



DONORS:

Colleen Hutson, Amy Yates, Mike and Karen Yates, Jim Ince, Donna Leonard, William Satterfield, Steve Chitty, An anonymous friend, John Harrell, Bruce and Evelyn Haak, S. Kent Carnie, Bill Barbour, David Jamieson, Geoffrey Nye, Bob Collins, North American Falconers Association

Remembering Brian and Joanne McDonald

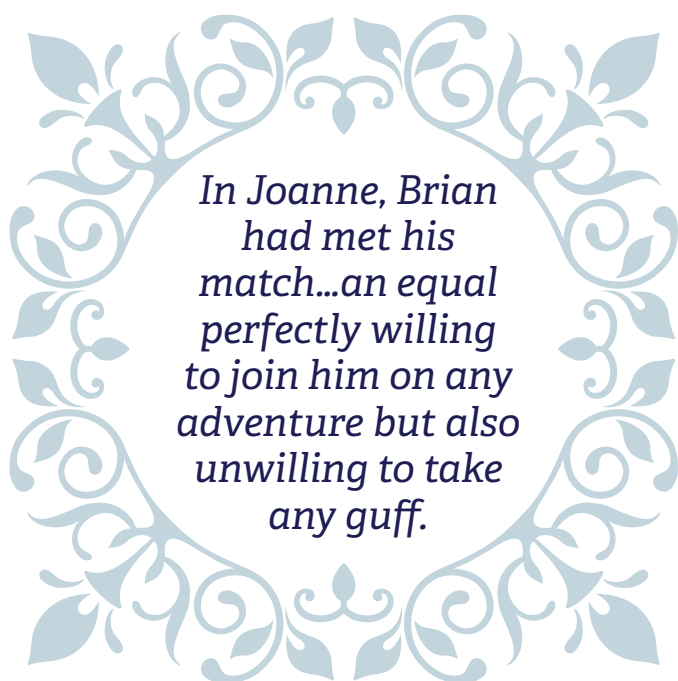
by Mike Yates

Born in Washington, DC, Brian and younger cousin Steve Gatti roamed the woods together seeking a direction for that compulsion. It came when Steve discovered falconry through a book and infected Brian; the boys never looked back. A screech owl grabbed by hand was traded for two captive kestrels at the Washington Zoo. By 1944 they had learned of Assateague Island and at 17 and 15 years of age boarded a bus that would take them to Ocean City, Maryland. Hitching a ride across the inlet with a Coast Guard launch, they walked for miles down the beach and managed to trap two passage tundra peregrines using pigeons and a headset. It was the beginning of a lifelong love of and skill at peregrine trapping for Brian.

After a hitch in the Army post-WWII, Brian hit the beach each fall for 1-2 weeks. He honed his skills and developed new and effective techniques. His drive and analytical nature, along with the initial noose jackets (conceived with Halter Cunningham and built by Brian) made him arguably the most successful beach trapper of the falconry era at Assateague. He and Cunningham were featured in a classic Life Magazine article on November 17, 1952. Staying in derelict buildings on the island, he kept few birds for falconry and banded hundreds of others. In 1958 the number of trapping parties at Assateague prompted a move to the False Cape beach of Virginia/North Carolina, where his obsession continued through 1970.

In the late 1940s and early 1950s Brian visited some of the last Eastern Anatum peregrine eyries in Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia and Pennsylvania, taking a 50-ounce female from one. Brian learned to make the finest classic Dutch hoods and some nicely tooled Indian ones, selling them and other falconry equipment to his peers. He traveled to Ungava Bay seeking gyrfalcons, and to Duluth and the Gaspé

Peninsula for goshawks. He flew peregrines at game in the Virginia and Maryland countryside and at meets elsewhere. Success was limited due to career demands and the very nature of the countryside. Much more success ensued with goshawks, which became his true game-hawking calling. Brian hunted cottontails relentlessly, and was a founding member of the Potomac Falconers Association. An early NAFA member, he made lifelong friends at meets, all of whom embraced the warmth, wit and intelligence of this extraordinary man. In 1970 his principles prompted him to walk away from the active practice of falconry rather than submit to conducting it under federal government oversight. Brian was a police officer, game warden, materials tester, museum conservator, gunsmith, cabinetmaker and provocateur.



