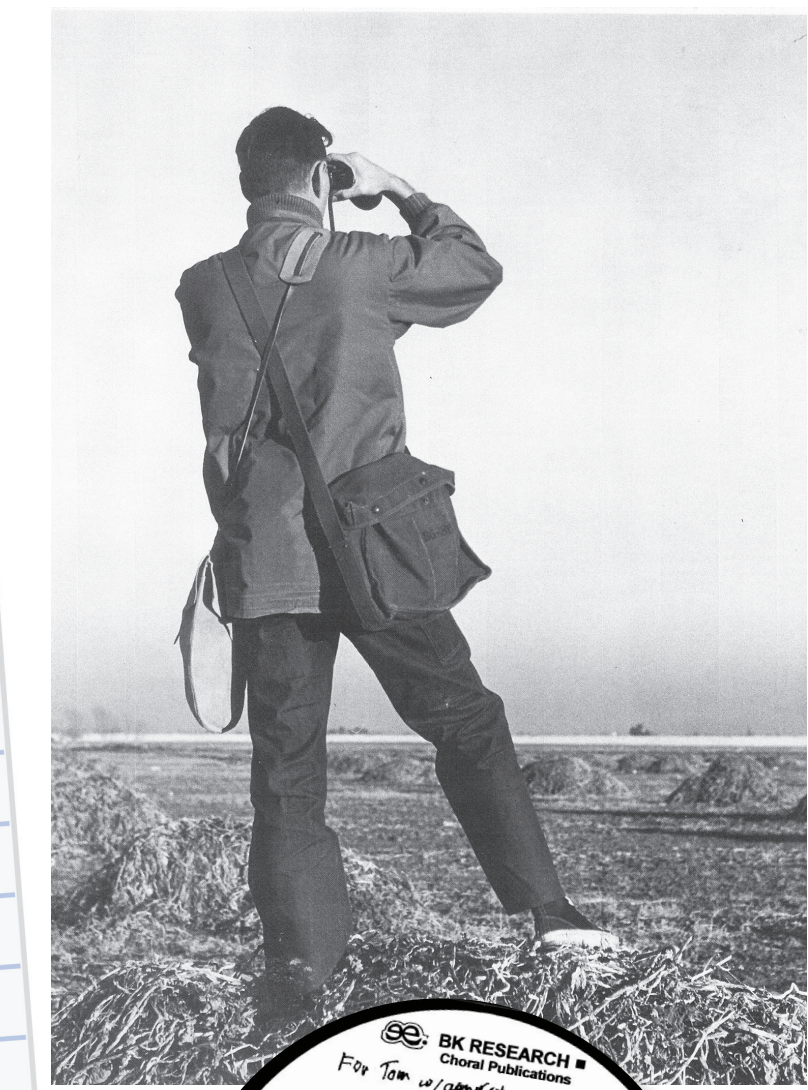




DONORS:
Tom and Renetta Cade, Jamey Eddy, Michael Arnold, Dennis and Rosalina Grisco



"Under the Original" – BK Spring 1992
Above label are the words written by Bob Klimes. The photo was taken by Malida Klimes during their return visit to Lompoc California in 1992. This cliff was the home of the two eyass anatum peregrines taken in the 1950s. Diana, the female, and later Massai, his tiercel. This location remained important to Bob for the remainder of his life. (Dan Fenske 2011)

March 24, 2008
Klimes Family
Marietta, Georgia

Dear Klimes Family:
My condolences at the recent passing of Mr. Klimes. It is ironic that I had recently been thinking about him only to find the obituary in the Los Angeles Times a few days later.

In June, 1958, I was a 6th grader at Carpenter Avenue School and was privileged to have Mr. Klimes as my teacher and orchestra conductor. I can't begin to tell you how much I enjoyed being in Mr. Klimes' class, the wonderful memories I have of him, and the impact he had on my life. I'll never forget the many hours we spent learning about birds of prey. He taught us the word "ornithology" (a big word for 6th graders) and the meaning of conservation which he taught us was "to use wisely." His enthusiasm for falconry, music, and learning spread to his students. Perhaps most memorable was the field trip. A few of the kids were invited to Mr. Klimes' house, which I believe was on Ostego Street. Massai and the kids got into the station wagon and we headed over to the Sepulva Dam Basin. Massai was released and quickly swooped down on an unsuspecting pigeon much to the delight of the boys.

