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# Champion COMMUNITY Page



Michelle Bartlett works closely with many birds of prey, like this turkey vulture, at Mounstberg's Raptor Centre.  
 Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

## Bartlett keeps busy with her feathered friends

By **FANNIE SUNSHINE**  
*The Champion*

**W**hen she was younger, polar bears were in Michelle Bartlett's future.

Nowadays, the raptor program instructor at Mounstberg Wildlife Centre can be found tending to injured birds of prey.

"I thought I would be involved with polar bears when I was younger," she explained. "I always wanted to work with animals. We teach outdoor education programs (at the Wildlife Centre) but I'm mostly involved with the Raptor Centre's rehabilitation program."

Ms Bartlett, who studied zoology in university, is responsible for the care, treatment and assessment of injured birds of prey.

"We look after predatory birds such as hawks, eagles, vultures, owls and falcons," she said,

adding the Raptor Centre usually sees about 100 birds a year. "Usually someone will find an injured bird and call the Humane Society. They'll come and pick up the bird and bring it to us. We'll examine the bird and fix it up and eventually set it back into the wild."

The Raptor Centre also looks after orphaned birds.

"With the orphans, we try to avoid human imprinting," Ms Bartlett said, explaining the bird will eventually think it's a human being and won't be able to learn basic survival skills, such as hunting.

Throughout the school year, Ms Bartlett travels to different schools to teach students about birds of prey. During the summer months and weekends, presentations are done at the Wildlife Centre.

"I talk about the rehabilitation work we do, the natural history of the birds and I explain what

types of birds are birds of prey and how they live."

Ms Bartlett will show the audience different birds throughout the presentations.

"We have two sets of birds at the centre," she explained. "We have the ones that are rehabilitated and then released. The public won't see these birds. The ones that are permanently injured and can't be released into the wild are the ones we use in the presentations."

The majority of the birds brought into the centre were injured by cars, she added.

"The first thing we do when an injured bird is brought in is assess it. If there's no way we can save it we have to put it to sleep. If the injury isn't too serious we'll put the bird in a hospital cage and observe it. If the bird has a broken wing and requires long term care, we'll bandage up the wing and give it cage rest. Then we'll let it into an outdoor flight pen for exercise and even-

tually release it."

Fortunately, she hasn't been seriously injured in the 18 years she's been caring for wild birds.

Ms Bartlett has taken her knowledge of birds around the world and has been part of bird shows in Sweden and British Columbia. She has also appeared on various TV shows and commercials. And only once did a presentation almost turn ugly.

"I brought out a red tailed hawk during a presentation," she recalled. "Unbeknownst to me, a woman in the audience had brought her cat along and had it hidden in her sweater. I could see the hawk was glaring at something in the audience but I didn't know what."

"Just as I was about to let the hawk fly, the cat's head popped out of the sweater. I told the woman she shouldn't have brought a cat along and she said not to worry, her cat doesn't hunt birds. I said yes, but my bird hunts cats."

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### COGECO 14 Programming Schedule – Aug. 7th - Aug. 13th, 2001.

Tuesday, Aug. 7th		Wednesday, Aug. 8th		Thursday, Aug. 9th		Monday, Aug. 13th	
9am, 10am, 11am, Noon	Plugged In! - Early Week Edition	9am, 10am, 11am, Noon	Plugged In! Early Week Edition	9am, 10am, 11am, Noon	Plugged In! Early Week Edition	9am, 10am, 11am, Noon	Plugged In! Late Week Edition
5pm, 6pm & 7:30pm	Plugged In! - Early Week Edition	5pm, 6pm & 7:30pm	Plugged In! Early Week Edition	5pm, 6pm & 7:30pm	Plugged In! Late Week Edition	5pm, 6pm & 7:30pm	Plugged In! Early Week Edition
5:30pm	Osler Health Connection	5:30pm	Quick & Easy Ways to Healthy Eating	5:30pm	The Issue Is...	5:30pm	Quick & Easy Ways to Healthy Eating
6:30pm	Cable in the Classroom	6:30pm	War Amps: "The Tragedy of War"	6:30pm	Money Week	6:30pm	Money Week
		8:00pm	Milton Council-Aug. 7th	7:00pm	Osler Health Connection	7:00pm	The issue is...
				8:00pm	Halton Region Council-Aug. 8th		

Feature this week: Local Council Meetings - Wed & Thurs 8 pm