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News Release

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Traveler shares his experience in Iran

Gary Backlund arrived in Iran, “the axis of evil,” with fear and apprehension and left with compassion and understanding. Backlund will share his experiences and discuss how his trip shattered his preconceptions at an after-hours presentation at [the Olympia Timberland Library](#) on Wednesday, July 13 at 7:30 p.m. Backlund will also show slides and answer audience questions.



“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.

Backlund’s 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.

This program is supported by the Senior Services for South Sound. The Olympia Timberland Library is at 313 8th Avenue. For more information, contact the library at 352-0595 or go to www.TRL.org.

