



“Preserving Our Falconry Heritage”

Heritage

e-Newsletter

Summer 2008 • No. 2

Recent News

- ❑ Administrator David Wells recently attended a Mastering Photoshop workshop. Because he does extensive scanning and digital photography of the Archives' collections, the advanced skills he learned will benefit him in producing this newsletter and creating other materials to promote the Archives. 🦅
- ❑ David Wells recently attended a two-part workshop, sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities. *Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Response* helps libraries and museums to develop a thorough plan to prioritize collections and to quickly mobilize resources for recovery and preservation in the event of a disaster, such as fire, flood, or earthquake. 🦅

Upcoming Auction

The 2008 Silent Auction is rapidly approaching! The official announcement will be made in late September by email and via this e-newsletter.

The auction list is comprised of duplicates of titles we own, books gifted for the purpose of sale, or books we sell on behalf of others and earn a commission. Every book has been evaluated and rated by professional book sellers. This year's list of several hundred titles, has offerings for every budget, from \$5 to the \$multi-thousands. 🦅

Introducing The New Curator Of The Archives

1st in a Series: Archives Associates

At the 20th Anniversary celebration on March 7, 2007, John R. Swift officially became the second curator of The Archives of Falconry following Col. S. Kent Carnie, the founding curator. He had served for 15 years as the Archives' Curator of Books and Manuscripts, establishing the largest collection of English-language falconry books in the world.

John became interested in libraries as a 6th grader in Dallas, Texas when he was asked to work in the school library, an activity he would continue through college. He graduated in 1968 with a B.S. in Education from the University of Kansas and immediately began work with the YMCA as a youth instructor. He continues to work for the YMCA today in Los Angeles serving as an Executive Director. His YMCA work in volunteer and board development, organizational and fiscal management along with extensive financial development skills have already been put to use at the Archives of Falconry.

While still in high school in 1960, his falconry experiences began when a Coopers Hawk flew into his racing pigeon loft. He immediately went to the local library for information about hawks but found little available. During college he obtained a Harris's Hawk and began training it. His first YMCA position in St. Louis, MO led him to falconer Henry Kendall who also was



an avid falconry book collector. From him John developed an appreciation for fine books as well as learned about practical falconry. Both activities began in earnest when John started working with Henry's falcon breeding project, the first successful breeding of Prairie falcons in the world.

After relocating to Denver, John joined the Colorado Hawking Club serving as a meet coordinator for local club meets. In 1977, The North American Falconers

JOHN R. SWIFT, CURATOR • KENT CARNIE, CURATOR EMERITUS • DAVID WELLS, ADMINISTRATOR
THE ARCHIVES OF FALCONRY, THE PEREGRINE FUND'S WORLD CENTER FOR BIRDS OF PREY

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New Curator (continued)

Association asked the CHC to co-host the November field meet, with John serving as meet chairman. They agreed, on the condition that the meet would become non-competitive — a tradition that continues today. John also implemented the fund-raising raffle as well as the meet art print that is still in use after 28 years.

While in Denver, John became acquainted with Barrie Watson, a falconry bookseller, who helped John find many elusive and rare books. Unable to fly a hawk while working in San Pedro, California, John met Natalie Nicholson, another bookseller, and his personal collection further expanded.

In 1991 the Swift family submitted a video to *America's Funniest Home Videos*™ and won the grand prize of \$100,000. Their lives as well as The Archives of Falconry would be changed forever. By making his book collection a charitable donation, John was able to preserve his cash prize and significantly increase the depth and quality of the Archives' book collection. Since this initial donation, John has continued to add new and rare falconry titles. The Archives of Falconry now houses the most extensive collection of English-language falconry books in the world.

Over the years, John's work at the Archives grew such that he was recognized by the organization as the logical choice to become the new curator when Kent retired. Via modern telecommunications,

John is able to provide leadership even though he does not live in Boise. David Wells is the full-time on-site manager and Kent maintains an office. There are numerous falconers working at The Peregrine Fund should specific falconry assistance be needed.

John is currently preparing a new bibliography of falconry books, entitled *Bibliotheca Accipitraria II* after the 1891 reference work by falconer/author James Edmund Harting. After 20 years' preparation, John's bibliography is nearing completion and will be published later this year as the fourth volume in the *Archives Heritage Series*. The reference work will list more than 600 titles and be illustrated with art work depicting rare and unusual books in the Archives as well as books in other institutions.

As a master falconer, John plans to fly hawks again after his retirement from the YMCA. 🦅

Recent Acquisition

John Swift donated a Sterling silver ring used by Sir Anthony Mildmay (1549-1617), whose family was prominent during the Tudor period. The 3/8" ring is probably a band that was wrapped around the hawk's leg and soldered closed, which Sir Thomas Sherley calls "garters for hawks." It is inscribed with the owner's name to aid in recovery of a lost bird. It joins the Freeman varvel and the Thornton Silver Tea Urn as significant objects of British antiquity in our collection of falconry equipment. 🦅



Update

We have received sad news of the recent deaths of two prominent falconers, Kent Christopher of Idaho and Tony Robertson of California. We extend our sympathies and invite family and friends to attend our March "Rendezvous" 2009, when both men will be honored with plaques at the Wall of Remembrance.

In the last issue of this newsletter, in the article on the Wall of Remembrance, we neglected to mention an important feature, that names on the plaques are not restricted to U.S. citizens. Any deceased falconer may be honored by contributions from friends and family regardless of nationality.

Thus, we are pleased to report that Netherlands Valkeniersverbond "Adriaan Mollen" has pledged funds to sponsor the first non-U.S. plaque in memory of J. H. M. Pieters. 🦅



Guess Who?

(2nd in a series...)

Can you identify this well-known, American falconer in his younger days?

For answer, see below