



# Peregram

Velma Morrison Interpretive Center News

Summer 2007

## Volunteer Spotlight

Kit Fawcett is a triple-threat volunteer. She volunteers in the gift shop, leads school tours, and works as a docent in the Interpretive Center. Last year she was Co-chair of the Bazaar and put in many hours preparing for that event.

### Signs of Spring

by Kit Fawcett

April Fool's Day may be a day some people play tricks on one another, but for my husband and I, it is a day to start watching the skies over the field in front of our home. For the 30 years we have lived in our home, we have been blessed with a variety of wildlife, from our resident fox family to the hundreds of quail, Mallard ducks and Canadian geese that return each year to feed in our fields and ponds. In April, we begin our vigil of searching the skies for the Red-tailed Hawks that have been coming to nest in a tree outside our front window for most of these 30 years. Soon after the first Red-tailed Hawk arrives, the Great Blue Heron will be seen circling over the fields or perched on his favorite tree beside the pond. He too is awaiting the arrival of his mate.

The male Red-tailed Hawk usually appears a few days to a week before the female. Once she arrives, the courtship begins with acrobatic aerial displays. They will fly high in the sky with one of them rolling over on its back as their talons meet in



Christie Van Cleave

*A Red-tailed Hawk brings prey to the nest.*

mid-air. They seem to just glide down to within 6-8 feet of the ground before they break apart, only to soar high in the sky to perform this feat again. They "talk" constantly to one another while they diligently repair their nest site, though they quiet down when on the hunt for food. Over the years, the Red-tail Hawks have developed a special liking for a large telephone pole on the side of our driveway. This is the site where they share their most recent catch of the day. We have seen them exchange mice, snakes, goslings and even a baby squirrel. Once the female starts sitting on her eggs, we notice the male often perches on a branch just below the nest. As the weeks go by, we daily witness the hawks floating on air thermals above the nest in the late afternoon. If they get too close to their neighboring sparrows, doves, or magpies, the smaller birds try chasing them away by dive bombing the hawk. These techniques do not seem to bother the hawks which continue

to float or soar carefree over the trees.

Then the eggs hatch. We generally have witnessed them raising two chicks. Before long the chicks' little heads are not just peaking out over the nest but their full-grown bodies are seen sitting on a branch, preparing for their first flight. They spend some time flapping their wings and rising a few feet off the branch developing the strength and courage to follow their parents into the air thermals. Once they start flying and perching on the telephone pole, we know they will be leaving us soon. Each day they fly farther and farther away from the nest site and our fields, preparing for their long journey south. Days will now go by without a single sighting of the hawks; soon they are gone, and so is summer. We know fall is just around the corner and we will have seven months before we can start watching the skies for their return. (continued ...)



*Swainson's Hawk Perched by its nest.*

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Last year we witnessed a new arrival, a Swainson's Hawk. He appeared a short time after the male Red-tailed Hawk. Within a few days of the Swainson's arrival, the female Red-tail arrived; she and her mate abandoned their old nest and moved about a 1/2 mile up the canal to another group of trees. The Swainson's immediately began building a nest a few trees west of the Red-tail's old nest site. We watched the Swainson's each day as they busily worked on their nest. They are much quieter than the red-tails so their presence was not as easily detected, until they too discovered the telephone pole and began their food exchanges, just as the red-tails had done before them. The Swainson's successfully raised two chicks last year, and they must have decided this was a good place to live as they returned again this year. Though we miss the antics of the Red-tailed Hawk family, we have grown to appreciate the way the Swainson's go about their daily business, as quiet citizens of our neighborhood.

As summer turns into fall and the hawks and herons have left for parts unknown, we will anxiously await another April 1<sup>st</sup> to start watching the skies, wondering which hawks will return to our fields and telephone pole. Will it be a Swainson's Hawk or a Red-tailed Hawk?

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## Public tours begin at Archives of Falconry

If you've ever wondered what goes on inside the building across the parking lot, now you may find out. The Archives of Falconry at the World Center for Birds of Prey offers guided public tours of its new "Arab" wing every Thursday and the first Saturday of each month.

