

DAVID SKILLAN'S WORLD OF TRAVEL . . .

NEWSLETTER

Spring 2009

Travelling the World Since 1951 → Leading Tours Since 1970

Dear Fellow Traveller:

Once again I'm sharing a few tidbits from my travel files—some personal impressions in the life and times of yours truly, and the news and views as seen through the eyes of a contemporary world traveller. Plus an update of my tours and safaris.

I'm now home for a while after two very stimulating and rewarding tours, to **Botswana and Zambia** and then to **South Africa and Zambia**. As usual, far too many highlights to mention, but suffice to say everyone had a good time. Among many thrilling experiences on my latest trip was our record sighting of 62 rhino in South Africa. And in Zambia, while my tour members enjoyed elephant rides and helicopter flights over Victoria Falls, I got to sit and walk with lions! What a remarkable experience! It is a new excursion created to rehabilitate orphaned lions, from small cubs to fully grown animals, back into the wild. As you may imagine, I was a little apprehensive at first. But after a few minutes in their presence I relaxed and enjoyed a short walk with them in the African bush! You can see me sitting with a couple of them at the beginning of my slide show, at www.skillansafaris.com/david-skillan-slide-show.html.



You may have noticed that I always talk about the big game that we encounter on my safaris, and seldom mention the small fry that we often come across, such as the busy dung beetle, the leopard tortoise, the chameleon, and the multicoloured agama lizard. But make no mistake, they too are important in the overall scheme of things, and we see and marvel at them and invariably stop to get a better look and take photographs. Did you know that the African continent is bigger than the United States, India, China, Argentina, Western Europe, and the British Isles combined? That helps account for its remarkable diversity.

Can't believe it's been two years since I had my right hip replaced with a titanium one due to osteoarthritis. I feel like a new man. I can walk normally, run, and even dance again, and most days I feel at least ten years younger than I actually am. It was no fun walking around with a limp and a cane. I'm so glad, too, that my occasional progress reports about this increasingly common ailment has helped others overcome their concerns about invasive surgery. As I've said more than once, while it's not something to look forward to, it's not such a big deal today.

I also can't believe my granddaughters, Emily and Natalie, are already toddlers. At 18 and 16 months, they are the most adorable little girls. When they were born, I was so excited that I wanted to retire immediately and spend time with them. But of course real life doesn't work like that. Hopefully, in the not too distant future, in addition to walking in the park, I'll be able to kick a ball around with them.

I must admit to a feeling of relief immediately after Barack Obama was inaugurated and he and his family moved into the White House. They are like a breath of fresh air. I liked Obama as soon as he appeared on the political scene, and think he deserved to become president. He certainly won't be able to solve all the problems facing him, but he's off to a flying start and is youthful, very smart, and willing to listen and do his best whatever it takes, and for that we should all be grateful. I hope people are not too hasty to judge him. Give him a chance—at least for a year. I also like his slogan, "Yes, we can." A can-do mindset is a winner. It should be a rallying cry for everyone, everywhere.

Like everyone else, I have been waiting to see what will happen to the prices for tours to various destinations. I would like nothing more than to say my tour prices have been greatly reduced. But any price reductions we've seen have been offset by the significant drop in the Canadian dollar against the US dollar, with which we must pay for most of our tours. Be assured, however, that if a reduction becomes applicable to any of our destinations, we will automatically apply it to your invoice before departure. I'll also post it on my website as soon as I know about it. In other words, **if the price drops before we leave, you are guaranteed the lower price.** You have my word on that.

No doubt about it, there are some great travel deals out there at the moment. But be careful—they may not always be what you expect, and you may not get what you bargain for. As always, the best advice is 'buyer beware.' You get what you pay for. But do rest assured that my travel partners and I are committed to helping you make the most of your travel experience and your hard-earned dollars.

As tourism is vitally important to many countries, particularly in Africa, parts of Asia, and Latin America, when you book one of my tours to Africa you are doing a service not only to yourself, but also to others who are in great need. Third World countries need all the help they can get, especially during these troubled times.

