually forced out of the country, leaving for England in 1947. (He was convicted in absentia in 1949).

After Veronyca's divorce had been finalised in 1948, they married. While his wife began working her way up the hierarchy of publishing, Orga pursued several menial jobs. He also began

writing, and published books on many areas of Turkish life; cookery, history, children's books and a controversial biography of Ataturk as well as the autobiographical story of his family (Portrait of a Turkish Family, 1950) and a work on the Yuruk nomads of the High Taurus mountains (The Caravan Moves On, 1958). Irfan Orga died in 1970.

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