



# High Plains News

“Building a liberal spiritual community that welcomes all to lives of wholeness”

September 2014

High Plains Church - Unitarian-Universalist

Vol 21, No 9

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## HPCUU Annual Picnic



The HPCUU Annual Picnic will be held on **Sunday, September 7<sup>th</sup>** after church. The Fellowship Team will be providing hot dogs, veggie dogs, condiments & drinks. **Please bring a dish to share** (main dish, side dish or dessert) and join us to celebrate our new minister, the new church year and each other!

### Kids' Imagination Station:

**Face Painting** ▪ **Caricatures** ▪ **Balloon Animals**  
**Free Putt-Putt ('til 2:00 pm)**

**Great Food & Fun for Members, Friends  
& Visitors of All Ages!!!**

## Church Calendar - September 2014

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2 Meals on Wheels 11:30 am - 1:00 pm	3 Hebron: Israeli Occupation 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm	4	5 Stitchers 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm Parent/ Child U&I 6:00 pm - 8:30 pm	6 Jack McElroy Memorial Service 11:00 am
7 HPCUU Annual Picnic 11:30 am - 1:00 pm Fostering Hope Team 11:45 am - 12:45 pm YRUU at High Plains 12:30 am - 2:30 pm	8	9 Meals on Wheels 11:30 am - 1:00 pm	10 Membership Team 6:00 pm - 7:30 pm Welcoming Cong. Workshops 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm	11 Welcoming Cong, Committee Meeting 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm	12	13 Aesthetic Team Banner Photo Shoot 10:00 am - 4:00 pm
14 Foster Family Support 11:30 am - 1:00 pm Team Volunteer Fair 11:30 am - 12:00 pm YRUU at High Plains 12:30 am - 2:30 pm	15	16 Meals on Wheels 11:30 am - 1:00 pm	17 Intergenerational Book Club 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm	18	19 Stitchers/Hands 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm  Manitou Spngs Art Walk  Hip Parents Group 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm	20 Issues on Aging 10:30 am - 12:00 pm
21 YRUU at High Plains 12:30 am - 2:30 pm	22	23 Meals on Wheels 11:30 am - 1:00 pm Soul Matters Group 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm	24 Suzanne Giesemann Workshop 6:00 pm - 8:30 pm	25	26	27
28 YRUU at High Plains 12:30 am - 2:30 pm	29	30 Meals on Wheels 11:30 am - 1:00 pm				

Be sure to check the Events Tag on the website at [www.hpcuu.org](http://www.hpcuu.org) for additions and corrections to the calendar.

### September Services - Connection

**Have you been traveling this summer? Bring some water from your adventures or use symbolic water from the church to tell us where you have traveled recently during the ceremony on Sunday, September 7.**

**Sept 7: "Coming Home: Ingathering and Water Communion"** with Rev. Dana Lightsey. Summer is winding down and you might still be floating on memories of summer travels and adventures. Yet, it is a time of coming home, coming back into our community. It is a time of celebration for coming back together and settling back into comfortable routines. Coming home is also reminiscent of returning to that place within us that is welcoming, accepting, comfortable and nurturing. This service is a joyous welcome back to our community and to ourselves.

**Sept 14: "Belonging"** with Rev. Dana Lightsey. What is this feeling of belonging that we long for? Yet somehow, at times, we find it. Perhaps it is a feeling of familiarity, acceptance, and understanding, or perhaps it is something within us that recognizes fertile common ground inviting our roots to sink in. This service explores our monthly theme of connection through the universal experience of longing and belonging.

**Sept 21: "Messages of Hope"** with Suzanne Giesemann. Come hear a powerful message from Suzanne Giesemann, former U.S. Navy Commander turned spiritual teacher. She is touted as "a breath of fresh air" with "a quality that is so different from others that it is difficult to describe," bringing messages of hope and love that go straight to the heart.

**Sept. 28: "Our 7 Principles"** Join us for three reflections from members of the congregation on our monthly theme of "Connection" and how it relates to our seven principles.



## Minister's Musings

by Rev Dana Lightsey

“Dana, here’s what you’ve got to understand about church, people come here first and foremost for connection and community, not theology!” The Director of Religious Education at the church in Greeley, CO was admonishing me. Granted, I had just started my pursuit of my degree to become a minister and I had my head in the clouds of theology and spirituality, and as board president, she knew I needed my feet on the ground.

