

## Watching For Hawks In 2004

It was early to be looking for migrating hawks. The day was warm and sunny, one of those soft, breezy, end-of-September days just before it really turns cold. The hawk migration peaks in mid-October along this eastern fly way. I knew I would see some who make this area their year round home and hoped to see a few leaving early on their way south.

What a gift! To sit in the park on a blue stone wall on top of a hill looking over the Brandywine Valley in Northern Delaware, waiting and watching for hawks. Having taken this year off from teaching I was free to spend the day hiking and looking for hawks. This would be a year of rest, reading, reflection on teaching, and looking for what I would do next.

I have always loved hawks and look for them wherever I go. I had an amazing experience in Ireland walking in the woods for an hour with a Harris's hawk on my gloved hand. He would fly to the trees and return to my hand for a bit of chicken. It was a thrill to see his eyes and talons up close.

Some American Indian cultures use the hawk as a totem. The power of the hawk is clear seeing. Indians call upon that power to guide them in their relationships with each other and the world. The survival tools of

the hawk make it a unique animal. A kettle of hawks can often be seen circling or soaring high above the fields looking for prey. Like other raptors, the hawk is alert, watching, looking, and then moving only when there is a reason to move. The hawk acts only out of need at a particular moment. With the world's sharpest eye the hawk sees even the smallest rodent. What would it be like to see so clearly? To see the whole picture, a life laid out rather than be bogged down in the minute details of day-to-day life? Wouldn't it be great to sit, perched and waiting until you see exactly what you need and then go for it?

And soaring! To soar, to rise without flapping. Soaring uses about 1/20 the energy of flapping in flight. Using the warm, upward moving air and updrafts that bounce off mountain ridges hawks are carried skyward and forward. This year I will stop flapping. I will rise upward using little energy and look carefully to see clearly everything that is available. Then I will choose exactly what I want. No wasted energy. No trying to do more, be better, be the best.

On this September day I saw several turkey buzzards and one red tailed hawk. As the hawk soared I saw its beautiful shadow over the field, perfectly matching its flight. As I watched I could hear the noise of car

horns, the local fire station, hammering of a construction crew in the park, and the jets heading to and from Philadelphia. All reminders of the constant human activity around me. Do the hawks tune out all this human interference, listening only for the rustle of leaves? During this year without a paycheck can I tune out the interference of worry about paying bills and whether or not I will find another job? Will I draw on the power of the clear-seeing hawk to see what I need to do next?



Red Tailed Hawk on Cottage Roof

After that year off I joined the staff of another Montessori school. Four years later I retired and moved back to Bethlehem and now enjoy watching hawks here at Moravian Village. A few weeks ago a sharp-shinned hawk sat in the tree outside my cottage. The hawk watching continues!

*Debby Morrison*



Debby's Christmas Putz



Atrium Christmas Putz