*If the price drops before we leave,
you are guaranteed the lower price.
You have my word on that.*

UPCOMING TOURS—All the dates and prices for my remaining 2009 tours are now posted on my website (www.skillansafaris.com/david-skillan-tours.html) as well as in this newsletter. My next tour is to **Uganda**, famous for its primates (gorillas and chimps) and multitudes of exotic birds. We leave in early September.



A few weeks ago, **Melissa Jo Kooijman** of **Wild Africa Safaris** made a two-week visit there, and returned absolutely over the moon and giddy with excitement. Apparently, it took only ten minutes for her group to come face-to-face with the mountain gorillas—not nearly as long as she'd expected. They also saw lots of chimps. Melissa snapped the photo at the left. You can see more of her pictures on my slide show (www.skillansafaris.com/david-skillan-slide-show.html), including a good one of her having fun with some Ugandan children. (She has two young sons herself.) As you'll see from her photos, the accommodations in Uganda are more rustic than some places we go, but clean and comfortable nevertheless. The bird and wildlife in Uganda are truly magnificent.

Melissa also handles my **Egypt and Jordan** tours. Details for the next one, in November, have now been

finalized. The tour is 16 days long, and the itinerary for Egypt remains basically the same as in years past, but instead of flying back to Cairo after our Nile cruise, we proceed directly to Amman in Jordan. There, as well as visiting the famous Petra and Wadi Rum, we'll stop at the Dead Sea and Jerash, the Roman ruins reminiscent of Turkey's Ephesus. For up-to-date info about Uganda and my November Egypt and Jordan tour, kindly contact Melissa. Her number at **Wild Africa Safaris** is **604-519-1610**, or **800-991-6111** if you're out of town.

My annual October **Kenya and Tanzania Safari**, which includes the world-acclaimed Ngorongoro Crater, Masai Mara, and fabled Serengeti, where we get to see the great migration of wildebeest and zebra, is as popular as ever. So please don't hesitate—book soon to be sure of a place.

I'll elaborate on the tours I have planned for 2010 in my summer newsletter. Meanwhile, my April **Hidden Treasures of Japan Tour**, escorted by me and my wife **Yuriko** during cherry blossom time, is creating considerable interest. This tour is being handled by **Collette Vacations**, who have arranged for us to use their local Langley, BC, office for inquiries and bookings. **Lisa Elliott** is the person handling the Japan tour file. You can reach Lisa at **800-468-5955 (extension 4098)**. Like some of our other tours, this one is expected to sell out early, so if you're interested you'd better submit your deposit soon. I'm also hoping to lead a tour to either **Peru** or **Vietnam**—or both—next year in cooperation with Collette Vacations. So stay tuned.

If you're thinking of joining one of my tours, please remember that I've led more than 200 tours abroad, including far more to Africa than anyone else I know. You'll be in good hands. I've often heard that a good tour leader is worth his weight in gold. Many people have also told me my tours and safaris are worth every penny, and the best money they've ever spent. An extensive long-haul trip is a wise investment at any time. Why not maximize your return by letting my hard-won international experience work for you? You'll enjoy the benefits and all the little extras that come only on a David Skillan tour. Together, we'll see and learn about some of the wonders of the world. **When the going gets tough, it's time to go on an exotic adventure!** I invite you to join me on one of my life-enriching tours in the near future.

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is a wise investment at any time.
Why not maximize your return
by letting my hard-won international experience
work for you?*

TRAVEL ARTICLES—I have recently updated and added new photos to a couple of my articles: **“On Safari in East Africa”** and **“Botswana—The ‘In’ Place for Safaris.”** You can read them by visiting the **“Newsletters & Archives”** page on my website (www.skillansafaris.com/david-skillan-newsletter.html). You may also like to see my article **“Interesting Times in Japan,”** in which I write about living and travelling in the Land of the Rising Sun. You'll find it on the same page as my other articles.