And, she was right. What keeps us coming to this church? Hopefully the sermons and the music are a part of it, but for most of us, it is the ever-important connection with others who are on this journey through life with us, supporting us, listening to us, and sharing in the turning points of our lives that really creates that ever-important meaningful bond of friendship.

Ironically, it is becoming harder not to be isolated and lonely in our world of hyper-connectivity. The research tells us that it is commonplace now for people not to have even one single deep and lasting friendship anymore. It is all too easy to get caught up driving around, answering emails, working overtime, etc. We need a place to remind us of what matters most in life - meaningful connection with others.

This September, as we begin our church year and our school year, it is a natural time of reconnection, so let’s make the most of it. Here’s what I propose: on September 7 when we celebrate Water Communion during our Opening Sunday, as the waters of our lives mix and mingle in a common bowl, let us actively grow our connections by reaching out to those who we do not yet know. Let’s begin this new church year by making new friends, and giving each other the gift we are looking for - new, deep and meaningful connections. And on September 14, consider connecting more fully with the church by volunteering for a team or other role.

When those moments come up in life that you really need or want to share with someone who is loving and accepting, may you find the connections you are looking for here. And may our new connections enrich our lives for many years to come as they grow deep and strong in this community.

See you on Sunday,  
Rev. Dana Lightsey

## The President's Post

by Jim Montgomery



On Saturday August 23rd I spent an interesting and productive six hours with twenty some fellow High Plains members at the ministry start up of Rev. Dana Lightsey at High Plains Church. As you know by now Rev. Dana is our new Developmental Minister, and Rev. Nancy Bowen our regional lead had come down to lead us in a conversation about what Dana’s part in the ministry of our church might look like. Time was spent during the morning session reflecting on different social styles and new ways of understanding each other and the relationships within our church community. After breaking for a delicious lunch prepared by Diane McRae we got back to work. We broke up into four discussion groups corresponding to our four developmental goals, a shortened form of which would be:

1. Growing our membership
2. Lay leadership development
3. Social Justice
4. Financial Health

Our task was to see how we might allocate our new minister’s time for working on these goals while keeping in mind that she will only be a half time minister. It soon became obvious that as a half time minister who can fairly give only eighty hours a month to our church, she will soon be overextended unless she can get serious help from all our membership. We have strong worship and pastoral care teams, thanks to Rev. Beatrice’s work here, and they along with the rest of the church leadership will be important in supporting a strong ministry at High Plains Church. Rev. Dana’s work is just beginning at HPCUU and all of us need to understand our work is also just starting. On September 14th we are holding a volunteer fair after church, please come and learn where you can fit in to help us grow and prosper in the year’s ahead.

Jim Montgomery,  
President of the Board of Trustees

## In Memory of Jack McElroy



Jackie Wayne McElroy, 71, passed away August 15, 2014. He was born on December 14, 1942 in Fort Riley, Kansas to Arlington Wayne McElroy and Hattie Ailene (Rhodes) McElroy.

Jack is survived by his wife of 45 years, Sheila Dixon McElroy, brother Jimmy Rhodes McElroy, niece Ashley McElroy Parsons, sisters-in-laws Elizabeth McElroy Preston and Sharon Dixon and nephew Aaron Davidson. He was preceded in death by his brother Kent Arlington McElroy.

He graduated from West Texas State University and was a member of Alpha Kappa Psi. He also pursued a degree in Geology from the University of Texas at El Paso, 1970 – 73.

Jack served the Army as SP5 Medical Corp, 1966 – 1968 including service during the Vietnam War. He was awarded the Army Commendation Medal and the Purple Heart.

He retired in 2006, as Vice President of Finance, after 32 years of service at Marathon, Inc. in Longview, Texas. He served the Longview community on the Board of Directors of Longview Community Ministries, the Longview Symphony and United Way for 6 years.

After retirement he created and co-managed Longview's first original acoustic music venue, Alpine Road Concert series. The music series is currently an on-going Longview venture.

Retiring to Colorado he served on the Board of Directors of High Plains Church Unitarian Universalist as their financial officer. He also served as a driver for Meals on Wheels.

