

Why I'm a Vegetarian

This year, in June of 2009, the UU General Assembly was in Salt Lake City. Last year, it was in Fort Lauderdale. In 2007, the GA took place in Portland, Oregon. It was in Portland where I met Dr. Will Tuttle.

My plane to Portland was late. So I missed Will Tuttle speech. I *did* however, speak to him, one-on-one, while I was volunteering at the convention center, at the UFETA booth. (U.F.E.T.A. stands for Unitarians for the Ethical Treatment of Animals. We recently changed our name to U.U.A.M., which stands for Unitarian Universalists for Animal Ministry.)

I told Will Tuttle about my story, encountering coyotes at The Audubon Society at Brinton Brook in Croton. I told him that I was worried about all of the little dogs that live in the mansions around Brinton Brook. I told Will that I looked through the yellow pages to see what I could do about the coyotes. I couldn't call the companies that exterminate the coyotes. So, I called the Saw Mill River Audubon Society headquarters. The volunteers there were excited to hear about the coyotes! They didn't know there were any! In response, Will said

(1) that the people who lived around Brinton Brook knew about the coyotes, and

(2) that they can take care of their own dogs. Furthermore

(3) he yelled at me, telling me, "The Audubon Society is for coyotes, NOT for your dogs!"

Despite his harsh words towards me, out of respect, not so much because of the passion I felt for his book, I bought World Peace Diet. He signed it:

"For Gretchen. The Light of U.F.E.T.A. in Peekskill! Peace, love and Joy, Will Tuttle"

This book is not a page turner. It's like an encyclopedia, full of facts, but I read it all.

In October of 2007, I drove alone to a Unitarian church in Concord, Massachusetts to hear Will Tuttle speak about his World Peace Diet book. There were large framed animal pictures in the UU sanctuary. (Show the photos.) He spoke with passion about his topic and played the piano beautifully. It was **THAT** day I became a vegetarian.

It's difficult being a vegetarian. It's inconvenient. Meat is cheap, available, and it tastes good. **But I DON'T** want to value the coyotes less than I do my dogs!!!

I believe being a vegan is better than being a vegetarian, but like F.D.R. and the late Rev. Forest Church said, "*You do what you can, with what you have, where you are.*"