WEBSITE—As you'll no doubt gather when checking it out, my website is intended to be both comprehensive and informative, and in its own inimitable way makes up for my not getting my book *Around the World in Eighty Months* published all those years ago. Last week I rearranged and updated my slide show, to include the countries where I currently lead tours and give you an idea of what we see and do on a David Skillan tour, who we meet, and the lovely places we stay, not to mention all the fun we have. Every picture tells a story. My newsletters are also now available electronically, so if you know of someone who would enjoy them, please provide me with his or her email address.



HAPPY ENDINGS—I love stories with happy endings, especially when they're true. A client of mine, a lovely lady from Victoria, was diagnosed last year with the same illness Terry Fox had, and as a result had to have her left leg amputated. (It is entirely coincidental that one of my best friends runs Vancouver Orthopedics, the artificial-limb manufacturer that made this lady's prosthesis.) She is now fully recovered and walking well, and has since cruised to Alaska and travelled by train through China, Mongolia, and Siberia. During one of my visits with her when she was still in hospital, I met her daughter, Anne, a professional editor of magazines, websites, etc. It is Anne who now helps me with my newsletter and website. This just goes to prove that we are all interconnected, and that what goes around comes around.

Apart from the first two weeks in May, when I'll be exploring the canyons of America, and the last two weeks in August, when I'll be in the Yukon, you'll find me at home in Vancouver, busy with writing and photography projects.

Go well, as they say in South Africa, and *safari njema* (travel safely), as the saying goes in East Africa. Please be so kind as to pass my name and newsletters on to anyone you think may be interested. Many thanks.

Yours in everlasting travel,

David (Around the World in Eighty Months) Skillan
Incurable romantic, gypsy at heart, and roving correspondent . . . ➔

WILD AFRICA SAFARIS
Proudly Presents
DAVID SKILLAN'S AFRICA
An Overview of Upcoming African Tours and Safaris

"I speak of Africa and golden joys . . ."

~William Shakespeare, *Henry IV*, Act 5, Scene 3

"I never knew of a morning in Africa when I woke that I was not happy . . ."

~Ernest Hemingway, author of *The Snows of Kilimanjaro* and *The Old Man and the Sea*

"On safari . . . each breath you draw gives pleasure. You wake each day with a new sense of wonder . . ."

~Elspeth Huxley, author of *The Mottled Lizard* and *The Flame Trees of Thika*

UGANDA WILDLIFE SAFARI

Departs September 6, 2009 → 17 days → \$8,275 per person (sharing)

Often referred to as "the Pearl of Africa," Uganda is a lush, green, tropical land with some of Africa's friendliest people and a safari circuit that encompasses breathtaking landscapes. You'll see Africa's Big Five (lion, leopard, elephant, rhino, and buffalo) and hundreds of other animals, including four different species of jackal, pygmy antelope, Nile crocodile, bush pig, giant forest hog, and the Uganda cob, Uganda's national antelope. Uganda is a birdwatchers' paradise, boasting the largest concentration of birds in all of Africa—more than 1,000 species. Our tour includes Lake Victoria (the largest lake in Africa), the Ruwenzoris (the Mountains of the Moon) and the acclaimed national parks of Murchison Falls, Queen Elizabeth, Kibale and Bwindi (the rainforests that are home to the mountain gorillas), and Ngamba Island (a sanctuary for chimpanzees). All this and much more. ***To be sure of a place, send in your deposit now!***

KENYA & TANZANIA SAFARI

Departs October 3, 2009 → 18 days → \$8,830 per person (sharing)

The ultimate adventure . . . the two most famous safari destinations in Africa . . . a romantic journey that many dream about, but few experience. This tour includes the finest game lodges and tented camps, splendid game-rich wilderness, and the magical Serengeti Plains, Ngorongoro Crater, Mounts Kenya and Kilimanjaro, Masai Mara, Aberdares, Lakes Nakuru, Naivasha, and Manyara, and the Olduvai Gorge (the Cradle of Mankind). Take a balloon ride over the East African plains and visit a Masai village, the Karen Blixen Museum, and more. The perfect tour for those who yearn to see a wildlife spectacle unrivalled anywhere in the world. October coincides with the great migration of wildebeest and zebra—often called the greatest show on earth. Imagine warm, sunny days, spectacular scenery, and amazing experiences: they're all yours on this incomparable trip! Learn more about it by reading "On Safari in East Africa," on my website. This tour can be extended to conclude with the island of Zanzibar or Kenya's Coral Coast. ***Don't miss out on this, our most popular tour!***

