Tribute by Mark Churchill

Mike was one of life’s good guys: a man who married his high-school sweetheart, who worked hard to support his family but always kept work and play in balance, who lived with integrity and generosity and humor. His family, his friends and colleagues at the paper, and of course the Nebraska falconry community will all miss him—the world will never again be quite the same. But, as Mike pointed out to me, life goes on, and he was okay with that. I’ll do my best to be okay with it, too.
In Memoriam: Mike Cox, 1952-2009
Tribute by Karl Linderholm

We lost a great friend and diehard game hawker when Mike Cox passed away on the 7th of September 2009. He has and will continue to have a profound impact on my life; part of who I am is because I knew Mike for over 34 years.

I met Mike on the 22nd of March 1975, I was 16 years old and Mike was 23, at that time he had been a falconer for one year. We learned together by sharing our experiences because we were the only two falconers in Lincoln through most of the early years.

I have 34 hawking seasons of memories with Mike; we caught more rabbits than you could shake a hawking stick at and as our families regularly remind us, we would tell the same stories over and over and still experience the thrill of the moment. One of my favorite stories is about the day we were flying Mike’s first bird Buford, an intermewed tiercel imprint Red-tail in an area that we had hunted for a few years but was being encroached upon by civilization. Buford took off with that quicker wing beat that meant he was just flying to another perch. Mike looked to see the “quarry” but saw a young girl walking her cat on a leash probably 80 yards away. Mike yelled as loud as he could “pick up your cat”, the girl not knowing anything of us or the impending doom picked up her cat. Fortunately, she dropped her cat and Buford being at the higher end of his flight weight just buzzed the cat.

Mike had numerous friends in the sport of falconry as we all do but what set Mike apart was that he was not contentious with anybody and was able to use his unique sense of humor to place our differences in perspective; a rare quality. Mike and I shared not only falconry moments, but 34 years of life’s celebrations and sorrows.

As a 14 year old reading my first falconry book, The Art and Practice of Falconry by E.B. Michell, not much made sense to me at the time but I do remember reading the last couple lines of chapter one: “Once a falconer, always a falconer, is a maxim of universal truth. And the fraternal spirit which animates most English falconers—and, for that matter, most falconers throughout the world—is not the least agreeable feature presented by this ancient and honorable field sport.”

Mike, I had no idea...