

RAPTORS OF THE ROCKIES

P.O. BOX 250, FLORENCE, MONTANA

Education Programs since 1988

Raptor Round-Up



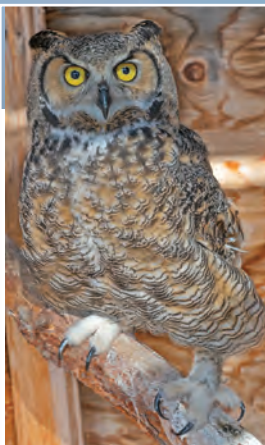
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NUMBER **58**, MARCH 2020

“Too many wings...”

This was a comment by our pal Dan Varland when he saw this photo of Sibley catching a duck. It was early in the hunting season, her 16th and she grabbed this hen mallard coming out of a slough thanks to flushing by the dogs. This is teamwork with me as a spectator. Sib and hasn't lost it, albeit slowing way down on the ducks and pheasants, but flying around for fun with some half-hearted chases when there is game. I always say, the greatest pleasure in the world is watching falcons in their atmospheric element, and I have been so privileged - not only flying Sib, but in observing wild Peregrines with their aerobatics, now making their back to our state after the long winter. It's The GOOD season.



Missoula Clay Studio

First in November, we spent the afternoon with clay creators and lots of enjoyment, blizzard and all. Starting out with a big PowerPoint showing our Raptors program and art over the ages, we had models Sibley, Simon and Owen, the stars for three hours and perfect. Lots of attractive owls were fashioned in clay, a few falcons, and they will all get fired, return for glazing. We'll be back! I even took home some clay of my own.



No, you didn't miss a newsletter in there somewhere. This is my first since last July, a few catastrophes and difficulties to deal with in 2019, so instead I sent out Season's Greetings cards to our faithful Raptor Backers. Read about the tough (and great) year in Raptor Round-Up 58, but as a wrap-up, totals

52 Programs, audience numbers **1872** in 2019

Programs now- **1771** TOTAL

Audience **135,564** children and adults

Kate Davis photos ©



The Little Jake Story, page 5

MISSION STATEMENT

Raptors of the Rockies is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) raptor education project located in Western Montana. Four Federal and State Permits are required. Since 1988, our mission has been:

- * To educate schools and the public through the use of live birds - the falcons, hawks, eagles and owls used in raptor education and wildlife art programs;
- * To provide a lifetime of quality care to permanently disabled birds of prey and falconry birds;
- * To instill a sense of respect and admiration for these skilled hunters and to promote wildlife conservation and habitat preservation for our wild bird populations;
- * To encourage everyone to go outdoors.

Thirty years apart, and totally different printmaking techniques. U of M Art Professor Don Bunse instructed me back in the eighties - images on metal plates with grounds, etched with nitric acid, solvents, *danger*. Now Bev Glueckert turned me on to drypoint - images scratched on to plastic plates, water-based inks, background colors rolled on with brayers, wash them in the sink! For the Peregrine, I may have invented a new way to make the textures by hammering different grades of sandpaper into the plastic. Then paint each in the edition of 8 with gouache and Arteza brush pens and *VOILA!* Just that simple.



"A Clockwork Owl" zinc plate etching 1989



"Peregrine Cliff" drypoint etching 2019

We Lose Our Pal, Ansel

Our beloved falcon Ansel died in December despite some heroics from Dr. Scott Bovard at Missoula Veterinary. He quit eating a few days prior and I brought him indoors on a heating pad and in a kennel. A few bright moments, but his system finally shut down, 15 years old. We sure loved him and he always made me and everyone smile and laugh, a very cheerful member of the our family.

Ansel joined the team in 2004 and was a program professional from the start. This falcon is a hybrid from a male black Gyrfalcon and female Peale's Peregrine, and unfortunately had a vision problem in his right eye so could never judge distance, a birth defect. These birds are prized by falconers because they often display the best qualities of each species, Gyr and Peregrine.