EGYPT & JORDAN TOUR

Departs November 4, 2009 → 16 days → \$6,995 per person (sharing)

Join us in the land of pharaohs, mystery, and enchantment! This exciting tour includes Cairo, Memphis, Aswan, Luxor, the Pyramids of Giza, the Valley of the Kings, a four-night Nile cruise, and the famous temples of Abu Simbel, Philae, Edfu, Kom-Ombo, and Karnak. Visit the renowned Egyptian Museum, ride a camel, watch a belly-dance display, haggle for souvenirs, take a horse and buggy ride, sail in a felucca, and peer into King Tut's Tomb. You'll also be transfixed by the wildly beautiful country of Jordan, as we follow in the footsteps of Lawrence of Arabia, explore the World Heritage Site of Wadi Rum, see the Roman ruins at Jerash (reminiscent of Turkey's Ephesus), dip your toes into the Dead Sea, and visit the extraordinary forgotten stone city of Petra, one of the newly named Seven Wonders of the World. ***If you've always wanted to see one of the world's greatest ancient civilizations, this is the trip for you!***

BOTSWANA & ZAMBIA SAFARI

Departs in January, 2010 → 16 days → Price TBA

You'll adventure in style and comfort on this exclusive connoisseur's tour, which is limited to just 12 participants. Described by aficionados as "Africa's Gem," Botswana has become a favoured destination among seasoned travellers. Masses of wildlife roam the woodlands, savannahs, plains, and wetlands of this sparsely populated country, including many species of antelope (nyala, waterbuck, kudu, sable, eland, tsessebe, lechwe, impala, and sitatunga), hyena, jackal, bat-eared fox, wild dog, wild cat, giraffe, zebra, hippo, and of course all of Africa's Big Five (lion, leopard, elephant, rhino, and buffalo). In this remote, peaceful region of Africa, we stay at the finest places, where food and service are second to none. Accommodations are in luxurious tented camps . . . travel is by specially chartered light aircraft . . . game viewing is by boat and open safari vehicles. We'll visit the Moremi Game Reserve, Vumbura Plains, Linyanti, world-famous Okavango Delta, and breathtaking Victoria Falls. To learn more about this superb tour, read "Botswana—The 'In' Place for Safaris," on my website. **Call now and place your name on the list!**

SOUTH AFRICA & ZAMBIA TOUR

Departs March 4, 2010 → 18 days → Price TBA

Described as "a world in one country," the breathtakingly beautiful South Africa is one of the most diverse countries on earth. Our incomparable tour, which includes both city and safari, goes to Capetown (one of the world's loveliest cities), Durban, and Pretoria, as well as the world-renowned wineries, Cape of Good Hope, Blyde River Canyon, Zululand, Swaziland, sensational Sun City, Mpumalanga, Kruger National Park, Hluehluwe Game Reserve, and day and night game drives in open safari vehicles. Take in the scenic Panorama route, and visit a penguin colony and rhino sanctuary, as well as the magnificent Drakensburg Mountains. In Zambia, we visit Livingstone, the adventure capital, during a two-day excursion to the awe-inspiring Victoria Falls, a sunset cruise on the mighty Zambezi River, and a thrilling optional helicopter, ultralight, or elephant-back ride. We'll sip fine wines, enjoy gourmet meals, and experience close encounters with extraordinary bird and other wildlife. You can extend the tour with an extra three days at an exotic beach resort in Mozambique's famed Bazaruto Archipelago. Read the article "A Visit to Cape Town . . . One of My Favourite Cities," on my website. **Plan ahead—book soon!**

