

"A GULF COAST JOURNAL"

APRIL 2008

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>> THIS SPECIAL PRESENTATION WAS PRODUCED IN HIGH DEFINITION BY WEDU, TAMPA, ST. PETERSBURG, SARASOTA.

>>Jack Perkins: MEET THE MAN THE GREAT DOCUMENTARIAN KEN BURNS AFFECTIONATELY CALLS PUSSYCAT.

HE'S QUITE A GUY.

WATCH THE GREAT LIPIZZAN STALLIONS WORKING OUT IN OUR NEIGHBORHOOD.

>> GOOD BOY!

>>Jack Perkins: AND COME TO KNOW THE GULF COAST'S FAVORITE SONG AND DANCE MAN, IN THIS VOLUME OF "A GULF COAST JOURNAL."

>> THIS WEDU PRODUCTION IS EXCLUSIVELY BROUGHT TO YOU THROUGH A GENEROUS GRANT FROM THE GULF COAST COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF VENICE, BUILDING STRONG COMMUNITIES, LEADERSHIP, PARTNERSHIPS, AND ENDOWED PHILANTHROPY.

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>>Jack Perkins: DEAR JOURNAL, WE CONSIDER PERFORMERS AND

PERFORMANCES AS WE WANDER THE GULF COAST THIS MONTH,
PERFORMERS OF ALL KINDS.

THE RANGE OF PERFORMANCE AVAILABLE ON THE GULF COAST IS ONE
GREAT REASON TO LIVE HERE.

SO LET US BEGIN OUR PARADE OF PERFORMERS, BUT BE APPRISED,
THEY ARE NOT ALL PEOPLE.

>> C'MON, BABY!

>>Jack Perkins: AH, THE TENDER BEAUTY OF A ONE-DAY-OLD FILLY
ALMOST TAKES YOUR BREATH AWAY.

SHE IS ONE OF THE RAREST BREEDS OF HORSES ON EARTH, A
LIPIZZAN.

>> IT'S ALWAYS EXCITING WHEN A NEW LIFE COMES INTO THE
WORLD.

>>Jack Perkins: GABBY HERRMANN HAS WATCHED THIS MIRACLE
UNFOLD TIME AND TIME AGAIN.

IT NEVER GETS OLD.

>> THE LIPIZZAN HAS BEEN IN MY FAMILY FOR 300 YEARS.

ONE OF MY ANCESTORS, HE WAS A KNIGHT, AND OVER THE YEARS,
THE FAMILY HAS ALWAYS PERPETUATED THE BREED.

>>Jack Perkins: THE NEXT GENERATION, GABBY'S THREE-YEAR-OLD
COUSIN BIANCA HERRMANN GETTING HER FIRST LOOK AT THE NEXT
GENERATION OF LIPIZZANS.

>> THAT'S MY BABY.

>>Jack Perkins: SOUNDS LIKE LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT.
LIPIZZANS ARE BORN BLACK, BROWN, OR BAY COLORED.

MOST EVENTUALLY TURN WHITE.

>> SHE'LL GO THROUGH A COLOR PROCESS OF GOING WHITE.

IT TAKES ABOUT SEVEN TO TEN YEARS.

MAMA DIDN'T CHANGE.

MAMA STAYED HER COLOR.

A BAY LIPIZZAN IN THE BARN IS CONSIDERED GOOD LUCK BECAUSE
THEY ARE RARE.

[WHINNYING]

>>Jack Perkins: THE FILLY'S FATHER IS THE SPECTACULAR
STALLION YURI.

AT AGE 29, A RIPE OLD AGE FOR MOST HORSES, YURI IS STILL
PERFORMING IN AND OUT OF THE RING.

>> THERE YOU GO.

>>Jack Perkins: BIANCA DOESN'T OWN A LIPIZZAN YET, ALTHOUGH
SHE'S A PRO WITH HER MINIATURE STALLION NAMED MAJOR MINOR.

>> IS HE CLEAN?

>> UM-HUM.

>>Jack Perkins: GABBY HOPES THAT BIANCA WILL SOME DAY FOLLOW
IN HER FOOTSTEPS AS HEAD OF THE FAMILY BUSINESS.

>> SHE KNOWS EACH HORSE.

SHE KNOWS THEIR PERSONALITIES.

SHE COMES IN HERE IN THE MORNING AND HELPS US CLEAN THE
BARN.

