



# Arizona Falconers Association

## November 2018 Bulletin

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### ***Welcome New AFA Members!***



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*Paul Kratofil  
Stacia Novy*

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### ***President's Report 11-10-18 Charlie Kaiser***

Hawking season is in full swing and so is AFA business!

As you are aware, elections are in progress. Jamaica has managed to find a good service that allows us to nominate and then elect our board. We have a bunch of new names lined up to help manage AFA and I hope all who are eligible to vote will do so, and then continue to support the directors and officers of the club.

The DHC is in the works, too. We are very close to finalizing the important details about the meet, so you can make plans. We are planning on Tucson and have a location that may work for us. This year it will be a little different; instead of having the meet at a hotel, we are trying to get a facility that we can use for the duration of the meet for all events, day and evening, and let people pick their own hotels. We will try to provide a list of hotels near the facility that everyone can choose from. Having a non-hotel facility will also allow for people to camp in the area if they desire. We will send details out as soon as we have them nailed down!

Game is down in numerous areas around the state, including Kingman. Cottontails are down significantly from previous years. We are preparing for some lean seasons in the norther part of the state. Apparently however, game

is decent in the Tucson area, including Antelope Jackrabbits, so get your birds tuned up for big game!

We had two club picnics this year so far. The first was in Prescott, arranged by Matt Hankins, and was well attended, even though we had a tremendous deluge shortly after food was cooked (good timing!). The second was in Tucson in October, arranged by Brian Wood and Carissa Jonson, and it was also well attended. I got to see lots of new faces as well as friends I hadn't seen in a while. I'm really pleased we were able to get something going in the southern part of the state. There are a lot of serious falconers down there and it's good to be able to bring them together. I want to do more of this... Thanks much to Matt, Brian, and Carissa for their work on these events. I've said it before; if you are interested in hosting an AFA get-together, the club will help out and make it easy for you!

I'd like to do a giant hood-making workshop soon. Not sure if it will be before or at the meet; I might do one here in Kingman. We've done these in the past and they have been a great hit; AFA buys the materials and provides the tools, we train the first folks on how to make a giant hood, then they train the next groups. I think we made a dozen boxes at the last one. If you are interested, please call/email/text me...

We are planning a spring meet in Tucson again that will focus on Antelope Jacks again. A bunch of us have wanted to do this for a while. Matt Hankins has offered to plan this so watch for news of it coming up...

The issues we had with CO25 were negotiated to our satisfaction with AZGFD. We were able to retain the two-year review cycle for now and that will give us time to make our case for the changes we want in the next review. We were able to get some details from the Department about the data they use for CO25 and we are optimistic that we can provide better and newer data that may allow us more freedom for raptor take. We'll be working with a couple of biologists on this to help strengthen our case.

That's all for now. Thanks!

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### ***AFA Elections***

Elections will be held for AFA Officer and Director positions from November 13<sup>th</sup> – November 27<sup>th</sup>. Each participating candidate who has provided a campaign statement is included in this bulletin. Eligible voters will receive an e-mail on the 13<sup>th</sup> allowing them to vote. All campaign statements will be provided again during the vote.

## **President**

### ***Charlie Kaiser***

My name is Charlie Kaiser, and I am the current president of the Arizona Falconers Association. I have been an Arizona resident for about 12 years now. I have been an active game hawk for over 20 years. I have flown a variety of birds including red-tails, coops, and peregrines, but my focus continues to be Harris' hawks in a cast.

During my tenure as AFA president, I have accomplished several things that stand out for our sport here in AZ. I am most proud of what I have been able to do for the falconry regs here. I worked extensively with AZGFD to rewrite our regs. I spent many hours both at home and in meetings with the Department to ensure that everything we gained with the new Federal regs was included in the AZ regs. My goal was to have the best falconry regs in the US. This was a hard-fought battle but the results were worth it. We now enjoy a great set of falconry regs here in AZ.

