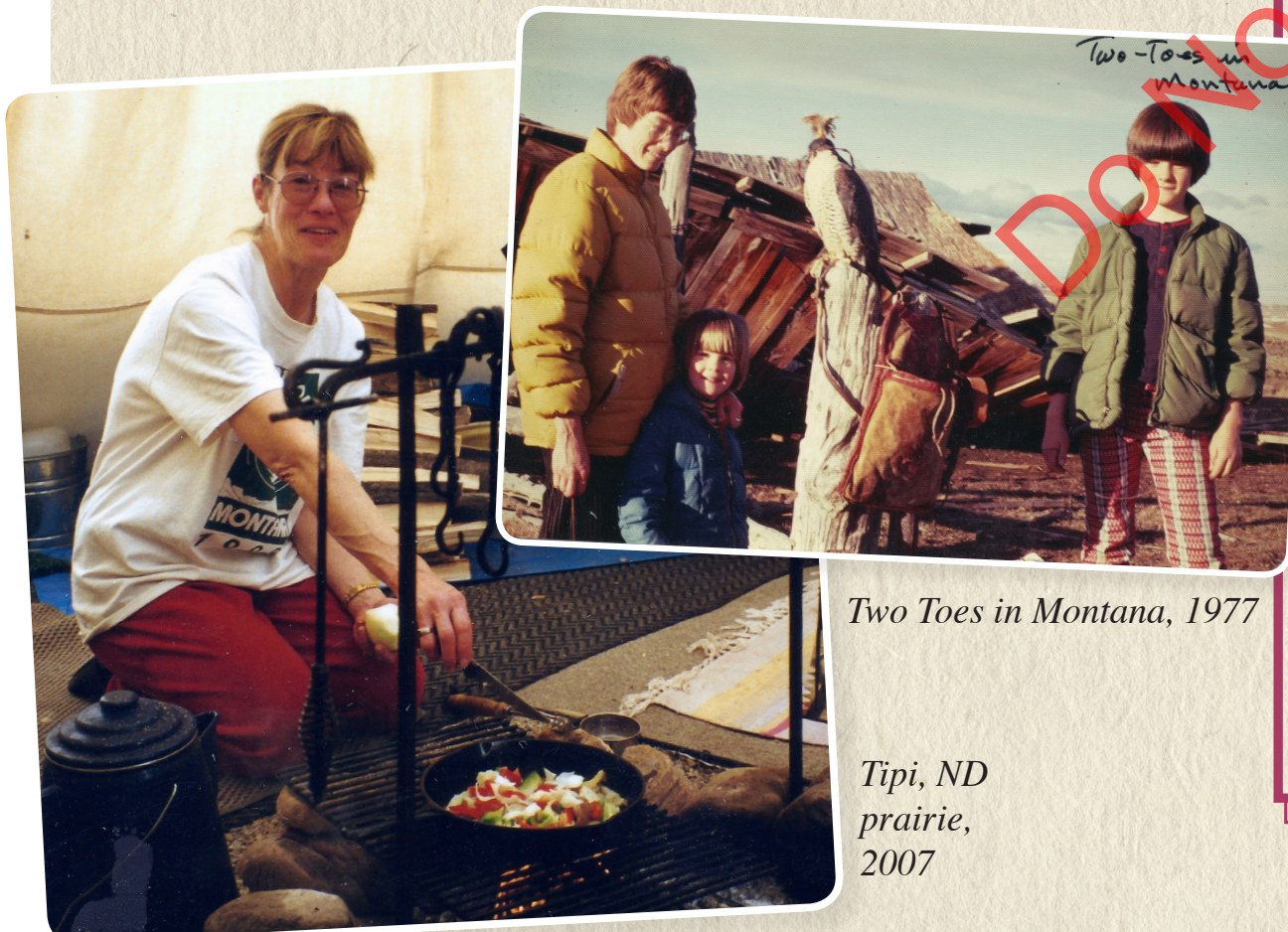


**Melissa (Missi)
Rogers
1946-2015**

DONORS: The Rogers Family, the Montana Falconers Association, David Eslicker, Larry and Cynthia Dickerson, Jim Frazier, Tom Coulson, Mike and Karen Yates, Brian and Susan Millsap, Anonymous Admirer, Bob Collins, Doug and Trish Pineo, Kent Carnie, Don and Joyce McInturff, Jim and Sheri Robison, Jonathan Wilde, Blair and Anna Anderson, Alan and Venice Beske, North American Falconers Association, Robert and Lisa Welle



