

# Peregram

Velma Morrison Interpretive Center News

Fall 2006



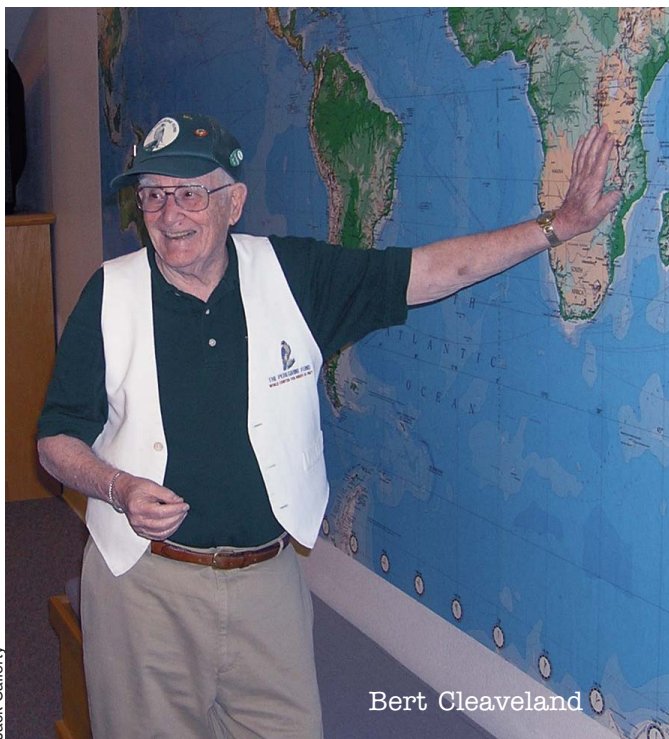
## Bert Cleaveland: A Lifetime of Giving

By Jack Cafferty

On Wednesday, September 27th, The Peregrine Fund lost a long-time volunteer, friend, and life-long supporter—Bert Cleaveland. While many of us knew Bert as the avid birder and devoted volunteer at the Interpretive Center, his dedication to the organization spans more than two decades to include national and international work.

Until he retired in 1985, Bert worked as a forester for Boise Cascade for more than 35 years. His association with The Peregrine Fund began in the early 1980s when The Peregrine Fund was looking for release sites for Peregrine Falcons in Idaho. At that time Boise Cascade assigned Bert to help the organization look for suitable release sites on Boise Cascade Property. As a result, Bert met Bill Burnham. A few years ago I asked Bert about his early years with the organization and what got him “hooked” on The Peregrine Fund. His face lit up and he said, “I’ll never forget that Gyrfalcon Bill brought with him when he first came (to Boise Cascade). I had been an avid birder since age 12 and that was a real treat for me... I never actually thought I’d ever get to see a white gyrfalcon in my lifetime.”

When he officially retired in 1985, Bert began volunteering at the World Center for Birds of Prey. At the time there was no Interpretive Center, but Bert did anything and every thing to help out. From guiding tours for the general public and schools to organizing slides and manning booths at events, he did it all. By 1987 Bert had made such an impression that he was asked to participate in the Maya Project in Guatemala and utilize his forestry background to survey vegetation. He ended up spending two field seasons in Guatemala conducting habitat surveys in the areas



Bert Cleaveland

where raptor surveys were being done. Acting President, Pete Jenny, recently commented, “Bert played a key role in the Maya Project. Most people probably don’t realize it, but it was his expertise in vegetation surveying that made that project all come together... He was one of the hardest working guys I’ve ever worked with and such a pleasure to be around.”

There’s no doubt that Bert’s dedication to the education program and the Interpretive Center are most impressive. I overheard a volunteer last month say, “That guy (Bert) knows everything about birds!” Bert had donated more than 6,500 hours to the organization over the years. Although this was the recorded number of hours he contributed, he frequently came in and helped out without logging in the hours. Whether it was young school children or adults with no interest in birds of prey at all, Bert always had a way of connecting with his audience. His information and descriptions were always precise and he had a way of always making people laugh.