I have worked with the Department on many falconry issues, including evaluating CO25 every two years, issues with the Phoenix metro area hunt zones, attempted restrictions on falconry and falconers, and others.

Throughout my work with the Department, I have worked hard to cultivate and maintain a good professional relationship between AFA and AZGFD while still pushing hard for our rights and opportunities.

I have also worked to improve AFA membership value. Communication paradigms have changed significantly in the past decade. We've gone from paper mailings to email to websites to facebook. Keeping communication channels open has not been easy; younger folks communicate differently than older folks do and it's been important to find ways that work for everyone. Currently, between email and facebook, we are managing to keep a balance that works for most people. I do, however, feel we can continue to improve in this area.

I've also worked to improve AFA events. Our meets are some of the best in the country. We draw attendees from all over the country. Our raffles are loaded with great falconry items. Our speakers are engaging. We are putting on more frequent events and will continue to increase them.

I have learned to be a more effective leader, working to bring diverse personalities together as a team.

As a businessman, I bring my professionalism to the AFA board, keeping meetings on track and ensuring follow-up from all involved.

I am an inclusive leader. I celebrate the diversity that we all bring to AFA and will not tolerate discrimination in our organization.

My goals moving forward...

Continue to work with the Department on issues affecting falconry.

Increase the number, quality, and types of AFA events.

Continue to push for better communication.

Continue to make AFA an inclusive club.

Continue work on the administrative manual to ensure future generations of AFA leaders have the information necessary to keep the club and its events running well.

I am grateful for all the support you have given me over the years and I hope to continue working with you to make AFA as good as it can be!

## **Vice President**

### ***Jamaica Smith***

Greetings, fellow Arizona falconers! I am honored to have been nominated for both VP and director for this great club.

I have been a falconer since 1996, and I've flown several different species of raptors at quail, jackrabbits, and cottontails. I currently fly a tiercel Harris's hawk on quail over my Wire-haired Vizslas, and I've been working with a rehab tiercel golden eagle since April, with the goal to release him next spring. I've been incredibly lucky to have been mentored in quail hawking by one of my falconry heroes, Harry McElroy, and now in eagle falconry by the outstanding Lauren McGough.

My entire falconry career has been in Arizona, and I'm relatively familiar with the history and challenges unique to falconry in this state. I've been privileged to serve on the AFA board as either an officer or director for virtually the entire time I've been a falconer. As either Vice President or Director, my goals for the club are to keep it fun and inclusive, provide as many opportunities as possible for new falconers to learn good falconry from qualified people, and do my part to help improve communication between the board and the membership.

## **Treasurer**

### ***Ron Palmer***

I became interested in falconry when I was nine years old. My father brought home a downy Kestrel from a tree that was cut down. I made progress through several years and several birds. I became “legal” in 1968 with trapping permits from AZ Game & Fish. Actually, it wasn’t until I met and learned from Harry McElroy that I can say I really became a falconer. I flew Cooper’s Hawks on quail and Harris’ Hawks on quail and rabbits successfully for a few years. My family obligations and work took precedence over falconry, but I always maintained my licenses and AFA and NAFA memberships. I have been the AFA Treasurer since 2007.

## **Secretary**

### ***Anne Schnell***

My name is Anne Schnell and I live in Chino Valley with my husband Paul. We moved to AZ just over three years ago from upstate NY. Although I am a general falconer, I have not been a falconer for very long. I started my apprenticeship in NY with a Red-tailed Hawk and completed it here in AZ with a female Harris’s Hawk. Before becoming a falconer, I worked with birds of prey in two other capacities. I hold a Master banding permit and volunteered for Braddock Bay Raptor Research (BBRR) for close to 20 years and banded hawks during the spring migration. I served for many years as the Banding Director and Vice President of the organization. In addition, I worked with non-releasable birds of prey doing education programs for BBRR.

