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**HARDASWICK MEMORIAL**  
*by Tom Cade*

Vic Hardaswick came to work for The Peregrine Fund at Cornell University in 1981, bringing his wife and two daughters to live in a countryside setting a few

miles from Ithaca, New York. Jim Weaver hired him to help with our growing effort to propagate Peregrines for reintroduction in the eastern states, because he had a laboratory background working with animals in a research department at Yale University and in helping to establish a Primate Center, specializing in prosimians, at Duke University. He was an avid and accomplished falconer who had already produced some falcons of his own and was a devotee of all things to do with Peregrines. He became an integral part of the Cornell breeding team that consisted of Jim Weaver, Willard Heck, and Phyllis Dague, and various graduate students. Together they raised more than 1,500 falcons, hawks, and eagles between 1972 and 1986.

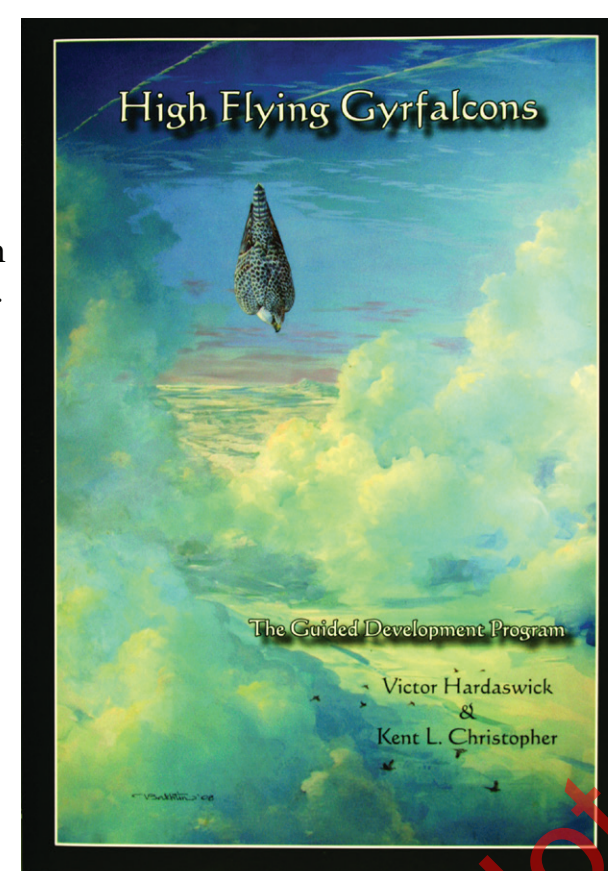
Vic and I worked together on some things, including a paper on the breeding and reintroduction of Peregrine Falcons published in



Avicultural Magazine in 1985. When our Cornell breeding program moved out to join our new World Center facility in Boise, Idaho in 1986, Vic joined Don Hunter in Centerville, South Dakota to run a private, commercial raptor breeding operation, which he later took over on his own. There he produced many fine Peregrines, Gyrfalcons, and Goshawks. He specialized in breeding white Gyrs, from the original Cornell stock, and white Goshawks obtained from eastern Siberia. Many of his Peregrines were used for reintroduction in the Midwest and to some extent on the East Coast.

In 1992 the federal Wild Bird Conservation Act was signed into law, ostensibly to control the excessive commercial trade in exotic birds for pets. For a time it appeared that this law might also preclude the import and export of wild birds for propagation at zoos, research facilities, and for aviculture generally. Vic quietly worked long and hard behind the scenes with the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the U. S. Scientific Authority for CITES to develop a permitting system that came to be known as the "Cooperative Breeding Program" to allow for continued international shipment of wild birds for specific captive breeding purposes. These regulations went into effect in October of 2000, and Vic was the first raptor breeder to be approved for this

program. Few falconers or breeders know how important Vic's efforts were in securing this regulatory provision. Vic was always a falconer. With good friends Kent Christopher and Keith Carpenter, Vic and I hawked sage grouse in eastern Idaho. I saw Vic's last successful flight one season when his big, white gyr, Shaka, caught her 25th consecutive grouse without missing a day. I will never forget those inimitable days when big falcons pursued big grouse over vast expanses of sky and we were falconers, a time made all the more memorable because of fine companions and the stories Vic and Kent tell in their book.



**A MENTOR, TEACHER AND FRIEND**

by Mike Perry

**I think that when most falconers reflect on their early years, there is one person who stands above the rest in their influence and teachings. For me, that person was Vic Hardaswick.**

I met Vic and his lovely wife "Tiger" in the fall of 1958. Years later I would learn her real name is Jan. She called him "Vic" but when she addressed him as "Victor", he knew she was serious and he listened. They had come to East Lansing so Vic could study at Michigan State University. At the time, my mom worked as the university librarian in charge of circulation. When Vic discovered that all the falconry books had been checked out, in typical Vic fashion, he went right to the top to find out who had them. My mom said he should meet her son.