He enjoyed golfing, hiking, snowshoeing and travel.

A memorial service will be held at 11:00 am, September 6, 2014, at High Plains Church Unitarian Universalist, 1825 Dominion Way, Colorado Springs, Colorado 80918.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to High Plains Church UU.

### Act for Social Justice

#### Welcoming Congregation Renewal Activities

By Julie Feuerbach



On Wednesday, September 10, we will begin our monthly Welcoming Congregation Renewal activities with a workshop presented by HPCUU member Dr. Amanda Udis-Kessler. In this first session, participants will be introduced to the various ways homophobia and heterosexism play out individually, interpersonally, culturally, and institutionally. The session will situate homophobia and heterosexism in a larger context of social inequality and will get us started on a conversation about the concept of welcome as a moral value and a congregational priority.

Plan to join us at 6:00 pm for a pot-luck dinner (please bring a dish to share), conversation, and community. The workshop will begin at 6:45 and will wrap up by 8:30 pm, with time allowed for questions and answers. Child care will be provided. We would like to get a count for preparation purposes; please RSVP to Beth Ingham at [welcoming@hpcuu.org](mailto:welcoming@hpcuu.org).

This will be the first of a monthly series of workshops and films about LGBTQ issues. Future workshop topics include general inequality/oppression and how oppressions are linked, Bisexuality, Transgender identity, and a wrap-up session in April centered on how our congregation can continue to be intentionally welcoming to ALL, especially to the LGBTQ community. Interspersed with the workshops, there will be two potluck/ movie nights in which an LGBTQ-themed film will be viewed, followed by a group discussion. The renewal effort will culminate in May or June at our annual meeting where the congregation will be invited to vote to renew our status as a Welcoming Congregation.

The Welcoming Congregation Renewal committee is excited to host these monthly activities, which promise to be both fun and educational. Following the initial one on September 10, they will be the first Wednesday of every month (with December off), so mark your calendars and plan to join us. Educating ourselves about LGBTQ issues is one way we can gather together as a faith community to act for social justice!

Julie Feuerbach,  
Social Justice Coordinator

## The Artist's Way Class to be Offered

By Merle Stryker

The Artist's Way class will be given again starting Tuesdays, October 7 and running for 12 sessions, ending on December 23. The Artist's Way, by Julia Cameron has been one of the best selling books of the last 10 years. The course is a spiritual journey to self knowledge and greater creativity whether you are not at all creative or just want to deepen your creativity and/or spirituality. There will be *homework* for this course in the form of daily journaling and other activities. The rewards are great. We ask that you make this huge commitment for the duration of the course and plan on doing the homework. This is an interactive group course. Each session will begin with an hour of sharing and move to an art project during the second hour. Please see Jessica Laike for a registration form.

We will meet on Tuesday nights 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm at the church. Merle Stryker will once again be the facilitator to organize the course, but each participant will be asked to facilitate and present a session. Help and suggestions will be provided. It is a great deal of fun as well as introspective. We need to get 10 people in order for the course to go. If you took the class last time it was given in 2008, you are invited to repeat it if you wish.

Please email or call Merle Stryker at 264-1178 or (email) [merleandgerry@gmail.com](mailto:merleandgerry@gmail.com) if you have any questions. **You need to register by September 16 in order to have time to get the book and read the first chapter by the time the class starts.** We'll plunge right in. Below is more about what you can expect to get from this course.

### Creativity - what is it?

Creativity is our own true nature.

It's becoming whole – becoming self-actualized

This course is about finding that which is our own true nature.

Creativity is the voice of God.

Defining God: shorthand for mind, universe, source, higher power, the mystery

Much of the course is based on finding God within ourselves.

Even an atheist can experience an altered life through working with these principles

### Some of the Basic Principles:

1. Creativity is the natural order of life
2. Creativity is an experience—a spiritual experience. Creativity leads to spirituality and spirituality leads to creativity—no distinction between the two

### How the linking of spirituality and creativity is done.

The heart of creativity is an experience of the mystical union.

How can we tap into the higher power that connects human creativity with the creative energies of the universe?

We work to *unblock* our channels to our creativity and spirituality.

Some of these blocks are fear, self-sabotage, jealousy, guilt, addiction and other inhibiting forces.