Our friend Kenny Sterner in Sheridan, Wyoming offered us the three-week -old bird back then to use for education programs, and off we were on a road trip, me and my Mom. On the way back Mom came up with the name Ansel because he had black feathers growing in with the downy whites. Ansel Adams the photographer was a hero to my Dad, who always had a darkroom in the basement when I was growing up. Ansel is so famous for his gorgeous black and white images, famously of Yosemite National Park, our family's favorite.

Ansel's debut was on public radio, and he is the star of a video made during the International Wildlife Film Festival Young Filmmakers Workshop. He was always very playful and had a tennis ball and knotted ropes that he carried around clenched in one falcon foot. Riding to programs in a kennel, and would step out when the door was opened and hopped up on a perch to astonish the audience. He once hopped across the whole floor at a preschool amid shrieks of kids, a pro.

As an adult bird, Ansel would begin his breeding season "echupping" or sounding off that he wanted to nest. This caused his next-door neighbor Sibley to lay eggs and one spring she laid 15 infertile ones. Bet she misses him too, maybe as much as we do.



Kate Davis Photo ©





We are Up to 100 greeting card images now, thanks to **Pyramid Printing**, available from us and Rockin' Rudy's and Good Food Store



Sonora the Aplomado Falcon surveys her domain, atop the open bookcase door. Every morning she dines on nice quail leg on the block perch, then spends an hour or two on this perch or on that house plant in the background. A simple piece of newspaper underneath each and she's a perfect housemate. Six years now, a gift from The Peregrine Fund.

Speaking of Taxidermy...



I recently told a friend that I had been a taxidermist for 20 years, and she asked, "What's the craziest thing you ever stuffed?" Here it is - a rooster for a fly-tying hackle business. I dyed the skin in five different colors then mounted it, used at trade shows by Hugh Spencer. He claimed that he raised these special chickens, with a wink! And even had some believers...

I worked at Bitterroot Taxidermy in Missoula for a dozen years, Wayne Lundberg my mentor. I was hired because I told him I could sew bear rugs, so went to a sewing machine shop for a crash course. It was immediately apparent that I had exaggerated my skills, so moved on to skinning and mounting birds, bears and small mammals. Thanks, Wayne, dear friend! Before that I had begged Dale Manning, Custom Birdworks for a job. Sorry, Kate. And he's been on our Board of Directors for ten years, awarded Best Bird Taxidermist In the World twice! Jennifer Manning is on the Board as well, and an owl named Owen for their son. Mucho love.



✦ Upcoming Public Raptor Programs: *UPDATES ON THE WEB SITE*

Saturday, March 28 *Montana State Taxidermy Competition and Exhibition* In Missoula this year at the Hilton Garden Inn on North Reserve Street, all weekend. In my former life I was a taxidermist, and did Raptors programs once a week or so. This will be big fun. Saturday at 11-noon. **CANCELLED**

Saturday, May 16 *Lolo Wildlife Day at Travelers Rest State Park* Raptors of the Rockies on at 1 pm... then Jamie Jonkel of Montana of Fish, Wildlife & Parks discussing Grizzly Bears, COOL!

Saturday, June 6 *Ninemile Ranger Station: Program for the public at 1:00 pm.*

Week of June 11-15 *Raptors And Art, Missoula Art Museum:* Kids! Our annual week of drawing live birds for two days, then paper mâché sculptures for the next two days, finishing with printmaking on Friday. Me and Bev Glueckert each day, starting at 10 am 'till noon at the museum. Sign up soon as this class is almost filled up.

Saturday, July 25 *Bannack State Park and Ghost Town:* Our ump-teenth visit to our favorite park, nestled in the Big Hole Valley near Dillon (sort of). Free Raptors of the Rockies program at 2 pm, and we won't be late this time...HA!