I was 17 and had been struggling for 8 years without ever meeting another falconer. When my mom gave Vic our address, he came right over. He was only a few years older than me, but light years ahead in falconry. When I first met him, I was star struck. My messiah had come to lead me out of the darkness and indeed he did! I remember proudly showing him my first BC. I had never seen one but had read a vague description. Vic saw it and his first question was "Why are all the nooses lying down?" My reply: "Well, so the hawks won't see them." Boy, did he set me straight in a hurry.

That Christmas vacation, Vic invited me to visit him at his house in Seymour, Connecticut. His pigeon lofts were full of pouters, rollers, tumblers, helmets, homers, and the like. He was a student of avian genetics and his pigeons showed it. He introduced me to the famous author-researcher Dr. Leon Whitney. Then we were off to New Jersey to meet Lou Woyce. The three of us then went back to Philly to meet Corney McFadden and Bob Berry. At Corney's, Vic saw his first German goshawk. Who would have guessed what that encounter would lead to!

Vic and Lou were responsible for getting me my first beach bird. We flew our falcons behind the university everyday in 1968. Vic and Lou invited me to join them on Assateague trapping beach birds. That week was the greatest vacation I ever took.

Vic was adept at letting someone else do the leg work and then share in the fruits of their labor. Vic would track down a biologist, professor, or Audubon birder who had discovered an active gos nest. We meet them, not as falconers, but as interested birders. Vic knew all the right people to open doors for us. He always told me: "If you want lion cubs, you have to go into the lion's den."

In the 50's and 60's, we did not have telemetry. We listened for her bells. Good bells were hard to come by. We got mostly Indian and Pakistani bells. Some were not too bad but all lacked durability. The German George Richter was the stratavarious of falcon bell-makers. His bells simply were the best. Vic used to say he would not mind losing a bird, but he would sure hate to lose the Richter bells she had on. When Richter bells became very difficult to obtain, Vic took matters into his own hands. With his best Richter bells in his pocket, he marched through the front door of one of the largest steel companies in America. He challenged their metallurgist to duplicate the bells' alloy. In the end, they did. They did a spectroanalysis and fabricated the metal. Vic could now make his own quality bells. This exemplifies who Vic Hardaswick was.

In the early 60's, Vic went to Durham, then to Cornell, and finally to Centerville. He partnered with Don Hunter to breed raptors. We kept in touch throughout the years. Finally in 2009 I went to Centerville to see what they had accomplished. It was most impressive, quite possibly the most diversified collection of goshawks in the world.

Vic was never very good at tying up loose ends of his many deals. The filling out of applications for permits, reports, records, and all the clerical work was left to Jan. She was his cornerstone, his lynchpin. Everything they accomplished, they did as a team. Vic was very proud of Jan's accomplishments. Jan caught his eye when she won the mathematics competition for the state of Connecticut. No small achievement. Vic had found his lifelong partner.

Vic called me a couple of years ago. We were reminiscing about the good times we had in East Lansing. He astonished me by reciting my old house address, the street I lived on, and things about my family I had long forgotten. I am sure those facts had not crossed his mind in over 50 years. He possessed the greatest capacity for recall of any person I have ever known. I do not believe I ever heard Vic say "I don't remember."

I just have to believe that there must be raptors and dogs in heaven. Otherwise, it would not be heaven for people like you, me and Vic. I suspect that when and if I make it there, I will find Vic with a bevy of goshawks and a couple of high flying gyrs. He certainly knew how to make them fly in the clouds.

After all is said and done, what really matters most is not how many glorious birds you've flown, or how they flew, or the numbers of head taken. But rather the enduring lifelong friendships that so enrich our lives.

**Thank you Victor Hardaswick for being my friend.**



*Jan was his cornerstone, his lynchpin. Everything they accomplished, they did as a team.*



*Vic was very generous with his friends; he was helpful to anyone he could determine was sincere and motivated to try falconry, any aspect of falconry. In spite of deteriorating health, Vic and Jan continued to produce some of the finest falconry birds available anywhere. In the last decade, their good friend, falconer, and highly successful breeder, Lance Christensen became a full partner in the project and many of the birds were moved to his facility. Vic was a great man, husband, father, and friend. He truly loved our sport and felt a deep, abiding, and increasingly rare need to give back to our community and the animals that had enriched his life. We will miss our friend; falconry will miss a champion. ~Ralph Rogers*