

Over time, I spent many weekends with the Hamerstoms. I never really became a typical Hamerstrom gabboon, but I often shared in the varied and fascinating life at the Hamerstoms. Sometimes I participated in observing in the field, or banding. On any visit there, I may have found another visitor, perhaps a falconer from Europe, or a raptor researcher from some other state. On one visit, I "purged" a tapeworm I had acquired from fish eaten while I was in the field banding bald eagles. I blended in and spent many hours, particularly with Fran, talking about her early years in wildlife biology, with Darlington, Leopold and others.

Fran had very strong ideas about the role of women in science and in relation to men. In the early 1970s Fran was my first role model of a woman who had entered a "man's" field and had succeeded. She awoke in me the dream that I, too, could overcome the sexism rampant in wildlife biology, and achieve what I wanted. Although I subsequently abandoned the professional career of a wildlife biologist, and went on to get a Ph.D. in Community Psychology, Fran has been my touchstone. At many times I have said to myself, as I pursued my own career interests, "What would Fran say or do?" Her work with raptors, her writing, and her ability to overcome, in her own way, the sex-role stereotypes that have oppressed women have been an inspiration for me.

I first visited Fran and Hammy because I really was interested in raptors. I really was interested in her mews. I really was interested in wildlife biology. I really was interested in meeting a human being who would accept me for all of that and nourish me as a person, as a woman in science. In recognizing all that, Fran gave new meaning to the question "Why are you really here?" and for that I will cherish her all my life.

THE SCHMUTZ STORY

I met Fran and Hammy in 1970 through Joe Schmutz, their live-in foreign summer student. Joe brought me home to meet the Hamerstoms when his VW bus broke down and needed towing. Fran and Hammy never quite believed that was why I was there. In any case, a feast was prepared—fondue on the front porch. Fran believed in welcoming people with food and Hammy enjoyed that part of all the company the most I think! Knowing Fran, pleasing Hammy may have been the primary reason she did it.

Within a short time of my arrival I was given my "test." Fran asked if I would feed the owl using part of the raccoon in the refrigerator. I know I passed the test because some twenty years later I still feel welcome when I visit the house on the marsh.

Fran and Hammy believed that couples should understand each other's work, which should also be their passion, and preferably work together. It was a great disappointment to them that I left ecology for genetics after my Master's and thereafter did not go into the field with Joe. Nevertheless I always felt encouraged by them that I too should pursue the aspect of science that was my passion. Hammy and I spent many evenings doing dishes together after one of Fran's delicious meals discussing my work and my aspirations. In his quiet way he always affirmed that he believed in me. He used to say that genetics had too many numbers for his liking but that he admired my tenacity in sticking to them. That was one of the wonderful aspects of the Hamerstoms—their nurturing of young people into science (and art) and their openmindedness even when we chose to diverge from the path they had started us along.

Fran was one of the few female role models I had in those days. All my biology professors were male then and for some years to come. I remember her advice that a woman who worked so closely with men in the field should dress as much like them as she could, with no makeup or frills. Until of course she went to a cocktail party or banquet at a conference with them where she should don her most alluring dress! She also instilled the notion that it would not be easy to be accepted as a woman and that we must try harder. Not that this was right, just that it was. Hearing this from her when I knew she supported my efforts was much easier than experiencing it with no forewarning, I believe.—**N. Gerrard and Sheila M. Schmutz, c/o Department of Animal and Poultry Science, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, SK, Canada S7N 0W0.**

DEAR FRAN

I think that the circumstances of my tenure with the Hamerstoms bears repetition. While a student at the University of Wisconsin at Stevens Point, I had been "booming" twice. Then after 2 yr in graduate school in Minnesota, as I was entering an elevator in St. Paul, I heard Professor Tester say to Professor Marshall, "We need three students to go to the Hamerstoms' this weekend." I piped up, "I'll go, and I can find the other two, too." As a result of this visit, I ended up spending the summer, and 2 yr later found myself trapping Hen Harriers in Orkney with Eddie Balfour.

My reason for recounting all of that goes back to my first one-on-one contact with Hammy. After spending the dusk hours of my first field day at the Hamerstoms' on top of the Kombi alternating between spotting scope and reading in the banding book, I drove back to the house leaving the banding book topside. What a commotion that caused when it became apparent what had happened. I was delegated to tell Hammy with my head hung in shame. His words still echo, "Well you'd *better* find it!" This was not the abusive response I may have deserved, but there was no question

as to the seriousness of my transgression and the response expected from me. I still remember ironing the pages of the notebook that had gotten wet before it was found. That first evening was the beginning of the greatest learning experience of my life.

