

Positive LIVING

Positive Stories for a Changing World

Autumn 2008

Issue 45

**“The Best Way to
Predict the Future
is to Change it”**

**Wild, Free and
Coming Back**

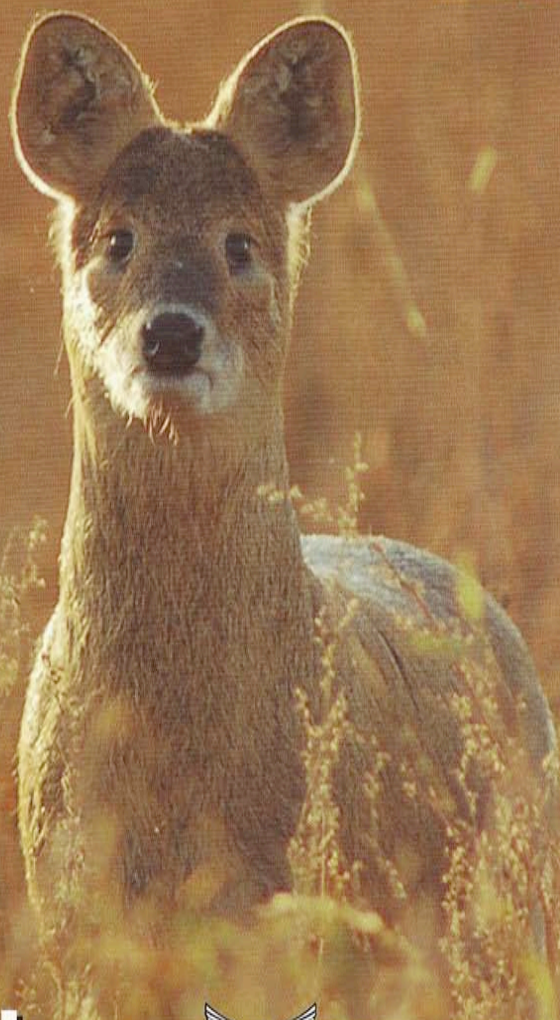
Tooth & Claw

**The Great
Fen Project**

Going Slowly

**The Gift of
Simplicity**

**On the Trail of
the Urban Scout**



**Rewilding:
the Green Agenda**



UK £3.00 / €3.80

A Positive News Publication



On the Trail of the Urban Scout

by Sarah Wilkinson

Urban Scout, aka Peter Bauer, is a fourth-generation native of Portland, Oregon's largest city. He has a deep ancestral relationship with the land and not just because his great, great grandfather lies buried there.

At 16, he started reading books on the structure, history and future of humankind. It dawned on him that civilisation could never reach a point of sustainability because the planet's resources were being squandered beyond their rate of replenishment. In short, while the human empire 'must' grow in order

to survive, it is by its own nature, an unsustainable practice. From this seed of realisation, he began a life-long journey to rewild – a process of 'dismantling' that he believes is vital for the continued development of 'us'.

"I decided to walk away from this culture and learn to hunt, gather and garden for all of my necessities," he says, referring to his previous city-slicker lifestyle. "In short, I'm a hunter-gatherer wannabe in search of meaning and tribe in a time of ecological and cultural collapse."

With the emergence of a new,

post-oil age and a ballooning world population in need of more 'earth', the future might seem to some as bleak. Urban Scout's mission is to stay one step ahead of such projections. Those trained and ready to embrace the change might see it instead, as a rather exciting journey – a great 360 degree swivel back to grassroots. Very true, the next generation may all have to be subsistence-style urban farmers like Tom and Barbara in the BBC mid-70s classic, *The Good Life*. Rewilders however, will point out the clue to the question of happiness is surely in the programme's title.

"I have a duty to mythologize the process I'm going through and inspire others to join the rewilding renaissance," Urban Scout explains. "So I write stuff, make videos, take pictures, design things, teach classes and maintain a blog that's a public exhibition space."