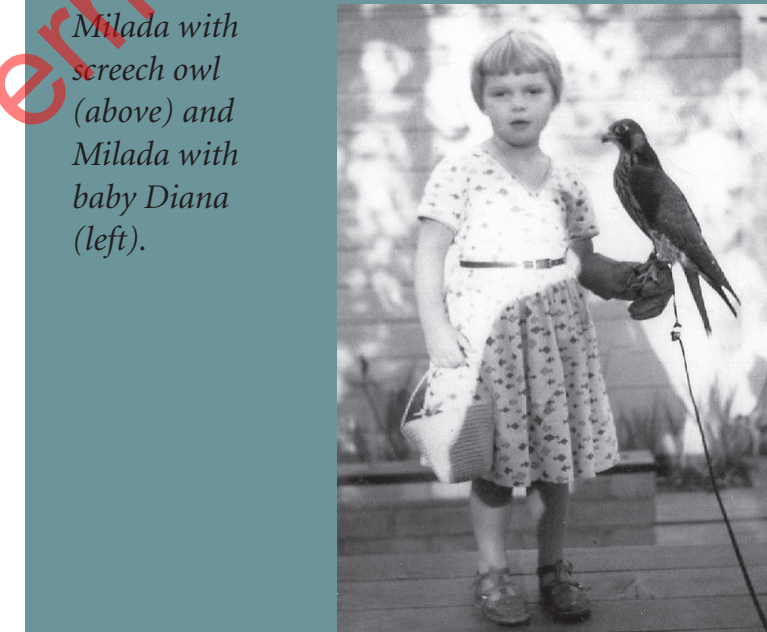
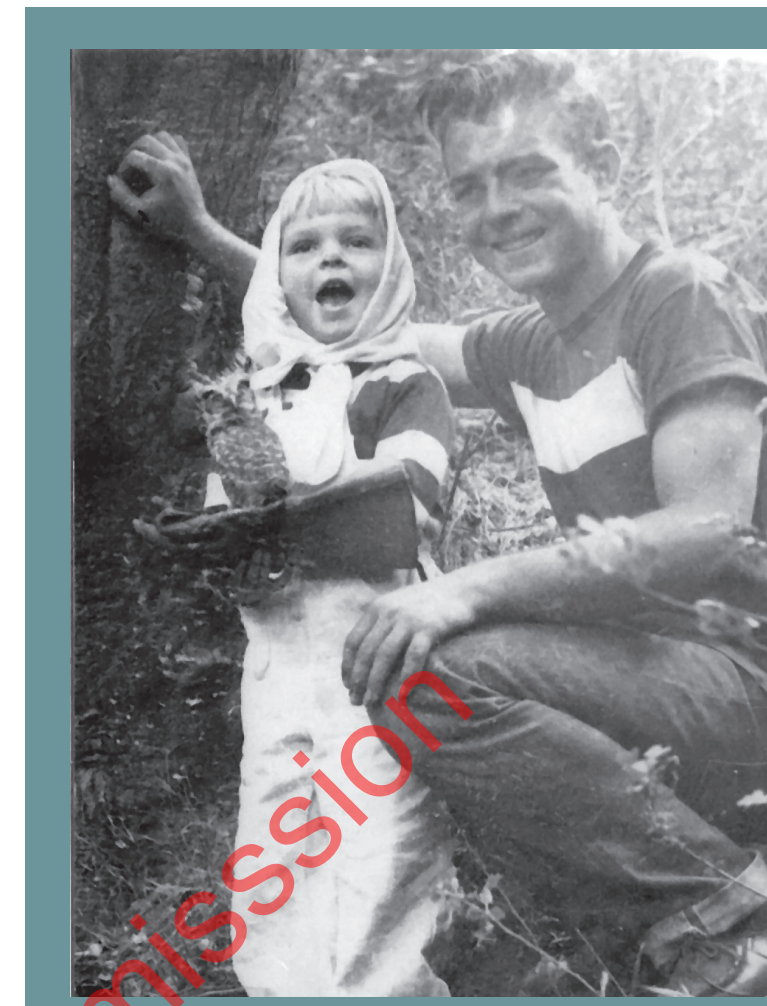
I also have many wonderful memories of the orchestra rehearsals and performances, the 6th grade "review," the class trip to Clear Creek Camp and many other events which I've recounted to my friends and family over the years. He even got me onto a local morning TV show. I truly feel Mr. Klimes helped shape me into what I am today.