Rogers family hacking Peregrines Red Rocks NWR, 1984



Two Toes in Montana, 1977

Tipi, ND prairie, 2007

Missi's Falconry Story

A lifetime well lived with Birds and Family

by Ralph Rogers

During a haircut in 1966, my



Missi and burrowing owl in 1968

barber asked if I was free for a blind date. I fell in love that night, once and for all. After a year, we were married and by then Missi knew exactly what she was in for. Our life included night forays into barns for pigeons or raising quail in the back bedrooms of old farmhouses, and casting, handling, and nurturing a variety of falcons. For almost 50 years, we did it all together. In 1976 we hauled everything we owned to Montana; we had no jobs, no place to live. The entire episode was fueled by our dream of a better place to raise kids, share love and confidence in each other. Our involvement with birds began to direct us, instead of the other way around. No matter how wild the undertaking, being with Missi made us feel safe, excited, confident and appreciated. This was her true gift.

From 1981 through 1999, summers were spent all over Montana at hack sites. Starting in 1988, the peregrines we released were bred in our back yard with Missi providing early hatch care. As Jim Enderson wrote in his book about the peregrine: "Ralph and Missi's son, Scott, and daughter, Andi, knew summertime meant a tent in the wilderness and the wailing of young falcons learning to care for themselves. Both children became biologists, she a specialist on releasing California condors in Arizona, and he working to restore

endangered fish in the Grand Canyon." Missi and I realized that just as young falcons at hack had to learn to solve problems and reach independence, so were our kids at hack learning the same things there in the wildness of Montana.

Taking a break from hack sites, in 1984, and using her best "tent mom" skills, Missi was the cook, doctor, psychologist, and ambulance driver for the crew that built the P-Fund facilities in Boise. Just like her relationship with falconry, she wasn't out actually driving the nails...her donation was to make sure everyone else could.

Missi was a NAFA officer from 1997 through 2004. She effectively co-chaired 6 NAFA meets, including three that were international. In our recent times she was certainly one of falconry's greatest ambassadors attending numerous IAF meetings and making lasting friendships all over the world. She will be missed from Argentina to Russia.

In 50 years she had gutted thousands of quail, spent thousands of hours minding breeding peregrines, stared at thousands of cliffs for wild peregrines, thrown thousands of rocks into ponds, or watched grouse flights disappear in the distance. She never had a falconry license but was supporting and critiquing falconry flights before most of today's falconers were born. Mainly, she lifted us up when we took ourselves too seriously. Her partnership with falconry was a huge part of who she was and she gave massively to this art and the conservation of the resources we use. Paraphrased from Jim Enderson's book: "The Rogers knew that the falcon had given them and their children opportunities, a sense of purpose, and now feeling of success in the out-of-doors they simply could not find anywhere else." I love you Missi.



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Remembering Melissa

By Sue Cecchini

Melissa Rogers was simply a force to be reckoned with! She had a commanding, energetic presence that drew people to her, and her smile, laughter and zest for life were both contagious and unparalleled. Melissa was truly a bright and shining light and the world will be darker without her.

Melissa had a tremendous love for her family, teaching, and lucky for us, falconry, and she easily combined these passions into one magnificent life. Ralph brought Melissa into the world of falconry, and she jumped in with both feet to make her mark on the falconry community. It's difficult to think of Ralph without immediately thinking of Melissa; they were one of those lifelong, soulmate couples who were always there for each other, and Melissa did so much to support Ralph, falconry, NAFA and the IAF. But she was, also, a very proud mother and gammi who passionately shared stories of Scott and Andi over the years and who proudly showed off pictures of her precious grandchildren.

Melissa took charge of family activities at many NAFA Meets, with great enthusiasm and a smile on her face, even if it were the third time visiting the same attraction, and if we were at the interactive museum in Amarillo, she would plop on the floor to play with the kids - she loved being with the kids. Melissa taught school for decades in Winifred, Montana, but she didn't just teach, she learned. I think Melissa took away from her students just as much as she gave them, which is saying a lot. During many falconry Meets over the years, one would find Melissa sitting in the lobby reading the latest trending "young adult" book, not because it was on her top 10 list, but because she wanted to understand her students just a little bit better by reading what they were reading. Melissa was one of those teachers that you hold in your heart forever. And thankfully for everyone in Melissa's life, it is safe to say that she viewed the world with the curiosity and enthusiasm of a young child - the littlest things could get her so excited. During an IAF meeting in Holland, Melissa tasted the rainbow sour candy strips that are popular with kids and she became almost giddy because she had never had them before.

