

September 7, 2011

## Library hosts two events for 2011 September Project

The [Aberdeen Timberland Library](#) hosts two events in honor of the September Project this week. The independent film, “Beyond Belief,” will be screened Saturday, September 10 from 2 to 3:30 p.m. Then Gary Backlund, a retired Navy man and clinical instructor at the University of Washington, will share insights gained from his travels in Iran on Monday, September 12 from 6:30 to 8 p.m.

The award-winning documentary, “Beyond Belief,” chronicles the story of two widows of the World Trade Center disaster. Together, they channeled their grief after September 11, 2001 into a message of hope and empowerment for Afghan widows whose lives have been ravaged by decades of war, poverty and oppression.

Susan Retik, one of the widows, suggested book titles to stimulate discussion about Afghanistan, its people, history, culture, specifically the ongoing oppression of Afghan widows. Library staff will lead a discussion after the film. The titles are listed online at [www.beyondthe11th.org/afghanistan.susansbookshelf.php](http://www.beyondthe11th.org/afghanistan.susansbookshelf.php) and copies of the books listed will be displayed during the program and in the library through the month.

Gary Backlund will share his experiences in Iran and discuss how his trip shattered his preconceptions at an after-hours presentation at the Aberdeen Timberland Library on Monday, September 12 from 6:30 to 8 p.m. Backlund will also show slides and answer audience questions.

Backlund arrived in Iran, “the axis of evil,” with fear and apprehension and left with compassion and understanding. “I developed this presentation because my experience simply did not match my preconceptions of Iran I had received from our media,” wrote Backlund in an email. He and his wife expected religious zealots, high police and military presence, dour citizens, fully covered women, dusty villages and decaying cities. They found none of that. Their experience during this transformative trip was that “the Iranians are near the top as the friendliest, kindest we have met.” Backlund wants to share that experience. His view is that the Iranian government is a big problem—not the majority of the people. “We have found people everywhere have the same goals...make a day’s wage, take care of their families and want a better life for their children,” he wrote.

Backlund was born in Portland. He trained and taught as a clinical instructor at the University of Washington. He practiced as an endodontist in Bremerton and served in the Navy, which created a passion for travel. “We travel light and we travel often, mostly independently,” wrote Backlund. A self-identified snowbird, he and his wife spend summers near Belfair and winters in Florida.

The Aberdeen library is presenting both events as its contribution to The September Project, a grassroots effort to encourage events exploring freedom, justice, democracy and community in public, academic, school and special libraries around the world during September. More information is available at The September Project Web site, <http://theseptemberproject.org>. Throughout September, the library also has a display of books “In Remembrance of 9/11.”

The Aberdeen Timberland Library is at 121 E Market Street. For more information, please contact the library at 533-2360 or go to [www.TRL.org](http://www.TRL.org).

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