Now 25, Scout has pioneered an internet community for fellow rewilders or for those who want to learn more worthy 'living' skills – an online field-guide, gathering and

providing valuable information on primitive or sustainable practices. "Our elders have long since disappeared," he explains, "and the information they held and the skills they used, only exist now in pockets – a few books, a few schools and practiced by only a few... We need something else to stand in for our elders... This website attempts to do just that."

Visitors to the forum can learn, for example, how to organise their own rewilding camp, how to seek out water and test for heavy metals before consuming it or find out which native plants are edible and, more importantly, which are not. They can search for courses on subjects such as foraging for wild fruits, nuts and vegetables or how to extract oil from plants.

"I don't have the luxury of a one million year old sustainable ►



Above: Urban Scout iChat's with the forest. Photo: © Melanie Brown
Left: Urban and Penny Scout look out across a fantasy post-civilised world. Photo: © Urban Scout



temporary tribal skills with style," says Toby Hemenway, author of *Gaia's Garden: A Guide to Home Scale Permaculture*. "I admire that he doesn't claim to know it all. Scout always takes me down an unanticipated path. We civilised folk have forgotten what he's trying to remember for us."

"Civilisation has been a process of making people perceive the world as dead," Scout informed Marjorie Skinner for the *Portland Mercury*. "It's time we create stories that will inspire new cultures and bring the world back to life."

Contact: www.rewild.info
www.urbanscout.org

To purchase rewilding t-shirts, hats and badges carrying a choice of Urban Scout messages:
www.urbanscout.org/merchandise



URBAN SCOUT
WANTS YOU
www.rewild.info

Left: The four essentials of survival – water, food, shelter... and... a laptop!
 Photo: © Melanie Brown
 Above: Uncle Scout wants you!
 Photo & design: © Urban Scout

culture to immerse myself in," Scout admits. "I don't believe a person can sit a few lectures on survival or primitive living and then go do it. It takes years of practice, generations in fact. I've created, as closely as I can, the safety and security that children in primitive cultures had, while slowly and respectfully learning to survive without the comforts."

His site catalogues his urban-hunter-gatherer-grower adventure. "Part fact, part fiction, part man, part myth, in *The Adventures of Urban Scout*, I try to use comedic

irony as a clever disguise to spread a truly sustainable world view, for a time beyond our own," he says.

However, this blend of satire, foresight and political comment has its heart and humour in all the best places. It provides the right measure of comedy, without eroding the more serious underlying message. Site users can find photo-guides on the sort of stuff they might, one day, need to know: how to cure a cold with Douglas Fir needle tea or prepare the food they catch, for example. They can read excerpts

from his book-in-progress, become part of the debate on the future of civilisation or keep track of his journal on the trials and tribulations of 'going against the grain'.

For those who enrol in his camps and workshops, they can master more hands-on rewilding skills, such as tracking, foraging, making fire without matches, finding or building shelter, how to 'eavesdrop' on the environment, translate the call of birds and effectively stay safe by taking advantage of nature's built-in alarm system.



The Diet that Time Forgot

During the Paleolithic Era, our ancestors were hunter-gatherers. They consumed a greater number of species of animals and plants than we do today and this variety contributed to a more prolific intake of vitamins, minerals and ingredients important to proper health. Dr Ben Balzer, a family physician based in Sydney, Australia, with an interest in nutrition, writes about the Paleolithic Diet – the one that humans evolved on and indeed, thrived on, during the two million years prior to urbanisation.

There are races of people who are slimmer, stronger and faster than us. They all have straight teeth and perfect eyesight. Arthritis, diabetes,

hypertension, heart disease and strokes, depression, schizophrenia and cancer are absolute rarities for them. These people are the last 84

tribes of hunter-gatherers in the world. They share a diet that has changed little from that of the first humans two million years ago and

their predecessors up to seven million years ago. Theirs is the diet that humankind evolved on, the one that is coded for in our genes