THAT LITTLE GIRL, IT'S IN HER.

¶¶

>>Jack Perkins: THEIR 200-ACRE FARM IN MYAKKA CITY IS HOME TO 30 HORSES, A DOZEN OR SO HERRMANN RELATIVES, SEVERAL APPRENTICES, PLENTY OF MENTORS FOR BIANCA.

>> HOAK, HOAK.

>>Jack Perkins: WORKING WITH THESE HIGH-FLYING, HIGH-SPIRITED STALLIONS TAKES UNBRIDLED SKILL AND BRAVERY.

>> GOOD, BOY!

>>Jack Perkins: ANOTHER OF BIANCA'S COUSINS, CARMEN HERRMANN STILES ALSO EPITOMIZES THE DEPTH OF PASSION NEEDED.

>> I'M 41.

I'VE BEEN WITH THEM MY WHOLE LIFE, AND THERE ARE STILL TIMES WHEN THEY BRING ME TO TEARS, THE KINDNESS THAT THESE STALLIONS HAVE IS JUST INCREDIBLE.

>> HUP, BRAH.

>>Jack Perkins: THESE MAGNIFICENT MANEUVERS ARE CALLED "AIRS ABOVE THE GROUND" A TALENT THAT SETS THE LIPIZZANS APART FROM OTHER BREEDS.

DURING THE MIDDLE AGES, THEY WERE THE MIGHTIEST OF WAR HORSES, SO VALUABLE ONLY GENERALS WERE ALLOWED TO RIDE THEM INTO BATTLE.

THEIR LEAPING KICKS INFLICTED DEADLY BLOWS UPON GROUND SOLDIERS.

>> WHEN I'M ON THE END OF THE LINE WITH HIM, WE HAVE TAUGHT HIM TO BECOME A WEAPON, A LETHAL WEAPON.

WHEN HE IS DOING HIS CAPRIOLE, HIS INTENT IS TO KICK ME.

BUT AS AGGRESSIVE AS HE CAN BE, AS SOON AS I CALL HIM, YOU CAN SEE HIS WHOLE DEMEANOR CHANGE FROM ONE HAND BEING A KILLER TO THE OTHER HAND BEING THIS KIND, GENTLE SOUL.

>> GOOD, BOY.

GOOD, BOY.

>> HEY, BUBBA.

>>Jack Perkins: IF IT SEEMS THAT ALL THESE PERFORMING HERRMANN'S ARE FEMALES, WELL, IT'S TRUE.

>> IT'S AN ALL-WOMEN TEAM.

WE ALWAYS GET ASKED WHY.

WELL, IT'S GENETICS.

THE HERRMANN'S HAVE MOSTLY GIRLS.

>>Jack Perkins: GABBY REMEMBERS RIDING A HORSE BEFORE SHE WAS OLD ENOUGH TO WALK.

>> I GOT ALL MY TRAINING FROM MY GRANDFATHER.

HE WAS AN OLD-WORLD DISCIPLINARIAN.

"I CANNOT DO IT" WAS NOT IN HIS VOCABULARY.

>>Jack Perkins: GABBY'S GRANDFATHER AND FATHER BOTH NAMED OTTOMAR HERRMANN WERE PART OF A RISKY LIPIZZAN RESCUE DURING WORLD WAR II.

THE HORSES HAVE BEEN CAPTURED BY THE GERMANS.

UNDER ORDERS FROM FORMER OLYMPIC RIDER U.S. GENERAL GEORGE S. PATTON, THE ARMY'S SECOND CAVALRY SAVED THE LIPIZZANS POSSIBLY FROM EXTINCTION.

>> THE FAMILY HAD THE PLIGHT OF SNEAKING THEIR HORSES OUT

WITH THAT GROUP AND COMING ACROSS, AND PATTON HAD ALWAYS SAID THESE HORSES NEED TO BE EXPOSED, AND THEN THE HERRMANN FAMILY DECIDED TO BRING THEM TO THE U.S.

>>Jack Perkins: GABBY'S FATHER WAS THE HEART AND SOUL OF HIS FAMILY AND HIS BELOVED LIPIZZANS.

WHEN HE DIED SHORTLY AFTER THE SHOW IN 2004, GABBY BECAME THE HEIR APPARENT TO RUN THE RANCH.

>> I'LL HAVE TO BE HONEST, THERE WAS A MOMENT WHERE I WAS A LITTLE OVERWHELMED.