The tools we will use are how we will unblock and find our spirituality.

In practicing and using these tools we find our greater selves.

### Mechanics

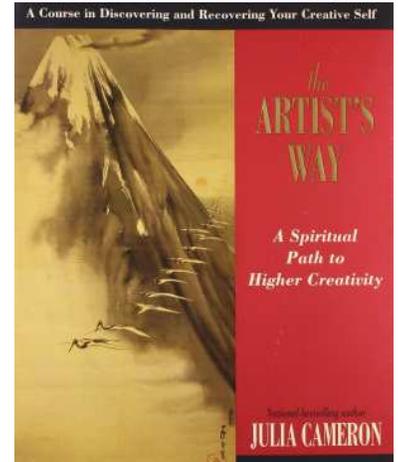
The group is peer run because creative recovery is a collective process.

Unblocking ourselves thrives more easily with some companionship.

Our group will be a creative cluster where people serve one another united with the common aim of creative unblocking.

We read, we write, we do artists dates, hold discussions, and do art projects.

We will develop receptivity and profound trust – we will develop it through sacred listening and sharing.



## High Plains Sisters

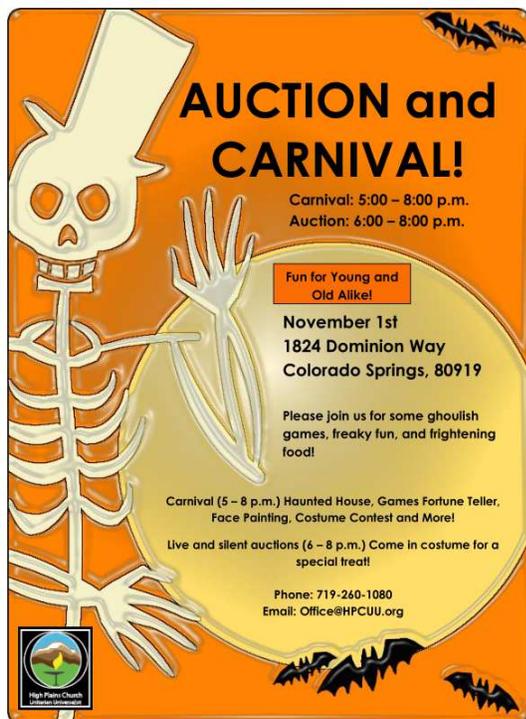
By Kim Doty

High Plains Sisters (HiPS) has a new format! Andi Hammond and Robin LaBorde have joined Kim Doty to help keep the group operating. We'll have volunteers pick a month and plan that meeting. The date/event will need to be chosen by the 15th of the prior month so that there is time to get a notice to the newsletter and other information channels. Any day of the week or time is encouraged, to allow the largest number to participate at some time. Almost any activity that can be done in a group is welcome, as shown by these upcoming events.

Friday September 19th, Robin's arranging a dinner in Manitou Springs, followed by the Third Friday Art Walk. Saturday, October 6th, Kim will be putting together a team for the ColorDash 5K supporting Springs Rescue Mission. And in November, Andi will facilitate an art evening for us to create our own works. In early December, the group will host a Cookie Swap.

HiPS remains a casual, no membership required women's group intended to deepen connections in our community and enable fellowship opportunities. Any High Plains member or friend who identifies as female is welcome to come to events and bring a guest if they desire.

If you have an idea for 2015, or would like more information, please contact Kim Doty at [kim.j.doty@gmail.com](mailto:kim.j.doty@gmail.com).



## Meals on Wheels Team

By Judy Sargent

HPCUU's Meals on Wheels Team is looking for some new drivers! The members (Judy Sargent, Amy Plapp, Janet Oliver and Carol Montgomery) take turns sharing the "Pearl" Route every Tuesday. We deliver meals to 6 - 8 clients and it usually takes about 1-1/2 hours. We all lead busy lives and would like to recruit new drivers to share the responsibilities and the rewards of senior meal delivery. If you are interested in becoming a Pearl Driver, please contact Judy Sargent at [mealsonwheels@hpcuu.org](mailto:mealsonwheels@hpcuu.org) or at 598-5949. Silver Key's Meals on Wheels program is an important part of the community fabric; not only does it help keep seniors in their homes but it also makes the drivers feel good!