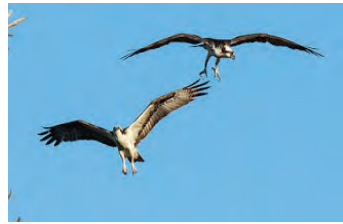
SUNDAY, AUGUST 11, 2019

Osprey Battles

We've been watching some amazing battles between two adult Ospreys from the beach, last night and still this morning. A third Osprey came in for a scrap as well. I even witnessed a Red-tail attack on an Osprey yesterday. I have never seen anything like this, ever.



Kate Davis photo ©



THURSDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2019

Red-tail and Prey

Look at what this Red-tail stooped on, twice! She pulled up both times way over the cat, who didn't freak out at all and just meandered back to the house through the grass. HA!



Kate Davis ©

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 26, 2019

Sussex School Assembly

Yesterday we were delighted to present a big PowerPoint and three birds to the kids at Sussex. This was at the invitation of our buddy Kim Peterson, 1st-2nd grade and she shares her teaching duties with a man that saw a Raptors program when he was a kid - at Sussex School, probably in that very same room. Pretty cool and thanks Sibley, iPod and Jillian, pros.



MONDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 2019

Doug Fir Firewood Galore

Thanks to pal Pat Johnson, we are well on the way to stocking up and filling the wood shed. Splitting and stacking next!



MONDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 2019

HOME From the Conference

Raptor Research Foundation Conference in Fort Collins, Colorado. Home safe and sound after a 4 hour workshop Wednesday on Raptor Photography with Nick Dunlop and Rob Palmer.



Now we work on our New! and Revised! *Falcons of North America* book. Plus Michelle and Nick Dunlop with Dan Varland at the RRF Conference.



MONDAY, AUGUST 26, 2019

Kettlehouse Taproom Bonner ROCKS!

Thanks friends at the Kettlehouse, Tim O'Leary for allowing us to host our Raptor Backer Appreciation Party 2019 on Saturday! A wonderful event in the most beautiful of settings. We had a great turnout for our "first ever" and hope to make it a "First Annual." The PowerPoint was perfect, birds on their best behavior - two Peregrines, Little Jake and Sibley and two owls, Simon and Owen. We can't begin to thank you enough for your hospitality, Kettlehouse! Check it out, by the Amphitheater on the beautiful Blackfoot.



Kettlehouse Taproom, Bonner



Carly Schotters photo



Ginny DeNeve photo ©

The Little Jake Story

Little Jake came to us from a breeder at 19 days of age, Sibley's sort-of cousin, and intended to be a hunting female; instead turned out to be a male - blood work came back from the lab after we had him several days. Oh well. I never have flown a male and perhaps he could catch these darned California Quail all over the place. Thanks Jennifer Manning for the ride to pick him up, and he was raised in a playpen inside and one outside.

He is named for our pal Jake Snowden, unveiled at his 8th birthday party for family and friends here in Florence. Big Jake met our birds here two years ago when father Andy brought over some bear meat to feed the eagles, and our young friend was hooked on zoology and specifically Peregrines.

Little Jake is 3/4 Peale's Peregrine and 1/4 *anatum* or Continental. His mom's mom was Sibley's mom (got it?) I have imprinted six birds over the years, falcons and one owl. This guy was sure friendly and quiet, but had very little interest in food. I hand fed Jake all growing up, very strange and I found it impossible to train him for falconry. He then developed foot problems Thast I treated with a homeopathic Emu Oil and Meadowsweet Herbs Killer Salve (!) mixture. One foot healed but the other had a large scab on the bottom. It didn't seem to bother him but a few specialists suggest we put him down. **NO.**



Above: Jenny Manning at the wheel, and Jake Snowden meets Little Jake on his eighth birthday.

Right: A collage of Jake, growing up becoming a gorgeous Peregrine. This sequence will be featured in the new *Falcons* book.

Below: Montana Public Radio, Pea Green Boat appearance with host Annie Garde. Alissa and Andy Snowden, with sons Luke and Jake, with Little Jake on the glove. What an experience for all of us!

Below right: Jake on a perch at my Mom's house. Yes, she has a mounted Mountain Lion of her piano. Of course!

Far right: Kit Lacy meets little Jake in the hotel parking lot, sad to lose him but excited and had to happen.



