



The Bay-wing Quarterly

Newsletter of the Arizona Falconers Association

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Edited by Anne and Paul Schnell

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A Message from the President

Charlie Kaiser

It's getting hot in AZ. It was 92 yesterday in Kingman. Looks like a dry, hot summer coming up...

We are working on new stuff for the club for this year. First, we will be putting out newsletters more often, so expect to see more communication.

We are also going to try to have more social get-togethers. We are actively searching for a social coordinator who can help plan these events; if you're interested in helping, please reach out to me.

I wanted to provide a financial report for the club. It's been a while since we've done this and it's admittedly overdue. The club is financially solvent. We currently have about \$8800 in the bank. This is after paying all the bills for the meet and making a conservation donation (more on that later). Over the past 5 years, this number has gone up and down by a couple of thousand depending on how we do at the meets. Some meets make good money; for example, our last Kingman meet resulted in a net gain of just over \$3000. Others don't do as well; the Chino Valley meet resulted in a net loss of about \$400. Generally, we consider breaking even to be our goal with the meets. If we make more, we can spend more on the

next meet as well as on conservation activity during the year. But if we break even or even lose a little, it's still OK; we're not trying to make a profit. We want to return what we make to the club with our events. For example, we usually purchase a bunch of raffle items from the major falconry vendors each year. These vendors are very good to us and discount the purchases and also donate a significant amount of items as well. I want to call out specifically David Frank at Western Sporting Publications on this; David has been very good to us and I encourage you to consider him when making any falconry-related purchases. We also underwrite get-togethers throughout the year (and want to do more!), so if you are willing to put on an event, we'll buy the food (and in some cases, come and cook it)! We have also purchased education materials for club use for events and plan to add to these as time goes on.

We do want to keep a "war chest" available. We continue to see struggles around the country as lawmakers and animal rights activists put up roadblocks to falconry. Currently, things are OK here in AZ (although I have some more on that in a bit too), but it would not be unheard of to need to file lawsuits or defend falconry or in other ways pay to keep falconry as it is. So keeping some funds in reserve is prudent planning.

Member survey:

We will be sending out a member survey shortly. It will be online and anonymous unless you wish to provide your contact info at the end to be contacted. We want to see what members think about the club and our events. Please; when you get the survey notification, spend a few minutes filling it out so we hear YOUR voice!

See you over the summer!



Welcome New AFA Members!

*Bill Boni
Jeremiah Colby
Jan Dawson
Gordon Douglas
Joel Geudtner*

*Dana Green
Sondra Haile
Carissa Jonason
John King
Jack Knight*

*John Madich
Alex Matkins
Zoe Meade
Shannon McQuerry
Andra Popcock*

*Jodi Rozmyn
Amber Smelker
Balinda Strosnider
Elle Swan
Brian Wood*

AFA Director's Reports

Pam Hessey Director's report, 4/28/18

Hope this finds you all putting up your birds for the molt and reflecting on one or two spectacular hunts of the past season. The meet in Chino Valley was very well attended, and lots of folks caught game. This was the first meet in a very long time where my hawk didn't catch game. It was tough going, even with the excellent maps provided, and the rabbits we did find knew how to challenge the flight capabilities of the best hawks out there. And, yes, I'll give Cowboy his due; he flew really hard, but at 30 years old, he ain't the fastest hawk in the sky. We are looking at having the next meet in the Tucson area, and perhaps we will see some of southern AZ contingent we have missed seeing at the northern meets.

We are also hoping to have several summer picnics this year, as well as a volunteer day or two to help get Jerry Ostwinkle's new raptor rehab facility built, and hopefully a coroplast hawkbox-building workshop... Look for announcements from the club as to the dates for these. These summers are long, and hot, and seem endless, but getting together with fellow falconers make the time pass quicker until hawking season again. Think about volunteering to arrange a local BBQ, a camping get-together, or tale-telling fest...the club will even foot the food bill. More people volunteering for things like this will keep our club alive and kicking-- c'mon, guys, step up to the plate and help out. Besides, who else but fellow BOP friends will listen rapturously to that story of the one that got away, complete with flight path hand gestures? Hope to see you at a Hawk Hoo-doo this summer!