My husband and I now do education programs and research with birds of prey through our business called Arizona’s Raptor Experience. We have 15 birds ranging in size from Northern Saw-whet Owls to Eurasian Eagle Owls and a Bald Eagle. Our message to our clients and anyone else who will listen focuses on the environmental issues facing birds of prey today.

### **Describe your experience**

Becoming a falconer opened a whole new world for me. Until I started hunting with the birds, I had never been a hunter, other than with a camera. Although I grew up with hunting, it was never something I wanted to do until I had the chance to experience hunting with a bird. For me, it is still not about the kill, but I’m always thrilled for my bird when she is successful. I simply enjoy watching and studying the behavior of the birds, their beauty when they fly, and the interaction between them (we fly our Harris’s Hawks together).

Becoming part of their world is an amazing experience and I am thankful each time my bird returns to me after a successful hunt. Besides working with the Harris's Hawks, my experience includes hunting with my husband Paul and a Swainson's Hawk, Ferruginous Hawk and American Kestrel.

### **What is it that you want to accomplish?**

Since I started serving as the AFA Secretary months ago now, my goals have included increasing communication for/to the membership and recognizing new members. I'm thankful to the club leadership and club members for contributing to the monthly bulletins and the Bay-wing Quarterly newsletter when I ask for content. To recognize new members, I have begun sending a formal welcome letter in the mail and listing new members in the monthly bulletin. My other responsibilities have included maintaining the membership spreadsheet and sending communications to the club from the board as needed.

I enjoy the work I'm doing now for the club, especially the publications. In my former life I was a college professor and Chairperson of the Environmental Conservation Department at Finger Lakes Community College, so I am used to meeting deadlines, editing papers and being organized. I hope to continue in the role of Secretary. Thank you for voting in this election process.

### **Director Positions**

#### ***Jeremy Hough***

Hi, my name is Jeremy Hough and I have been nominated to run for a Director's position in the Arizona Falconers Association. I am honored that I was nominated. I have met some wonderful people through the club and I have been able to go hawking with a few of you. Those of you that I have not had the opportunity to hawk with, yet I hope that we will be able to in the near future. A little bit about me for those of you that have not really got to know me yet. I started my hunting career at a very early age where my father instilled in me a strong conservation and ethical hunting practices. While I have always loved birds of prey, it was always at a distance. Until my wife started her falconry endeavor. From the moment we trapped her bird I knew this was something I had to do myself.

While I am fairly new to the Falconry scene, I feel that I have a lot to offer the Club. I have a can-do attitude and will not leave any task unfinished.

Some of the areas that I would like to work on is communication with the

members, and getting more members involved in the club. I would like to see smaller get togethers throughout the season where a sense of community is fostered, and the exchange of knowledge is encouraged.

Thank you for taking the time to vote, I look forward to seeing everyone soon.

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## ***Harold Smith IV***

### **Start with an introduction**

My name is Harold (Blake) Smith. I am a 35-year-old General falconer living in northern phoenix. I am quite outgoing, love discussing falconry and particularly new ideas in the sport. My hobbies generally focus around hunting and camping and I also very much enjoy DIY projects. This is only my 3rd season practicing falconry and while that could seem like a drawback, I would like to think it actually contributes to my fierce passion for the sport. Every time I fly my birds it still blows my mind that they willingly allow me to hunt with them in the field.

### **Describe your experience**

I began my journey in falconry with a kestrel. She was a fierce little bird who taught me the importance of patience and consistency in this sport. She was the beginning of a rough first year for me. I thought I was prepared for everything and nature threw me a curve ball in the form of a female Cooper's hawk. After having my first bird die in my hands, I was thoroughly crushed but my sponsors guidance helped me push through and continue the sport with a late trapped passage female Harris's hawk. The combination of her late start in the season and my own ego drove me to fly her free too early and watch helplessly as she caught a thermal and flew over a mountain range. I spent the rest of the day following her all over the valley, watched in awe as she got into an intense dog-fight with a red tail, was convinced I lost her signal at least 10 times and finally found her sitting on a telephone pole with her antenna chewed off. Recovering her taught me the importance of persistence, humility and also hands on experience with veterinary care as I had to manage her wounds from the red tail fight. The next year I trapped another PFHH and had a fantastic season. I have intermewed her and am currently using her to teach my recently acquired captive bred male harris how to hunt. Things are already off to a fantastic star. I have been bringing him with me everywhere that I reasonably can to expose him to new sights and experiences. In the last week alone I have interacted with dozens of people and introduced them to falconry.