I wish I could have personally thanked Mr. Klimes for all he gave me. I hope his memory is the blessing to all of you that it is to me.

With my deepest sympathies to you and thanks to Mr. Klimes,

Lewis Schlesinger

In addition to being a teacher, band director, Klimes was a *composer and songwriter*.



Left: Southern California Falconers
Top row (L to R): Jerry Grisco with haggard gos, Bob Klimes with Masai, Briane Grisco with Jack Merlin 'Nena', Bob Halfill with haggard gos, Bill Nash; Bottom row (all with Coopers): Jimmy Yester (who was the lead singer for the "Association"), Howard Haugh, Dave Weeks, and Tom Cade

Through My Eyes by Milada Klimes

My Daddy is a falconer. We have a pigeon coop. I go inside and look for eggs. Sometimes I get poop on me.

Daddy takes a pigeon when we go to Sepulveda Dam. I don't like it when he pulls out some feathers. But he says it's Okay.

Daddy throws the pigeon up in the air. Diana is so high I can't see her. Then she dives really really fast and knocks the pigeon down and eats it.

I go with my Daddy and we look for birds. One time we found a little owl. I like it my Daddy takes me with him.

One time my Mom and little Brother went to the dam with Me and Daddy. Diana got lost. Daddy was really sad. I miss Diana.

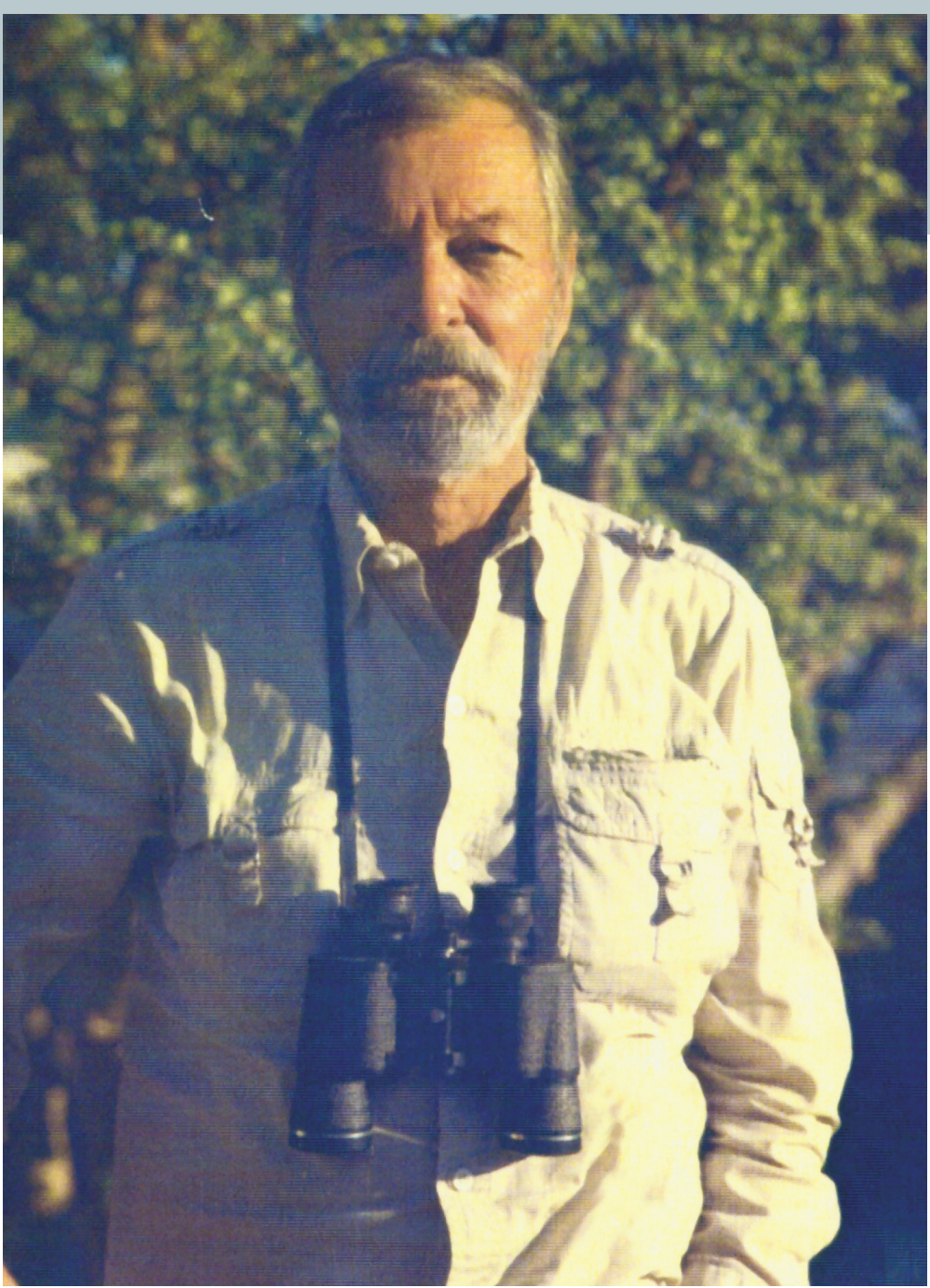
Then we got Massai. I was older. Diana was a girl. Massai was a boy, a tiercel peregrine falcon. He was with Dad all the time. Even when he was playing the piano writing music.