THE FINANCIAL END SCARED ME.

>>Jack Perkins: SKYROCKETING COSTS, ESPECIALLY FOR FUEL, ARE FORCING GABBY TO CUT BACK ON THE TRAVELING SHOW, WHICH MADE THE LIPIZZANS FAMOUS IN THE U.S.

>> MAYBE WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO LET IT GO.

THEN I GO AND LOOK AT THOSE BOYS, AND WHO IS GOING TO BE THE FIRST ONE TO GO?

I COULDN'T DO IT.

>>Jack Perkins: THE HERRMANN'S ARE DETERMINED TO KEEP THE TRADITIONS OF THE PAST A FAMILY TRADITION.

>>Jack Perkins: ANOTHER PERFORMER, ASK ANYONE IN THE CITY OF VENICE WHO IS THE FAVORITE SONG AND DANCE MAN, AND YOU'LL HEAR THE SAME NAME OVER AND OVER.

THE QUESTION IS, HOW DID A FORMER ENGLISH TEACHER, A FORMER FINANCIAL PLANNER, HOW DID ERIC WATTERS BECOME MR. ENTERTAINER?

>>Jack Perkins: A FULL HOUSE THIS NIGHT AT ENGLEWOOD'S
TANGERINE WOODS.

>> IT'S ALWAYS A CHALLENGE.

YOU HAVE TO DELIVER THE GOODS, AND YOU HAVE TO DELIVER THEM
WELL OR THEY WON'T INVITE YOU BACK.

>> AND IT WILL GET VERY ROMANTIC AND PROBABLY THE LIGHTS
WILL HAVE TO BE TURNED DOWN.

>>Jack Perkins: FOR TWO HOURS, THEY WATCH ONE MAN, NO
SPECIAL EFFECTS, NO LASER LIGHTS, NO VIDEO SCREEN.

¶ RETORNO ¶

>>Jack Perkins: FOR TWO HOURS THEY WATCH ERIC WATTERS, THE
ENTERTAINER.

ERIC'S PERFORMING LIFE BEGAN EARLY.

>> MY FATHER WAS A THEATER PROFESSOR, AND WHEN HE NEEDED A
CHILD IN A PLAY, I WOULD BE THE CHILD.

>>Jack Perkins: HE CONTINUED THEATER THROUGH COLLEGE, THEN
STOPPED.

>> I KNEW THAT I DIDN'T WANT TO TRY TO DO WHAT MY FATHER HAD
DONE BECAUSE HE HAD DONE IT SO WELL AND I SUPPOSE I FEARED
NOT DOING IT AS WELL AS HE.

SO, THEREFORE, AVOID THAT AND DO SOMETHING ELSE.

>>Jack Perkins: HE NEVER COMPLETELY LOST TOUCH WITH
PERFORMING, THOUGH.

DURING CAREERS AS A TEACHER AND THEN A FINANCIAL PLANNER.

>> MANAGING MULTI-ZILLION DOLLAR PORTFOLIOS FOR YEARS,

THERE'S AN AWFUL A LOT OF ACTING THAT GOES ON THERE, TRYING TO KEEP THOSE CLIENTS HAPPY.

>>Jack Perkins: HERE AT VENICE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, SOME 40 YEARS AFTER HE HAD STARTED PERFORMING AS A CHILD, HE STARTED AGAIN.

¶ THAT VOODOO THAT YOU DO SO WELL ¶

>> I WAS SCARED TO DEATH.

I WAS SCARED TO DEATH.

¶ FEEL A SLEEPYHEAD ON MY SHOULDER, NODDING, DROOPING CLOSE TO MY SHOULDER UNTIL IT GOES KA-PLOP ¶

>>Jack Perkins: HE BEGAN PERFORMING SHOWS UP AND DOWN THE EAST COAST, MANY OF THEM FOR CHARITABLE BENEFITS.

HIS EFFORTS HAVE RAISED THOUSANDS UPON THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS FOR MANY GOOD CAUSES OVER THE YEARS.

¶ MY BABY IS ASLEEPIN' ¶

>> SUCH A GIVING GESTURE TO BRING A LITTLE BIT OF JOY TO THOSE WHO NEED IT MOST, THAT'S A REALLY NOBLE THING TO DO.

