



The Wildlife Watch Binocular

PO Box 562, New Paltz, NY 12561 Spring 2006

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HOW I SEE IT: Wildlife Watch Interviews Will Tuttle, Ph.D.

WILL AND MADELEINE TUTTLE ARE WRITERS, MUSCIANS, ARTISTS, HEALERS, AND MINISTERS WHO HAVE CHOSEN TO LIVE IN A SOLAR-POWERED CAMPER, WORK OUTDOORS, AND TRAVEL THE COUNTRY DELIVERING THEIR MESSAGES AND SHARING THEIR SPIRITUAL DISCOVERY



Photo from Will Tuttle's website: www.willtuttle.com

W.W. What motivated you to live this way?

W.T. About ten years ago, we decided to try touring full-time and bought a diesel pick-up truck and 27-foot 5th-wheel trailer. We thought we'd do it for maybe six months or a year, and now we've been living on the road full-time for ten years - except for a month in the winter and one to two months in the summer. We're booked every weekend at progressive churches and conferences around the U.S., putting on concerts of uplifting, original piano music, giving workshops on developing intuition and compassion, delivering lectures on vegetarianism and animal rights, and doing art exhibits of Madeleine's original watercolor paintings of animals. I book our itinerary about six months in advance; it's really a lot of fun and gives us a chance to impact thousands of people directly at a grassroots level.

W.W. How much power do the solar panels actually provide? What do they allow you to do? How much non-renewable energy do they save you?

W.T. **We have four 75-watt panels mounted on the roof of our rolling home, plus a fifth 75-watt panel that we set up on the ground for optimum solar gain. It works great! On sunny days, we get from ten to twenty amps of electricity going into our bank of six golf-cart batteries. We've been able to live for many months at a stretch, never plugging in to "shore power." The solar panels provide our electricity for lights, pumps, motors, small kitchen appliances, tools, computer, digital piano and recording studio, charging cell phones, and so forth. We started with just two panels and three small batteries and over the years we've kept upgrading our system. We use propane for cooking, heating, and running the refrigerator, and one seven-gallon tank typically lasts us about two months!**

Our solar electric system gives us freedom and flexibility. For example, this week, traveling between Buffalo and Cleveland, we're staying in an Ohio state

park that has \$28 sites with electricity and that are completely booked. Because we don't need to hook up, we're staying in an "overflow" area for only \$18 per night. Instead of being crammed in with a bunch of noisy campers with smoky fires in an expensive camp loop, we're by ourselves in a beautiful field by a forest with a group of fifteen Canada geese that we enjoy immensely, looking out over Lake Erie.

Since we're in the south in the winter (either southern California/Arizona or Florida) and in the north in the summer (typically either New England, Michigan/ Wisconsin, Colorado, or Washington/Oregon), we have good solar gain year round. Whether we've paid off our entire investment (about \$5,000) in the solar system we've installed yet is doubtful, but we're continually saving money and enjoying opportunities that are priceless.

W.W. How do you have to plan your days to accommodate living in your rolling home?

W.T. On Saturday, Sunday, Monday, and Tuesdays, we're typically parked in the parking lot of a Unity, Unitarian, or Religious Science church, and are busy with the program we're offering: doing the music and meditation, and often the message/sermon on Sunday morning, putting on the concert/art exhibit, and then the workshop on developing intuition. During the day on Monday and Tuesday, we take appointments for individual sessions with people where we create "Personalized Music & Art Portraits." I tune into the individual or couple and create a 30-minute recording of piano music that is inspired by the presence and spirit of

the person or couple, and Madeleine creates a 9"x12" watercolor painting similarly inspired. People really love these and so this keeps us pretty busy. We also run errands, such as going to the local health-food store (we know the best ones throughout the U.S. by now). On Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, we typically stay in a state park that's on the way to our next destination. These days we love to take time in nature, and go hiking, biking, kayaking, swimming, snorkeling, and bird-watching, as well as catching up with things.

Every morning, first thing, wherever we are, we meditate for two hours, and do some yoga, tai chi, and reading in spiritual books. Madeleine practices the silver flute for about two hours also, and I play the piano and work on writing projects. I've produced three new CD albums and written two books while living in our rolling home. The second book, just released, is *The World Peace Diet*, which is about the mentality of domination and exploitation required by our daily meals of abused animals, and how this mentality is the unrecognized and invisible source of most of our problems. Though less than one percent of books are chosen to be reviewed by Library Journal, this one was chosen for review and was even recommended for all the libraries, both municipal and university, throughout the U.S.! This is, I believe, a great victory for the animals.

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ANIMAL PROTECTION IS NOW A PART OF GOVERNMENT!

