

Column 070621

A Verona institution is no more. After 30 years of caring for, researching and writing about injured birds, Kit Chubb is retiring, and the Avian Care and Research Foundation will cease to be. Kit and her late husband Robin created the foundation at their home on Road 38, and it immediately became the place to go with your injured loon or your baby robin. Kit used her nursing training and her keen analytical skills to mend bones, nurse wounds, and rear orphans, but her eye was always on the educational side of the operation. She was particularly drawn to study owls and raptors. From the beginning, she caused a stir in the (then) small world of avian care. As she notes in her writing, *"Our approach to care was as much hands-off as possible". "This "impose the least, release the soonest" caused us to break with many rehabilitation traditions. The concept also reduced the work, reduced the stress on both bird and worker, and greatly speeded the recovery and release rate."* Kit has taught hundreds of local people the importance of letting nature handle what nature can handle, and she is internationally known for her meticulous documentation and pioneering techniques. She X-rayed thousands of birds, created a database of thousands more, taught students through post mortems, photographed and sketched her patients, banded over 1500 birds and most importantly – watched and watched her charges in the many aviaries that Robin built. The aviaries have been gone for some time. Severe respiratory illness, caused by her body's reaction to a protein in the bird dander caused Kit to stop working directly with birds. "I should have stopped in 1988 when they told me [about it]" she says, "but I was having a wonderful time. I didn't want to stop" After the hands-on work ended, Kit continued to use her extensive records to write and publish. She has written two books - *Beaks, Brains and Bones* and *The Avian Ark* – and many articles on everything from using a scanner as a camera to the do's and don'ts of nests, eggs and young birds. So, when you find a sick turkey vulture, don't call Kit anymore. Call Sue Meech in Napanee 354-0624. But you can go to Kit's website for some information: www.kitchubb.ca. There you'll find many of her articles, as well as chapter postings of her latest work in progress – a book about great blue herons. Brava to Kit for her determination, her skill, and her contributions to the avian world and best wishes for a glorious retirement.

Congratulations to Julie Sleeth of Sydenham for her gold medal in shot put at the Ontario-wide track and field meet. The only other OFSAA gold winners from Sydenham High, who won in 1984, they were local lads: Dan Reynolds (then of Verona), Jonathon Chabot (then Harrowsmith) and Paul White (then Hartington) and Sheldon Cook (now a chiropractor in Sydenham) who took the gold for the relay competition.

We're sorry to see the closing of Simply Takeout, Gerald Amey and Sandra Reynolds' cheery little corner eatery. The sign on their window says they're out of business and thanks people for their patronage. Anyone who has ever run a business for the public, no matter how small, knows how many hours go into keeping it afloat. Scheduling changes in their other work lives made it impossible for Gerald and Sandra to continue staffing the shop.

Best healing wishes go out to Della Amey.