## Growing UU Membership Workshop

### Using Social Media and Visitor Integration Strategies

By Nancy Bentley

On Saturday, October 4, nationally known growth, outreach, and media consultant, Peter Bowden, will come to High Plains Church for a special daylong workshop.

Peter will challenge us to consider how the concept of church has changed during the past ten years, how the path to membership is different than it was, how technology has affected these changes, and what we can do to keep visitors coming back to church to become strong, active members.

Peter is a lifelong Unitarian Universalist and the co-founder of the UU Small Group Ministry Network. He produced one of the first and most popular UU videos on YouTube, "You're a Uni-What?" and created the closest thing we have to a UU TV channel, the website: [UnitarianUniversalism.TV](http://UnitarianUniversalism.TV). He helped launch collaborative Unitarian Universalist social media projects such as the UU Growth Lab, <http://uuplanet.org/uugrowthlab/>, and the UU Media Collaborative on Facebook.

Read more about Peter on his consulting site [leadingcongregations.com](http://leadingcongregations.com) and explore his Unitarian Universalist projects and social media at [uuplanet.org](http://uuplanet.org).

A special group rate is available at Hyatt Place for out-of-town attendees attending the workshop, as well as home hospitality. Register by going to our website, [www.hpcuu.org](http://www.hpcuu.org), and looking under the "What's New" tab in the Events section of the Calendar, or pick up a flyer in the church office.

Sign up. Join in. Growth begins at home with each and everyone one of us!



# Growing UU Membership

## Using Social Media and Visitor Integration Strategies

### with Peter Bowden

Saturday, October 4, 2014 9:00 AM to 3:30 PM



**High Plains Church Unitarian Universalist**  
 1825 Dominion Way  
 Colorado Springs Co 80918

Details and online registration at  
<http://uugrowth-oct2014.eventbrite.com/>



Join us for a daylong intensive workshop for congregational leaders presented by Unitarian Universalist growth, outreach and media consultant, Peter Bowden.

Peter will help us focus on new ways to share our vision with others and integrate visitors into our religious community. Social media is fundamentally changing how people form relationships, consume information and make important life decisions. This has significant implications for congregations, from how we share news and announcements to how people move into membership. For our congregations to thrive in the 21st Century, we must understand these changes and learn to use the communication tools of our time with purpose, skill and integrity.

Sponsors: **High Plains Church Unitarian Universalist, Jefferson Unitarian Church, UU Church of Greeley, First Unitarian Society of Denver.** Pending Sponsors: All Souls Unitarian Universalist, Boulder Valley Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, UU Church of Cheyenne

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 Mail-in Registration Form:

**Growing UU Membership Using Social Media and Visitor Integration Strategies**

Early registration (Before 9/13/14): \$45 (After 9/13/14): \$50 Lunch & Snacks included.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Congregation: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Role(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to **HPCUU** with memo **Oct 4<sup>th</sup> Event Registration**, and mail to High Plains Church Unitarian Universalist, Attn: Karen Wilsey, 1825 Dominion Way Colorado Springs, Co 80918

\*If registering a group, please include list of those attending, their leadership roles & email addresses.

## Accessing the Members Only Website Page

By John Atkinson

Want a member's phone number? Want to find church policies and procedures? Want to read copies of board meeting minutes? Need a check



reimbursement form? These and many other "church confidential" items are available on the members' only section of our website.

Click on the "Member Login" icon on the left-hand side of the home page. This will take you to a page where you can enter your user name and password.

If you don't have a user name and password just click on "request" on the login page, complete the email that pops up, and then email your name and proposed User Name to the webmaster. A good User Name is just your first and last name.

The webmaster will verify that you are a member (or a friend) and email you a temporary password you can use to log in. Once logged in you must change your password to one that you would prefer. A good password is at least 8 characters with some numbers and/or special characters. Many people remember a phrase and use the first letter of each word of the phrase to create a password. If you have questions or need help email [webmaster@hpcuu.org](mailto:webmaster@hpcuu.org) or please call John Atkinson for assistance.

