



By nature, a naturalist

A 16-YEAR-OLD GREAT HORNED OWL, Porfirio, is a pet of naturalist Frances Hamerstrom. In the background is her summertime helper, Stanley Moore.

Photos by George R. Cassidy; cover design by Kenneth A. Miller, both of The Journal

Frances Hamerstrom's world is never a boring one

By PAUL G. HAYES
Journal science reporter

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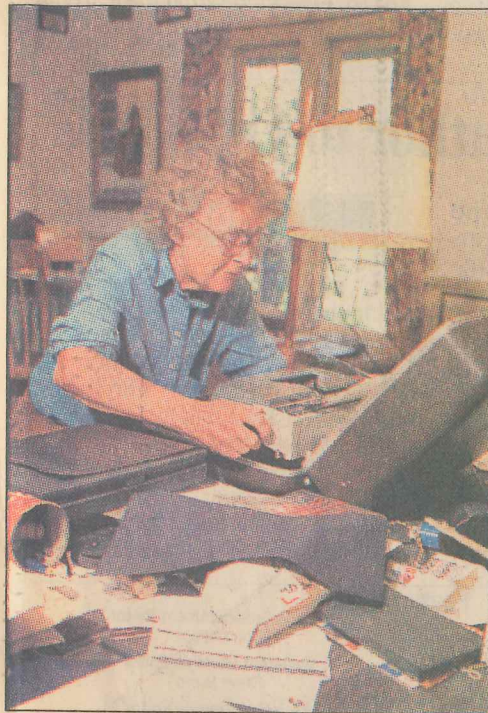
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FRANCES HAMERSTROM works at her typewriter in her home near Plainfield.

By PAUL G. HAYES
Journal science reporter

PLAINFIELD, Wis. — Wildlife biologist Frances Hamerstrom, 86, just back from the South American forests for the second time in two years, had a frustrating trip to the Amazon headwaters in Peru this time.

In February she and her guide, Alfredo Flores Acho, of Iquitos, Peru, paddled their dugout up the Cuneseba River, a tributary of the Amazon, to Cuneseba lake so that she could watch the black-collared hawk, or fishing buzzard, feed on fish.

She had heard that the hawk stood on one foot and scooped up fish with the other, and she wanted to see for herself whether this was true. Her question remained unanswered.

"I watched one not fishing for an hour and twenty minutes," she said.

"Then something happened to one of my legs. It began to hurt so badly that I

took a pain pill for the first time in my life."

The pill affected her greatly. Alfredo thought Fran, who pronounces her name Fron, was dying, she said. "He put me in the canoe and said, 'Paddle! Paddle!'"

Fortunately, Hamerstrom lived to tell this and other tales of her recent trip, having returned last month to her central Wisconsin home, the pre-Civil War house into which she and her late husband, Fred, moved in 1949.

This is the place the Hamerstroms made famous during the three decades that they, as employees of the old Wisconsin Conservation Department, studied the habits of prairie chickens and were instrumental in acquiring habitat in central Wisconsin for the birds.

Through 1972, the house, which

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Indian guide

lacks central heating or flush toilets, was headquarters for prairie chicken watchers. They came from all corners to arise before dawn in order to sit, cramped and cold, in blinds during April and May to watch the ritualized courtship of the birds.

After the two wildlife biologists retired from the state, she assumed other lives. One was to continue research on birds of prey of Wisconsin; another was to write a growing shelf full of popular books on nature, some for children, others for adults. She still tends her companion of many years standing, the great horned owl that she tethers in open fields in order to attract hawks.

Until his death four years ago, she and Fred spent most winters in the South, usually at Wilder Wildlife Foundation in Texas, often in Mexico. She

continues to winter in the South, in Texas, and often in Mexico. She went to the Amazon a year ago and returned to the Peruvian forests early this year.

After the ill-fated excursion to study black-collared hawks with Flores Acho, she joined a party of six other scientist-adventurers and three Indian guides up the Huagramona River in northern Peru. This proved to be dangerous.

