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In Memoriam: Richard S. Peterson
June 20, 1925 — June 10, 2004

—by Clifford S. Kellogg

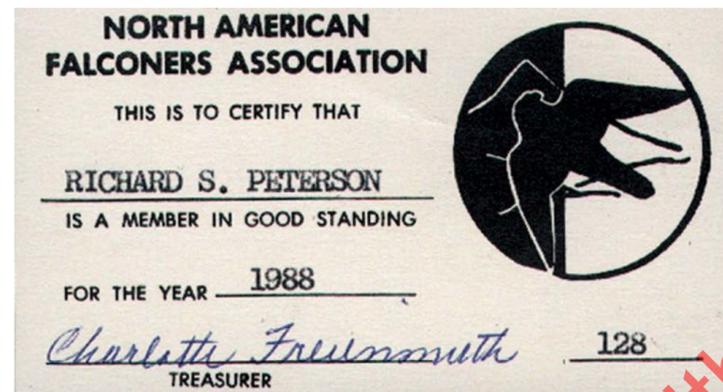
It is with sadness that I report the passing of one of falconry's finest, Mr. Richard S. Peterson, of Issaquah, Washington.

Many of Mr. Peterson's friends referred to him as "Pete", and I shall hereafter do likewise. Pete was born on June 20, 1925, in Linesville, Pennsylvania. He became interested in airplanes and flight at the early age of 7, through a cousin who gave him a model airplane. Shortly thereafter, Pete's father took him and his brother to an air show, where the boys were treated to an airplane ride. It was at this time that he made his decision; he was going to learn to fly! It was Pete's passion for flight that eventually led him to falconry.

As the years passed, Pete graduated from high school and entered college at Tri-State University in Indiana, where he graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Aeronautical Engineering. In 1950, he joined the Boeing Company, as a flight test engineer. He worked there for the next 32 years, retiring in 1983 as a senior flight test engineer.

Pete's falconry began about 1958, after coming across an article by Frank and John Craighead. He was one of the original NAFA members, having attended the first Conclave at Hal Webster's place near Denver in 1961, and served as Pacific Director for NAFA during 1966 and 1967. Pete was a devoted NAFA member until his recent passing. He was also a longtime honorary member of the Washington Falconers Association.

In addition to his ardent support of falconry, Pete was a strong supporter of the Raptor Research Foundation, and was a Washington State



University benefactor, supporting the raptor program there. He truly cared about falconers and raptors, and understood well the need for political involvement and scientific research.

On a personal note, I had the privilege of making Pete's acquaintance in the early 1970s. Michael Neukirchen made the introduction, which turned in to a friendship of over 30 years. Over those years, Pete became my mentor, as he did for a number of aspiring falconers. We spent many evenings walking about the town (Issaquah, Washington) with Michael's and my redtails, talking about anything from hawking to culinary exploits to college and it's challenges, and of course, falconry politics. Pete was the single biggest influence on me in this regard.

I learned many things from Pete over the years. One of the most significant is that the people of falconry are the most important thing, more so than the birds themselves. Certainly, no bird has given me the sorts of memories that my relationship with Pete has. Here on this earth, we have lost one of falconry's finest gentlemen. Our loss is Heaven's gain, and I look forward to seeing Pete again in those most excellent hawking fields!



Photo by Clifford Kellogg

Photo by Bill Girden



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