

Buralarda

The Newsletter of Arkadaşlar, Friends of Turkey



Number 46 September 2017

Whither Arkadaşlar?

By Jill Diskan, Linda Scheffer, Mike Jewell, and Lynn Maichle, with input from other Arkadaşlar Board members

Six months is a long period for the membership of an organization not to hear from its Board of Directors. It's been six months since Sandy Anderson's death in early March. She was in the middle of a very busy time for those involved in the final editing and mailing of *Buralarda*.

Changing that issue of *Buralarda* from a typical mix of stories and news to a tribute to Sandy was very painful, emotional, and logistically difficult in every aspect but one: What to write. Peggy and Dale performed miracles pulling a new edition together from scratch and mailing it out, but Arkadaşlar members wrote the story. Tributes came from the DC area, Turkey, and all around the country. Messages captured the thoughts of friends Sandy made along the journey from Austin to Gaziantep and all the years since. Among them, one tribute captured the existential issue we face: **"It's tough imagining Arkadaşlar without Sandy Anderson"** —Allan Gall, T-1.

These past few months we have proceeded on two tracks:

- **First:** We are taking care of business as usual, working through Sandy's responsibilities and focusing on a search for volunteer(s) to continue the key activities she was working on.
- **Second:** With this newsletter, we begin addressing the broader question: Whither Arkadaşlar?

In addition to identifying volunteers to assume some of the responsibilities, we face the broader reality—whither Arkadaşlar. With most of us in our 70s or 80s we are slowing down and/or spending more time taking care of family members, friends, and ourselves. With no new, younger members re-vitalizing our ranks, our numbers are shrinking. We all knew this day would come. Sandy's death has precipitated the discussion and need for action, sooner than we would like. After all, she inspired, led, or participated in virtually every activity in Arkadaşlar!

Arkadaşlar has had a good run. We've fulfilled our mission of maintaining connections among Returned Peace Corps Volunteers, staff, and friends of Turkey for 26 years. Over the years we've held many Bayram dinners, Global Reunions, and other get-togethers. We've contributed \$154,850 to nine

projects, plus \$30,111 to five Turkish Earthquake Relief Funds and the Soma Mining Disaster for a grand total of \$184,961! YAŞA!!

During our initial discussions, Board member comments ranged from "it may be time to pack it in" to "let's see how it goes." We identified three possible courses of action:

- Disband now, possibly issuing a report on our 26 years of activities and charitable contributions, i.e., a planned exit.
- Continue, but downsize to a level commensurate with the defined interests and current energy level of our members, delaying a final exit.
- Continue as we are for now, but with support from members; this option works only if several members step up to assume responsibility for specific tasks and activities.

We all agreed, however, that we need to hear from Arkadaşlar members before making any final decisions.

Thus, to gauge member interest in Arkadaşlar as an organization as well as willingness to help with our ongoing activities, we're asking you to complete and return the short survey on page 7 of this issue. Please return the survey using one of these options **by October 31:**

- Fill out the survey page, scan it, and send the scan file as an attachment via email to jilldiskan@comcast.net.
- If you don't have a scanner, fill out the survey and mail it to Jill Diskan (contact her by email for the mailing address).
- The survey is also available for download from the Arkadaşlar website as a pdf file.

Please do not be concerned about your image or our feelings. Unqualified honesty is essential for making these decisions. Also, feel free to include comments and suggestions with your survey response. So that you will have an idea of the reality of the commitment required to pick up all the pieces, following is a listing of tasks and responsibilities that need new leaders, all of which are projects and responsibilities that Arkadaşlar has undertaken over the years.

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Tasks and Responsibilities Needing New Leaders and/or Participants

Sandy's leadership and/or participation over the years were essential in all of these tasks. (*) Ongoing maintenance as needed (**) Coordination of regular activities

- Arkadaşlar Database (*): Maintain the database of Turkey PCVs, staff, and friends of Turkey (FOTs), which includes addresses, phone numbers, email addresses, group numbers, years served, site(s), and job performed, i.e., TEFL, CD, etc.
- Listserv (*): Monitor postings, add and delete members, per their requests.
- Website (*): Work with Ellie LeBaron to keep it updated.
- Mug books (*): Keep copies of all the original group mug books, along with Linda Scheffer, from every training group.
- *Buralarda* (**): Work with Peggy Hanson, Jill Diskan, and Dale Evans to assign, write, and collect the articles, maintain the mailing list, coordinate with the printer, and, along with Linda Scheffer, keep copies of all of the past issues [every 3–4 months]
- Membership Directory (**): Work on text, data, and production with Linda Scheffer and Lynn Maichle every three years, and, along with Linda Scheffer, keep copies of all Directories.
- Bayram Dinners (**): Maintain communication with group coordinators of all our groups for the yearly dinners.
- Global Reunions (**): Work with Linda Scheffer to coordinate global reunions (approximately every five years)
- NPCA/PC Connect: Serve as Arkadaşlar liaison (yearly NPCA conferences).

