

Birds on Telegraph Hill, Birds at the Airport

Where were you when The American Federation of Aviculture flew into San Francisco?

Wanda Elder, Rossville, Tennessee

The AFA started landing in San Francisco on July 29th for the 30th Anniversary Convention being held at the Hyatt, August 4-7th. My husband, Bill Elder, and I arrived on the 30th so as to have a couple of days to relax before the convention. The weather in Memphis had been in the high 90s for a couple of weeks so we decided to rent a convertible and head north up the coastline. Actually, we were going to rent a motorcycle but when I found out it was going to be \$375, per day, I decided that the convertible was a better way to get wind in our faces. Arriving at the airport we were in for quite a shock, it was 58 degrees. Needless to say we spent 3 days in a wonderful little Sebring with the top locked in the UP position. We checked into the hotel August 1, and there were already "bird" people enjoying a leisurely dinner.

The official kick off of the convention was Wednesday, August 4th but there was collating, folding, stapling, and even a little mutilating that took place on Monday and Tuesday. None of this would have run as smoothly without the assistance of the dynamic duo, Pat Chinnici and Nora Schmidt. Downstairs in the convention office, a coatroom with two tables, the stuffing of the tote bags began. Carol and John Brasaemle along with Bill got this started on Tuesday and the dynamic duo finished it Wednesday. As usual, these volunteers made themselves indispensable. This was the first time in many years that we had canvas tote bags. They were sponsored by Hagen (USA) and screen printed with large red letters proclaiming that it was AFA 30th under which was printed Tropicana.

They were stuffed with flyers, coupons, a *Pet and Aviary BIRDS* magazine, bag clip, pens, and things I can't remember. All placed there in support of AFA.

The first Wednesday is always reserved for the House of Delegates (HOD) meeting. While it is the job of the Board of Directors (BOD) to see to the daily running of AFA, it is the challenge of the HOD to approve any changes to the By Laws. This was the main focus of the Wednesday meeting. This was also the venue for President Gallaway to extend our thanks to the many people who had given countless hours to make the convention and AFA in general a success. Awards were presented to Carol and John Brasaemle, Beth Greenberg, Pat Chinnici, and Nora Schmidt. These people are always there asking what they can do to help and making even the most mundane chore a chance to laugh and enjoy being in the company of friends.

The vendor hall officially opened at noon on Wednesday and what an exhibit it was. There were our standards, John Brasaemle and Gamini Ratnavira who had more beautiful art than one would have thought possible. I

brought home one piece that is absolutely perfect for the motor home. Verleen Hopper (Angels Art) and Darlene Sousa (Jewelry and Gifts) made sure that there was jewelry to suit every taste, just as Marianne Helm of Tangy Design had clothing for bird lovers. Bird Toys Etc, Jungle Talk, Jungle Toys, and POLYPERCH presented a wide variety of toys and kept toys on the raffle table for every raffle. China Prairie not only brought what is considered to be one of the best incubators but also their famous sprout mix. There was also no shortage of knowledgeable people to talk with attendees about nutrition and product. There were representatives for Hagen, Mazuri, Prettybird, Zeigler, and last but not least ZuPreem. ZuPreem came with their candy tree again this year and Bill and I each won \$5, which I immediately invested in raffle tickets. I Deal Purification Systems did their best to improve the quality of air. There were representatives from The Bird Endowment, Loro Parque, and PETCO to entice and educate us. If you could have seen the *Bird Talk* booth you would understand why it is called Fancy Publications. They have more specialized magazines than I thought possible. We also had Carol Stanley from *Pet and Aviary BIRDS* Magazine. Carol was absolutely charming but I did miss that East Tennessee accent of Martin Cleland. Remember Martin? He had an Australian accent last year but moved to Tennessee about a month ago and has been practicing his Southern drawl.

For those of us with questions about the Animal Welfare Act, AWA, the USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) had two booths and was available to answer any and all questions. This year, NAWA was there not only to talk to our attendees but also to get input concerning their efforts to represent the bird world when it comes to the enactment of the AWA. You couldn't turn a corner without seeing an AFA affiliate. These are organizations that support AFA and in return AFA offers them a place to hold their annual meeting and a booth so that they can meet and greet old members and sign up new ones. This year we were privileged to have the following organizations in attendance: Alex Foundation, Avicultural Society of America, Contra Costa Avian Society, and Friends of St. Vincent Amazon Foundation, International Conure Association, National Finch and Softbill Society, International Parrotlet Society, Organization of Professional Aviculturists, Pyrhurra Breeders Association (I can type it but don't ask me to pronounce it), Parrot Alliance, Quaker Parakeet Society, The Amazona Society (AMAZONS RULE), The Red Siskin Project, and last but not least, The Tanygnathus Society.

