

like ourselves, we remember a Kabul with little traffic, 24 hour electricity, huge trees lining Darluman, women in 1960's era clothing mingling with women in 'chaderis'. We remember long adventures in the provinces, swimming lessons in the USAID pool, horseback riding and a close international community.

As a high schooler, Jim had spring break in Mazar-e Sharif, senior prom at the Bagh-e-Bala, basketball games against Habibia High School and buz-kashi. Camping and fishing were popular pastimes and it was safe to travel anywhere any time. Every day at noon, the old cannon fired from the bastion on Koh-e-Sher Darwaza.

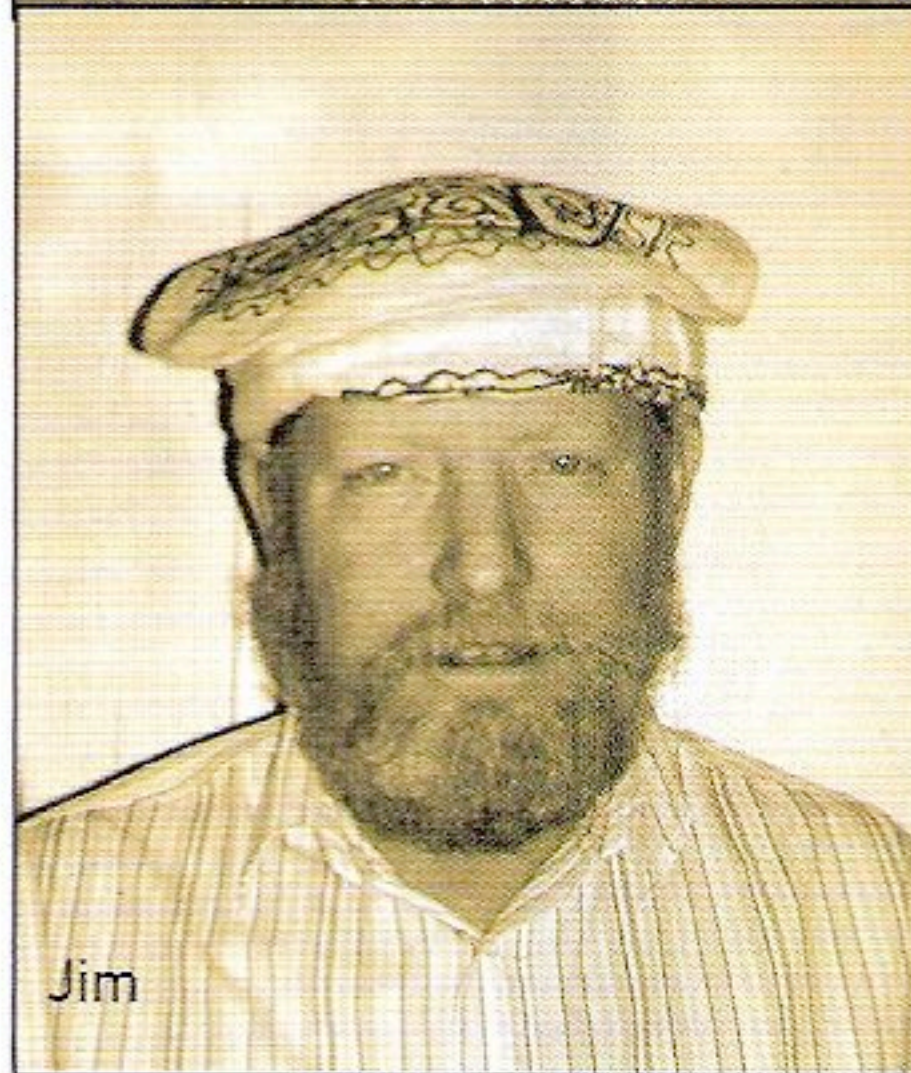
This year, Dawn and I inherited the job of running the small non-governmental organization (NGO) PARSA which was started in 1996 by Mary MacMakin, another old friend of Afghanistan who originally came to Kabul in 1962.

Now, Dawn and I struggle with the mysteries of "capacity building" with the PARSA staff so that they can eventually run this international NGO, which is their rightful inheritance after ten years of service with Mary through the wars.

Like many consultants here, Dawn and I are



Dawn



Jim

making a comic and heroic attempt at introducing western financial and management systems to our Afghan staff who are entrenched survivors. They are genuinely unsure about what all of the fuss is about although the notion of getting a paycheck is highly motivating.

Dawn and I have a certain tolerance for life here that comes from having such a long relationship with Afghanistan. Like other expatriates we live with concerns about security, we discuss the insane traffic and we participate in heated conversations about the future of Afghanistan. However, we still think it is remarkable to wake up once again every morning to the call of the mul-lah, and to a sun rising over the mountains of Kabul. Sights and sounds we never thought we would experience again.

We want to be here, to witness and assist the people that welcomed us as children in a country that gifted us with a unique upbringing. For us the outcome for Afghanistan seems obvious, the future is as unpredictable as the Afghan people. We can only hope that the next generations of Afghans will have the opportunity to know Afghanistan as we did.

www.aisk.org and www.afghanistan-parsa.org