>>Jack Perkins: ERIC METICULOUSLY ARRANGES HIS SHOWS, NOT JUST A LIST OF SONGS, A SERIES OF STORIES, SOME PROVIDED BY HIS FATHER, NOT THE THEATER PROFESSOR.

>> MAN DIED TODAY.

MAN WHO WOKE AT DAWN OR BEFORE IT TO LIVE ANOTHER DAY AND DID NOT.

>>Jack Perkins: THE SOLDIER.

>> MY FATHER HAD BEEN IN WORLD WAR II AND HAD KEPT A

JOURNAL.

SO I TOOK THE JOURNAL, I USED THE JOURNAL AS THE CONTEXT FOR THE SONGS.

>> ON AUGUST 25th, 1944, THE CITY OF PARIS WAS LIBERATED.

ON AUGUST 26th, THE VERY NEXT DAY, SUNDAY, THIS SONG WAS NUMBER ONE ON THE LUCKY STRIKE HIT PARADE, SUNG THAT NIGHT BY MR. FRANK SINATRA.

¶ I'LL BE SEEING YOU IN EVERY LOVELY SUMMER DAY ¶

>>Jack Perkins: A MAN, A PIANO, AN AUDIENCE THAT DOESN'T COME JUST TO HEAR SONGS, THEY COME TO SEE A SHOW.

AND FOR THE NEXT TWO HOURS, ERIC WATTERS ENTERTAINS.

¶ I'LL BE SEEING YOU ¶

>> I WILL BE BACK IN JUST A FEW MINUTES.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

[APPLAUSE]

>>Jack Perkins: IN HIS PERFORMANCES, ERIC WATTERS LIKES TO DELVE INTO THE GREAT AMERICAN SONGBOOK GOING BACK TO SONGS FROM 30, 40, 50 YEARS AGO.

OUR NEXT PERFORMERS GO A LOT FURTHER BACK THAN THAT.

WE KNOW THAT SOME PEOPLE MOVE TO FLORIDA FOR THE SUN, THE SEA, THE SAND.

RETIRING TO THE SUNSHINE STATE TO PLAY A WOODWIND INSTRUMENT THAT WENT OUT OF FAVOR IN THE MID 18th CENTURY?

>> MAJOR PRIZE WHEN I FOUND OUT THERE WAS A RECORDER CONSORT HERE AND WE QUICK FOUND A CONDO AND MOVED IN AND HAVE BEEN

LIVING HAPPILY EVER AFTER AND PLAYING EVERY TUESDAY.

>>Jack Perkins: EVERY TUESDAY IN THE REHEARSAL ROOM AT THE ST. BONIFACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH ON SIESTA KEY.

BETWEEN BREAKS OF MUSIC FROM THE RENAISSANCE AND THE BAROQUE PERIOD, WE HEARD BARBARA ELSTER'S STORY OF RELOCATING TO THE GULF COAST REPEATED OVER AND OVER AGAIN.

>> MY WIFE AND I SETTLED HERE FOR OUR RETIREMENT BECAUSE OF THE RECORDER GROUP THAT WAS AVAILABLE HERE.

>>Jack Perkins: LYNELLE WILLIAMS, LEADER OF THE EARLYE MUSICKE CONSORT, MOVED TO SARASOTA FOR THE VERY SAME REASON, AND THAT WAS MORE THAN 20 YEARS AGO.

>> OH, NICE.

>>Jack Perkins: THE RECORDER IS OFTEN THOUGHT OF AS A CHILD'S INSTRUMENT BECAUSE OF ITS WIDESPREAD USE IN MODERN DAY SCHOOL MUSIC PROGRAMS.

>> IT'S AN EASY INSTRUMENT TO LEARN TO PLAY.

YOU HAVE JUST A CERTAIN SET OF FINGERS.

YOU CAN, WITHIN A MONTH, YOU CAN LEARN THE FINGERINGS FOR IT.

THAT HAVING BEEN SAID, IT IS NOT AN EASY INSTRUMENT TO PLAY WELL.

>>Jack Perkins: MASTERING THE RECORDER, WHICH DATES BACK TO MEDIEVAL TIMES, DEMANDS SERIOUS STUDY AND A LOT OF HARD WORK.

DURING THE RENAISSANCE, WHEN MUSIC BEGAN TO EXPERIENCE A NEW

FREEDOM AWAY FROM THE CHURCH, THE RECORDER INCLUDED AN ENTIRE FAMILY OF INSTRUMENTS.