We thank you and look forward to your responses.

—Your Board of Directors

In Memorium

Mary Jo Posnak Hulen, T-14, May 21, 2016

Dr. Richard Stacey, Staff, March 12, 2017

Michael Shapiro, T-5, March 22, 2017

Russ Whitesel, T9/T8, April 2, 2017

William Tobin, Friend of Turkey, August 13, 2017

Museum of the Peace Corps Experience

Many if not all of us have reached the stage of our lives where we are downsizing and need to begin to dispose of our lifelong accumulation of “things.” Thus, we thought this information on a proposed Museum of the Peace Corps Experience might be helpful for those of us seeking appreciative new homes for our treasures from Turkey.

The Committee for a Museum of the Peace Corps Experience, a group of dedicated returned Peace Corps Volunteers, is working toward making the Museum a reality to house documents, items, and oral histories of RPCVs and their Peace Corps experience.

While not yet a reality, the proposed museum will fulfill Peace Corps' third goal: bringing many cultures home to Americans and broadening geographic education. The vision for the Museum is to provide exhibits of art, artifacts, photographs, videos, as well as live interaction, reflecting lifestyles in various countries around the world. The exhibits will rotate periodically. In addition, the Museum will mount traveling exhibits, working with returned volunteer groups to bring Peace Corps stories into many cities and towns around the country.

This may be an opportunity to share our treasured art and artifacts and the compelling stories associated with those objects.

The first step is to raise money, of course. However, thought is also being given to collecting RPCV treasures, which will include submitting digital pictures of the items along with the stories behind them.

For further information and details on how to donate financially, submit items, or to get involved with making the Museum a reality, visit the Museum's website: www.museumofthepeacecorpsexperience.org.

—Jill Diskan

A Note from Dick Janzig

Three years ago I added high-definition slide shows of Turkey to my website only to discover recently that they took much longer to download from the website than it did to watch them. I have moved them to my SmugMug account, where they run directly from there.

If you are interested you can watch the slide shows at the following URL: <https://janzigphotos.smugmug.com/Slide-Shows/Turkey-Slide-Shows>.

If you are interested in just looking at pictures: <https://janzigphotos.smugmug.com/Turkey>.

If you want to browse the site: <https://janzigphotos.smugmug.com>.

Memories of Yesteryear

On September 26, 1964, newly arrived T-4B volunteers assembled at Gazi Enstitüsü in Ankara to depart for their sites. The man in the third photo is unidentified. Below, Sid and Pat Long, packed and ready to go. Photos by Danny and Joanne White (T-4).



Small World— A Story of Our Photo Book

Türkiye Through Our Eyes, our photo book, brought an unexpected surprise: at the Global Reunion, Arkadaşlar gave a copy of the book to Kemal Kirisci, a speaker from the Brookings Institute. After he'd taken the book home and shared it with his family, his mother-in-law saw the photo I'd taken of men playing cards outside the Land Assessor's Office in Silifke in 1967.

"That's my grandfather!" she declared, noting, however, that her grandfather was the Land Assessor, but she couldn't be sure he was one of the men in the picture. My sense is that the odds are pretty good that he was, and someday we may know.



Men pass a typical day in front of the Land Assessor's Office. (Silifke, 1967) – Sandy Comstock Anderson

The book is perhaps even more pleasing than those of us who worked on it for six years anticipated. The team included Sandy Anderson (T-13), coordinator; Dick Janzig (T-15), photo editor and collector of photos; Lynn Maichle (T-16), collector and editor of photo captions and stories; Tom Reinhard (T-9), photo editor; Dale Evans (T-13), layout and prepress specialist; and Linda Scheffer (T-8), treasurer. We also acknowledge the many photographers who shared their best photos.

Türkiye Through Our Eyes is a book we Arkadaşlar *experience* more than merely read. It brings back so many memories. Who knows what other connections we'll find as we share it with others?