In many places, the river was blocked by huge trees, some four feet in diameter, that had to be sawed and chopped through. After cutting through 37 trees, the guides were exhausted and in pain.

Still short of their goal, a "sacred waterfall" where Hamerstrom hoped to observe the hunting habits of the indigenous people, the tour leader said: "I think there's a 2% chance of seeing the sacred waterfall. But we all had a glorious time, didn't we?"

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Museum has enough weapons to carry out a war

By THOR CHRISTENSEN
of The Journal staff

SOME PEOPLE collect stamps. Others collect matchbooks. Mark Sondag collects Sherman tanks.

"Paid \$25,000 for this one," Sondag says, pointing to a gutted 1945-model monster sitting in his oversized garage. "About 2,000 hours of restoration and it'll be ready for the museum."

"The museum" is the Kenosha Military Museum — one of Wisconsin's most popular roadside attractions since Sondag opened it in 1988. In addition to tanks, the 100 or so military pieces he's lined up in a former cornfield next to I-94 include armored cars, attack planes, helicopters, howitzers, jeeps, cannons and dune buggies used in Operation Desert Storm.

The biggest item is a 45-foot Sky Crane, which was used in Vietnam to pick up crashed helicopters and fly them back for repairs.

Some pieces are bashed in, bombed out, rusted or riddled with bullet holes. Others are in near-mint condition.



Journal photo by Ned Vespa

MARK SONDAG stands before one of the Sky Cranes in his military museum.

"We drive the M-60 tank around the back 40 sometimes," Sondag said, referring to the farmland behind the outdoor museum. "You can see an old tank sitting in any city park, but to actually hear one rumble and see it

start moving is quite a sight."

The Chicago-bred Sondag, who will be 41 June 1, served four years in the Air Force in the '70s. He began collecting military items more than a decade ago. He hunts for pieces at military

The Kenosha Military Museum is at 10700 120th Ave., just south of Highway 165. It is open noon to 5 p.m. Wednesday through Sunday, April through October. Admission is \$3.

base closings and scrap metal sales and buys others from fellow collectors.

His quest has taken him to all 50 states and to Israel, Peru and other countries.

Sondag's hobby is not a particularly cheap one. He bought his two "Sky Cranes" for \$2 a pound, which might seem like a bargain until you realize that each crane weighs 20,000 pounds. He routinely spends thousands of dollars to ship a single item.

Some of the money for the endeavor comes from the museum's \$3 admission fee and from renting pieces to TV and film-makers. His weapons have shown up in the films "Red Dawn," "1941" and "Tank." But he buys most of his vehicles and aircraft with money he's made over the years from a van restoration business he still runs part-time.

REVIEW



'Beverly Hills Cop III' just isn't a good time

"Beverly Hills Cop III" has nearly everything. The scams are there, the disguises are there, Eddie Murphy is there. But what's missing is vital: Somebody forgot to include the fun that made the original 1984 comedy such a hit. See Douglas Armstrong's review.

D2



FRAN HAMERSTROM and Stanley Moore, a summer helper from San Francisco, discuss some research on the steps of the Hamerstrom place.

Wildlife: Adventurers fall short of big goal

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"He stood there in that open boat, looking handsome, and expecting us all to cheer," she said.

His comments were met with total silence. There, deep in the Peruvian jungle, she said, that silence comprised a memorably dramatic moment. The party went on for one more day, by which time it was reduced to eating only macaroni and tuna fish preserved in water, which gave it a sawdust taste, before turning back down the river.

Undaunted, Hamerstrom returned to her busy life in Wisconsin. Since retiring from the state, she has been adjunct professor at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, and she has written 11 books.

Her "Wild Food Cookbook," edited for such recipes as sucker

Press. Her autobiography, "My Double Life — Memoirs of a Naturalist," will be published by the UW Press in September.

A week ago Monday, she drove to Marshfield, Wisconsin Rapids and Stevens Point for several appointments, including securing support from UW-Stevens Point to bring her friend Flores Acho, a self-taught biologist and musician who knows "all the mammals and most of the plants of the Peruvian jungle," to the US.

