The United States Fidelity and Guaranty Building, Baltimore, Maryland.

Scarlett overlooking the Inner Harbor area.

Scarlett

Baby peregrines.
In recent years the city of Baltimore, Maryland has been involved in a process of rebirth; it has succeeded in revitalizing its downtown business district as well as homesteading many of its older communities.

It was more than appropriate, then, that on Friday, April 6, 1984 the first city-bred peregrine falcons in thirty years were hatched on a ledge outside the 33rd floor of the United States Fidelity and Guaranty Building, one of the Inner Harbor area’s newest skyscrapers.

The hatching signifies yet another success in attempts by the Peregrine Fund, Inc., headed by Dr. Tom Cade, professor of ornithology at Cornell University, New York to save the peregrine falcon.

During the late 1940s and early 1950s the peregrine falcon population decreased sharply. So sharply, that by the early 1960s there were no peregrine falcons left east of the Mississippi. In fact, the Eastern North American subspecies of the peregrine falcon is now considered extinct.

Later research by Dr. Joseph Hickey of the University of Wisconsin concluded that DDT was the culprit. The toxins were having devastating effects on the calcium levels of falcon eggshells, rendering them too thin to withstand incubation. DDT was also affecting estrogen levels in adult birds, altering courtship and parenting behaviors. Sadly, Derek Radcliffe was finding similar data in Great Britain. You see, the peregrine was also dying in Western Europe and Britain.

An international conference called by Dr. Hickey in 1969 pooled information and drew world-wide attention to the peregrine falcon’s plight. Post-conference research is largely credited with the near total restriction placed on the use of DDT by the Federal government in 1972.

In the early 1970s The Peregrine Fund began its program of captive breeding and reintroduction of the species into the wild. The peregrine falcon species is actually comprised of a number of subspecies of the bird; among them the Chilean peregrine, Tundra peregrine, etc. The various subspecies possess subtle variations in color. It was from a wild caught population that The Peregrine Fund embarked on its fight to save this bird. The organization has since succeeded in producing about 250 peregrines per year at its breeding facilities in Fort Collins, Colorado and Santa Cruz, California. The birds are then banded and reintroduced into the environment.

In the fall of 1977 a female falcon bred by The Peregrine Fund was released from Carroll Island, near East Baltimore. She was a cross between a Chilean and a Tundra peregrine — the cross being an attempt to dampen her migratory urge and hence decreasing her risk to DDT found in higher concentrations in southern climes. That spring she reappeared on a ledge at the USF&G Building in downtown Baltimore.

And so begins Scarlett’s story. Promptly “adopted” by the employees of USF&G and the general citizenry of Baltimore, Scarlett has become another source of the city’s growing pride.

First attempts to mate her, however, proved unsuccessful, even tragic. Alas, poor Scarlett, the falcon, seemed to have the same run of bad luck with husbands as her novelistic counterpart. Two males brought in showed no promise at all. Rhett was thought to have some potential but was found dead in a grain elevator having eaten a poisoned pigeon. But it was Ashley who met the meanest fate of all. After surviving being shot by an unknown gun-

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In the months that followed, John Barber feels that he is a wild Tundra falcon since he possesses the white chest and black back of that subspecies. An unbanded tiercel was sited in Norfolk, Virginia earlier in the year and "Beauregard's" past will always add to history for several years. Scarlett and Beauregard remained together and hopes were high. During the months that followed, John Barber observed the courtship feeding and bowing. Most exciting though, were the courtship flights where the birds would circle and carry on the tradition begun in Baltimore by Scarlett. Scarlett and Beauregard's story is a hopeful one. In these days of killing pesticides and habitat destruction, man has succeeded in reversing his actions. He has given one of nature's most magnificent creatures a second chance of life. And for himself and his children not all is gone with the wind.

**Editor's Note:** Thursday, September 6, 1984 Scarlett died in the veterinary hospital at the Baltimore Zoo. An office worker in the Standard Oil Building noticed Scarlett perched on an abandoned building and obviously sick. John Barber, an employee of the United States Fidelity and Guaranty Company and former Smithsonian Institution ornithologist was notified and he took Scarlett to the Zoo hospital where veterinarians worked on her for four hours to no avail. Preliminary results of the autopsy showed that Scarlett died of an infection resulting from a puncture wound in the back of her mouth, possibly caused by choking on a bone.

Although Scarlett's death was an unexpected tragedy, nature has a way of perpetuating life. Within four days of Scarlett's demise, another female peregrine was spotted flying by the U.S.F. & G. building and landing on various ledges. There is an excellent possibility that Beauregard and the new female, named Blythe by the U.S.F. & G. employees, will pair bond and carry on the tradition begun in Baltimore by Scarlett.
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