It’s hard not to have a smile on my face when I think of Bert. He was always good for a nice Hawaiian shirt at a volunteer

party, a big smile on his face, and then there were the stories. Only Bert could tell a story that would present factual information and begin in a serious fashion and by the end have you laughing so hard you could hardly stand. One day Bert came to me and pointed out this little dot in the Pacific Ocean. He was fairly serious and said, “You see that island right there? Well, I was there once. Some amazing birds on that island! I was sitting on the beach right next

to the edge of the ocean taking notes, drawing sketches, and thinking how great this was. My field notebook had about 50 pages of stuff in it and then all a sudden, this wave came up and hit me out of the blue. I got completely soaked, and this was back before the days of water proof ink, so I lost all my notes.” Concerned about the notes, I asked him what he lost and he laughed, “To heck with the notes, I was never very good at drawing anyway, but that wave was one big wave and it was a great ride, let me tell ya!”

We will all miss Bert’s big smile and stories. If the walls of the Interpretive Center could talk, no telling how many of Bert’s stories would be played back. One thing is for certain, Bert’s enthusiasm and love for this place will be shared by all of us that he touched over the years. A few years ago, I asked him what kept him coming back to volunteer after all these years and he said, “It’s simple. I just really enjoy all the great people.” We too, have enjoyed all the great people over the years and Bert is definitely one of those many great volunteers.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to Bert’s wife Edith and the rest of his family.

## Some Good News for Vultures in South Asia

The following is verbatim text from a press clipping from the Pakistan Times of September 22, 2006:

The Health Ministry on Thursday banned the veterinary Diclofenac drug with immediate effect, due to its adverse effects on vulture population. The registration board thoroughly considered the published data on the decline in vulture population due to the use of veterinary Diclofenac. It has been proved through international research that veterinary Diclofenac causes renal failure in vultures because of which their population in Asia has declined drastically. Research shows that loss of vulture population has serious negative impacts, like loss of natural scavenging system that could lead to the spread of animal and human disease since vulture quickly dispose of carcasses of animals that die of anthrax and any other deadly disease including potential rabies epidemic. It has also been proved that Meloxicam, which is effective as Diclofenac in treating livestock, is safe for vultures.

The international research mentioned in the above clipping, was conducted by a team of scientists led by The Peregrine

Fund. Since the mid 1990s, there has been a massive die off of vultures on the Indian Subcontinent. In The Peregrine Fund *Fall/Winter Newsletter* of 2004, an article about South Asian vultures stated, “We are witnessing what were once likely the world’s strongest raptor populations, with numbers in the hundreds of thousands, diminish in just a few years to mere handfuls of no more than several hundred.”

As recently as 2002, scientists were speculating about the cause of this terrible calamity, with the usual suspects being pesticides, poisons, and diseases. Careful and thorough research by scientists associated with The Peregrine Fund found the cause—an anti-inflammatory drug called diclofenac. This finding was published in the February 2004 issue of *Nature*, one of the most prestigious journals of science. This drug was created decades ago for use in humans and has little or no side effects in humans. But, when the drug began to be used on the Indian Subcontinent to alleviate the pain and inflammation in domestic livestock, the result was catastrophic for vultures. When the animals of farmers die of natural causes, cultural and religious practices of South Asia prescribe

that vultures eat the carcasses, thus helping to clean up the environment. Research showed that residues of diclofenac in livestock carcasses were fatal to vultures, and only one carcass in 250 would have to contain diclofenac to cause the drastic decline in vulture populations.

The obvious solution was to have diclofenac banned immediately. The problem has been that it is not easy to get manufacturers, farmers and local veterinarians to see this immediate need. Thanks to significant efforts by Peregrine Fund scientists that produced an overwhelming body of information about the dangers of diclofenac, India, Nepal, and now Pakistan, have decided to ban the veterinary use of the drug. It is not possible to convey in a few sentences in a press release the essential contributions The Peregrine Fund has made in trying to solve the Asian vulture crisis.