Paul Schnell, Director's report, 6/3/18

Greetings to everyone from Central AZ. Now that our feathered hunting partners are in full molt or nearly so, this is an appropriate time to pass along some good news and information on the falconry and raptor front.

Congratulations to Nancy Hough (Arden) of Paulden for her advancement to General Falconer in April. Her sponsor, John Bostwick of Chino Valley, husband Jeremy (soon to be General Falconer) and Anne Schnell met for dinner to celebrate Nancy's very active and successful two-year apprenticeship with her deadly tiercel Harris's Hawk, aptly named Jenghis. Nancy and Jeremy were married at Goldwater Lake, Prescott on May 27th. Congratulations!

In Phoenix, newly minted member from MO Shannon McQuerry sponsored his son Jack 17, in his first short (2.5 month) but productive season that Jack enjoyed with his passage Red-tail, Eve. Jack is the kind of falconer we'd all have our apprentices aspire to. As Jack explained, "*Having my dad as my*



Forrest and his son Tyler

Photo by Jon Orona

sponsor was the best thing... he made me be so meticulous with everything... I've never been so dedicated to anything before. We both have such a passion for falconry... he emphasized good husbandry and good record keeping, and doing 'PR' when I came across people in the desert."

Biologist/falconer Jon Orona continues to place kestrel boxes on his study areas under US Forest Service jurisdiction with assistance from Forrest Miller and his son Tyler Miller. AZ's Raptor Experience recently donated another 4 nests for Jon's research bringing the tally to 14 boxes. Last year, AFA contributed \$1,000.00 to this worthy project.

Jerry Ostwinkle's Arizona's Raptor Center is shaping up nicely. Our interview shed light on the value of Jerry's facility to Arizona's raptor heritage and AFA's \$1,500.00 donation last January. We think it is money very well-spent.

Director's Reports come in all flavors, shapes and sizes, and good one's never occur in a vacuum. Please feel free to share any relevant news and info for the benefit of each other. Remember: an informed membership is an effective membership. See you at the Summer Picnic.

The Medical Corner



Prophylaxis and self-medicating: Is it worth the risk?

By Dan Scrivener, BS, CVT

With the molt underway, we all have been tending to other matters around the home/business/mews, but we all still get that itch. Whether you have been a falconer for 50 years or 5 months, the excitement of the molt to finish or for trapping season to start builds as soon as the birds are put up. Thoughts of the next season are swimming in our heads; what do I want to fly this year? How can I make my bird perform better, fly stronger? For those of us looking to molt out our birds, how can we help them have a clean molt? If we are looking to trap a new passage bird, how can we make sure that it will do ok with the stress of trapping and manning? I know these are all questions we wonder and worry about during the off season. There are some steps that can be taken to ensure a good season.

One simple procedure that can be helpful is getting a fecal check. Many parasites can cause issues with nutrient absorption along with occasionally causing mechanical obstructions in severe cases. Stripping nutrients from a bird trying to grow in new feathers can cause stress bars, hunger marks, fret marks, etc. As we all know, the void in the feather at these points can cause severe structural and functional disabilities, i.e. broken feathers and reduced maneuverability. The next question is (usually); why get a fecal check and not just treat for parasites with a general dewormer? It's a fair question, but not necessarily a simple answer. I have spoken with many falconers, and it's about 50-50 regarding prophylactically treating for parasites or not. Many have done it for decades and have not had any issues with it, and they may never have an issue. I, myself, check a fecal every pre-molt and pre-season. I do have to say, with over 15 years' experience in the veterinary field, I am very confident in my ability to look for and find parasites in my birds. I never treat without a reason to treat, as I wouldn't treat myself with medication without a good cause. In some cases, there are parasites present in the gastrointestinal tract that are non-pathogenic in small numbers or loads. However, there are parasites that are always pathogenic and should always be treated no matter the parasitic load, such as coccidia and trichomonas (canker/frounce).