. . . And Collette Vacations Proudly Presents
DAVID SKILLAN'S JAPAN

JAPAN'S HIDDEN TREASURES TOUR

Departs in April, 2010 → 14 days → \$5,828 per person (sharing)

This journey through rich history and traditional culture is like no other tour you've ever taken! You'll visit Japan's first ancient capital at Nara and the vibrant metropolis of Tokyo, as well as Hiroshima, Hakone, Nagano, Takayama, Kanazawa, Otsu, and Kyoto. Stroll along the Ginza, wander through stunning Japanese gardens, explore Meiji Shrine and Matsumoto Castle, and enjoy a cable car ride that provides spectacular views of Mount Fuji, Japan's highest mountain. Travel on the bullet train, relax in luxurious hot-spring baths, see traditional farmhouses with thatched roofs, learn the art of origami, and participate in both traditional and modern Japanese entertainment. This one-of-a-kind tour of the legendary Land of the Rising Sun takes place during the season of cherry blossoms. To learn more about the country, please read "Interesting Times in Japan," which you'll find on my website. **Don't miss out—reserve your place now!**

David Skillan is a writer, photographer, and tour leader par excellence. He has travelled, lived, and worked all over the world, including Japan, Kenya, Tanzania, and South Africa. He's had a love affair with Africa since 1962, when he first set foot there.

Since 1970, David has hosted more than 200 foreign tours, including more than 100 to Africa—Kenya, Tanzania, South Africa, Zaire, Rwanda, Uganda, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Namibia, Egypt, Tunisia, and Morocco. He spends four to five months of each year travelling the world, mostly to African destinations.

He has been publishing newsletters about his life, travels, and tours since 1978. →

EXCLUSIVE

The David Skillan Travel Collection

A Special Series of the Finest Personally Escorted Tours and Safaris

2009				
September 6	UGANDA WILDLIFE SAFARI	17 days	\$8,275	Wild Africa Safaris
October 3	KENYA & TANZANI SAFARI	18 days	\$8,830	Wild Africa Safaris
November 4	EGYPT & JORDAN TOUR	16 days	\$6,995	Wild Africa Safaris
2010				
January	BOTSWANA & ZAMBIA SAFARI	16 days	Price TBA	Wild Africa Safaris
March	SOUTH AFRICA & ZAMBIA TOUR	18 days	Price TBA	Wild Africa Safaris
April	JAPAN'S HIDDEN TREASURES TOUR	14 days	\$5,828	Collette Vacations
<p><i>Tour prices are per person, in Canadian dollars. Prices include all international and domestic flights (round-trip from Vancouver, Canada, though you can make your own flight arrangements and meet your tour), fine accommodations, most meals, and all sightseeing, as outlined in the respective itineraries. Taxes are extra. All dates, itineraries, and prices are subject to change. Most tours can be extended at the ends.</i></p>				

David Skillan's tours are promoted and marketed exclusively by Wild Africa Safaris of New Westminster, BC, and Collette Vacations of Langley, BC. For full details about a tour or safari, including the itinerary and booking information, please contact the tour operator indicated in the schedule above.

<p>Wild Africa Safaris</p> <p>Suite 104 713 Columbia Street New Westminster, BC V3M 1B2 Canada</p> <p>800-991-6111 or 604-519-1610</p> <p>africa@wildafricasafari.com www.wildafricasafari.com</p>	<p>Collette Vacations</p> <p>Suite 6A 5761 Glover Road Langley, BC V3A 8M8 Canada</p> <p>800-468-5955 Extension 4098</p> <p>lelliott@collettevacations.ca www.collettevacations.ca</p>
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Call now for colour brochures and detailed itineraries! →

Portrait of a Travelling Man

by Ruth Scott Philp

A version of this article was published in 1986 in the Vancouver-based British Columbia Business Examiner. It was written by Ruth Scott Philp, a retired freelance writer and teacher of English and typing who has travelled widely, taking a number of escorted tours, including three with me. I update and reproduce this article every so often for the benefit of those new to my newsletter.