The work has been well documented in Peregrine Fund newsletters, annual reports, and our online Notes from the Field. Please visit The Peregrine Fund’s web site, [www.peregrinefund.org](http://www.peregrinefund.org), to view these documents to appreciate the magnitude of the work involved.

## upcoming events

**October 8, Sunday—Open House** Admission to The Peregrine Fund’s Visitor’s Center is Free all day!

**October 8, Sunday – October 15, Sunday—Online Auction: Tickets for National Finals Rodeo** Guests visiting our Visitor’s Center may bid on (4) four tickets, two tickets for each night (December 8 and 9) of the National Final Rodeo in Las Vegas, Nevada. Bids for these tickets also will be taken until October 15th by phone 208-362-8687 or online at our webpage: [www.peregrinefund.com](http://www.peregrinefund.com) under: What’s New.

**October 19, Thursday—New Volunteer Orientation** If you or someone you know is interested in volunteering with The Peregrine Fund, please download an application at [www.peregrinefund.org](http://www.peregrinefund.org), or call the Volunteer Coordinator at 362-8257. New volunteer orientation sessions are held at 6 pm on the third Thursday of every month. Pre-registration is required.

**November 1, Wednesday – December 10, Sunday—Online Auction: Annual Fall Bazaar** See the details in the article about Volunteers’ 10th Annual Fall Bazaar.

**November 4, Saturday – Volunteer Propagation Workshop** Active volunteers are encouraged to attend our Propagation Workshop from 10 am until 2 pm. This workshop will have special presentations by The Peregrine Fund’s Propagation Staff and volunteers will have opportunities to ask questions.

**November 16, Thursday – New Volunteer Orientation** See information for October 19 (above).

**November 24, Friday – 10th Annual Fall Bazaar** begins Friday, November 24th and will end when all items are sold, but no later than December 10th. For more information, see the article on the volunteer bazaar in this newsletter.

**December 9, Saturday – Volunteer Christmas Party**



### Contact Us:

Velma Morrison  
Interpretive Center

5668 W. Flying Hawk Ln.  
Boise, ID 83709  
(208) 362-8687

[tpf@peregrinefund.org](mailto:tpf@peregrinefund.org)

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# Volunteers' 10th Annual Fall Bazaar



Thomas Mangelsen

Go to "What's New" at our website, [www.peregrinefund.org](http://www.peregrinefund.org) to bid on "Riding the Wind – Bald Eagle."

Temperatures are dropping, leaves are changing colors, and migratory birds are beginning their journeys south. What this all means is that fall is here and it is time for the Annual Fall Bazaar (formerly called Holiday Bazaar) at the Velma Morrison Interpretive Center at The Peregrine Fund's World Center for Birds of Prey.

This annual event will be held at the Center during normal business hours of 10 am – 4 pm Tuesday – Saturday, November 24 – December 10.

For 10 years volunteers at the Interpretive Center generously have contributed their time and their various arts and crafts talents to make the bazaar a success. This year is no different. As in years past, all the proceeds from the bazaar directly benefit The Peregrine Fund's education program. However, there are some changes for visitors to the bazaar this year.

The first change is the name: Our Holiday Bazaar will now be known as the 10th Annual Fall Bazaar. In recognition of the many years the volunteers at the Center have worked hard donating their time and talents to this bazaar, identifying the number of years and adding the word "Annual" are two ways The Peregrine Fund is saying thank you. In the past some visitors to the bazaar expressed disappointment that there were so few holiday/Christmas items for sale. Replacing "Holiday" with "Fall Bazaar" will prevent this misconception the public may have.

Another change is the collection of donated products, gift certificates, or discounts from local businesses. These gifts will be combined with hand-crafted items provided by the Center's volunteers and supporters in beautifully wrapped gift baskets. There also will be wood carvings, wind chimes, and new and used books on display at the Center.

A silent auction will begin November 1 and end December 10 for a framed, Thomas Mangelsen 20"x30" image, "Riding the Wind – Bald Eagle" and two handmade quilts, a full-size bed quilt, 6' x 8' titled "Flying Home," and a wall hanging quilt, 38" x 38" titled "Blaze of Glory". Pictures, detailed information and instructions on how to bid on these items can be found by clicking on the "What's New" section of the website: [www.peregrinefund.org](http://www.peregrinefund.org).