## Pastoral Care Team

By Amanda Udis-Kessler

You may or may not have noticed the two chairs at the front of the sanctuary across from the piano. This is the Caring Corner, and a member of the Pastoral Care Team will be sitting there after church every Sunday (with rare exceptions) if you need to talk about anything. Our role is to listen compassionately as you talk about whatever may be on your mind and in your heart. We don't counsel or try to "fix things"; we simply seek to offer a supportive presence for you. So please come see us if there's something troubling you and you think our type of listening can be of assistance.

## Board Minutes

The Monthly Board Meeting Minutes are available on the Members Only page of the church website.

## Fall Campus Prune and Cleanup

By Bill Cutts

Saturday, Sept 27 from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm. Come help beautify our landscape and impress the UU visitors attending the Peter Bowden workshop. Bring loppers, clippers, shears etc and gloves. Long sleeves and pants to get up close and personal with our scratchy bushes. Pull huge unsightly weeds from sidewalk along Academy. If we have a working mower, knock down weeds on the island east of parking lot.

Added long-term needs:

Anyone able to provide us with 10 pickup loads of mulch will be lionized or canonized,

Any handyperson willing to resuscitate the lawnmower (needs pure gasoline flush, new sparkplug, and maybe new carburetor--I'm told) will be much appreciated also. It has not been usable all summer.

Contact Bill Cutts 534 0387

## Part 2b:

### Listening in a Jerusalem Shop

By Lori Sly

After I checked into the convent guesthouse, a pretty black woman with a French accent gave me a tour of the dining room and checkout areas. She showed me to a narrow room with a twin bed, mini desk, freestanding wooden closet, and tiny attached shower room.

From my window on the rooftop terrace, I could see a beautiful view: an expanse of spiked towers and domes rising above ancient buildings made of white stone blocks. The famous golden-topped "Dome of the Rock," where Muslims believe Mohammed ascended to heaven, and Jews and Christians believe Abraham offered his son as a sacrifice to God, appeared close by.

Resting on flowery mismatched sheets, I fell into sleep without dinner.

A loud broadcast of Islamic chants woke me up at 3:45 A.M., sounding like there was a bullhorn blasting right outside my window. The broadcasts occur five times a day for prayer, and this first one that day lasted until 4:30.

Are people really praying right now? Does anyone get their eight hours worth of sleep?

At 7:30 A.M., I wandered down multiple levels of gardened terraces to the convent dining room. I ate a breakfast of toasted pita bread, yogurt, cucumbers, and tomatoes.

A thin, frosty-haired man from France, named Alan, joined me at the breakfast table. In halting, accented English, he confided that his wife and son co-travelers were sleeping in.

I introduced myself and tried to remember anything from high school French class that I might say to him right now. Le Shien--Dog. La Sha--Cat. Gateau--Cake. Comsi Comsa--so-so. So much for relevant memories.

This was Alan's second visit to the area. After we talked about various Old City sites, he gave me a warning that was to prove prophetic.

"I would advise you not to tell the Palestinian shopkeepers you are an American. They hate Americans. Most Europeans support Palestinian rights, but not Americans; they are known to side with the Israeli Jews."

"Actually I'm a member of a group who supports Palestinian rights. And yesterday I told a shopkeeper I was American. He spoke politely with me about the situation here."

"Still, it might be safer to say you're Canadian. They like Canadians. You'll get a better price that way."

"Hmmm. Well, who knows?" I said. "Maybe I can change some minds."

After breakfast, Alan helped me find the Damascus Gate again for a day touring the area on my own.

My third listening session occurred after I finished touring, near the end of the day. It turned out to be much, much harder than the Hebrew University professor or the Palestinian shopkeeper of the day before.

I was returning to my room at Ecce Homo convent when I passed the same shop where the man had given me directions and invited me in yesterday. The father of the man I talked to before motioned for me to sit on a stool across the narrow shop entrance from him. He was medium height, with gray hair and stringy arms. He wore the white pillbox hat of a Muslim.

I deduced he had been quietly listening to my conversation with his son the day before and decided he had some things he wanted to say to me.

"Is your son here today?" I asked.

"He's sick. I gave him lemon juice to help him get well."

"I hope he feels better soon."

Gripping the arms of his plastic molded chair, he drew me into a long discussion. First, I don't remember why, but he explained that the word "shalom" was a guttural, earth-bound, ungodly word, and the word "salaam" was light and airy, floating toward heaven. He spoke with an air of the wise educator.