The new wing honors the ancient tradition of falconry in the Middle East, where the sport has continued uninterrupted for more than 3,000 years. The centerpiece is an authentic goat-hair hunting tent from Syria that measures 20 by 12 feet and is 8 feet tall. Inside, three mannequins are seated enjoying coffee together in the tradition of hospitality on the Arabian Peninsula. Visitors may sit on colorful pillows inside the tent and view rugs, blankets, bags and artifacts. The new wing doubled the square footage of The Archives to its current size of 7,000 square feet.



David Wells

*Life-sized mannequins inside the Arab Majlis tent.*

The new wing also features interactive displays with audio and video clips of the sport of falconry and the efforts to recover endangered birds in the Middle East. One wall is covered with a photo mural of a desert scene. Other walls represent an ancient fort in the United Arab Emirates. The international excitement attending the opening of this exhibit has generated feature articles in the British and German falconry magazines, the North American and Colorado Falconers' Association magazines, as well as stories in the local media.

The Archives' valuable paintings, books, and artifacts related to falconry around the world also are on display. Historical materials date from 1495 and include collections from every nation where falconry is practiced. International scholars and researchers regularly visit the archives, which is the only one of its kind in the world. Descriptions and photos of some of the major collections are presented on the web site: [www.peregrinefund.org/american\\_falconry.asp](http://www.peregrinefund.org/american_falconry.asp).

The Archives of Falconry was founded by former curator, Kent Carnie, at the World Center for Birds of Prey in 1986 to preserve the historical evidence of the sport in the United States. The Archives was expanded in both size and

scope in 2006 with a donation from Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed, son of Sheikh Zayed, the founding president of the United Arab Emirates and a falconer who made significant contributions to the conservation of birds of prey.

Falconry is one of the oldest methods of hunting. Eagles, hawks, and falcons are used by falconers to pursue and catch quarry for food. When the Peregrine Falcon became endangered in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century due to the widespread use of DDT and other persistent pesticides, falconers were instrumental in organizing the successful recovery effort. Falconers have played a significant role in our understanding of raptor biology and raptor conservation.

- **When:** 1 p.m. and 2:30 p.m. every Thursday; 10 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. on the first Saturday of every month.
- **Cost:** The cost of touring both The Archives and Velma Morrison Interpretive Center is \$7.50 adults, \$6 seniors, \$4.50 youth. The Archives-only tour is \$5 adults, \$4 seniors, \$3 youth. Free to members and children under age 4. Volunteers receive free admission and are encouraged to make a reservation for themselves.

**Reservations and information:** (208)362-8687. Each tour is limited to 12 people.

Special two-hour tours also are available by appointment. This more extensive tour provides an intimate exposure to falconry by world-renowned expert Kent Carnie, curator emeritus. The minimum price is \$200. Call 362-8687 or e-mail aaf@peregrinefund.org.

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## **Well....Owl Be Darned!!!!**

### **Separating Fact from Fiction Regarding Raptors**

**Trish Nixon, Raptor Specialist**

We've all heard stories about the amazing adaptability and fascinating behavioral patterns of Eagles, Owls, Hawks and Falcons. Some of these "facts" have been passed from one generation to the next, and like many stories that have been repeated time and again, a few have been dramatized, exaggerated, and embellished over the years. In my years working with The Peregrine Fund, I've heard lots of these stories and thought it would be interesting to investigate some of them here and separate the truth from the "urban legends."

**Owls rotate their heads 360 degrees:** Like all birds, owls have a lot of flexibility in their necks. Owls can turn their heads about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the way around, a bit further than most other birds. Rapid movement just makes them appear to rotate their heads 360 degrees.

