Ed Ng died May 27, 2004 at the age of 66. He was born and raised in the heart of San Francisco’s Chinatown, lived in the Bay Area most of his life, settling in Concord 28 years ago.

He was a graduate of Francisco Junior HS, Washington HS and Heald’s Business College, SF. After high school, Ed joined the Navy and served on the USS Midway. He started his career in the early stages of the computer industry, but changed direction to join his brothers in the family business of Taylor and Ng, Inc. for many years. He also operated other small businesses in between.

Ed was the beloved husband for 27 years of Cheryl Wong-Ng, devoted father of Tracy Ng, and caring relative of an extended family. His three passions in life were family and friends; the sport of falconry; and support for the good works at the SF Chinatown YMCA.

Ronald Brown, Frank Ely, Bob Herrick, Walter Imfeld, Donald Inskeep, Charlie Kaiser, Maclovio Lopez, Bill Murphy, Katherine Ng, Tony Robertson, Dewey Savell, Dave Steele, Terence Tiernan, Wayne Upton, Victor Wong

An Afternoon with Ed Ng — by Pam Hessey

(Editor’s note: This past spring (2004), a few of us went to visit Ed Ng, who was battling cancer. Ed, his wife Cheryl, Frank and Linda Ely, Jim DeRoque, Pam Hessey, and I (Charlie Kaiser) had the pleasure of an afternoon sitting and talking about falconry with a tape recorder going. I’d like to thank Lisa Snowden for her transcription of the recording.)

Pam Hessey: I was one of Ed’s apprentices. He gave freely of his time and knowledge, that is invaluable to me. We spent hours talking about my bird’s progress, my handling techniques, and Raptor psychology. However, we never got around to how Ed got started in falconry. Ed said he had been inspired by two movies he had seen...
I asked Ed if he recalled any funny incidents that happened to him when he was flying...

Ed: "I did the typical rushing a duck pond with decoys in it... and I just had an e-mail from my friend Mike, Mike Crago. He said he flew his bird one time and knocked a pheasant into the bushes. Then, a couple of days later, he was flying the same field, and the bird came down and went into some bushes, and pulled out a frozen pheasant! What happened was that he knocked down a pheasant several days before and it ran into this same bush. It died in the bush, so the bird came out with this frozen pheasant. I think there's one or two stories that I always like to tell people, because I myself get a good laugh out of it.

One was about this guy, his name is Rob Bell; he's a goshawk guy. He went fishing, and somewhere along the shore he saw this Goshawk eating a squirrel or something. And he chased the bird. The bird didn't carry the squirrel, so Rob figured, "What the hell, I'll just put a big noose around the squirrel and see what happens." And sure enough, the Goshawk came back and, he snagged him with a fishing pole. That's how he caught the Goshawk.

The funny thing was when he was retrieving the bird - he wasn't pulling it. He had to go toward the bird, but he had to go over branches and under stuff. And then he finally got to the Goshawk and grabbed him.

Another one was Ray Turner. He's a firefighter.

Ed's friends for perpetuity

Ed was out fighting a fire one evening - forest fire - and he looked up at the tree, and there was a young downy Cooper's up there. So, he put his hose up there, wetted him down, blasted him off the tree, took him home and had himself a Cooper's Hawk.

Ed: "People - falconers throw money away on falconry. Here's a good one about Jim deRoque. We went to Montana, and we had a duck flight. The duck landed up in the water; he wouldn't flush. The duck was in pretty much of a fairly frozen pond, and Jim was going in to try to flush it while the Peregrine's flying around. Jim was throwing pebbles at it at the beginning. Then pretty soon I see him flipping rocks. I said, "What are you doing?" And there was all this loose change he was throwing money at the duck to get him to fly. And I said, "Shit, this guy is really wanting to get that flight." The duck got hit, and it spun around. And the Peregrine flies in it'd hit that duck again and spin him around. And you can measure the puddles of blood from here to there. Eventually the duck flew, and Jim's bird caught him. It was a rat race, but that was a funny flight, because he was in ice water.

Jim deRoque: "On that same Montana trip - Cheryl just found out about this the other day - we were driving home. We were with Ed Cummings and Val Fairman. And we were in the car in front of us, and we were driving, and it was about 2:01 in the morning. And we pulled over and Ed and I switched. I said, "Are you okay to drive, Ed?" "Oh, yeah." He's wide awake. I looked at the clock, and it was, like, 2:05 am. And then we're driving along, and I look up, and Ed's driving. It's a 15-15. I looked over at Ed, and Ed is like this (head back, mouth wide open), sound asleep! His arms were straight, but his head was back, and his mouth was open... I yelled at him. It was probably the worst thing I could have done."

I asked Ed what positions he has held in the past for CHC, and what his plans for the future of our club...

Ed: "I've been apprentice chair, director and director at large. That's about it, helped out on the raffle... a lot of stuff. I guess the old-timers, we all seem to see that there's a new wave of falconers coming in. It's a new wave, a new mentality, new approach. So, it's not even just buying a bird, telemetry, Internet. I see the educational stuff. I see that through you guys, that kind of a promotion. A lot of old-timers say, "They're just like pet-keepers - a little bit more than pet-keepers. They like to go to these Scottish Game Fairs to promote falconry; they like to do other educational stuff, you know." Well, in a sense we did that too when we went to the Cow Palace, right? That was the beginning of it all, of all our meeting with the public. This was at the boat show, we'd get a booth. And there would be people with shotguns there, dogs there. That's what we're doing. From there it seems to have escalated more into the educational side.

I see a totally new group. They're not as - they're not like what we were. I guess nobody will ever be like us, so fanatical. Even if they don't have the opportunity to buy things on the Internet, somehow thing like that, it's still a new group."

Charlie Kaiser: "I think part of it is due to - you have to look at the sponsor as to how committed the apprentice is going to be. I feel if the sponsor is very committed to the sport and committed to the birds, then that attitude is going to transfer to the apprentice."

Ed: "You are what you teach. You are what your sponsor was or could be. You are what your sponsor is, in a sense."

Ed sponsored me in my falconry apprenticeship. I had asked several people, but Ed was the one stepped up and offered to take me on. He was always a generous man. We started out as pupil and teacher, but I learned so much more than the basics of falconry from Ed. He gently corrected my mistakes, and bestowed on me the infinite patience that characterized his life. Ed shared his home and his family with me, and especially his joy of little things - he helped me accept the crushing loss of my first bird, and was also there with me when, miracle of miracles, that same bird came back to me. He gave me to the feeling of magic, to be able to call a wild bird from the sky to be my partner. He also taught me to accept losing a partner with grace and honor. I am still struggling with this lesson...

To find such a mentor and friend has been a special gift in my life; to lose such a man has wrenched a terrible hole in my spirit. But his strength in accepting his lot in life, the joys, and the losses, remains with me. The firm joy of calling a hawk to my fist, and the equally intense feeling when it again leaves. Fly high and free, Ed.

Ed's close friends placed his ashes at this historic and now reoccupied Peregrine eyrie in central California.

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