I just said, "Oh." I nodded, feeling like something wasn't quite right, but not discovering what yet.

If you know "shalom" is a Hebrew greeting and "salaam" is Arabic, you might immediately understand his explanation as a slam toward Jews, but I didn't realize that right away. Too many new foreign words were stacking up in my head; I was collecting them without much room left in my brain to process them yet. Trying to remember French words with Alan that morning, and recalling French phrases at odd times all day, had only made the jumble of Arabic and Hebrew worse.

He began to bring up other subjects, speaking more loudly and rapidly as he did so. With one side of his lip lifting, he talked about an Anglican bishop in America approving the marriage of a woman with a dog.

I felt so incredulous, that I couldn't stop myself from replying.

"I don't know anyone in America who is married to a dog. I've lived in many states in America, and I don't even know what you mean by 'Anglican.' This marriage can't be common and sounds silly to me."

But my statements only made him angrier. "I know the truth!" he yelled. "You listen and learn."

I realized the engineer in me was trying to solve his problems for him, to fix his misconceptions. This is not compassionate listening. I should have stayed quietly attentive, or reflected back his apparent emotions and needs instead.

He continued by talking about America's CIA. The CIA was sent everywhere to do America's dirty work. The 9-11 incident with the twin towers in New York was manufactured as an excuse to kill Arabs. The reason the Twin Towers were picked was because no Jewish shops and businesses were located there.

I was appalled and I couldn't stop myself from speaking again. "I personally don't believe everything I read on the Internet."

"I know the truth!" he said again.

This isn't going very well. Shut up and listen.

He went on to tell me that Americans maintained 72 Guantanamo camps abroad, invaded Afghanistan, denied Gaza food and medicine, and mowed down Palestinian houses. If they didn't do the thing themselves, they sent others to do it for them. Americans send Israelis into Palestinian homes and take them away. And Americans dropped nuclear bombs on Japan. Americans are baby killers.

I listened quietly for a long while as he continued to batter Americans, guessing he, or his family and friends, must have been shown some great disrespect, such that he had to go looking on the Internet for someone to blame for all the ills in his world.

Millions died in Iraq and Syria because of America. Americans give the F-16s and other weapons to Israel. Americans bankrolled Saddam Hussein to kill Iranians, then sent him into Kuwait so they could kill him there.

While he rambled on, his eyes often slitted at me, and sometimes his eyelids sagged downward, looked tired of the words he put out there.

He predicted that in 2016 Americans would die from the sun and a flood; he saw it in a dream that they would go to hell. God sees what they do. "Americans are being punished by God, that's why they're the only ones who get PTSD. Soon Russia and China will take over the power in the world and America will be nothing. The Chinese are quiet and smart."

"American politicians are worse than all the other politicians. President Obama is a liar and a cheat. And so was Bush. And Clinton and Reagan before that. What good thing has Americans ever done for the Palestinian people?"

A few times, he seemed to realize what a torrent of anger he was asking me to swallow, and tried to check himself. "Once I prayed for Americans to die," he said, "but later I changed, because I could not wish the same thing on Americans that they wished on me. I am human." Later he added that a few American people may be okay, but not the government.

He also slipped in that he wasn't here to talk politics, but to sell things, and he might love me more if I actually bought something.

"I can never forget that America supported the death of my dreams and hope," he claimed with a desperate tone.

Two other sons whom I hadn't met before joined their father from the back of the shop. One was a stocky, balding man, possibly in his thirties, the other a very

overweight young man with Down's Syndrome features.

Unlike the son the day before, who tended to blame the situation of Palestinians on corrupt politicians from both sides of the conflict, these other sons nodded vehemently while their father talked. Once, the thirty-something son pointed to a group of tourists going by, and with a disgusted tone, said, "See, Americans. Jews."

Near the end of the father's tirade, he began repeating more about American Anglicans, this time about them having sex with dogs. His face grew redder, his voice louder, his limbs more stiff and perturbed, and foam appeared at the sides of his mouth.

I was afraid he might spit at me.

Thankfully, he didn't.