Newly formed: The Animal Rights Subcommittee of the Environmental Conservation Committee (EnCC) of the Village of New Paltz.
Chair: Rachel Lagodka



Photo by Jackie McCarney

THE FRONT LENS: Information & Education

WISDOM AT THE TOP

By Anne Muller

HAVE FLOODED ROADS CAUSED BY BEAVER ACTIVITY?

If money is the issue, then a beaver deceiver can be installed. If morals are the issue, then a beaver deceiver can be installed. If effectiveness is the issue, then a beaver deceiver can be installed.

New Paltz Town Supervisor, Toni Hokanson, had a BEAVER DECEIVER installed as a solution to spring road flooding, obviating the need to remove beavers and side-stepping a request by the New Paltz Highway Department to trap and kill the beavers!

Those adorable and necessary beavers often find themselves in hot soup when roads begin to flood as a result of the dams they build to impound and quiet the waters surrounding their lodge. Flooding or possible flooding of roads is often the reason for highway departments wishing to have them killed by lethal trapping. Additionally, beavers are not liked by developers who need dry land for construction. They, too, hire trappers to kill beavers.



All photos by Peter Muller

Firsthand Account of the Installation:

The beaver deceiver installation went incredibly smoothly. On this cold morning in early March, I think we were all in utter awe over seeing Skip Hilliker of HSUS, a man in his 60's, chop away ice on a beaver pond and, without hesitation and only a cotton shirt, wade chest-deep into the icy waters carrying one end of a "beaver deceiver." The two other heroes who worked on this were Barb Coddington and Jeff Williams, from the Dept. of Buildings



and Grounds, who assisted and trained with Skip, for surely this method will be implemented in the future.

Standing knee deep in icy water, they began by clawing the culvert clear of mud and twigs placed there by beavers as part of dam building. Once done, the water gushed freely through, lowering the water level slightly in the eastern side of the pond. The photos will show you this amazing work in progress.

Poles, to which the fencing was to be attached, had to be pounded into place. That was no easy feat as they weren't pointed at the bottom, and they often hit shale under the muck. Even at 8:30 a.m., Skip had just come from another installation in Connecticut. In spite of the cold, we were all riveted by Skip's apparent enjoyment of working in the freezing water. If he wasn't complaining, who were we to complain? We were cold, but at least dry.

Needless to say, it was exhilarating at so many levels - especially the spiritual level of seeing people work together to save an environment and the little engineers who built it.

Wildlife Watch thanks Toni Hokanson, Supervisor of the Town of New Paltz and Jason West, Mayor of the Village of New Paltz whose vision brings us to the point where brainpower and not primitive killing implements are used to non-lethally resolve conflicts with animals. We thank the New Paltz Town Board for its decision to effectively and non-lethally resolve the flooding problem. Thank you to Marion DuBois for the good direction she gave to the Town, and thank you to Judy Joffee for all the help she gave the installers thus reducing the installation time. Thank you to the landowners who willingly gave their permission and attended the installation with their children.

Please see the websites of **Beavers Wetlands, and Wildlife** operated by **Owen and Sharon Brown**. www.beaversww.org and **HSUS** http://www.hsus.org/press_and_publications/press_releases/study_contradicts_.html

Tuttle

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W.W. How does the increase in gas prices affect where you park your rolling home?

W.T. We only put about fifteen to twenty thousand miles on our truck each year, and we actually pull our rolling home only about one-third of those miles. Thus, over the past ten years, our fuel expense has ranged between only three to five percent of our total expenses. The prices of fuel are certain to rise in the future, though, so we'll have to see how that affects us.

W.W. What type of "hi-tech" gadgets do you use for communication with the outside world, and also for your living and creating inside and outside the RV?

W.T. We went the first five years with an old "bag phone" cell phone that was connected to a fax ma-



chine and cordless phone. We had no computer. Now we have a PowerBook laptop that connects to the internet through Bluetooth and a cell phone with a built-in video camera! It's been working amazingly well. I can finally maintain our websites and send flyers to churches as PDF files. We get our mail forwarded to us every week from the little town, Healdsburg, in northern California where we used to live, and we have a toll-free phone number that people can use to place orders and leave messages. With our computer, scanner, digital camera and video camera, digital piano, and recording studio, I can create, burn, and copy DVDs and CDs, as well as put together CD albums, books, art prints and cards, musical scores, flyers, press releases, edit wildlife photos and videos, create PowerPoint presentations, and electronically submit my bimonthly column, "Food For Thought" to VegNews Magazine in San Francisco. We were interviewed on Wisdom Television, and we can make and send DVD copies of the show to people, for example. **And all powered by the sun!**

W.W. How do you practice the piano; and how does Madeleine paint?