THE CONTRABASS, TENOR.

GLAWKLINE.

THE OBOE-LIKE CORNAMUSE.

AND THE TINY SOPRANINO.

THE SMALLEST OF THE RECORDERS IS A PARTICULAR FAVORITE WITH THIS GROUP BECAUSE IT HAPPENS TO BE THE PREFERRED CHOICE OF THEIR MASCOT, BUNKY.

>> HAS TO BE RENAISSANCE OR BAROQUE.

NONE OF THE MODERN STUFF, NONE OF THE NONCLASSICAL.

>> I JUST MOVED HERE IN AUGUST, AND ONE OF THE THINGS I DID BEFORE I ACTUALLY GOT HERE WAS WENT ONLINE AND DISCOVERED THERE WAS A RECORDER GROUP HERE, AND CALLED LYNELLE, AND JUMPED RIGHT IN.

>> THE RECORDER AROUND 1750 JUST WENT OUT OF STYLE.

BECAUSE OF THE LARGER CONCERT HALLS AND THE BIGGER ORCHESTRAS WITH THE MORE MODERN INSTRUMENTS, THE RECORDERS COULD NOT BE HEARD AS MUCH.

>>Jack Perkins: THE RECORDER WAS RESURRECTED IN THE 1930s. FROM GREAT BRITAIN, NEWFOUND POPULARITY OF THE FORGOTTEN WOODWIND SPREAD TO THE EUROPEAN CONTINENT AND TO THE UNITED STATES.

>> I LIKE THE INTIMACY OF THE SOUND.

¶¶

>> VERY SIMPLE SOUND.

>>Jack Perkins: SIMPLE, INTIMATE, PLAYFUL, THE SARASOTA EARLY MUSIC CONSORT PERFORMS SEVERAL CONCERTS EACH YEAR. A LOYAL GROUP OF LISTENERS GATHER AT THE SANCTUARY AT ST. BONIFACE TO ENJOY THE UNIQUELY CALM AND CREATIVE SOUND. FROM MEDIEVAL TO MODERN TIMES, FROM EUROPE TO THE U.S., THIS HISTORIC INSTRUMENT HAS TRAVELED THROUGH CULTURES, ERAS, TIME ZONES BEFORE MAKING ITS WAY TO FINDING A HOME ON THE GULF COAST.

>>Jack Perkins: AS WE CONCLUDE OUR LOOK AT PERFORMERS AND PERFORMANCES, WE TURN THE TABLES AND CONSIDER NOT THOSE PUTTING ON THE SHOW, BUT A MAN WHO IS A MOST KNOWLEDGEABLE AND AVID AUDIENCE.

IN THE COOL MORNING HOURS AT MYAKKA STATE PARK, NATURE PUTS ON QUITE A SHOW.

>> COUPLE COMING IN FOR A LANDING.

>>Jack Perkins: AND ONE MAN IS IN THE FRONT ROW.

>> LOOK AT THOSE DUCKS.

>>Jack Perkins: OWEN COMORA, RESIDENT BIRD INTERPRETER.

>> GOOD MORNING.

WELCOME TO THE BIRD WALK.

YOU'RE IN LUCK.

WE HAVE SOME ROSEATE SPOONBILLS OUT THERE.

>>Jack Perkins: EVERY TUESDAY AND THURSDAY FROM NOVEMBER THROUGH APRIL, YOU CAN FIND OWEN HERE TALKING BIRD TALK.

>> YOU'RE LOOKING AT A GREAT EGRET EATING A FISH.

THEY HAVE TO SWALLOW THE FISH HEAD-FIRST.

IF THEY SWALLOWED IT TAIL FIRST, THE SCALES WOULD CUT UP ITS GULLET.

>>Jack Perkins: OWEN IS A WALKING ENCYCLOPEDIA OF BIRD KNOWLEDGE.

HIS PLAY-BY-PLAY COMMENTARY IS EXCITING AND INSIGHTFUL.

>> THERE'S THE KINGFISHER UP THERE HOVERING.

HE CAN SEE A FISH FROM UP THERE.

IF HE CATCHES IT, HE SMASHES INTO THE WATER.

HE MAY GET -- HE MISSED.

HE MISSED.

HE'LL HAVE TO TRY AGAIN.

>>Jack Perkins: WHEREVER OWEN GOES, PEOPLE FLOCK.