It would be his first trip out of Peru, she said. She wants to meet him in Miami, rent a car and drive to central Wisconsin, just to see his reaction, she said. He lives a life near the jungle, with his family.

"He said that one day, he wanted a square house by the river, with a garden and a small house nearby with a hole," meaning an outdoor toilet



Single disc holds 1,000 programs

By BOB SCHWABACH

THE ASSOCIATION of Shareware Professionals has a new CD with 1,000 programs for \$25. That works out to 2.5 cents a program. The programs cover business, utilities, games and education.

Shareware is the term used for programs that are marketed pretty much on the honor system. You try it out and, if you like it, you are honor-bound to pay a fee (usually around \$25) to register the program and be eligible for technical support.

There are many shareware discs — both CD and regular — but this is the official one; ASP is the group to belong to if you're a programmer trying to market your own work.

The disc has two further claims on our attention: One is that it has been vetted — it has been checked to make sure there are no viruses. The second is that all programs are full working versions — no demos.

Many shareware programs are quite good. They usually are aimed at a narrow task or set of tasks, like figuring amortization and mortgage rates, or making mailing labels. Often they are too small to be worth marketing on their own, or they came in late to an already overcrowded category.

The downside is that some shareware programs are hard to use and offer little help or documentation. Still, at 2.5 cents a program, you can afford to toss a lot of them.

■ You can find the ASP Shareware CD in some software stores, or you can order it direct by calling (616) 788-5131.

More mapping ability

Automap Pro, for Windows, comes from the same people who made Automap Road Atlas, a route planner that came out about a year ago. This "Pro" version goes way past the original. It covers 410,000 miles of roads in the US, Canada and northern Mexico, right down to county roads. It recognizes 120,000 places. Click on start and destination points, and the program will generate a trip sheet detailing all roads and turns for the fastest trip or the scenic route. You can print it out and take the instructions with you.

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"He said that one day, he wanted a square house by the river, with a garden and a small house nearby with a hole," meaning an outdoor toilet.

"I said, 'I have a 3-holer.'

"He said, 'Oh, Fran, you are rich.'"



ERSTROM and Moore band the kestrel for research.



Journal photos by George R. Cassidy

FRAN HAMERSTROM strides boldly across the Buena Vista Marsh west of Plainfield, where she conducts much of her research. Left: Hamerstrom captures a kestrel. Above: She examines the bird after removing it from its nest.

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It can also be oriented by ZIP code or phone number. Type in the first four digits of a phone number and that location comes up. Detailed street maps are an extra charge, however. The base program just gives highways and state routes in metropolitan centers.

Probably the most important advantage here for business users is that Automap Pro will link to databases. In other words, you can generate maps of customers or anything else from your database. You can map where they are by ZIP code or phone number, but you also can make maps by sales figures or complaints or anything else that your database covers.

The process works in reverse as well. You can click on a map location and have the person's picture, address and phone number pop up. You can do the same with properties — a natural for the real estate business.

The list price for Automap Pro is \$400, but the street price figures to be around \$250.

A couple of games

Two from LucasArts, a division of Lucas Films:

"Indiana Jones and the Fate of Atlantis," for the Macintosh. Once again the Nazis are about to seize a secret weapon, this time from the ruins of Atlantis, and you-know-who is going to stop them.

"Sam & Max Hit the Road" is for the PC. This is definitely for kids. Two free-lance police officers, a shaggy dog and a hyperkinetic rabbit track a stolen bigfoot across America, stopping at numerous gross and bizarre roadside attractions. This was "best adventure game of the year" by Computer Game Review magazine.

Mary's place in Catholicism still being developed, debated

By ACHENBACH

WHY THINGS ARE

Why is the Virgin Mary so important in Catholicism?

many times been cited as the source of miracles, such as the miracle at Lourdes.

The "Immaculate Conception," which refers to Mary, not Jesus, has been Catholic dogma only since 1854; it proclaims