He slammed Americans so many ways in such rapid succession that I have a hard time remembering it all. But here are some words and phrases he repeated again and again: Dirty. Baby killers. Liars. I know the truth. I'm human. What good thing has Americans ever done for the Palestinian people? I can never forget what America did to me.

It was challenging for me to stay in a compassionate listening mode throughout the hour-long session with the shop owner. After some initial falters, I was able to listen and nod for most of the hour, and I did say, "I can see you feel strongly," "You're very angry," and "So you want America to be fair about this?" The latter statements validated his feelings and needs, and I hope made him feel respected as a human being with his own unique experiences. One doesn't have to agree in order to empathize with the human feelings of others. His fury was heavy in the air, on my shoulders, and in my heart.

He finally ended his own harangue. "It's been an hour already. My kids are waiting for me to close the shop, and I must pray."

As I left the shop and they closed the tall metal doors at the front, I told him, "I'm very sad you have been so hurt by America." I didn't look back after I said this, because I was at the edge of what I could take.

I stayed steady and intent on his words while in his shop, but my body shook after I walked out of his sight.

I skipped dinner and cried in my room. It was overwhelming to be the target of such obvious hatred and disgust. I felt lonely. I slept poorly. The 3:45 A.M. prayer broadcast helped that along.

The next morning I was able to think more clearly, but still felt a little disoriented. What did listening to this man mean to me? How do I assess?

It would have been easier to relate to the shop owner if he had told me specific things that happened to him or his friends, instead of spouting a stream of conspiracy theories and wholesale damning of groups. I try not to do either of those things myself. Maybe I should have asked what specifically happened to him.

I sensed some of his pain each time he said, "I am human." And I could imagine what a trial he had taking care of four sons, one of them special needs, based on that small shop.

Although I felt proud that I was able to listen to the rant the majority of the time without open judgment, I also felt a tiny bit like a dirty American. I do pay taxes, part of which go to the Israeli government in huge amounts. This Israeli regime has been documented as carrying out some systemic, abusive acts: demolishing Palestinian homes and ruining their livelihoods; throwing Palestinians in jail without due process; failing to prosecute Jewish settlers who abuse their Palestinian neighbors.

But hasn't the government done a valuable thing, too, giving Jews who are booted out elsewhere, a place to be welcomed?

But trampling on Palestinians makes Palestinians less likely to accept new Jews to the area, and that defeats the government's own purposes.

One thing we could do better as Americans is to follow our money, to send people with it who monitor how it's used. The shop owner's son even alluded to that yesterday.

For now, my best hope was that I had given this shop owner a safe space to vent his frustrations, and that he might heal somewhat--from whatever he actually experienced--as a result. And perhaps I was the first American who ever listened to him.

I ate breakfast with a Japanese woman traveling alone on a Catholic pilgrimage. She didn't speak much English, and I only knew how to say "hi" in Japanese, so we smiled a lot and connected more that way. Tears pooled in my eyes when I told her in very simple terms what I did

yesterday. How long would it take for me to move on from this emotionally?

I checked out of Ecce Homo, because I would be meeting the Compassionate Listening Project group and staying at a hotel with them in East Jerusalem tonight.

Alan and his wife were checking out at the same time.

"Hi, Alan."

I suddenly remembered some more French and introduced myself to his wife, "Je m'appelle Lori. Enchanté."

I told Alan, "Your prophecy about Palestinian shopkeepers came true for me. Yesterday I got an earful about Americans from a guy across the way."

He looked concerned. "Are you okay?"

I smiled. "I'm fine. Sort of." I continued to feel a bit shaky and disoriented. Hate was a powerful emotion to have absorbed on behalf of my country.

As I went outside and clunked the wheels of my suitcase over the stones in the road, toward a gate to the Old City, the sun was already getting hot.

I felt wary of seeing the angry shopkeeper on the way out.

I did.

He was just opening his shop at about 8:30 A.M., and he saw me coming as he sat down in his white chair at the front.

He dipped his head, closed his eyes briefly, and put a single fist to his heart.



Lori on the Terrace at Ecce Homo

I continued walking by, but displayed a half-smile and waved.

His gesture gave me some reassurance, and yet, given cultural differences, I was uncertain what it meant.

Later that day a new friend and I took a random poll of Palestinian men, showing them the gesture and asking what it meant.

It was a gesture of respect for me.



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