**Eagles and hawks allow hummingbirds to hitch a ride during migration:** Hummingbirds migrate like all other birds....flying to their destination on their own. Another form of this myth is that fledgling raptors ride on their parents' backs. While it would be a great way for chicks to earn Frequent Flier Miles, it's just a myth. A raptor would not tolerate another bird "riding" it....and when a young raptor fledges, it takes it's first flights on it's own wings.

**Birds spend most of their time flying:** During spring and early summer, raptors are at their most active and will spend more time flying (hunting) than at other times of the year. When possible, a bird will spend much of it's time perched, and much of that time is spent preening which is grooming their feathers. Energy is conserved whenever possible.

**The tufts on some Owl's heads are ears:** Actually, those tufts (or horns, as they are incorrectly called) are just feathers. Owls' ears are under their feathers and not visible. When threatened, an owl will erect those feather tufts to help him look "big" and more powerful to another bird or animal.

**Eagles (Golden or Bald) can carry off livestock, dogs and small children:** Morley Nelson helped to dispel this myth when he showed many in Washington, D.C. that an eagle could not carry the amount of weight people assumed. By incrementally increasing the weight carried by one of his falconry eagles, Morley proved that an eagle's lifting power was limited. This helped lawmakers determine that large raptors should be protected species because they weren't responsible for carrying off the types of animals for which they'd been historically persecuted.

**Birds will reject a chick touched by humans:** With the exception of Turkey Vultures, most birds' sense of smell is relatively weak. Biologists and field researchers can band young birds, return them to their nests or eyries and the parents will resume care of the young immediately, proving this belief is just a myth. Birds are protective of those chicks, and disturbance of a nest is not recommended in ordinary circumstances.

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**Owls cannot see during the day because they are nocturnal:** Owls can see perfectly well during daylight, and very well at night, too! Not all owls are nocturnal; several varieties will hunt during the daylight hours. Those who hunt at night roost during the day, but are quick to “wake up” when the need arises.

**An Eagle (or other raptor) molts all its feathers at one time, and is rendered flightless until the new feathers grow in:** Thankfully for raptors, this isn't a fact. Molting, the replacement of old feathers with new, occurs in regular patterns over a bird's body. Most feathers are molted in symmetrical fashion, with a feather and its counterpart from the other side of the bird's body dropping off within hours of one another. The feathers that receive the most wear are replaced first. The center tail feathers molt first, followed by those to the outside of the tail.

Unlike geese, swans, and other large water birds, who are synchronous (“all at once”) molters, most large raptors may take up to two years to complete a molt. Smaller raptors complete a molt in a matter of weeks, depending on their size. Molting is interrupted for migration, reproduction, and other energy consumptive needs. Raptors continue to fly during the molt.

**Birds of prey show aggression towards people and pets “just because.”** This is one misunderstanding that should be dispelled, as it's responsible for negative feelings towards raptors. Hunting is how raptors survive; it is not an activity carried out for entertainment. Birds of prey are on the wing frequently during chick season—feeding and rearing rapidly growing offspring. During this period, they are more wary and aggressive toward perceived threats to their young and to trespassers in their territory. If you are aware that raptors are nesting in your hiking path, climbing route, or picnic area, give the birds their space. All birds are protective during this time. Song birds mob raptors to drive them away from their nests and young; this behavior is not unique to raptors. At other times of the year, hawks, eagles, owls and falcons, (unless cornered or injured), are inclined to avoid you, rather than to show aggressive behavior towards you. Their main goals are reproduction and survival.

Birds of prey are amazing.....and we all hear lots of stories about them. How do we know when what we are hearing is “for real?” When something sounds odd, do some research, ask others, and check reliable websites. Raptors are awe-inspiring in their own right, even after we bust those age-old myths about them. I spend a lot of time reading about birds of prey and constantly learn surprising facts. That's one of the reasons I'm passionate about my work with The Peregrine Fund – always a new discovery to learn about, a new behavior to witness, and our staff in the field is a treasure trove of fabulous insights regarding the birds they work with and study daily. Check out their “Notes from the Field” on our website periodically.....the more you learn about birds of prey, the more you'll want to know!