Striking a blow for the shy and sensitive, I am probably the least likely world traveller who ever lived. Shy and sickly as a youngster, I was pretty hopeless at school. For years I was afraid of flying, and every time I went to sea—which was often—I was desperately seasick. It was nice to realize, after travelling all over the world and trying my hand at just about everything, that I was good at something—organizing and leading tours, and proving that some people will go to any lengths and overcome all manner of obstacles to achieve their dreams.
~DS

When Rudyard Kipling wrote, “If you can keep your head when all about you are losing theirs/And blaming it on you,” he should have added, “Then you may have the qualities to become a successful tour manager.”

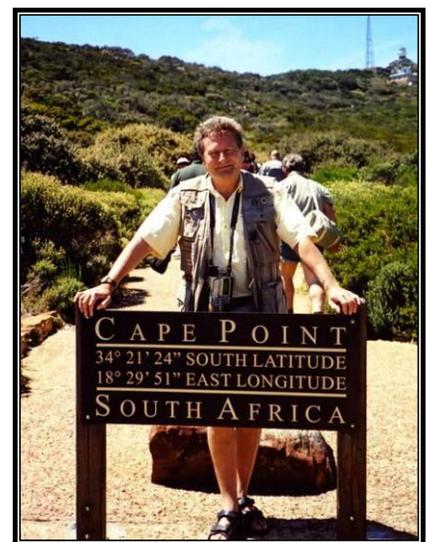
If you are an experienced tour manager, you not only keep your head, you also keep your sense of humour and your perspective. You know there may be surprises, but you are prepared to deal with them. You may find that the hotel you booked a year in advance has been overbooked; the restaurants you were prepared to recommend have folded; the weather has turned out to be unsuitable for the events you have scheduled. You smile, you give a Trudeau-like shrug, and you carry on.

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of his early years of travel.
Not only have they shaped him
and made him the quintessential tour manager,
they have also provided him with memories
that most people cannot even imagine.*

As one of a group of Canadians touring Australia and New Zealand, I felt fortunate in having as a tour leader a man who has been involved in the travel business all his adult life. After performing the military service demanded of young men in England at the time, David Skillan set off in the early 1960s to achieve a boyhood ambition to see the world, carrying a pack weighing forty pounds, and with fifty English pounds in his pocket.

The young adventurer attracted a fair amount of attention from the press. An article entitled “Twentieth-Century Phileas Fogg” likened him to Jules Verne’s fictional character, who went around the world in eighty days. Skillan’s initial journey lasted eighty months. He covered 500,000 miles and delved into strange, exotic lands and foreign cities, seeking employment to finance each stage of his marathon odyssey.

Another article called “Travelling Man” mentions that Skillan has used every mode of travel except a balloon. He does admit, however, that he once had to give up an interesting job because of a tendency to seasickness. That problem has now been overcome, but meanwhile he has flown with more than seventy-five airlines and worked in a dozen countries, including Japan, Thailand, Argentina, Ethiopia, Kenya, South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand.



As we flew in comparative comfort over the Australian Outback, Skillan recalled how he had worked his way around this desolate stretch of country. He enjoys the relative luxury in which he now travels—riding a plane instead of hitching rides, eating in hotels rather than making meals out of cans or cooking over campfires, sleeping in

comfortable beds instead of sleeping bags. As the comedian says, "I've been rich and I've been poor, and rich is better." Still, Skillan never regrets the challenge and adventure of his early years of travel. Not only have they shaped him and made him the quintessential tour manager, they have also provided him with memories that most people cannot even imagine.

One writer described him as "the debonair fellow in the black turtleneck sweater." Twenty years later, Skillan's image has changed. Whether he wears a natty jacket in a colour bright enough to catch the eye of his tour group or the safari suit in which he appears very much at home, he stands out in a crowd. There is an air of confidence, of a man in command of himself and the situation. We knew him best in a short-sleeved shirt, a khaki vest, a neckerchief that was different every day, and the shorts and knee socks that appear suited to the land Down Under and that do much to show off a handsome pair of legs.