Kate Davis photos ©



Fast forward several months and Jake has joined Cascades Raptor Center in Eugene, Oregon. With his health issues Bird Curator Kit Lacy and staff will care for him, with a hospital and veterinarian on site. We met up in Spokane, Washington on February 17th, coincidentally the most terrifying drive of a lifetime in a blizzard. Jake was at his new home in Oregon at dark. Kit reports that he smacked that bad foot, the scab fell off, and no surgery needed. I had a feeling that would happen. They are treating that foot and keeping us posted. We will miss him, but delighted for his new digs, and spoiled rotten I'm sure. He deserves it.



facebook post!

 **Kate Davis**
March 10 at 4:10 PM · 🌐

I loved when a 6th grader just asked me at an assembly, "What IS your job?" Well, butchered a bear for the eagles last night, today fed and watered the birds, flew the falcon (here), one tour, wrote a grant, answered emails, updated the Blog, worked on the new "Falcons of North America" book, enclosure maintenance repair...And it's just 4 pm. Might have to head to the river with the dogs and camera. What a great job it is!



Kate Davis photo ©



Sonny the Bald Eagle Surgery

Our hero, Dr. Scott Bovard at Missoula Veterinary performed the removal of a huge growth at the tip of our Bald Eagle's wing in September. Sonny joined us as an adult bird eight years ago, missing that wingtip somehow and scavenging on foot. He must have banged it in the 40 foot enclosure and had a infected ball as big as a lemon. Dr. Bovard and expert team removed it along with some problem bone and fully recovered and back in his enclosure with Nigel a week later. *One happy ending for 2019.*



I first met Scott over twenty years ago when he worked on a Bald Eagle's wing early one morning, before the clinic opened. He was new to Missoula Veterinary from Iowa, and his young children Gillian and Andrew were standing on chairs watching the surgery. I asked, "Dr. Bovard, how many birds would you say you have worked on over the years?" His thoughtful reply was, "A number of them." One is a number! His first. Scott tells the story that he and a fellow veterinarian Herb Hanich were working in Mongolia when a herdsman asked about his experience with camels. Scott replied, "Herb's done as many surgeries on camels as any vet in Montana." **EXCELLENT!**



Some new, brief friends after a program in Missoula, wondering what was perched in that parked car watching them out the window. Our tallest friend shouted, "Peregrine Falcon! My uncle breeds those." Apparently, headed to some convention at the Holiday Inn...



Red Squirrel Flights in the Front Yard



Flying By one August evening, photos from the beach



Our Stellar Teaching Team

with the years they joined us



Sonora the Aplomado Falcon 2013



iPod the Northern Pygmy-Owl 2010



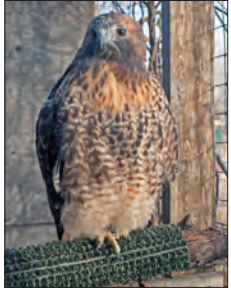
Owen the Northern Saw-whet Owl 2012



Sonny the Bald Eagle 2011



Jillian the Great Horned Owl 2003



Simone the Red-tailed Hawk 2017



Sibley the Peregrine Falcon 2003



Nigel the Golden Eagle 1999

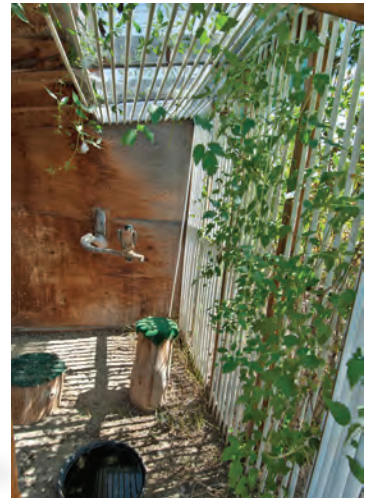


Ella and Wes the American Kestrels 2013 sister & brother



Simon the Great Horned Owl 2017

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 and superb Raptor Backers!

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