## Power and Grace

**T**hanks to the generous donation of Dick Uilein, The Peregrine Fund is pleased to welcome “Power and Grace” to its collection of art on display at the Interpretive Center. The piece is a striking show of passion—the wood carving took 16 months for artist Jim Robison to create, and in addition to the core body and wing pieces, the Bald Eagle includes over 300 individually carved, burned and painted feathers. Jim Robison is an avid falconer and outdoorsman, and he has been earning notice as a wildfowl artist since he was young. As a teenager, he was featured in People magazine and an NBC film, and Robison's pieces have been selected three times for one of the most prestigious bird art exhibitions in the US, “Birds of Art” at the Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum. Each of Robison's works show both a devotion to his art and a devotion to his feathered subjects—they are true to life down to the minutest detail, from scale to habitat, and hours of painstaking research go into each design. Of his passions, Robison claims “first and foremost is my love for birds in flight. I am very partial to raptors, game birds and waterfowl. I very much so want to put you, the viewer, in the field, to connect with the birds and experience this millisecond of time.” If you haven't yet stopped by to see the eagle, don't waste any more time! This centerpiece is worth a visit in itself.





**W**hen you visit, look for displays of artwork and letters in the visitor center. We receive letters from local visitors at the interpretive center daily, in addition to letters and emails from all over the world. Many of those letters are from children, who also send their art work.



Mrs. Archuleta's 2<sup>nd</sup> grade class at Lincoln Elementary in Caldwell made a book of letters and art as a thank you. Here are some samples:

*Thank you for helping us learn about birds. You were very nice. Where did you get all that stuff? Cole*

*Thank you for letting us see the bird when we berly got in. Vanessa*

*Thank you for letting us come over for a wile. I just notiest that you gies are pretty nice. It's so nice I wish I could live there. Someday I wish you can come to the school. Maybe you can some day when you have a day off. Emily*

*I like the part when you brought out one bird. It was pretty funny when it made all that sound and when it stood on one leg. That was like the best field trip ever!! I loved all of it! Brookland*

*My favorite birds were volcers. Tristan*

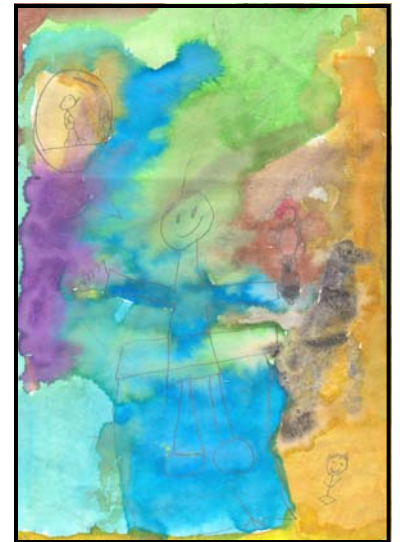
*My favorite bird was the bald eagle. Wyatt*



*I like the owl that can hear a mouse and how fast a falcon can go. Cody*

*I had a good time learning about birds life cicle. The snake was cool. Lyon*

*I feel like going their over and over and over again. Thank you! Love, Corbin*



The above letters are a result of the fact that The Peregrine Fund extends free admission to school groups, and Interpretive Center volunteers make every effort to give students interesting and interactive programs. Our education staff also works with teachers to integrate the learning from our programs with what is being taught in the classroom. Our thanks go out to all those teachers who arrange transportation and try to give the students a valuable experience outside the classroom. They are a tremendous asset to our programs.

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## ANSER Charter School Kindergarten Donates

Nick Piccono



*Chloe from the kindergarten class presents our director, Jack Cafferty with a check.*

The Peregrine Fund has recently received a generous donation from Anne Moore's kindergarten class at Anser Charter School, which has decided to give a portion of this annual charity fundraiser to help birds of prey! The class has a tradition of making note cards decorated with birds, selling the cards to local businesses and donating the proceeds to organizations chosen by the students. This year the class made over \$600 from the cards (reigned over, appropriately, by owls), which was then donated to six charities including The Peregrine Fund. Note cards made by the students are on sale in the gift shop, and a copy of the donation check is on display at the Interpretive Center.