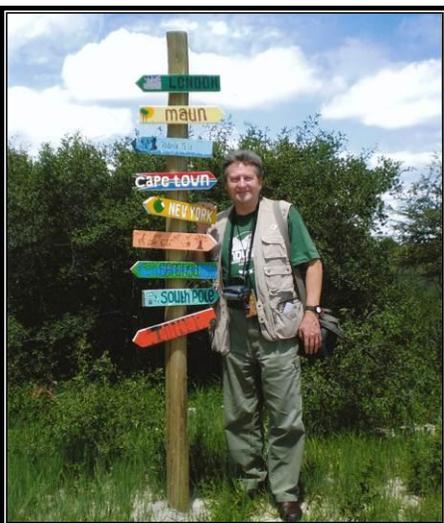
*He enjoys the relative luxury in which he now travels
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Skillan is seldom still. The life of a tour manager is a busy one. On long-distance tours, with many departures and arrivals, he takes charge of all tickets, getting boarding passes and paying taxes, leaving tour members to relax or look around the airport. On arrival at each airport, he dashes outside to find the bus driver (or coach captain, in Australia), then directs everyone to the coach and does a head count.

As we approached each hotel, he would make a last-minute announcement over the microphone, usually emphasizing something that he had mentioned earlier. It may have been "Early call at seven tomorrow morning. Bags out before breakfast. The coach leaves at eight-thirty." Or sometimes it was "Tomorrow is at leisure." He might then have described what we could see and give suggestions on what to do, where to eat, and where to shop. He likes to see that his people get the most for their money. Perhaps he remembers when he had to count his pennies.

When the day's work is over, David may be seen swimming in the pool or on the beach, striding over the countryside or along a city street, or running to snap just the right picture, which might turn up in a magazine illustrating one of his many articles. One might expect him to be blasé, but there is a youthful enthusiasm in his expressions of delight in a breathtaking sunset, a gorgeous valley nestled between volcanic hills, or even a lovely sunny day. "Aren't we lucky to have this weather?" is how he often greets a new day.

It takes a little while to get to know David Skillan. Under an insouciant façade, he hides a core of sensitivity and old-fashioned sentiment. He likes to joke and tease members of his group, but he senses if anybody is unhappy, and when someone is in difficulty he is helpful and sympathetic. His romantic nature becomes evident when he speaks of his meeting the beautiful Tokyo-born Yuriko, followed by a two-year courtship and a traditional Japanese wedding. He is now the proud father of two lovely daughters, Julie and Jane, and grandfather of two small granddaughters, Emily and Natalie.



David Skillan is now a Canadian citizen, but his first few years here were perhaps nearly as difficult and challenging as his time spent wandering in foreign lands. In spite of a prepossessing appearance and obvious education, he had more than his share of problems and obstacles. It is a tribute to his perseverance and willingness to turn his hand to any kind of work that he has been able to parlay his love of travel and his interest in people into a successful career in the travel industry.

David never forgets the friends he made on his early travels—the people who picked up the young wayfarer and sometimes offered him the hospitality of their homes. He has tried to give back some of this help to others and to people who have travelled with him.

As I watched him stand, feet braced on the deck of a steamer, gazing at the horizon, while on another tour with him in the Far East, I thought of the lines "Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes/He star'd at the Pacific." Perhaps this is just the romanticism in my own nature, but I felt that I would like to know what he was thinking and whether he wished himself back in the days when life was unpredictable and tomorrow always brought something unexpected. ➔

Excerpts from Recent Emails, Cards, and Letters



“Enjoyed South Africa and Zambia—our first trip to Africa—immensely. The jet lag wasn’t bad. We look forward to getting your spring newsletter and checking out your website for future trips.”

~Mary & Rick H. (Surrey, BC)

“Please count me in on next year’s cherry blossom tour. I’ve always wanted to go to Japan!”

