Hawkeye Bird Control indulges family passion

ByMAGGIEPETRUSHEVSKY The New Tanner

Protecting the environment by using nature to control pests provides the Frankian family with a living while also letting them indulge their passion for protecting injured birds of prey.

Dan Frankian, the entrepreneur behind Hawkeye Bird Control Inc., got the idea for his business from watching the King's falconers ridding his airport of seagulls with falcons.

Having always loved birds of prey, it was as if "lightbulbs went on" when he saw the falcons in action, Frankian says. He was serving with the Canadian Army in the Middle East at the time, and every time he passed the airport he saw the possibilities.

On his return, discussions with a Georgetown resident who cleared birds off Pearson Airport with birds of prey only filled in some gaps and confirmed his belief that his concept was viable.

Today Hawkeye has contracts with corporations all over the place to keep bird pests under control with birds of prey. Eight associates handle the contracts.

Their job is to move birds from point A to point B without endangering the birds, in the most humane, non-threatening manner, he says. They return the birds to their natural environment always remembering with some of them, that could these days be an urban environment.

Frankian's military training as a sniper made him a leader and a team player but his training as a photographer taught him to be completely independent. Combine that with what he calls his genetic predisposition to running a business because of his Middle Eastern heritage, and it was only natural he should set up his own enterprise in 1985.

At that point there were few regulations about the

business. Today he has all manner of federal and provincial regulations to contend with as a "permitted occupation."

The rescue portion of his business only started in the early 1990s. Now he receives calls from Animal Control Shelters all around the Greater Toronto Area for help with injured birds of prey.

"Wildlife rehabilitation has been a backyard things for years," he says. "But with birds of prey you have to be a lot more organized. They are very deadly to you and to themselves."

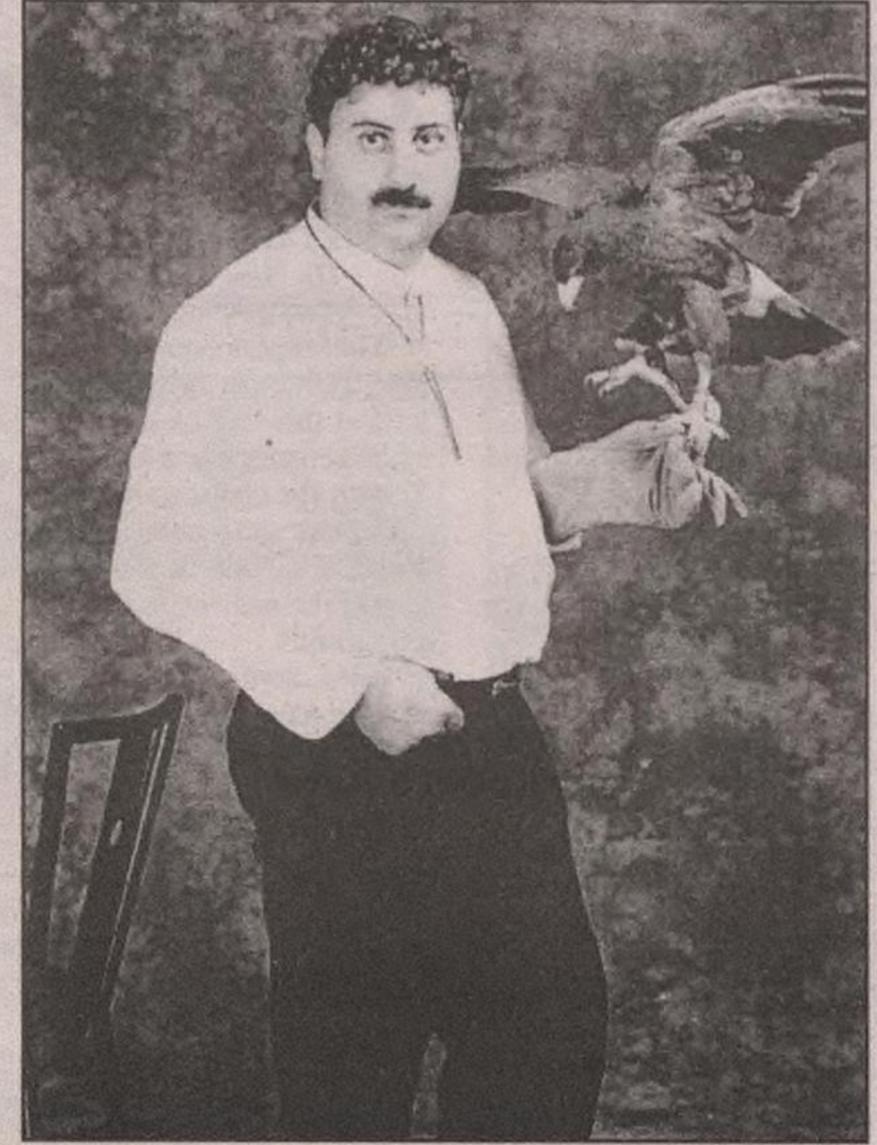
Since prey birds will not show any signs of weakness, by the time they are seen to be in trouble they are already very seriously ill or injured, he explains. They will already be on the ground and there is no need to use chemicals or tranquilizers, for instance, to be able to capture them.