>> SEE THAT.

>>Jack Perkins: HE HAS COLLECTED 622 NORTH AMERICAN BIRDS ON HIS LIFE LIST, THAT TALLY THAT BIRDERS KEEP OF ALL THE BIRD SPECIES THEY HAVE IDENTIFIED DURING THEIR LIFETIME OF BIRDING.

OWEN, TELL ME, WHAT'S THE FASCINATION ABOUT BIRDS?

>> WELL, IT'S THE THRILL OF THE HUNT WITHOUT KILLING ANYTHING.

>>Jack Perkins: THE THRILL OF THE HUNT BEGAN FOR OWEN IN NORTH BERGEN, NEW JERSEY, AT AGE 13.

>> MANY BIRDERS WERE CLOSET BIRDERS.

IT WAS NOT THE KIND OF THING YOU ADMITTED TO YOUR FRIENDS,
ESPECIALLY IN NEW JERSEY.

>>Jack Perkins: HE WENT TO COLLEGE AT UTICA COLLEGE OF
SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY, GRADUATED WITH A P.R. DEGREE, GOT A JOB
AT A PRESTIGIOUS NEW YORK AD AGENCY.

>> AND I TOOK ROD SERLING ON HIS FIRST PRESS TOUR FOR THE
"TWILIGHT ZONE."

THAT WAS A WONDERFUL EXPERIENCE.

>>Jack Perkins: IN 1962, OWEN WENT TO WORK FOR WHAT WOULD
BECOME NETWORK TELEVISION'S MOST FAMOUS BIRD.

NO, NO, NOT THAT ONE.

THE OTHER ONE.

>> THEY DIDN'T HAVE THE PEACOCK WHEN I GOT TO WORK AT NBC IN
19 -- IN 1963.

THEY HAD THE NBC SNAKE.

>>Jack Perkins: AS DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL PRESS, OWEN RUBBED
ELBOWS WITH MANY CELEBRITIES, BUT HIS PASSION FOR BIRDING
NEVER WANED, EVEN IN THE CITY.

>> I ALWAYS HAD A PAIR OF BINOCULARS AT THE DESK.

AND IF A CLIENT WOULD CALL AND A BIRD CAME BY, I WOULD TELL
THEM TO HOLD ON, I HAD TO IDENTIFY THE BIRD.

THEY UNDERSTOOD.

THEY ALL PUT UP WITH ME AND MY BIRDS.

>>Jack Perkins: AFTER 20 YEARS WITH NBC, OWEN STARTED HIS
OWN P.R. COMPANY WITH HIS WIFE BETTY.

>> SHE WAS ACTUALLY MY SECRETARY AND VICE PRESIDENT, AND CHIEF BOTTLE WASHER.

ONE MORNING, I WENT AND WOKE HER UP AT SOMETHING -- SOMETIME AROUND 6:30 A.M., AND I SAID, BETTY, TAKE A LETTER.

AND BETTY LOOKED AT ME, AND SHE SAID, OWEN, TAKE A HIKE.

[LAUGHTER]

>>Jack Perkins: OWEN GOT ABOUT THE SAME RESPECT FROM A YOUNG FILMMAKER WHOSE DOCUMENTARY HE WAS HIRED TO PROMOTE.

>> AND THE PROGRAM WAS THE CIVIL WAR.

I HAD NEVER HEARD OF KEN BURNS BEFORE, AND I WAS INTRODUCED TO HIM IN NEW YORK CITY, AND I SEE THIS KID WHEN I COME IN. AND EVERYBODY IS KIND OF FAWNING OVER HIM.

I'M INTRODUCED TO HIM, KEN BURNS, OWEN COMORA.

HE'S NOT THAT FRIENDLY TOWARDS ME.

>> HE CAME INTO MY OFFICE, AND I JUST DID NOT LIKE HIM AT ALL.

>> I GUESS HE THOUGHT THAT I WAS A BROADWAY TYPE PRESS AGENT.

>> AND AT THE END, I RATHER DISDAINFULLY SAID, WHAT, DO I NOW HAVE TO CALL YOU PUSSYCAT AND YOU CALL ME SWEETHEART NOW?

IS THAT WHAT IT IS?

BECAUSE THIS IS THE LANGUAGE OF FLACK.

>> AND WE FORMED A KIND OF A BOND, AND OVER THE YEARS, WE STILL TALK TO EACH OTHER THE SAME WAY.