I remember so fondly the two favorite names that you called Hammy in my presence. The first was when we were looking for his approval of a manuscript or scheme, and you would refer to him as "Maestro." I feel that this was a very accurate description of his nature. He was an eminent composer, conductor and master of the art. That art was, of course, the written word, which somewhere along the line includes analytical thought as well. It is doubtful whether I or any number of gabboons would have ever written anything without Hammy's help. That help was always firm, frank, and often painful for me; but one could never say that Hammy was unkind in the process. Indeed, I can picture myself squirming in discomfort after a good "editing," and Hammy finding something so nearly absurd about my attempt at self expression that it started both of us laughing. For this, I owe Hammy much.

The other name you used for Hammy was "Gesichtelle," which literally translated means "little face." This was strictly between the two of you, but I believe it to be a term of endearment, and observed your use of it in special situations where appeasement of the "Maestro" seemed in order. Indeed, N. Tinbergen and K. Lorenz showed that this sort of behavior maintained the pair bond in many organisms. I should have learned that earlier in life.

Even as a gabboon, Hammy treated me with respect, and played the generous host beyond all expectations. We could be having a raucous writing session in the back room over a jug of MP, when Hammy could be heard, "Bill, are you in? How about you, Fran?" Usually that meant martinis for a select few before bed and the winding down of the more strenuous activities.

There are many such memories, such as the inadvertent crack left in Hammy's net door which allowed Ambrose to get into Hammy's office, the great pleasure you both took when we flew the owls indoors at night, and "mouse television." So many words added to my vocabulary: "stocking mail," "go topside," "Kombi," "George's Stomach," "do a walk-in to the nest," "Fuzz," "Cuzzin Ray" and much more.—William C. Scharf, Biological Sciences, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, NE 68588.

THE HAMERSTROMS, A MEMOIR

It's January and time again to throw a *bal-chatri* for wintering kestrels. The birds once more are perched on the lines in the rural areas of coastal North Carolina where I now live, but with each bird I ensnare, my mind drifts back to another day and another place—and to the always delightful company of Frances and Frederick Hamerstrom.

My recollection goes back to the Christmas season of 1973, or maybe it was 1974, when a well-used—some might say ramshackle—Volkswagen bus clattered into the parking lot at the Welder Wildlife Foundation in southern Texas. The snows and bitter cold of Wisconsin were far away once more. Fran and "Hammy" had arrived.

The Hamerstroms were a legend in their own time. I'd heard of them since my student days, of course, as had just about anyone with an interest in wildlife, but now here they were in person. Fran, hair askew, in her flannel shirt and well-worn jeans scarcely resembled the debutante and fashion model she once had been. Indeed, as I got to know her better, I suspect she gleefully "played" to the contrasts of her then-and-now image. (See page 5 of Fran's marvelous book *Strictly for the Chickens* for a photo of a *verrry* fashionable young woman poised elegantly on an impressive staircase.) Hammy, dashing in his magnificent snow-white goatee and mustache, immediately transmitted an air of quiet competence, warmth, and civility for which he was widely known (*Wildl. Soc. Bull.* 19:119–122; see also 378–379).

So, here the Hamerstroms were in person, replete with what was for me an arcane collection of wire, loops, tubes, and caged birds stored rather randomly inside and on top of their much-traveled bus. Fascinating days lay ahead.

In the winters following their so-called retirement, Fran and Hammy had begun fleeing the Pleistocene-like environment of Wisconsin, trapping and banding raptors *en route* to the more compatible climes of Texas and Mexico. Harris' Hawks were their special interest while staying at Welder, before heading on to Mexico to study Ospreys, but there was always time for banding another redtail or kestrel, and certainly for discussions of Northern Harriers—Fran, I think, was one of the first to champion renaming "marsh hawks." Northern Harriers remained a special interest for Fran, although Hammy, as always, was dutifully involved with the work, whether in the field or as a reviewer of manuscripts (he was renowned for his precision with words). Fran's studies of harriers spanned some two decades and included data on more than 200 nests and almost as many color-marked breeding adults. Of the papers resulting from this volume of long-term information, one in particular stands out—for me, at least—because it clearly links the importance of prey abundance on the reproductive efforts of predators (F. Hamerstrom 1979, *Auk* 96:370–374). This work eventually led to a book-length treatment, entitled "Harrier, hawk of the marshes: the hawk that is ruled by a mouse" (1986, Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington, DC).

In Texas, the harriers and Prairie Chickens of Wisconsin were left behind in favor of Harris' Hawks. And it was



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