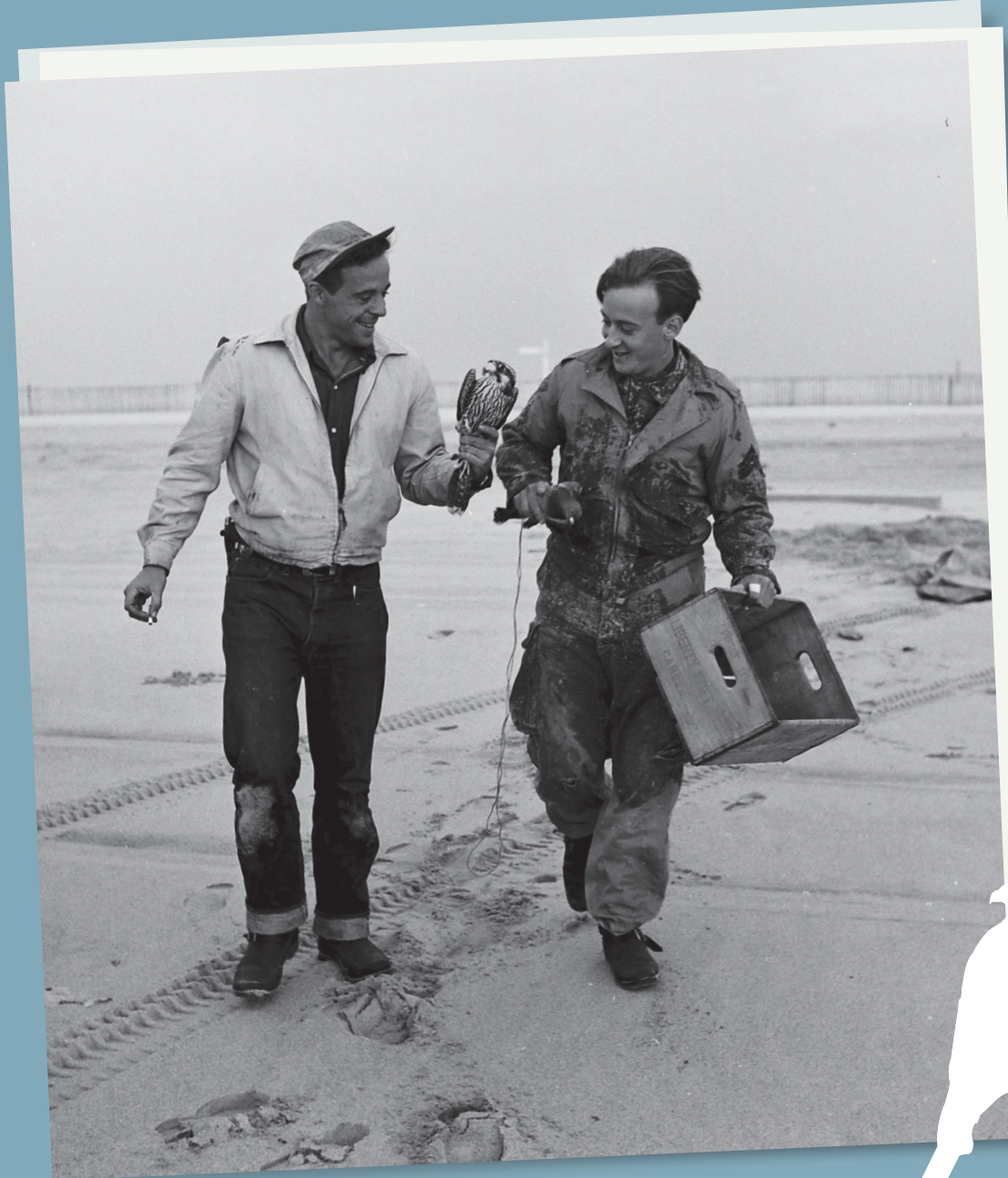
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Joanne met Brian as a nursing student on Maryland's Eastern Shore. In Joanne, Brian had met his match...an equal perfectly willing to join him on any adventure but also unwilling to take any guff. Brian and Joanne trapped peregrines together at Assateague in 1957 and 1958, and at False Cape in 1958 and later years. When Brian and Doug Mollison looked in vain for remnant Eastern Anatum peregrines in 1959-60, Joanne roped into the High Rock eyrie. She free