Different medications affect different parasites, well, differently. Some are broad spectrum, some are very narrow, but it is important to know what you are treating to be effective at treating it. Panacur or Fenbendazole is a medication that is routinely used to treat a broad range of parasites but has been shown to cause bone marrow suppression in some species, especially vultures. Bone marrow suppression can occur very quickly and cause death in an otherwise healthy bird. Metronidazole, a treatment for trichomoniasis (canker), can kill enough helpful bacteria to cause candidiasis, a fungal infection. So, you see, anytime you treat without reason, you potentially could be causing other issues that may have detrimental effects on your birds. I am not saying this to prevent you from getting treatment for your birds, in fact, I would want you to treat, but you should be aware of the potential dangers and pitfalls. There are other situations which I do recommend prophylactic treatment.

Aspergillus, "OMG...the 'A' word." Yes, I know. It is the bane to many of us. Sometimes it keeps us up at night sweating with nightmares. Ok, maybe not that bad, but it is something of which to have an awareness. Newly trapped birds or birds coming into a new environment that are highly susceptible to asper should get a prophylactic treatment. Itraconazole or Sporanox has been used in many birds to prevent aspergillus infections from taking hold in an immunosuppressed, stressed-out bird. Typically, the course is over 3 weeks after obtaining the bird. While this is recommended throughout the falconry

world, itraconazole has been shown to cause liver dysfunction with prolonged use, and while it is helpful for preventing aspergillus, it is no longer recommended to treat active infections. Currently voriconazole is the drug of choice for active infections. Why not just treat with voriconazole? Simple answer is resistance. Asper is so very difficult to treat; we do not want to make it more difficult to get rid of by overusing a currently effective medication. Think about the consequences before taking the action.

I would recommend finding a good AVIAN veterinarian and not just a vet that will see birds. Develop a good relationship, and keep in mind, while they know more about the medical side, we know more about our birds. A good veterinarian will ask for your input and place the bird's condition and health above routine. Ask questions, but again realize that a good avian practitioner will know the pitfalls and dangers of medicating or not, and they should give you sound advice. Should all of you go out and find a veterinarian and take your birds in right now? No, of course not. Is it a good idea to know where to turn in case of an emergency? Yes, it is. A good resource to use is looking at the Association of Avian Veterinarians, www.aav.org, to find a veterinarian that might be helpful in your area. I hope everyone has a great and feather perfect molt.



Tips and Techniques for Apprentices

First, choose your first bird carefully. As an apprentice, your first bird can make a big difference in your experience in falconry. In the old days, apprentices had two choices: a passage Red-tailed Hawk or an American Kestrel. Now your choices include birds like wild-caught Harris's Hawks and chamber raised birds. My advice has always been to choose a larger bird. Weight control in small birds is so critical. A few grams can make a big difference in a healthy, well-behaved bird. Larger birds are not as sensitive and can be easier to manage.

Second, find a good breed for your game base. You want to be able to go hunting with a good chance for slips after initial training. It doesn't work out well if you have trained to hunt and can't find ducks or the season isn't open.

And last, don't take another falconer's bird for your first bird. You won't know what bad behaviors you are inheriting. Work out your own mistakes on your own bird, not someone else's. You are going to make mistakes. Talk to your sponsor. That's why they are there. These are my personal observations, there can be exceptions. Enjoy the bird and enjoy the hunt.

~Master Falconer John Bostwick



Juvenile Red-tailed Hawk

P. Schnell photo



Farewell and Thank You...