We were disappointed by the fact that four of our ven-

dors, American Racing Pigeon Union, Brinsea, Canopy and Innovative Inclosures had to cancel at the last minute. They have all assured me that they will be in attendance next year in Florida. They also have our sincere hope that the causes for their being unable to attend while personal prove to be minor. They were all missed.

The hotel made box lunches available and set up tables in the coffee break area for our use we had asked the hotel to do the box lunches and then promptly forgot about it. It was the last day of the convention when I noticed the boxes in one of the vendor booths. Alamo Exhibition Bird Club, Higgins Premium Pet Foods, Pretty Bird, and Reno Area Avian Enthusiasts generously sponsored the coffee breaks.

Wednesday night, AFA hosted a mixer for the attendees called the Anniversary Bash and sponsored by two Tennessee clubs, Mid South Bird Club and Middle TN Cage Bird Club. It was an opportunity for people to sit and talk birds and visit with friends, old and new, with music playing in the background. Music that was made possible by a donation from Amigos de las Aves USA to rent the system. The actual CDs belonged to Brenda Piper and Kelly Tucker. I think Kelly has the largest collection of Beach Boy music in the continental US. This was our only real opportunity to socialize and learn at the same time. As one attendee described it, "A great opportunity to eat, drink, and network"

Something new this year that was a tremendous hit was the Passport Game. Each fully registered attendee was given a "Passport." It was his/her mission, should they decide to play, to visit each booth and get a sticker from the person manning the booth. When the passport was complete it was turned in for a drawing of items donated by the vendors. Total value on this particular prize was probably in the neighborhood of at least \$800.00. The winner, Dianna Stokotelny of California, was overwhelmed by the seven boxes of items – toys, club memberships, figurines, perches, bird food (lots of that!), pins, shirts, a two-year subscription to Bird Talk, and lots more. All I could think was that I hoped she was driving and that she had a relatively large car. There was lots of great "stuff." If anyone who attended the San Francisco convention and would like to buy their passport back (we plan to do these again next year and going forward), use the contact information below. They will be \$10 each, which will cover the processing and mailing, as well as a small donation to AFA.

Speaking of prizes, here are the winners of our Super Drawing items:

- **Avian Library**, donated by various individuals including Joanne Abramson, Kelly Tucker, Wanda Elder, Dick Schroeder, and Nancy Speed – won by *Marilyn Hawley* of Arizona
- **Alpine Air Purifier** donated by Ideal Purifiers – *Echo's Haven of Florida*

- **Gamini Ratnavira artwork gift certificate** – *Jennifer Culp* of California
 - **Cabo San Lucas trip** donated by Dave & Terri Jones – *Susan & Jose Gueits* of New York
 - **Ecotour trip to Peru** donated by Rainforest Expeditions – won by *Ingrid Harrington* of California
 - **Avey Brooder** donated by Avey – won by *Jan Allin* of California
 - **\$1,000 gift certificate towards cage** donated by Innovative Inclosures – won by *Robert Raine* of Nevada
 - **Silver and diamond earrings** donated by Long's Jewelers – won by *Susan Lindsey* of Alabama
- Congratulations to all the winners and many thanks to the very generous donors who made these terrific prizes possible.

In addition, we also held a double raffle for everyone who completed a convention survey form. We got lots of responses that we believe will help us do an even better job with next year's convention. The winners of the two mini digital cameras were **Verleen Hopper** of Texas and **Karyn Paulson** of California. If you still have convention surveys with you, feel free to send them to the Tennessee address listed below. We can still use your input to do the planning for next year.

The raffles this year reflected the theme of the convention, "The Evolution of Aviculture" with over 100 different books, everything from a 1898 treatise on how to care for caged birds to Jean Delacour's *Birds of Malaysia* to a basket of Rosemary Low's current books in print, donated and autographed by **Rosemary Low** herself. We also owe a special thanks to **Hancock House Publishers** and **T.F.H. Publishing** for their multiple donations of books to our regular raffles. The **National Parrot Rescue & Preservation Foundation** (Parrot Festival) donated a very popular item, full registration to next year's event. That wonderful gentleman from POLYPERCH, **George Cook**, kept coming over twice a day at least to donate an addition perch or perch/combo to every single raffle! And so many folks just showed up with additional items that we were overwhelmed by the generosity. Particularly, we'd like to also thank **Melanie** and **Mark Lowery** representing **Hagen** who donated some gorgeous Oneta prints that were some of our biggest hits. **Rocky Mooney** and **Tony Candelaria** brought some wonderful items from California vendors, including boxes and bags of quality bird food from **Leach Grain & Milling** of Downey, California as well as from **Silver Song West** of Merced, California, and great bird crocks from Fenix Research Group, Inc. **West Valley Bird Society** of California donated a Pet Pocket Bird Carrier and a Birdie's Tri Perch which is a portable perch with chew protectors and carrying bag, **Sally Blanchard** donated one of her sketches of a Bare-Eyed Cockatoo, **Tani Robar** (one of our wonderful speakers) donated a full set of her four parrot training videos, **Bird Supply of New**