## **Add personal details**

Once I start talking it very quickly becomes obvious that I am an animal nut. My wife and I often joke that we could quit our jobs and just open up a petting zoo. I am a fierce advocate for the humane treatment of animals, pets and prey alike. I have a great respect for the quarry we hunt and encourage others to follow by example. I have always felt a drive to participate in the formation of the world around me from student government to local politics. I worked on the 2012 presidential campaign and was even a delegate in the primaries. During this time I found I had a passion for door knocking and canvassing. I would like to apply this skill set to falconry by participating in educational side of the sport. I actually look forward to running into people in the field and answering any questions they might have about my bird or what I am doing. Given the vacancy in the educational position, I think my passion could be applied to the benefit of our club.

## **What is it that you want to accomplish?**

I would love to be able to positively impact public perception of our sport. I have already run into a few people who had a negative impression and I would like to think I adjusted their perspective through polite discourse. As an added benefit I can provide experience in IT and AV skills to the club. I am a professional video editor and live broadcast manager. I host webinars and conferences on a weekly basis for an international company and have access to equipment that would greatly uplevel the multimedia portion of our meets. There are certainly other AFA members with more falconry experience than me in the running, but I would like to think I bring along a unique set of skills and passions that would be very beneficial when it comes to interacting with the public.

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## ***Joseph Pravongviengkham***

Born and raised native, Arizonian desert rat. My uncle, Mike Sayamontry, took me hawking when I was 10 years old; I was hooked from that day on. When I turned 14, I got my license and trapped a Red-tail...I can't say I have been without a bird since. I went on to fly another Red-tail, a couple of Harris's and Kestrels all throughout high school (and by "fly" I mean hunt obsessively). I graduated as Valedictorian in 2014 and had everything lined up to go to ASU, it was then that my grandma showed me an article about bird abatement in CA. My options were simple: (a.) use my scholarships to go to a prestigious school, further my education or (b.) go across the state to the middle of nowhere and fly falcons in an industry I had little to no knowledge of.

I've been doing bird abatement for almost 5 years now, in which time I've flown peregrines, barbarys, aplomados, a coop, and a wide variety of longwing hybrids. I'm currently game hawking a tiercel Barbary and a tiercel Gyr/Peregrine. My career and personal life revolve, quite literally, around falconry.

Over the years I've worked in 5 different states and have had the opportunity to go to a number of meets and see the various clubs and falconry organizations and see what they do right and what they do wrong. I have to say, in my experience, the AFA as a club is one of the best there is. It seems to function exceptionally well; member communication is on point, event coordination is always a success, and treasury has a surplus.

In the 8 years i have been a member, i haven't seen anything dramatic that needs to be changed in the AFA, however I only go to the meets and pay my dues, other than that I don't really see the internal goings-on of the club in which there may or may not need change.

I'm quite flattered that ANYONE would even consider nominating me for anything, to be honest I've had no desire or even considered being anything more than a member. Having said that, if I were elected in some position I would do my utmost to have a good working relationship with the Game & Fish in order to preserve the sport and laws as we know them especially for my younger generation, as well as represent, as best I can, the abatement falconer community.

Sincerely, Joe

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## ***Paul Schnell***

Hello. My name is Paul Schnell and I have served on the board for about 3 years following Anne's and my arrival here in 2015 from upstate New York. My introduction with raptors began in 1971 at age 12, followed by nearly four decades involved in wildlife conservation issues, falconry and education that began in 1981.