I am excited about the changes and proud to be among the many volunteers who are working to make this the most successful bazaar yet. Please help support The Peregrine Fund's education program and the thousands of Treasure Valley school children who visit the Center each year by encouraging all your friends and family to visit the bazaar. If you are not able to stop by the Center, visit our website and bid on this year's silent auction items!

# volunteer spotlight

Brit Peterson has been a volunteer docent at The Peregrine Fund's Visitor's Center since 1993 with over 1,800 hours. Helen Crewse, another volunteer docent, was recently shopping in Home Depot and happened to be wearing a Peregrine Fund shirt at the time. An employee approached her saying, "Oh you are at The Peregrine Fund's Visitor Center? That is a wonderful place. I had one of the best tours there when Brit gave the tour. I learned so much. Brit gave a terrific tour it was very informative!" It is very true that Brit gives excellent tours with precise and detailed information, but there is another side to Brit that would surely surprise the average visitor. Brit has banded more American Kestrels than almost anyone in the intermountain west.

Brit did not start out her working career to become a kestrel expert. She obtained a degree in Criminal Justice in 1994, and due to her life long interest in animals, she continued taking courses in biology. Her interest in birds of prey began when she answered an ad in a flyer looking for a field worker to help a graduate student with a Burrowing Owl study. Brit's work with Burrowing Owls led to ten years of field work for both the United States Geological Survey (USGS) and Boise State University with one of her favorite birds of prey, the American Kestrel.

Brit's field work with kestrels centered on visiting kestrel nesting boxes placed along Interstate 84 on the back of freeway signs. She also visited nesting boxes placed in trees in private yards in Nampa, Idaho. And finally, she visited boxes placed on poles alongside various rural roads south



Mark Purdy

of the World Center for Birds of Prey. Over the ten years of her field work, she regularly visited as many as 132 boxes. A season in the field spanned from the middle of March to early August. What she did each season in the field, is of course, the most interesting part of her story.

Each season Brit began in mid March with cleaning the boxes. This was not the most fun part of the job. Near the beginning of April she began the process of visiting boxes to check for the presence of egg clutches and to count the eggs. Brit observed that kestrels tend to lay 4 to 6 eggs in a clutch. About 25 days after the eggs had hatched, it was time to band the chicks, weigh them, determine their sex, and measure the length of the wing cord. Other observations involved "site fidelity" or how often adults of a nesting pair returned to the same box to nest. Once Brit observed that a male returned to nest at the same box with a new female and in the neighboring nest box was his previous mate nesting with a new male. "All sorts of reasons for a breakup of a mating pair come to mind, but without research, it is all just speculation.", says Brit.

The tools of her field work were simple:

a pickup with two different sized ladders, a spring scale, a ruler, a field notebook, banding tools, an L-shaped apparatus to plug the nest box holes made of PVC, and a sock. Upon reaching a nest box, Brit would erect the PVC pipe apparatus and plug the nest box hole. Next she would climb the ladder, unscrew the top of the nest box, capture an adult or a chick, place the bird in the sock to calm the bird, and then band and measure the bird as needed. The process all seems fairly straight forward, but there were often certain issues that had to be dealt with as she was making her rounds.

More than once while perched on a ladder that rested on the backside of a freeway sign, trying to capture kestrels in a nest box, Brit would be interrupted by State Police or crews from emergency vehicles wanting to know what she was doing. It takes little imagination to see how dangerous it would be to be surveying these nest boxes with semi trucks blowing by at 70 plus miles per hour. Then there was all the effort and skill involved in climbing in to trees in private yards to access private nest boxes. It takes special skill to collect and handle birds of prey, and Brit insisted on collecting the birds bare-handed. For Brit, the bare-handed collection was important to be able to sense the bird's movements and keep the bird from being harmed during the process.

