

May 17, 2011

Iran... a Journey with a Message

Gary Backlund arrived in Iran, "the axis of evil," with fear and trepidation and left with compassion and understanding. A retired endodontist and Navy man, Backlund discusses the human side of Iran at the [Shelton Timberland Library](#) (William G. Reed Public Library) on Thursday, May 26 from 6 to 7 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.

The Shelton Timberland Library is located at 710 W Alder Street, Shelton. For more information, please contact the library at (360) 426-1362 or go to www.TRL.org.