[This article was written by Sandy Anderson for the March 2017 issue of *Buralarda*]

Note about the Arkadaşlar photo book: We will not be ordering any more photo books. Eleven copies are still available on a first-come basis, \$35 if the book has to be mailed, and \$30 for local pick-up. The check should be made out to "Arkadaşlar" and sent to Linda Scheffer.

Lost on a Mountain, Almost Lost in a Blizzard

A tragedy felt by many of us was the death of Dennis and Marcia Pearson (T-9) when they did not return from skiing on Uludağ in January 1967. Many Arkadaşlar experienced the loss deeply, and some shared their grief. Sandy Pfunder (T-9) collected and saved those stories and photos. You can find them at www.arkadaslar.info/dennis_&_marcia_pearson.htm. Photos are at www.arkadaslar.info/sandy_pfunder_album3.htm.

The story doesn't end there. Another T-9, Bill Surbaugh, chose to have them recognized as Paul Harris Fellows by the Rotary Foundation of Rotary International. With that honor came bound, gold-embossed certificates. Bill sent them to me over ten years ago, stating that he was fully confident that I could locate the family. If only it had been that easy! Linda Scheffer and I talked to T-9s who might know something of the family. We asked Sandy Pfunder for help. We checked genealogy, made www.anywho.com searches, contacted the Pearson's alma mater at the University of Minnesota, and it all came to nothing. It didn't seem that the Pearsons had any family members we could find.

Then at the Global Reunion this fall, Linda and I ran into Mary Ellen Hogan Jackson (T-5) as we were gezzing through the Turkish Bazaar. Mary Ellen mentioned a cousin of Dennis who had always wanted to know what happened on the mountain. Mary Ellen led us to Judy Peterson, a second cousin, who lives in Florida. She has been collecting materials about the couple. She found Julie Pearson Long, a first cousin who still lives in Minnesota.

Dennis had been an only child, but Judy is going to continue looking for Marcia's family. We have sent the Rotary Foundation Certificates and stories to Julie Pearson Long. A happy ending to a long quest for us and for the family.

—Sandy Comstock Anderson

While the previous story is about the sad and senseless death of the Pearsons (whom I had never met), let me try to recapture the moments when I learned of their freezing to death. I had been skiing on Bursa's Uludağ just the week before. It was my only trip to Bursa, along with Bruce Eberle, Todd Boressoff, and perhaps one or two others. I remember that the weather had been warm and pleasant for skiing.

I don't recall where I got the news, probably from a newspaper, and I was on my way back to my first village, Aşağısayık Köyü, in the Kasaba of Gerede and Province of Bolu. I was no doubt returning from one of those towns. The village had only one Jeep dolmuş, but there were several vehicles in the Nahiye of Dörtdivan about 1.5 kilometers away. I used to enjoy walking the distance between Aşağısayık and Dörtdivan to give me some "space" from the constant scrutiny and interaction with the villagers.

I recall arriving in Dörtdivan as it got dark in a significant

snowstorm. I had wondered if I should walk home alone that evening, but shrugged it off quickly. Where would I stay? There was nothing like a hotel in Dörtdivan which had only a few stores and a PTT (the place I frequented the most since it was my connection with the outside). I set out at a fast walk through the increasingly intense wet snow coming straight at me. Shortly after I left Dörtdivan, the wind increased and the snow was coming directly in my face, almost horizontal to the ground. I leaned into the wind and tried to keep up the pace. I had a coat, cap, and gloves, but no sweater or scarf for my face. The snow began to freeze on my face and glasses along with my entire front.

When I reached the creek that was about halfway, I recall going down below the bridge out of the wind to "warm up." I then realized that the front of my legs were numb, since I had only a pair of then-frozen jeans between my skin and the elements. I knew it was about 15 minutes to the village at a leisurely pace, and I thought that I could do it in 10 minutes. By this time it had turned colder and it was hard to find the road. I decided to "make a run for it" and walked as fast as I could while sensing a dip on the right or left to tell me when I was nearly off the road.

During that short period of time I recall imagining the irony of them finding another PCV frozen to death while carrying news of two others who had just died similarly. (I was not nearly in their dire situation, but the eerie thought kept entering my mind.) The years have blurred the memory, but I believe I was almost in suspended animation as I hurried home on legs I could scarcely feel. I did reach a friend's house in the village where I knocked on the door to ask them if I could warm up. I think it was then that I began to feel afraid.

I don't remember much of what transpired after that except that I warmed up, (probably) had dinner with them, and went to my own house and room to build a fire in the soba.