## Visitor Center Intern Part of Winning Team at the Idaho Envirothon

**A**ustin Holden, our high school intern, recently graduated from Borah High School. Just prior to graduation, Austin participated as part of a team at the Idaho Envirothon, where seventeen teams from all over Idaho competed by taking tests on wildlife, soils, aquatics, forestry and current environmental issues. Austin's team got the highest score on four out of five tests. Since each team was also required to give a team presentation on an environmental subject, Austin's team gave a PowerPoint presentation on Renewable and Alternative resources, and they received a high score. Because of their outstanding performance on the tests and the presentation, Austin's team won the overall competition. They will now go to New York City in July to compete in the National Envirothon Competition. Good Luck, Austin!

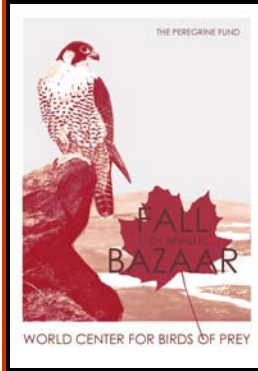


Mark Purdy

*Lucy, the Turkey Vulture, lands on Austin's arm.*

# Annual Fall Bazaar

## Preparation Begins



This year's Fall Bazaar will begin Sunday October 7<sup>th</sup> and continue through Sunday October 21<sup>st</sup>. Last year's bazaar was very successful, raising over \$6,600. All proceeds from the event directly benefit The Peregrine Fund's education program and the thousands of Treasure Valley school children who visit each year.

The Bazaar ends before the holidays on October 21<sup>st</sup>. Last year we learned what items were popular and sold quickly. This year we are looking for items that can be grouped together into baskets, or would be great on their own. Here is an idea of what we are looking for:

- Wine baskets
- Food or coffee baskets
- Night on the town packages
- Cooking
- Recreation or Sports items
- Pet items
- Appealing items for men (i.e. golf, auto supplies, tools)
- Gift Certificates

We are open to your ideas for some great packages or donations. If you are interested in donating or have some suggestions for us, please let us know.

[tpf@peregrinefund.org](mailto:tpf@peregrinefund.org)  
(208) 362-3716

## Ruth Kassens Quilt to be Ruffled Off on the First Day of the Bazaar

This gorgeous queen-sized quilt was made by volunteer Ruth Kassens, and includes two matching pillow shams. Tickets are \$2 apiece or six for \$10. You do not need to be present to win. The drawing will be held at our Open House on October 7<sup>th</sup>—the same day the Fall Bazaar begins!



Tickets may be purchased:

1. In our gift shop
2. By check

Make the check to The Peregrine Fund (exact amount). Mail it care of Nick Piccono to:

The Peregrine Fund  
5668 West Flying Hawk Lane  
Boise, ID 83709

Please include contact details such as name, address, phone number, and email address

3. By phone using a credit card. Call (208) 362-8687 and ask for Nick Piccono.

# Outstanding Volunteer Awards

**W**ithout the support and work of our volunteers, The Peregrine Fund's World Center for Birds of Prey would be at a loss. Volunteers are vital to assist in the day to day operations. Our volunteers do an assortment of work for us ranging from working the gift shop, giving tours, cleaning chambers, feeding the birds, even working in our volunteer library. We want our volunteers to know we appreciate them. Every year we enter our volunteers for The President's Volunteer Service Award—an award created by the President's Council on Service and Civic Participation as a way to thank and honor Americans who, by their demonstrated commitment and example, inspire others to engage in volunteer service. They award volunteers who have contributed a certain amount of hours within a 12 month period. This year we have 28 volunteers who have fulfilled their requirements. The Council gives out three awards; Bronze (Over 100 Hours), Silver (Over 250 Hours), and gold (Over 500). The following is a list of our recognized volunteers and their