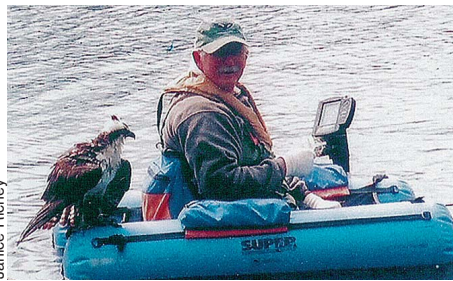
The USGS and BSU were very fortunate to have such a dedicated field worker over a long period of time. Because of the long period of her work in the field, Brit was able to make observations other less experienced field workers would probably have missed. Here at The Peregrine Fund we highly value her experience, and her excellent work as a docent. We know her long experience with us is a great asset to our program.

## Peregrine Fund Member Rescues Osprey!

by Mark Purdy

The Peregrine Fund is noted world wide for its conservation efforts on behalf of birds of prey. Sometimes the work of conserving birds of prey comes down to the individual efforts of people in their everyday lives. The news has just reached us that last August a Peregrine Fund member was responsible for rescuing an Osprey in a most unusual way.

Dr. Donald Pica, a physician from Twin Falls, Idaho, had gone to Rumbaugh Bay at Hebgen Lake in West Yellowstone, Montana to enjoy the day fishing in his pontoon boat. Nearby an Osprey was also "fishing" in its own way. When campers began making a commotion on shore, Dr. Pica became aware that the Osprey was down in the water floundering and unable to fly. He decided to take his watercraft over to the



Janice Richey

bird to investigate what was going on. What happened next was totally unexpected!

When Dr. Pica got near the downed Osprey, he perceived a fishing line draped over the bird's wing preventing it from lifting off from the water. "I saw that the bird had a really big beak, and I was not eager to try and remove the line too quickly." While he was wondering what to next, Dr. Pica edged his watercraft closer to the bird. The

Osprey settled the whole issue by suddenly hopping onto the water craft (see picture with this article). Dr. Pica then reached over and removed the line from the bird's wing. The bird was no longer in danger of drowning, but now Dr. Pica had a new problem—how to get the bird off the watercraft!

Dr. Pica decided to move his watercraft to shore and deal with the issue of removing the bird there. He had no specific plan in mind, and was mulling over what to do when he reached shore, when the bird solved the "debarking" problem by suddenly leaping into the air and flew away.

The image that accompanies this article was taken from shore by Janice Richey of Island Park, Idaho. Notice the California Condor emblem on Dr. Pica's hat. The same hat may be purchased online or in our gift shop.

## bird of prey vocabulary: Match Your Knowledge!

This puzzle is doubly devious. The terms in the first column apply to birds of prey found at The Peregrine Fund's Visitor's Center. From the list below, find the bird(s) of prey that best match the term and write your answer(s) in the second column.

**Bird of Prey List:** Falcons, Osprey, Harpy Eagles, Turkey Vultures, Northern Harriers, Owls. *Hint: At least one bird of prey is used twice!*

### Terms that apply to birds of prey

- Hallux:** A back talon that is opposed or directed backwards and allows for grasping and perching.
- Malar Stripe:** A distinct stripe found below the eye of birds.
- Perforate Nares:** Continuous Nostrils.
- Zygodactyl:** Two toes in front and two toes behind.
- Tomial Tooth:** Triangular projection on either side of upper beak which is used to break the neck of prey victims.
- Spicules:** Sharp spines found on the bottom of feet.
- Tarsus:** The lower segment of the leg before the toes.
- Facial Disk:** A ring of feathers about the faces of certain birds of prey used to direct sound into their ears. These birds use sound as well as sight when hunting.

### Bird(s) of Prey

- It is very large for \_\_\_\_\_.
- Prominent in many \_\_\_\_\_.
- Found in \_\_\_\_\_.
- Found in \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
- Found in all \_\_\_\_\_.
- Enables \_\_\_\_\_ to hold on to fish because of these spines.
- For \_\_\_\_\_ their tarsi are long and bare, and designed to aid in reaching into grasses to seize prey.
- Facial disks are found in \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.