### **Describe your experience**

I have been truly blessed to have worked with large carnivores: boas, pythons, gray wolves, cougars, eagles, ferruginous hawks and eagle owls within the scope of two successful conservation education businesses I developed in New York over a 34-year span. The greatest joy however, has been the wonderful

students, teachers, scientists and conservationists that one gets to know and work with along the way. The future of conservation lies with young people!

Conservation today is a difficult climb up a rocky, very steep mountain. Many forces work against America's dwindling natural resources. Anyone who enjoys and/or utilizes wildlife must also get involved. There is an old maxim worth considering, "To those whom much has been given, much is expected." In the past decades, I have been elected to serve on committees, boards and in other leadership roles, including with the USFWS and the NYS Outdoor Writer's Assn. These roles have shed a bright light on the great importance of timely communication with members, commitment to other's needs and above all, the discipline to lead by example.

### **What is it that you want to accomplish?**

Board members serve at the discretion of the president. In the spirit of improving communication, serving new members, assisting new and older falconers, working to sustain and protect Arizona falconry, and supporting and promoting raptor research, conservation and education I respectfully ask for your vote. Thank you.

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### ***Troy Moody***

Hello fellow AFA members. My name is Troy Moody, I am 24 years old and a general falconer here in Arizona. With this bio I'm hoping to garner your trust and support in becoming a future director of the Arizona Falconers Association representing you and our culture not only amongst our peers, but our critics and skeptics as well.

I have been a resident here and grown up in the Phoenix area my entire life. The outdoors have always been passion of mine with hunting, fishing, and camping being a huge part of my upbringing. As of the fall season of 2017 I was able to follow through with my passion of becoming a wildlife biologist by completing my Bachelors of Science degree in the biological sciences of conservation and ecology at Arizona State University. With my degree I took a seasonal temp job in Michigan this past spring performing golden and bald eagle surveys on the windfarms for the spring migration.

Regarding my personal journey with raptors, I established my love for them around the same time I really started researching falconry in my early teens. However, being in competitive sports throughout high school I never pulled the trigger until early in my college career where I began volunteering at the Arizona Game and Fish Department's Adobe Mountain Rehabilitation Center. After starting to work with their "ambassador animals" I rekindled my

desire to become a falconer, passed the test, and spoke with the center coordinator asking if she knew of any falconers willing to take on a new apprentice. From this point on is where I got not only a steep learning curve, but a reality check of my complete ignorance of raptors at the time. At that point I was taken on as an apprentice by longtime Eagle Falconer and Arizona raptor rehab expert, Jerry Ostwinkle.

For those who know him understand the strong personality that comes with him, but that being said it comes from a good place regarding the birds and I believe I was taught (and still learning) by one of the best, fortunately in both falconry and raptor rehabilitation. After being disappointed by the condition and the treatment of the birds at the center and the unwillingness for its staff to adjust, Jerry left Adobe Mountain to create his own rehabilitation center The Arizona Raptor Center where I followed suit and have been working with him since. The quite possibly thousands of hours of conversations I have been fortunate enough to have had with him over the last several years has been invaluable in regard to my development as a falconer, biologist, and rehabber. My personal experiences I have gained from my own falconry career as well as the countless stories and experiences I have been able to live through others has really put an image in my head as for things I want and hope to see not only for our club, but for any falconers in our state of Arizona.