Having grown up on a cattle and sheep ranch in northwestern Colorado, I knew about dangerous blizzards and cold weather. Yet, never before had I experienced a potential crisis like that night. I'm sure I went to bed with very conflicted images of snow on Uludağ and in my village and of the simultaneous feelings of shock, grief, and gratitude.

Now, I must dig out my diary and see what I wrote.

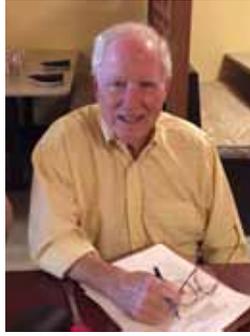
—Kenneth O. St. Louis (T-10)

The documentary "Kedi," playing in some U.S. theaters now, is a heartwarming look at İstanbul Turks and their street cats, full of philosophy and kindness and spectacular views of the İstanbul we all know and love. It is also available for download, at kedifilm.com, in Turkish, with subtitles. Great for your language skills!

—Peggy Hanson

President's Corner

As our lead article shows, the Arkadaşlar Board of Directors has been struggling to define the future path for our organization since the untimely death of Sandy Anderson, who over the years had, along with Linda Scheffer, taken on many of the tasks that make it what it is. The Board has met twice since March. The survey you find on p. 7 of this issue of *Buralarda* is our effort to get the membership as a whole to weigh in on what you need or wish for from Arkadaşlar—and what role you might be willing to play!



One of our goals has always been to foster a network where Turkey volunteers could maintain contact to share our deep ties both to each other and to Turkey. The most obvious way we do this is by our reunions and Cumhuriyet Bayram dinners. You'll find what information we have been able to glean about bayram plans elsewhere in this issue. I would like to urge everybody to play an active role in helping to organize events in your area. We are working on breaking down addresses geographically, as Sandy used to do, in order to make this task easier.

As our “amca,” Dave Weinman, always says, “Onward!” We are Arkadaşlar, when all is said and done.

—John Wintrol

2017 Bayram Dinners

Ohio. Catherine McCutcheon, T-12, is the coordinator. cmccut1@gmail.com.

Florida. Lynda Özgür, T-6, is the contact person, with Paul Kirwan, T-8. lynda.ozgur@gmail.com, kirwanpc@gmail.com.

New York. Hank Levy, T-8, will be coordinating again this year; Sunday October 29, noon–3:00. Location and cost TBD. henryjlevy@yahoo.com.

Washington. Dana Marmion, T-15, is coordinating the Washington (state) Bayram potluck on Saturday, October 28, 4:00–7:00 at the home of Ruth Hultengren. RSVP (or “come anyway”) to Dana, marmionducky@gmail.com.

Washington, DC. Linda Scheffer, T-8, is taking RSVPs for the dinner: Sunday, October 29, 5:30–8:00, at Kazan Restaurant, 6813 Redmond Drive, McLean, VA, 703-734-1960, \$55; LMScheffer@aol.com.

These are the events we've been advised about at press time. Others may be in the works! If you are interested in organizing a Bayram dinner, contact Linda Scheffer for contact information on Arkadaşlar members in your area.

The *Buralarda* Team for This Issue

Peggy Hanson, Linda Scheffer, Jill Diskan, Dale Evans



We wish to recognize strong input on this issue from Jill Diskan and Linda Scheffer, who epitomize the volunteer spirit spoken about elsewhere in the issue. They have stepped up with ideas, meticulous editing, and overall support for this newsletter. It takes a team, everybody!

—Peggy and Dale

Turkey: What Does It Mean to Us?

Peggy Hanson

It has been well over half a century since the first of us Peace Corps volunteers arrived as eager and naïve young idealists in our adopted *memleket*. The last left there 47 years ago. And yet, Turkey has left its mark on every volunteer—arguably a more indelible mark than we left on it. Though we tried.

Knowing how I feel about Turkey, my husband gave me a heavy tome for Valentine's Day, *Istanbul: A Tale of Three Cities*, by Bettany Hughes. It got a fantastic review in *The Economist* (January 28, 2017 edition). As I dip into my present, I find passages that speak to me, and I feel the need to share some of them with you, my fellow Turkophiles. For me, there is balm in remembering the complex and tumultuous history of the world's most intriguing city. I will share a few of the passages. See if you agree:

“Through history on both sides of the Bosphorus there have been earthquakes and tsunamis, storms with hailstones the size of a man's foot, and fishermen have thirty different names for the winds that pluck the waters here. The Greek poet Pindar believed that the secure foundation of cities was *eunomia*, good order, but Istanbul also encourages something which, physiologically, our minds seek—disruption. In terms of both historical fact and written histories this place reminds us why we are compelled to connect, to communicate, to exchange. But also to change.”