~Lois W. (Sechelt, BC)

“It looks like your tour schedule and our vacation plans will finally coincide. We are available and very interested in your Egypt and Jordan tour, as well as Japan. Please add us to your list.”

~Anne W. and Brian M. (Calgary, AB)

“Oh, my goodness, I’m green with envy! My heart yearns for Botswana, and my memories of my first trip to Africa are enormous. I’ve since done Kenya and Tanzania and Egypt and Jordan with you, but the first one I still remember in perfect detail, almost every minute of it!”

~Sally S. (Edmonton, AB)

“Your passion and knowledge radiate”

“Can’t say enough about the South Africa and Zambia tour, and so glad the trip went ahead. I just LOVE Africa. I’m hooked. I can see why it’s one of your favorite trips. The scenery was spectacular, the places we stayed at were fabulous, and I particularly liked the great variety of things to see and do, with so many game drives in between.”

~Robyn L. (North Vancouver, BC)

“I look forward to your newsletters. Thank you for keeping me on your list. Last night I watched the movie based on Agatha Christie’s best-selling book *Death on the Nile*, and noted that it was filmed in Egypt. I was thrilled to recognize many of the famous sites from my trip there with you.”

~Pat M. (Ottawa, ON)

“Every time we hear from you, we are reminded of our awesome tour of Kenya and Tanzania five years ago, when we saw a record number of animals, including big cats. Only on a David Skillan tour!”

~Eric and Beverly D. (Vancouver, BC)

(My record for lion is 86 in Kenya and 90 in Tanzania. Botswana holds my record for leopard—six on one trip—and South Africa for rhino—more than 60 on my most recent tour. ~DS)

“I am sitting at home watching a documentary about the Serengeti, so naturally it brings back memories of our trip there with you (as well as South Africa and Egypt). Now we are wondering where to go next. We did a Panama cruise awhile ago, but it was a bit boring. Uganda and Japan both sound fascinating. Please don’t plan on retiring soon!”

~Lois and Norm B. (New Westminster, BC)

“My mother and I are still drooling over your upcoming Uganda wildlife safari. Hope to decide by next week.”

~Vicki S. (Prince George, BC)

“Thanks so much for the DVD of our Egypt and Jordan tour. A wonderful souvenir of a wonderful trip! It’s like going down memory lane and reliving each awesome moment. You have no idea how much I would like to join your next Botswana tour. Pray that the market rebounds and makes considerable gains!”

~Diane M. (Vancouver, BC)

“Compliments on a great newsletter, one in which your passion and knowledge radiate. Though we have never participated in any of your tours, because we prefer to travel solo, if we were to take a tour, yours would be a top choice.”

~Lis W. (West Vancouver, BC)

(As I’ve pointed out a number of times, go on a well-organized tour and you’ll be very impressed. Go on a lousy one, and you’ll never go on another! ~DS) ➔

This newsletter comes to you with our compliments.

It is intended to create a greater awareness of the world we live in, to promote worldwide travel and tourism, and to motivate you to get up and go.

Leave your worries behind, and get going! →



Tour members enjoy a sundowner in South Africa's Kruger National Park in March, 2009.

Relive your exciting journey with our exclusive, customized souvenir video!

A 90- to 120-minute DVD or videotape of your tour includes the sights you've seen, the places you've visited, and the major highlights and adventures you've enjoyed.

Featuring you and your fellow tour members in exotic locales, the video or DVD is available at the end of your trip for a nominal sum. It provides a comprehensive record of your trip and makes a cherished family memento.

"We now have three of your video productions—Kenya, Thailand, and Ecuador—and to us they are absolutely priceless!" Michael and Pat L. of Burnaby, BC, wrote to me. "Any time we feel like going back, we can play them and relive all those awesome experiences!" →

Points to Ponder . . .

"You must be the change you wish to see in the world."

~Mahatma Ghandi

"We are here to add what we can to life, not to get what we can from life."

~William Osler

"How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world."

~Anne Frank

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"Adventure is the champagne of life!"

~G. K. Chesterton