At the AFA Board Meeting this past January we learned that Shantell Dahlberg, AFA Director and Education Coordinator, is moving to Durango, Colorado with her husband to be closer to her grandparents. Shantell has represented AFA at AZGFD and other outdoor shows to educate the public about the sport of falconry. She recently worked to have new AFA education banners produced that are pictured below. On behalf of all AFA members, we thank you for your service and dedication to AFA and wish you all the best!



Shantell (left) at the AZGFD Expo at Ben Avery.

Photo by Jeremy Hough

New AFA education banners...



Thanks for the photos Shantell!



Arizona Raptor Center Takes Flight: An Interview with Jerry Ostwinkle

By Paul Schnell

For most AZ falconers, Jerry Ostwinkle is synonymous with the Desert Hawking Club, eagles and state of the art raptor rehabilitation. Jerry has practiced falconry for 38 years, sponsored scores of apprentices, helped write AZ falconry regulations that we follow today and was the backbone of the state's Adobe Mountain Wildlife Rehabilitation facility located in the valley until its closure last year.

In 2014, Jerry received both the Chairman's Award given by the AZGFD Commission and was the first recipient of the Jerry Ostwinkle Conservation Award by SAGE – the Sonoran Antelope and Golden Eagle Society. With the dissolution of Adobe Mountain last year, Jerry stepped up to create, develop and manage the newly built Arizona Raptor Center. We recently caught up with Jerry for an interview.

AFA: What lead you to design and build a new raptor rehabilitation facility, Jerry?

JO: After four years inspecting rehab centers in the state, especially in the Tucson area, we found that raptor abuse was horrific and widespread. Rehabilitators seem to want to hoard raptors, rather than release them following a full recovery, more than anything else. Most of the veterinarians possess very little understanding of the healing properties of a raptor. These centers hold the birds for far too long, and their theories behind raptor rehabilitation are so ridiculous that you would need to write a novel to explain them!

AFA: Why is this situation allowed to continue?

JO: Because the individuals in charge (within the AZGFD) simply have no understanding of what it is they are doing. For this reason, I started the Arizona Raptor Center.

AFA: Morley Nelson from Boise, ID was a world-renowned raptor expert and has been honored by the prestigious Peregrine Fund for a lifetime dedicated to raptor conservation, like you. You had a 30-year relationship with Morley until his passing in 2005, and he taught you historic healing procedures used by falconers for centuries. Give us an example of a procedure that you've used successfully.

JO: We received a two-week old Barn Owl with a fractured tarsus (leg). It had a 90-degree angular fracture close to the foot – an extremely difficult break to repair. Using a splint system of 8 bamboo shafts, this 2,000-year-old technique allowed us to set the fracture and remove the splint after 16 days. The young owl was returned to the nest with a total of 20 days in rehab. Compared to other rehab facilities, where the owl would have been held for six months or longer!

AFA: Do you have any closing comments?

JO: Only falconers will work with the birds under rehabilitation, and for their daily care, feeding and flight conditioning. As for eagles, our goal is that they come to us first for proper rehabilitation. I can tell you that the system is a complete failure right now, and it needs to change. By documenting our successful rehab techniques, the other facilities will have to rise to our level of excellence. We can accomplish this by changing the regulations to a much higher set of standards. We're looking for volunteers and agents from around the state. An agent, under my supervision, is an individual that can hold the raptor with the same authority as the Center. These are the people we will need to cover the state.

AFA: Thank you for time, Jerry. Feel free to contact us if we can assist you and Arizona's raptors.

If you are interested in volunteering, making a donation, or you need a rehabilitator, you can contact Jerry at: azraptorcenter@gmail.com or 602-549-8482.

Tidbits of Important News...

- ❖ **AFA Directory:** An updated version of the AFA Directory will **not** be produced this time around. Too few members submitted information to warrant the time investment in a new directory. **Thank you** to those of you who *did* submit your information.
- ❖ **On-line Survey:** After the survey has been conducted, results will be shared with the membership once the board of directors has reviewed and summarized them.
- ❖ **Summer Picnic:** Watch for information about the summer picnic - coming soon!