Change. However much we fight it and regret it, change occurs. Bettany Hughes also notes, “Istanbul is not where East meets West, but where East and West look hard and longingly at one another, sometimes nettled by what they see yet interested to learn that they share dreams, stories and blood.” This could be a Peace Corps mantra!

Hughes' *Istanbul* is 600 pages long before you get to the last 200 pages of footnotes, acknowledgements, and citations. One would have to call it an example of thorough research! Being too lazy to go through every historical chapter line by line, I scan some paragraphs, continuing to find jewels of intuitive knowledge:

“...Constitutionally, from that first line of prehistoric footprints, Istanbul has been a city for the Cosmopolitan, for the World Citizen...Today the

containers of international goods stacked along the Marmara shore look to be a mosaic from the sky. Tankers sit like rows of broken teeth across the horizon of the sea. Ships from north, south, east and west wait, clumped at the choke-points created by the Bosphorus' tricky currents and winds, as they have done since the beginning of history. Bektashi fishermen on the Bosphorus still brave the supertankers and the international floating hotels that clog the straits. They pray to a god that has no name but love, while Lionel Richie's music pumps from disco-lit bars. Istanbul is a settlement that, in her finest form, produces, promotes and protects the vital, hopeful notion that, wherever and whoever we end up, we understand that although humanity has many faces we share one human heart—to know Istanbul is to know what it is to be cosmopolitan—this is a city that reminds us that we are, indeed, citizens of the world.”

All of which takes us to the Yahya Kemal Beyatlı poem with which Hughes introduces her final chapter, her *Coda*:

“If there were a second life
And a return one day from the other world
And every soul were set free into the universe
And could according to its pleasure find a place to settle
If fortune were to turn to me and graciously grant a star as my abode
This favour would leave me cold. I would want to return to Istanbul.”



A view of the old city from the Beyazıt tower, 1965. In the foreground is the Yeni Valide Cami and the Kapalı Çarşı. Ah, Istanbul, my favorite magical, mystical, mesmerizing city! Last time I spent time there was October–November 2012. Since then big changes, politically, have happened there, so it probably would not be as easy to go “gezging” in that beautiful city. —Marelle Groteluschen (T-3)

Arkadaşlar Membership Survey

Name:

Future of Arkadaşlar

Please indicate ONE choice for our future by marking an "X" next to that choice:

- _____ Disband now, possibly issuing a report on our 26 years of activities and charitable contributions; i.e., a planned exit.
- _____ Continue, but downsize to a level commensurate with the identified interests and current energy level of our members, delaying a final exit.
- _____ Continue as we are but with support from members; this option works only if several members step up to assume responsibility for specific tasks and activities.
- _____ Other: (please specify)

Tasks and responsibilities: for each item below, please indicate TWO ratings:

1. Your *level of interest* in having this activity continue (1 = not important, 5 = very important)
2. Your *willingness to help out* (1 = not able to help, 5 = very willing)

Responsibilities

Interest Level

Willingness

Maintenance

1 2 3 4 5 1 2 3 4 5

Arkadaşlar database													
Listserv													
Website													
Mug Books (repository)													
Coordination	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5		
<i>Buralarda</i> newsletter													
Membership directory													
Bayram dinners													
Global reunions													
NPCA/PC Connect liaison													

If you are a coordinator for your RPCV Turkey group, which one? _____

Are you willing to continue? _____ Yes _____ No

If you are currently coordinating Bayram dinners, where? _____

Are you willing to continue? _____ Yes _____ No

Comments:

Please return this survey using one of these options by October 31:

Fill out this page, scan it, and return the scan via email to jilldiskan@comcast.net.

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This survey is also available for download from the Arkadaşlar website as a pdf file.

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Friends of Turkey

Visit Us on the Web
at
www.arkadaslar.info



“Buralarda” means “hereabouts” or “somewhere around here” in Turkish.
It comes from an exercise in some of our “mim-mem” Turkish language lessons:
“Buralarda bir benzinci var mı?” (“Is there a gas station somewhere around here?”),
repeated with different vocabulary nouns substituted for “benzinci.”