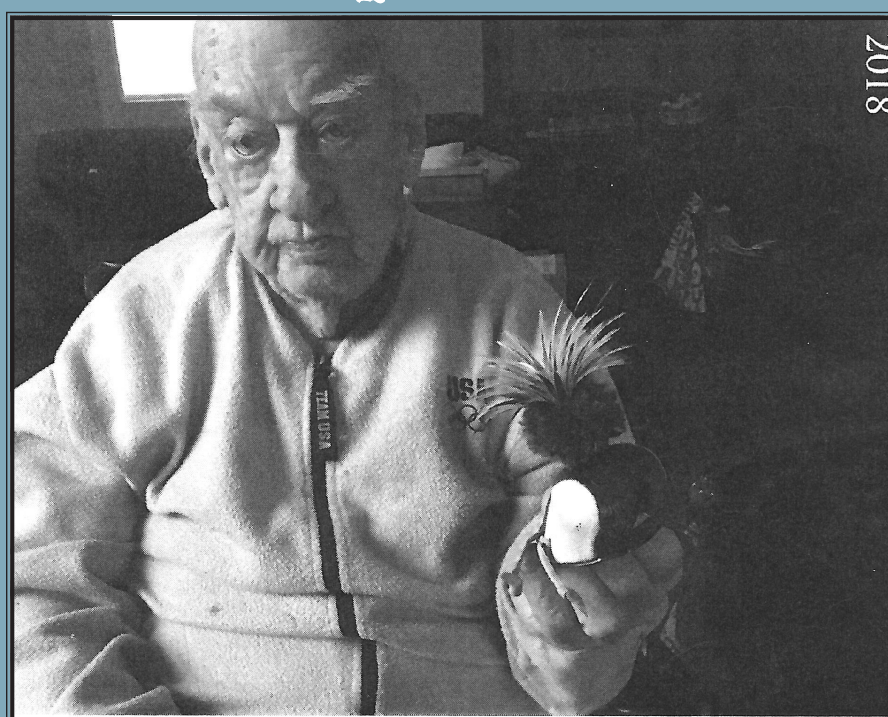
climbed into Jump Mountain, emerging with a grin and an old primary in her teeth. Helping initially to man and train Brian's falcons, she later flew birds of her own. These included a kestrel, an Eleonora's, a red-tail and a goshawk.

The couple attended early NAFA meets; Joanne caught rabbits with her gos at the Wilmington meet in 1967 and soon thereafter left active falconry. She was a nursing home administrator, poet, artist, singer and musician who will always be remembered for her wit and kindness. She and Brian loved one another and children Sean and Colleen fiercely until her untimely passing in 2001.





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Joining his wife *Joanne McDonald*.

Survived by children *Sean McDonald*
and *Colleen Hutson*...

grandchildren *Brandy McDonald-Nestor*, *Brooke Camden*, *Brian Hutson* and *Megan Hutson*...

and great grandchildren *Sherry Nestor*,
Luke Camden, *Hunter Nestor*, *Logan Camden*
and *Eleanor Ware*.