W.T. Every weekend we're in a church parking lot, and most of the churches have good quality grand pianos and I'm usually given a key to the building, so I can practice and play the piano a lot. When we're in nature, I can play our digital piano, which, though not as inviting as an acoustic piano, is one of the better digital pianos available. Madeleine paints right on our "everything" table, which is on our slide-out, and which I made from birch plywood many years ago. It's a dinner table, desk, and painting table; we just have to coordinate

our schedules! Madeleine of course paints a lot on Mondays and Tuesdays when we're doing our individual sessions for people.

W.W. How long do you stay in one location? What considerations go into the decision?

W.T. We make large, slow loops around the U.S., to all 48 states and occasionally into Canada. We like to say that we follow the geese and thus rarely have to use our air conditioner or our heater. We get nice long autumns as we head south in the fall, and long, beautiful springs as we head north. Our itinerary revolves around our choices of which churches and conferences to attend and when, and what part of the country we'd like to be in and schedule events in during a particular time of the year. Sometimes our decision

is made more by the large congregations and potentials of a region, and other times we choose to go to small congregations in order to be in more dramatic natural settings. Again, though, it's all decided about six months ahead. Occasionally we schedule a month or two off, and just relax, but mostly, we enjoy our tour immensely, and the main opportunities for extended spontaneity are during our summer and winter breaks.

W.W. What does living this way allow you to do that you couldn't otherwise do?

W.T. Many things. For one, it allows us to meet and influence (hopefully positively) many tens of thousands of people through the continuous interplay of our tour schedule and the concerts, lectures, exhibits, workshops, and radio/TV exposure, as well as countless discussions with individuals as we "pass through." **Also, it allows us to meet and be continually influenced by many non-human animals all over the country. We try to bring respect for them and their interests back into the human world when we return to the towns and cities on the weekends. In the wild we have seen elk, moose, antelope, bobcats, wolves, foxes, mountain sheep, orcas, whales, sea turtles, black and grizzly bears, and lots of deer, raccoons, skunks, otters, muskrats, turtles, and snakes, as well as salmon, catfish, trout, and countless other types of fish, and eagles, hawks, owls, egrets, herons, cormorants, ibis, terns, gulls, an-**

ingas, puffins, mergansers, loons, wild turkeys, coots, and, again, countless other types of birds. Also butterflies, dragonflies, grasshoppers, and so many other wonderful and beautiful insects, as well as deserts, mountains, riparian regions, coastal regions, prairies, lakes, hardwood forests, and so on. Our life is a rhythmic, ongoing adventure of learning about and deepening our appreciation of the natural world, and then bringing this into the human world through music, art, and words, and then going back out into nature again, like inhaling and exhaling.

In addition, we have many opportunities to speak out on behalf of animals, especially around hunting. We're always writing letters to the management of state parks and of "wildlife refuges" where people routinely kill and torment birds, mammals, and fish for "sport." At one state park in California where duck hunting was allowed and practiced, I started a petition against duck hunting in the park, and went around to all the campers and RVs in the campground, and presented the list of signatures to the manager of the park, who forwarded it to his supervisor. I believe that every effort we make, no matter how small, is helpful, and it is essential to keep contributing our voice, however we can. I've heard that a most powerful force and factor for social change is when "a stranger comes to town." Since people don't really know us, we can be and do almost anything and this gives us much more freedom to plant seeds in consciousness than if we were local people everyone knew and could easily categorize and thus ignore.

W.W. How does solar camping contribute to your awareness of nature? How much does this lifestyle contribute to the natural world?

W.T. Before we embarked on our "grand tour," I was quite oblivious to RVing and didn't know what a "fifth-wheel" was until we bought one, and because I was against over-consumption of resources, I always looked at RVs as examples of wasteful extravagance. **I've discovered, though, that living in one full-time is probably the lightest and most environmentally-friendly way of living that an average person in the U.S. can aspire to. Since we don't own a house, our use of petroleum resources is a tiny fraction of most Americans. We get our electricity from the sun, use only about 50 gallons of propane a year, and only about 80 gallons of water per week. We don't drive much, bike when we can, and haven't had a TV for thirty years.**

We've been vegans for over twenty years, and this represents an enormous savings of water and fossil fuel use; as

my new book points out, eating animal foods causes enormous air, water, and soil pollution and degradation, and habitat destruction for wildlife. A conservative estimate that the amount of land, water, fossil fuels, and pesticides required to feed one person a typical meat, cheese, and egg-based diet would feed fifteen people eating a vegan diet. We are careful to only buy organically-grown produce, grains, and foods because pesticides and artificial fertilizers kill insects, fish, and birds.