Frankian takes his injured captives to the Wild Bird Clinic at the University of Guelph's Small Animal Clinic. It is the best facility of its type in eastern Canada and has five or six specialists capable of dealing with the sort of problems he brings them.

Frankian himself has become well experienced in caring for the injured birds since
their aggressive nature works
against them if they were left
to recuperate in a hospital.
They may well be on intravenous, need coaxing to feed,
and/or need exercising to regain strength when they return to his property on the
Niagara Escarpment south of
Acton. It all takes time.

The only one of this year's remaining patients is a sharp shinned hawk he calls Faith. She came to him following a severe snow storm last winter and will not be able to return to the wild until early next spring.

Faith and her mate made their home in Mississauga and he apparently struck a building on Hurontario Street in one of last winter's worst



MAJESTIC: Dan Frankian has been fascinated by birds of prey since his childhood. - Supplied photo

snow storms. By the time Frankian was called, the male was a frozen lump and Faith was almost as bad. Her tongue was partially frozen; her toes were frozen; portions of her wings were frozen and her feathers were broken and missing.

People told him they had seen her trying to feed her mate and lying beside him to keep him warm for several days

"When they say birds of prey mate for life it depends on the bird," Frankian says. "Some do. Some only stick together for three or four years. Faith is an example of how sincere that bond can sometimes be. It bring a lump to my throat just talking about her. That's why we called her Faith."

Frankian has also been called on to rescue Peregrine Falcons. They are on the endangered species list and get

even more special care than the more common raptors like Faith. The two Peregrines he's worked on in the last couple of years were victims of second hand poisons. Someone put out poison to get rid of pigeons but the falcons nearly died from eating the poisoned pigeons.

"Birds of prey have to be as fit as Olympic athletes," he says. "Nature is very unforgiving but it's even worse for them. That's why they have to be fattened up and bulked up again before they can be released. Faith's feathers haven't molted right or come back in right yet. She can't go until she's back in top condition or she just won't survive."

Why bother with the expensive non-productive sideline.

"As a falconer I think it's my responsibility to do it," he says. "It's your duty to help.



Two injured in freak accidents

Runaway wheels

A construction worker received a head wound when he was struck by runaway wheels from a truck on Highway 7 Tuesday morning.

The rear dual wheels of a cube van separated from the vehicle near Hyland Avenue as the driver was entering Georgetown at 11:39 on Oct. 25. The wheels continued 150 metres down the road and struck a man working in the area. He was taken to Georgetown Hospital where he was treated for serious cuts to his head, then released. The incident is under investigation by Halton Regional Police, the Ministry of Transportation and the Ministry of Labour.

Man pinned

A car which apparently started itself seriously injured a man at the Toronto Car Auction on Lawson Road in Milton on Tuesday.

Halton Regional Police say the 52-year-old man was walking by the unattended car when it apparently started by itself and moved forward, knocking the man down and running over him.

Other people came to help him and actually lifted the car off the man. He was taken to Milton District Hospital, then transported to Hamilton General Hospital.

The car was seized for investigation.

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For consultation/appointment, call The Wellness Centre (519) 853-3460

