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***PRESCOTT
UNITARIAN
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PUUF Plans Gardening Project!

By Edward Hamilton. The simple act of planting, nourishing, and fostering the growth of another living thing. What could be a more elemental way to build a connection to the world of living things around us? We at PUUF believe that growing plants -- raising a portion of our own food, right near home -- is a small but important way to connect to and benefit our environment, and to build a better world. So, the PUUF congregation has committed itself to a new pilot gardening project.



At the outset, our efforts will be two-fold. First, we will build and maintain a



small conventional raised bed vegetable garden. This garden will enable us to work together, perhaps with the input of our community neighbors and local students, to build fertile soil from unwanted organic wastes, while generating a healthy crop of tasty vegetables.

Second, we will construct and operate a very novel plant growing setup, known as an "aquaponic" food production system. Using methods developed in just the last three or four decades, this second system will produce plants in a soil-free environment, and a crop of fish in a small aquarium. Thus, our

THE PRESCOTT UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP IS A LAY LED CONGREGATION. AS UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS, WE COMMIT OURSELVES TO EMBRACING AND CELEBRATING THE DIVERSITY THAT MAKES UP ALL HUMANITY. WHATEVER YOUR THEOLOGY, THE COLOR OF YOUR SKIN, YOUR SEXUAL ORIENTATION, YOUR ETHNIC BACKGROUND, OR YOUR PHYSICAL ABILITIES, YOU ARE WELCOME AT OUR FELLOWSHIP.

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growing system will be a marriage, of sorts, of "aquaculture," raising captive fish, and "hydroponics," raising plants without soil. The name aquaponics springs from these two features.

Modern aquaponics was first developed in the US Virgin Islands, to address conditions often like those we face in this region. The islands have little arable land, and rainfall is scarce, and limited to half the year. An aquaponic system can help overcome these problems by using minimal water, while raising a relatively large crop on a small "footprint."

In overall design, an aquaponic unit is fairly simple. We raise fish in a large aquarium. As the fish are fed and grow, they release urine into their water as a by-product of metabolism. The water, rich in fish waste, is circulated to the plant beds. Here bacteria convert urea to nitrates, which the plants consume for their own growth -- cleaning the water that is returned to the fish. Voila! The fish help the plants, the plants help the fish.

It all seems so simple... but there is a LOT that can go wrong. If the water's pH is too low, the fish die. If it's too high, the plants die. Micronutrients like iron missing? There go the plants again.

So, we will build a very small aquaponic system -- as we said, a pilot project. And we will tinker. And we will fail, and try again. And, as our fish

and our plants grow (or fail to grow) we will learn together. And somewhere down the road, the PUUF congregation will become small-time local farmers. Producing a food crop for ourselves, and we hope, for other members of our community who need fresh, locally-grown food. What could be a better way to do something for our community, and our planet?

From the Board President

Hello everyone. I hope everybody had a pleasant holiday season. I certainly did with my brother and his wife visiting, their first time in Arizona.

I would like to thank the board of PUUF for electing me as the president of the board. I appreciate the chance and challenge to further aid in helping PUUF as we move forward into 2019. If anyone has any joys or concerns you can always reach me at

alatuul1975@gmail.com .

Also, congratulations to this fellowship for your generous recent donations for the Guest at Your Table project. We donated a total of \$398.71 for this very worthwhile cause.

Thank you, Al Schober



ANY PERSON MAY BECOME A MEMBER OF THIS FELLOWSHIP, WHO IS IN SYMPATHY WITH ITS PURPOSE AND PROGRAM, BY SIGNING THE MEMBERSHIP BOOK, AND THEREBY ACCEPTING THE OBLIGATION TO PARTICIPATE AND TO HELP SUPPORT THE FELLOWSHIP BY FINANCIAL OR OTHER MEANS. PLEASE SEE AL SCHOBER FOR INFORMATION.