Living full-time in a space of 250 square feet teaches conservation. If I want to buy a new pair of pants, I have to give away a pair of pants first! There's little room to accumulate anything that isn't absolutely necessary. It's a wonderful discipline and brings us a lot of joy. Since our house is so small, we spend a lot of time in the sun and air, outside, and feel kinship with the other beings who are our neighbors. My goal is to help people reawaken to the beauty, fragility, and preciousness of the natural world, and to raise the consciousness of Western culture so that we can live in harmony with each other and with the other beings with whom we share this spectacularly diverse and magnificent planet.

W.W. Please comment on aspects that I'm no doubt missing.

Wandering monks, sadhus, spiritual seekers, and prophets have arisen in every time and culture. In our modern mechanized culture, we've found our way of doing this as full-time RVers. This definitely isn't for everyone, and I'm always grateful for the people with their roots in the local earth and economy who are working for peace, justice, and compassion at the local level. Before embarking on this, I got a Ph.D. in education from U.C. Berkeley and taught college courses in philosophy, history, mythology, and comparative religion for six years, and that was terrific, too. Madeleine spent many years in Switzerland working as an artist and healer. **Our ministry now is a quite amazing chapter, probably only possible in the United States, and only during a relatively small window of time, historically. Our future, and the future of all of us, depends on our awakening from the dream of arrogant and fearful domination of nature, and discovering our spiritual unity with the whole interconnected web of life and living in ways that honor and respect that web.** www.willtuttle.com

EARTH DAY APPROACHES MIDDLE AGE

by Jeff Davis

Get out your shovels and trowels, your binoculars and picnic blankets. It's time to celebrate Earth Day.

Earth Day is approaching middle age. In the height of civil rights marches and anti-Vietnam protests, Earth Day was born in 1970. Two people—then-Senator Gaylord Nelson of Wisconsin and longtime peace activist John McConnell, who authored the first Earth Day proclamation—may have conceived the planet's day of honor independently. The first Earth Day 36 years ago prompted events and festivals across the globe; in fact, the event in New York City collected twice as many participants as the Woodstock Music Festival the year before. The Earth Day champions then included Republican and Democrat (and everything in between), old and young, hawk and dove, hippie and soldier. Everyone, it seemed, could agree that this beautiful planet needed attention—and so did our way of life. Five years of revolutionary bi-partisan legislation to protect the environment followed. What's happened? (That's a subject for another article.)

Here's a sampling, though, of the dynamic and varied ways you can celebrate Earth Day this year in the Mid-Hudson Valley:

EARTH DAY HIKE at the Minnewaska State Park Preserve, April 22, 9 am-noon. Call the Education Office at 845.255.2011.

EARTH DAY BIRD WALK led by Hattie Langford near Minnewaska. Call 845.255.2011 for details of time and place.

EARTH DAY RELIGIOUS SERVICE AND COMMUNITY FAIR on Sunday, April 23 at the New Paltz Reformed Church located at 92 Huguenot Street. 9am-11:30 am service. 11:30 am-3 pm fair with booth displays, live music, CSA farm reps, gourmet food, and more. Call the organizer Jim O'Dowd at 255.4170 or call the church at 255.6340.

TWO FARMS BENEFIT CONCERT at SUNY New Paltz's Studley Hall on April 22, 7:30 pm. Listen to Pete Seeger, Dog on Fleas, and Betty and the Baby Boomers. Your \$20 ticket price (\$15 if a senior or student) goes directly to saving two huge farms that will be donated for agricultural purposes only. Organized by the Wallkill Valley Land Trust and the Open Space Institute.

EARTH DAY POETRY READING at Stony Kill Farm Environmental Education Center on Saturday, April 22, 3 pm. New York State Children's Poetry and Art from the international River of Words contest.. Great poems from all traditions celebrating the Earth. Bring your own favorite nature poem (not your own) to share. 2 miles north of the Beacon-Newburgh bridge, on state route 9D. Call Rich Parisio at 845-831-8780, ext. 302 for more info.

"THE SEEDS FOR SUCCESS" REGIONAL CAMPAIGN SCHOOL FOR THE GREEN PARTY, Village Hall, 25 Plattekill Ave, New Paltz, NY 12561. The school will offer workshops on campaign management, treasury and finance, public speaking and speech writing, internet and campaign technologies, canvassing and a lot more. April 22-23, 2006 -Email Margaret Human - mlcuffbtswi@yaho.com or Call: Edgar Rodriguez - (845) 255-9652.