| <b>Bronze</b>      | <b>Bronze</b>   | <b>Bronze</b>   | <b>Silver</b> |
|--------------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Betty Purdy        | Fred Pugh       | Mike Garets     | Jack Osgood   |
| Brit Peterson      | Helen Crewse    | Milt Melzian    | Kit Fawcett   |
| Chan Springer      | Kathryn Hampton | Nikki Sartin    | Leo Faddis    |
| Claudia Fernsworth | Kip Malone      | Randy Rasmussen |               |
| Connie Leavitt     | Marcia Ross     | Ron Price       |               |
| Dale Howard        | Marianne Horen  | Ruth Kassens    |               |
| Diann Stone        | Martin Greitzer | Vivian Upton    |               |
| Dick Thatcher      | Maud Bolstad    |                 |               |
| Dina Golley        | Mags Shaw       |                 |               |

**T**he Peregrine Fund Volunteer Program has been very successful because of our committed volunteers—the majority of which are long term. This year we have 2 volunteers celebrating 10 years of service with us and 7 volunteers celebrating 5 years. The following list of volunteers will also be recognized at our Summer Volunteer Party on August 3<sup>rd</sup>.

## **5 Years**

Ray Brucks  
 Claudia Fernsworth  
 Ruth Kassens  
 Connie Leavitt  
 Jack Osgood  
 Cathy Quam  
 Nikki Sartin

## **10 Years**

Karen Brender  
 Leo Faddis

# U P C O M I N G E V E N T S



## Contact Us

Velma Morrison  
Interpretive Center

The Peregrine Fund  
5668 W. Flying Hawk Ln.  
Boise, ID 83709  
(208) 362-8687  
[tpf@peregrinefund.org](mailto:tpf@peregrinefund.org)  
[www.peregrinefund.org](http://www.peregrinefund.org)

## Beginning June 14 -- Archives of Falconry Tours

The Peregrine Fund's Archives of Falconry will be open to the public through regularly scheduled tours each Thursday afternoon, the first Saturday of every month, or "special event" tours of offered and scheduled by Kent Carnie. See the article in this issue for more information.

## July 9 -13, Monday–Friday -- Summer Art and Raptors Program

Sketching... Naturally! Volunteers and staff will present the summer art program for children. Contact Trish Nixon (208 362-8258) or Mark Purdy (208 362-8259) for more information.

## July 15, Sunday -- 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 (208) 362-8257. New volunteer orientation sessions are held monthly. Pre-registration is required.

## August 3, Friday -- Volunteer Summer Picnic

Idaho Shakespeare Festival in the evening. Current Volunteers are free and may purchase a ticket for a guest at a reduced rate. Doors open at 6:30 P.M. and the Green Show begins at 7:30 P.M. Volunteers are encouraged to contact Nick Piccono soon to reserve a place.

## August 31, Friday -- Boise Hawks

Peregrine Fund Staff will be at the Boise Hawks baseball game with one of our Raptors. We will be selling raffle tickets for the quilt and talking to the public.

## September 4, Monday -- Labor Day

The Peregrine Fund's World Center for Birds of Prey will be open.

## September 14-15, Friday and Saturday -- Project Wild Class for Educators

This workshop is provided for teachers who have taken Project Wild. The workshop is presented by the Idaho Fish and Game partnering with The Peregrine Fund's World Center for Birds of Prey and the BLM.

## September 29, Saturday -- National Museum Day

Museum Day is a nationwide event taking place on Saturday, September 29, 2007. Participating museums and cultural institutions across the country will offer free admission to Smithsonian readers and Smithsonian.com visitors, allowing for one day only, the free-admission policy of Smithsonian's Washington, D.C.-based facilities to be emulated across the country. Visit <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/museumday/> for more details.

## October 7, Sunday -- Open House

Free admission offered all day, children's activities, and more from 9 A.M. – 5 P.M.

## October 7 – 21, Our 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Fall Bazaar

See the article in this issue for more information about the Bazaar