IT IS NOW -- THE PUSSYCAT AND SWEETHEART HAVE BECOME TERMS OF ENDEARMENT.

>> HE IS A PUSSYCAT.

HE'S JUST ONE OF THE GREAT ALL-AROUND HUMAN BEINGS I HAVE EVER MET.

>> BETTY, I JUST SAW A MALE AND FEMALE WOOD DUCK OUT THERE WALKING IN THE BACK.

I'M REALLY SURPRISED.

>>Jack Perkins: OWEN AND BETTY RETIRED TO SARASOTA IN 1999. COMPATIBLE AND COMPLETELY OPPOSITE.

>> LOOK AT THE NEIGHBORS OVER THERE!

>> NO, BETTY.

NO, BETTY, WE WON'T DO THAT.

MY WIFE IS NOT A BIRDER.

SHE ENCOURAGES ME TO BIRD WHENEVER I WANT AS LONG AS SHE DOESN'T HAVE TO COME WITH ME.

HERE ARE A COUPLE OF BLACK NECK STILTS.

>>Jack Perkins: UNSURE OF WHAT TO DO WITH HIS NEWFOUND FREE TIME, OWEN APPROACHED THE FOLKS AT MYAKKA WITH AN IDEA.

>> I SAID, YOU KNOW, WHY DON'T WE SET UP A BIRDING PROGRAM. I'LL BRING MY SPOTTING SCOPE AND MY BINOCULARS AND TRY TO TEACH PEOPLE ABOUT THE BIRDS OF MYAKKA.

AND THEY THOUGHT THAT WAS A GREAT IDEA.

>>Jack Perkins: NINE YEARS LATER, THE BIRD TALK IS STILL GOING STRONG, EVEN ON HIS OFF DAYS, THE BIRD INTERPRETER IS

STILL INTERPRETING.

>> THE TURKEY VULTURE GLIDES WITH KIND OF A V.

"V" FOR VULTURE.

IF THEY WERE EAGLES, THEY WOULD GLIDE WITH THEIR WINGS EVEN.

EVEN FOR EAGLE.

"E" FOR EAGLE.

>>Jack Perkins: AND THE OSPREY, OF COURSE, FLIES LIKE THAT.

>> YEAH.

[LAUGHTER]

>>Jack Perkins: AS A BIRD CALLED AN AMERICAN BITTERN WANDERS INTO SIGHT, IT IS CLEAR THAT THE THRILL OF THE HUNT IS STILL ALIVE 63 YEARS AFTER OWEN'S BIRDING BEGAN.

>> HE CAUGHT A SNAKE RIGHT HERE.

THIS IS THE BEST VIEW I'VE EVER HAD.

>>Jack Perkins: OWEN, YOU KNOW THERE ARE CYNICS WHO FEEL THAT BIRDERS REALLY NEED TO GET A LIFE.

>> WELL, JACK, I HAVE TO TELL YOU THAT WE HAVE A LIFE, AND WHEN WE GO BIRDING, IT'S A BEAUTIFUL LIFE.

>>Jack Perkins: A BEAUTIFUL LIFE THAT IS TRANQUIL AND REWARDING.

A LIFE DEFINITELY NOT FOR THE BIRDS.

SPEAKING OF BIRDS AND MYAKKA STATE PARK, THE OTHER DAY WE WERE OUT AT MYAKKA SHOOTING THESE KIND OF THINGS, STAND-UPPERS, WHERE I STAND AND PRATTLE ON ABOUT SOMETHING, ONLY AFTER WE FINISHED DID ANY OF US LOOK UP AND REALIZE

THAT ABOUT EIGHT FEET ABOVE MY HEAD ON A BRANCH THERE SAT A
MAGNIFICENT RED-SHOULDERED HAWK.

WE LEAVE YOU NOW WITH SOME GLIMPSES OF THAT GREAT BIRD AND
SOME OF HIS MYAKKA NEIGHBORS.

REALTIME CAPTIONING BY AMERICAPTION, INC.

¶¶

>> THIS WEDU PRODUCTION IS EXCLUSIVELY BROUGHT TO YOU
THROUGH A GENEROUS GRANT FROM THE GULF COAST COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION OF VENICE, BUILDING STRONG COMMUNITIES,
LEADERSHIP, PARTNERSHIP, AND ENDOWED PHILANTHROPY.