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Michael Roper, Tami Lamp, Jim Nelson, Clifford and Janna Kellogg, Andrew and Emily Keresy, Washington Falconer's Association, Debra Taylor

Remembering Russ Taylor • by Brian E. Sullivan •

It was sad to not have known Russ again as I had heard he was drawn back into falconry. For a long time Russ took up other interests and I lost touch with him. This is a reminder to all of us aging falconers that if you really want to practice falconry, do not wait too long to make some of your plans come true as we are limited on how many seasons we have left.

Clifford Kellogg and I would take off from Seattle and go “over the hill” as we called it back then, to visit Russ. We visited him many times to go hawking near Selah, Washington. Russ did not join us much in the field but we would return and talk hours into the night about falconry. At that time, Clifford and I were in a campaign to re-establish a hawking club in Washington State. The Northwest Falconers Association was defunct and the Rainier Hawking Club had all but ceased to exist. Russ was very supportive. I think the first meet was held at Russ’s house. He opened his doors and hospitality to all falconers. The small gathering was a success and was one of the catalysts for starting the Washington Falconers Association.

As a young man and falconer, I was always encouraged by Russ and gleaned as much information as possible about his knowledge on Olympic Goshawk nests. Finally, after I spent many hours in the field looking for the nests and not finding them, Russ agreed to ride with me for a day to show me three old nests. I was very excited to have him with me as I was getting very discouraged. It was a day to remember as he took me into the forest and pointed

out the old nest trees. That was just what the doctor ordered!

The next trip I took with Russ was what I call “by the seat of your pants”. I had found several Sharpshin nest sites up out of Teanaway. Russ asked if I would take him to a nest so he could take a female. I was thrilled to take him to one of my nest sites, as he was always generous with me and others. He made the plans to come and pick me up in a small plane, as he wanted to build hours as a pilot. I suggested the Cedar Hill Airstrip near Maple Valley as this was one of my favorite hang outs with my older brothers who were pilots. I arrived early and was waiting for him to arrive near the grass/gravel strip. What I did not know was the low amount of hours he had and that he had never landed on an airstrip that short or with that type of surface! I spotted him as he made try after try to land. The plane was a 172 tricycle-gear Cessna. He finally set it down, with some large bounces, and stopped before running out of runway. When I approached I could see he was shaking and noticed he was covered in sweat. I told him he did a great job landing and then went on to tell him I watched ground loop here in the past! Take off was much better and we landed on the paved strip in CleElum. We were met by his wife who drove us to the nests. We took the sharpie and flew back for the airstrip. After a dozen times around the airport he went for it! Again he made an OK landing, just like the first time, and I told him thanks for the great time as I was now also covered in sweat and shaking!

He was a true friend and someone many of us looked up to and admired.



Ode to Russell

by Debbie Taylor

**I wish I could sing today for you my dear
But emotions run high now that's very clear
The pain and the hurt will someday go away
When we all meet in Heaven,
we'll all be there someday.
For now, Love, I now you are safe and sound
With God and His Angels all around.
I'll remember dear Russell
all the good times we had
And never look back on anything bad.
Oh Lovey, we danced, we sang and we played
We always thought there'd be another day
I shall cherish your memory
Keep my songs bright
You're safe now dear Husband
You have gone to the light
So fly like a falcon
And run like the deer
Swim with the fish
In my heart you'll be near
Be at peace my dear Husband
You had such a full life
With all of my love,
Debbie your wife**





Above: Russ with Goshawk in 1970.

RUSSELL K. TAYLOR; THOUGHTS BY CLIFF KELLOGG, AS GLEANED FROM WRITINGS BY CHARLENE DOWNS AND DEBBIE TAYLOR, AND PERSONAL EXPERIENCE.

Russell K. Taylor was born in Honolulu, Hawaii on March 6, 1942 to Lloyd K. and Rose (Whang) Taylor. Like many falconers in Russ's generation, he was interested in environmental sciences. He received his Environmental Engineering degree from Purdue University. He went on to a 27 year career with the Washington State Department of Ecology. Russ became a falconer in the 1960's and was instrumental in the state of Washington's adoption of the first federal falconry regulations. Russell served one term as North Pacific NAFA Director, in 1974 and 1975. He had fond memories of hawking rabbits with his goshawks on San Juan Island. Among his several falconry articles, his article on hawking San Juan rabbits appears in the December, 1971 Hawk Chalk. His other interests included scuba diving, archery, big game hunting, and all kinds of fishing.

For me and my close falconry friends, Russ Taylor was a mentor. Brian Sullivan and I made many trips to the Taylor residence in Selah, WA, for hawking excursions. Some of my fondest memories were of hawking in the area, sitting at the kitchen table with Russ, making hoods and discussing falconry techniques and politics. We learned much from Russ over the years and became close with the family. In 1978, Russ and Charlene held a falconry meet at their residence in Selah, WA. The NAFA President and multiple NAFA directors attended. Russ was influential in the formation of the current Washington Falconers Association as this meet was the spark that started the current club.

As the years passed, we lost touch with each other, but after his diagnosis with cancer, he was able to visit our home with our long time friend, Steve Seibert. It was refreshing to see that Russ had not lost his interest in falconry and imparting his knowledge to others.

Russell lost his brave battle with cancer on March 26, 2010. His impact on those around him cannot be measured.



Above: Russ with Steven and Brennan