The Arizona Falconer's Association is a club with great potential. We already have great people which is a thing some clubs struggle with, however there are things I would like to strive and work toward as a Director for AFA that I believe would benefit all of us individually and at the club level. For those of us who were present at the AZGFD Falconry meeting or heard about it right after the fact know the frustration that occurred. It was a good talk that seemed to go nowhere. No future meetings occurred or are planned to occur even though they were promised. If elected as a Director I would work hard in establishing a clearer communication pathway with our state agency in effort to make sure our voices and opinions are heard. Along the same lines, I would like to start requesting from our agency the purpose of some of our regulations such as the science and research behind it. It seems that neighboring states having conflicting research as their regulations don't coincide. I believe that falconry like every other resource using activity should require regulation, however with that being that those regulations are made with common sense and are backed with scientific reasoning. A regulation that has no science or sound reasoning backing its creation is not a regulation, it is a restriction. Something we should not tolerate as it is a slippery slope to go down already seen in other states. Another topic already brought up and I know that is frustrating to many already is the poor quality of our actual test required to become a falconer. It has plenty of irrelevant and wrong information in its pool of questions that makes it an inefficient tool for the state and a frustrating barrier for pre-apprentices that find themselves having to answer questions that may never apply to them as falconers again. Although there is plenty more to talk about, I'll end on this last idea. I would love to see us working more with other outdoor groups. It is of no surprise to anyone that the falconry

community is small nationwide, practically microscopic at the state level, but by communicating with other outdoor groups and attending their events even if it means just once during the year, we can hopefully gather more supporters in working towards our goals and aspirations as a club. By gaining support by larger organizations than our own, hopefully we can create more understanding of who we are as falconers as well as backing for what we want as a club.

If you made it this far into the bio you're a trooper and I appreciate you taking the time to learn about me and what I want for the club. We in Arizona have it better than many, but we should always work towards something better. The AFA as of now reminds much of a social club, and although that is a value we should preserve, it should continue to evolve into one that stays diligent regarding the rights of its members as well as representing and fighting for the interest of falconry as a culture in our state of Arizona. Thank you for your time, and I hope gained your support as a Director for the Arizona Falconer's Association.

-Troy Moody-

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### ***Pam Hessey***

I've been a falconer since 1991; flown a Redtail, Cooper's Hawks, Goshawk, Harris' Hawks. I have also worked with rehab/education raptors since 1989, including Bald and Golden Eagles.

I have served as a director in AFA and California Hawking Club for many years...

I have served on the Education Committee, and always volunteer assistance at meets (registration, talk set-up, raffle and banquet) and picnics. I have help teach/present many Apprentice Workshops.

I have attended all Board Meetings except 2; absences were out-of-town work or sick bird related. I attend AZGFD meetings when Board member attendance is necessary.

My falconry brings me out into the desert, where I witness amazing flights - and often spectacular escapes by the prey - as well as the feel the satisfaction of my birds' success on kills. I partner with raptors with whom I have a trust bond; we hunt as a solid team. I see falconry as a pathway to open other's minds and eyes to nature and the circle of life and death.

I hope to positively influence people about the art and sport of falconry, and to help them realize the worth of wild areas and wild creatures. By being an ethical falconer, I hope to persuade people that hunting with raptors is a

positive way to relate to the natural world. I whole-heartedly support the club and its mission statement, and as a director will continue to do so.

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### ***Brian Wood***

Hello! My name is Brian Wood. I was born and raised in Tucson, AZ. I became interested in becoming a falconer at age ten after encountering a graduate student from the U of A at the edge of my parent's property who had trapped a family of Harris's Hawks. After spending some time speaking with the man, he let me release one of the trapped birds and that was it, I was HOOKED, I knew then and there that I wanted to work with these birds! Finally, October 2015, at age 25, I got my falconry license. This wonderful sport has since taken over my life!

After a couple of seasons with little involvement with the AFA I was able to attend a Desert Hawking Classic meet. Being able to spend some quality time with like minded people was such a great experience. Seeing what all the club does for the falconers here in Arizona made me really want to get more involved. My fiancé, Carissa and I had the pleasure of putting together the little Southern AFA Picnic this past October. We had a great turn out and again, it was amazing getting to see all these "bird nerds" in one place. Setting up gatherings such as these is one of the many things I'd love to help be a part of. I would also be honored to be one on the board that helps pave the way for how the current and future falconers are able to practice falconry here in this state.

Thank you all for your time! Can't wait to see everyone at this season's Desert Hawking Classic!

# ***Happy Thanksgiving!***