Now my family, and me and my brother's friends, went to the dam. While Dad was flying Massai, us kids made tunnels and rooms in the alfalfa fields and we'd get stuck in quick mud in the creek and caught crawdads we took home and Mom cooked them till their eyes popped out, and sometimes I'd step on glass. I leave my sneakers on now.

Massai was very beautiful. I was too little to know Diana was beautiful. I was too little to know Diana liked me. She'd let me get really close to her and she'd let me pet her breast, carefully, and I liked to stick my finger in the little hole. Daddy put my hand in his big glove and it went up my arm too. Diana would sit on it. Daddy must have really trusted me, and I trusted him.

I watched Massai a lot. He would swoop so fast. I worried he would smash into the ground. But he never did. I knew it was special to watch him. I liked watching my Dad too. I knew my Dad was special.

I saw other falcons and hawks and owls, too. Dad had a club. The Southern California Falconer's Association. Other falconers brought their birds to our house for the meetings. No other kids had falcons at their house and they didn't have a Dad who was a falconer.



the *Story* of Masai

In the years I was associated with the Southern California Falconers' Association and knew Bob Klimes (1953-1957), the members were aware of only one Peregrine eyrie that still produced young regularly every year. We called it the "Lompoc Eyrie" because it was located only a few miles south of that town on the south side of the Santa Ynez River valley along U.S. Highway 1. In this period, members of the club obtained four or five young falcons for training [A few were also taken by non-members.] The most famous was a tiercel that Bob trained and named "Masai."

Masai was taken in 1955 in a rather unusual way. When we arrived at the eyrie in late May, expecting the eyasses to be still flightless in the nest. Our party, consisting of Bob Klimes, his wife, Warren Trobaugh, Yvon Chiouard, one or two others, and I discovered that we had miscalculated the season. Two eyasses, a falcon and a tiercel, were already flying clumsily about the cliff, probably fledged for only a couple of days. At first we thought we would have to come back when the young were older and could be trapped with live bait. Then we decided to observe where the falcons would go to roost. At dusk both birds flew to a short ledge with a slight overhang midway down the cliff [100 feet below the top] and roosted almost shoulder to shoulder.

I decided to rappel down the cliff after full darkness and try to grab one of the birds before they flew. This trick, which I had never attempted before, was easier to contemplate than to do. To make a long story short, I managed to rope down to the ledge, landing a few feet away from the young, which immediately started hissing and rearing back against the ledge with their wings spread out in typical defensive posture. As I worked in closer, the female, which was nearer to me, flew out, but the tiercel froze in position. I was able to grab him by the legs in my left hand, while holding onto the rope with the other.

That was how Bob Klimes came to possess Masai. Bob and other club members flew him regularly for a number of years, mostly back of the Sepulveda Dam, constructed by the U. S. Corp of Engineers for flood control on the almost always dry Los Angeles River. A large flood containment area of some three square miles behind the dam provided the only undeveloped, largely open area remaining in the San Fernando Valley, where Klimes lived, with enough space to fly a falcon. Masai became expert at catching "feral pigeons" and mourning doves or an occasional duck or crow, often flying high out over the Santa Monica Mountains and then coming back over to deliver breath-taking stoops at flushed quarry.

Today the Sepulveda Dam containment area has been converted into a public recreation area with two golf courses, tennis courts, botanical gardens, and other civilized facilities, but still has about 250 acres of "wildlife habitat" for bird-watching. Only Cooper's Hawks can fly there now.

TOM J. CADE,
20 February 2012