



DONORS:

Pennsylvania Falconry and Hawk Trust



John J. Celley ~ Ridley Park, Pennsylvania
Favored bird: Finnish goshawk



Sure, he was good with boats, radios, fishing and even shooting pool, but after starting with a red tail, the **Finnish hawk became his life's passion.**



John J. Celley was the typical falconer. His Finnish goshawk was the center of his life. Perhaps not obsessed, but he certainly fussed over that bird. Celley lived in Eastern Pennsylvania where he was a self-taught certified master electrician and state electrical inspector. He also served as master electrician for Cheyney University in West Chester, Penn., for 13 years. But like many other falconers, his life was much more complex than amps, watts and ohms.

He also served as a deputy for the Fish & Wildlife Commission of Delaware County and as secretary of the National Falconry Association. In addition, he was in the Coast Guard Auxiliary and served as a recovery captain of the Delaware River Launch Service — experienced at boat hook towing. Sure, he was good with boats, radios, fishing and even shooting pool, but after starting with a red tail, the Finnish hawk became his life's passion. Jack Hubley knew him with his first bird, and he was quite impressed with Celley's meticulous notes of the bird's weight, hunting experiences and husbandry.

"He was certainly in love with his craft," Hubley said. "There was no doubt about that." That, in itself, makes sense as to why he would later become secretary of the NFA.

He was remembered by Michael Kuriga as a quiet and unassuming man, and they would sometimes look for goshawk nest sites in North Central Pennsylvania.

And Celley would often take his bird to hunt upland game like rabbits, ducks and squirrels.

A father of two, Celley's life ended tragically in 2005 at age 53 in a motorcycle accident on a hilly Pennsylvania road.

To no one's surprise, he was buried with a goshawk feather neatly tucked into his sports coat.

Reminiscences: Mike Kuriga, Jack Hubley, Gary Bolis



In Memory of John J. Celley

