



## Falcons keep gulls in check at landfill

This past winter was a big year for the Snowy Owl. These birds were spotted in many southern areas where they don't often roam. Birders everywhere were delighted, and many flocked to areas where these snow white birds could be seen.

If you were watching the news, you may have seen the controversy over the lethal removal of Snowy Owls from an airport. This was quickly remedied after an outpouring of support from various bird conservation groups. While it is sometimes necessary to control birds to protect human health and safety, there are many non-lethal methods available.

Living in the Finger Lakes, I'm sure many of us have seen the wooden coyote cutouts that are meant to scare geese away from certain beaches. These aren't always effective over time, and the geese may come back. Some people use plastic owls or raptor calls to keep pest birds away from parking lots, docks, houses and more.

Seneca Meadows Inc., the company that sponsors all of the programming at the Seneca Meadows Wetland Preserve and Education Center, employs a very effective method of bird control at its landfill.

In 2007, the company had over 40,000 gulls scavenging at the site,

### NATURE NICHE

Amy Barra



creating hazardous conditions for employees, visitors and the birds. The solution came by contracting with American Falconry Services. American Falconry trains falcons to perform "fly-arounds" where gulls are feeding. The gulls are scared off just by the presence of this natural predator. The program has dramatically reduced the number of gulls around the area.

If you're interested in seeing the Seneca Meadows Falcons, the company is offering free facility tours every Saturday (except holidays) from June to September. Tours start at the Education Center on 414 at 9 to 11 a.m. To reserve a seat for the tours, call 539-5624. Walk-ins are welcome.

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## BEAUTY IN SUBTLETY

By **MELISSA RAYWORTH**  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Paint your walls a bold color and friends will likely praise your creativity. Invest in a standout piece of furniture or striking work of art and your decorating is bound to earn compliments. But creating a noteworthy room with subtle, understated elegance is a bit more complicated.

Understated style "rides the fine line between too sparse and too cold," says designer Brian Patrick Flynn, creator of the FlynnsideOut design blog. "A lack of objects makes a room feel unfinished, and a lack of color can also read of lifeless."

But finding the right, subtle balance can be worth it. Although bold decorating has been in the spotlight for a while, a more neutral room, if well designed, "will never become tired," Flynn says.

"Every once in a while, it's nice to have a space that's just simple and clean," he says.

How do you design a room that's low-key and beautiful, not bland and boring?

### Soften every surface

Without warm, vibrant colors, you can create warmth in understated rooms by filling them with soft, elegant materials that look and feel appealing.

"Think of a camel cashmere sweater," says



The Associated Press

**To create this understated living room, interior designer Betsy Burnham, of Burnham Design in Los Angeles, balanced a subtle palette of neutral colors with a mix of rich textures and unique shapes. The effect is powerful, but the room has a soothing elegance.**

designer Betsy Burnham of Burnham Design in Los Angeles. "It's the simplest thing in the world," but it's timelessly beautiful and feels great.

Materials like cashmere, silk and "breathable fabrics such as linen or cotton blends" bring a sense of warmth and comfort, Flynn agrees.

He also recommends wood surfaces softened by

white-washing, smooth stone surfaces, and "broadloom carpet that adds texture and softness underfoot."

Use natural and artificial lighting for a soft glow. Sheer curtains can maximize daylight, while "in the evening, it's about lamps," says New York-based designer Jon Call of Mr. Call Designs. Place lamps to evenly spread

light throughout the space, eliminating bright spots and dark shadows.

Flynn also recommends dimmers to control light precisely.

### Compelling shapes

In a subtle room without busy patterns or bold colors, find other ways to

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## Short season, but a long payoff

Three quarts of black raspberries and counting.

It's my favorite time of year — when I can easily spend hours slathered in "bug juice," as Kevin calls mosquito repellent, gathering my all-time favorite berry.

When these dark purple beauties are perfectly ripe, they roll off each carpel with a gentle flick of my thumb into the waiting quart basket below. During the initial harvest, five to six are often ready on each "set," tumbling off in quick succession. It's a well-ordered dance, green molded fiber basket in my right hand, left thumb at the ready, eyes searching among the greenery, gauging ripeness.

As the berries pile up, I get giddy, imagining the sweet yet tart pies, jam and juice that will soon follow. Macerated and topped with fresh whipped cream,

### FRONT AND CENTER

Mary K. Schoonover



they make a simple, yet luscious dessert. One that's as tantalizing on my tongue today as it was the first time 40 years ago.

I was a toddler when my parents bought their farm in Rose and embarked on a second career growing vegetables. Wandering the field edges picking flowers for my mother is one of my earliest, fondest memories.

But not nearly as intoxicating as repeatedly filling stainless steel bowls with berries and trotting off to the kitchen to hand them over. Mom would fold them with sugar in her large ceramic mixing bowl and let them macerate as I

headed out for more.

By the time the canes were picked clean, the sun-ripened berries would be nestled in a rich juice, glistening and inviting. Then came the hard part — waiting until dinner was over, the dishes were cleared and the tea poured. But once dessert was served and the softened, sweetened berries mingled with cream in a sublime purple marriage, I was in heaven.

Black raspberries may be in season for just two short weeks each July, but they've rewarded me with a lifetime of memories.

I can't wait to go pick some more.

*Schoonover is chief copy editor at the Times. She and her husband, Kevin, are creating an edible landscape garden. Front and Center appears Fridays in the Times.*

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