Melissa saw the world as a beautiful, fun and exciting place, and in her memory, hear her message –

*Love and hug your family every day;
even if they leave dead animals in the sink
Fully and completely enjoy the little things in life
Laugh and fill an entire room with your infectious joy
Teach a child to sing and love it, even if they can't carry a tune
Learn something new today and again tomorrow
Be patient and kind, work hard and leave your mark on this
world.*

Melissa surely did!

To Melissa - the wonderful woman who reminded us that we don't just need STEM education, we need STEAM. We need art in our world to keep it beautiful! And boy did she make this world a beautiful place. Thank you for always making us laugh and smile and for sharing your love of life.

*Love you for always,
Amelia Cecchini*

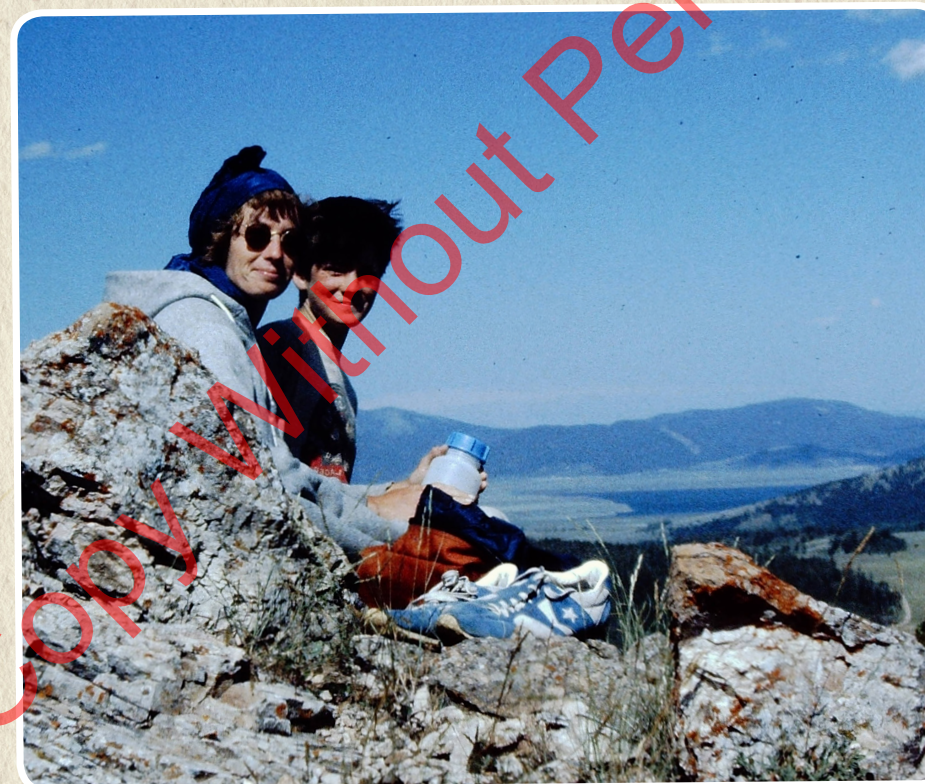
There were literally hundreds of these from past students. Sheila summed Missi (Mrs. Rogers) up most succinctly.

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“Mrs. Rogers had so much love in her, the BEST laugh ever, a ridiculous amount of energy, and an amazing ability to love so many people and in turn be loved by so many. She was such a special person and the two of you were a couple that I always looked up to. You both still looked in each others eyes as if it was still young love...or even better. Her smile, laugh, and even the sound of her ring tapping on the piano bench to the beat of the music will never leave our hearts and minds. How lucky we are to have had such a wonderful person such as she in our lives. -Sheila (Donsbach) Tesarek

“This tragedy caused me once again to examine the life of Mrs. Rogers. She knew the blessed gift of life was...well, a blessing! That's why she lived each day as an adventure. She was a teacher...but not just music, English or basic grade school. No. She was a teacher of LIFE. Even in her death, she teaches me one final lesson: EMBRACE your life, Mary. GO! Have an adventure! Love with all your heart. Laugh loudly. Dance in front of people (not just when no one is watching). Sing loud - even if you're off key! Thank you Mrs. Rogers...again I say THANK YOU. You have given me my LIFE RESOLUTION”.

-Mary Heller: Another ex-student



*Top: Melissa and her son Scott Peregrine hack in Montana.
Bottom: Ralph and Melissa with daughter Andi, taking young from aggressive falcon Winifred in Montana, 1987*