

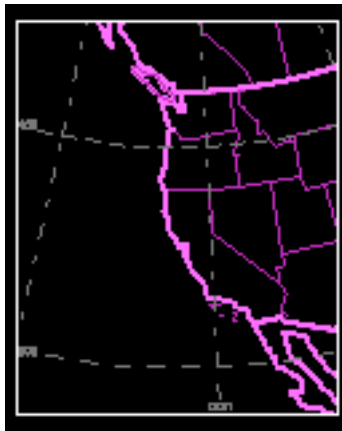
Two Poles: West Coast tour report

Skip Schiel

skipschiel@gmail.com
617-441-7756

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A journey of discovery and witness has two poles: going somewhere to explore and then returning home to broadcast the news. For me this means regular trips to Israel-Palestine and then, in some ways more difficult, traveling around my United States homeland to show and tell my story. With the thick blanket smothering much dialog and debate about the conflict in the Levant, finding an audience is taxing.



Thanks to family, friends, and many others I met for the first time, I feel the two-month tour was largely successful. I presented to approximately 500 people in 16 different venues, including two Anchorage high schools and 3 Friends meetings. I ranged from British Columbia near the Yukon, thru Alaska, Washington state, to California. The people who organized and hosted shows were usually very good—dedicated, skillful, concentrated, respectful of my needs, and appreciative. I concentrated mostly on the shows, [*Gaza Scorched and Squeezed*](#) and [*The Hydropolitics of Palestine and Israel, with Quakers in Israel and Palestine*](#) and [*Facts on the Ground*](#) thrown in a few times. I raised approximately \$1,200, with my transport and much of my expenses mostly covered by an organization, family, and friends.

Not a huge audience or amount of money but a start. I've donated a portion of the proceeds to various organizations in Israel-Palestine, listing these organizations with links at the end of this letter.

The digital equipment worked flawlessly. The opportunity to revise shows as I encountered new audiences was a distinct benefit. Focusing exclusively on one main topic—Israel-Palestine—helped. Thanks to many incisive questions from audiences, I've learned better what to examine on my next trip to the Middle East next fall. Occasionally someone objected to my views, usually respectfully.

One example of a question leading to further insight came from the last show about Gaza, in Seattle, thru the Episcopal Peace Fellowship. The audience included several Jews who had been

many times to the region in support of Palestinian rights, a young man from Gaza, and a woman who'd worked in Gaza with the AFSC and then the UN as a nurse to Palestinian refugees in 1949-50. The question was, that word *terrorist*, what does it suggest? Maybe try dropping the word entirely and be more specific— *attacker of civilians, self or suicide bomber, fighter, militant, etc.* *Terrorist* tends to demonize the Palestinians and remove the Israelis from the category of terrorist. I've learned to nuance the word *martyr*, why not *terrorist*?

As a bonus, along with visits to beloved family and friends, I experienced a range of terrains: Alaska from drippy Juneau to frozen Atlin, California's temperate and unseasonably dry climate, and Seattle's fog and rain. Luckily I was able to photograph much of this, and put it on my website for circulation. [Samples here.](#)



Live oaks, Napa, CA



Anchorage AK

I met different peace groups, such as the Veterans for Peace in Juneau and Juneau People for Peace & Justice, Women in Black on Bainbridge Island, the Japanese Buddhist order Nipponzan Myohoji, and the Lake Forest Peace Group in Seattle, along with many stalwart peace and justice activists. [Samples here.](#)



Women in Black, Bainbridge Isl, WA



Veterans' for Peace, Juneau AK

A few problems however: I've more readily found an audience on the West Coast than I have in my own East Coast neighborhood. Despite invitations from three Friends meetings, I've been disappointed that many other Quaker and AFSC groups I invited to host shows were unresponsive. Despite good publicity and personal contacts, the turnout has too often been slim.

While on tour, I continued writing my memoir, *Israel-Palestine-Kaleidoscope*, about how I arrived at my photo project about Israel-Palestine. [It's here.](#)

Now my task is to revise these shows, make some new ones from the photos I made last spring, and begin planning for my return to the Middle East next fall. I intend to further explore my main themes: water politics, youth, non-violent resistance, holy sites, and Quakers. Later this spring I will raise funds for this 4th journey of witness and discovery in the Levant.

If any of you would like to host one of my shows in the spring or summer of 2007, or, after my return from Israel-Palestine next December, please contact me. Thanks to all for your participation in this difficult struggle for human rights for all people.

Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good life let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. This wisdom is not such as comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, devilish. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, without uncertainty or insincerity. And the harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

—James, chapter 3

Donated to:

[American Friends Service Committee's program in Gaza](#), Popular Achievement, a youth program building leadership and community service skills

[Friends International Center in Ramallah](#), providing a base for the nonviolent transformation of the conflict

[Gaza Community Mental Health Program](#), offering services to the overwhelming traumatized population

[Israel/Palestine Center for Information & Research](#), a joint organization

[Palestinian Hydrology Group](#), raising awareness and monitoring services

[Rabbis for Human Rights](#), enacting biblical calls for justice and mercy

[Ta'ayush](#), Jews and Palestinians working nonviolently for justice