Hampshire donated a whole pile of fabulous swings and toys, **Ginny Baker** of Baker Zoo donated placemats and coasters and a pin, **Avian Fashions** donated a flight suit and leash combination, **Kong** donated four Kongs, **Intraware** donated a set of two-way radios and a mini maglite, and **Nancy Speed** donated a double yellow head cookie jar, a macaw picture frame, and a terrific Michael Simon sweater that everyone was fighting over. Last and so very far from least, **Mark Hagen** really made our daily raffle, Silent Auction, and live auction. To the daily auction he donated bags and bags of food, limited edition caique statuettes, and for a three day special raffle, one of his new "vision" cages which is a new concept living space offering greater freedom of movement for your smaller birds with less mess and effortless clean-up. To the Silent Auction, Mark donated an armful of gorgeous silver coins depicting various birds from cockatoos to the Spix's Macaw, which drew hundreds of dollars from attendees for AFA. For the "pièce de résistance" (I defer to Sheldon to put the appropriate accents on this), Mr. Hagen donated a full set of Belize silver coins that were a huge hit at the banquet's live auction. His generosity was amazing and we thank him and all the other kind vendors and individuals who gave so much to AFA this year.

I wish I could write glowing comments about the speakers but since I was unable to attend any of the talks; I will have to leave that to someone else. I will say that it was great to be able to visit with old friends who once again were there as speakers. It was reminiscent of 10-15 years ago.

The culmination of the convention was the Saturday night Reception/Banquet (sponsored by Bird Talk), Super 8 Raffle, Silent Auction, and live auction. For everyone there who had the opportunity to either view or bid on the Silent Auction items, a special note to **John and Debbie Treanor** who procured and framed all but one of the eclectic art items in the Silent Auction. Debbie spent many months scouring the countryside for the unique and interesting pieces that were on display and won by some very happy individuals. In addition, **John and Carol Brasaemle** donated a terrific piece entitled "Major Mitchell's - Crests Up" that was a highly sought after item as well. At the live auction, we were treated to several of **Wayne Smyth's** amazing paintings and prints celebrating our 30th anniversary as well as the beautiful Blue-throated Conure. As an extra treat, we switched **Beth Greenberg's** inimitable ostrich egg depicting an Imperial Amazon and a Red Siskin from the Silent Auction to the live auction, where it drew lively bidding. Speaking of Greenbergs, **Dwight** surprised us with a very generous donation of cigars that several gentlemen gladly bid on. **Beyond Batik** once again donated a gorgeous quilt with an African Grey motif. We had a room full of wonderful, generous people who did a great job of singing

Happy Birthday to **Jim Hawley**, our acting CFO. The hotel was amused that we, as bird people, would choose chicken as our entrée for the banquet. The chicken was declared to be far from rubber and the dessert of Lemon Tart a pleasant surprise.

Sunday morning found most people checking out to return home while some of us went to a BOD meeting and others attended the Fundamentals of Aviculture course presented by **Natasha Schischakin**.

It is now Tuesday and the last box has been taped up and shipped and we are on a plane winging our way home. I am writing this and at the same time making a list of things I want to do for next year. One thing for sure, we are striving for bigger and better in Miami next year. Communication lines will remain the same throughout the year. For information or comments about the convention please email me at conventioncentral@idealbirds.com, or if you prefer for a direct approach call me at 901-853-6079. Letters can be addressed to: AFA, P.O. Box 159, Rossville, TN 38066. If you are interested in donating items for the raffles or auctions, or if you are interested in volunteering to work on any aspect of next year's convention, you can also use the address, email, and phone number above. Everyday enquiries about membership and/or AFA should be sent to the office in Kansas City, MO.

I wanted to take a quick minute to share with everyone my thanks to the folks that worked so hard to make the convention a great success. First, the "bag ladies," Pat Chinnici and Nora Schmidt who tirelessly have stuffed the registration tote bags year after year after year, as well as schlepping boxes and prizes and everything else whenever needed. Also, **Mary Ellen LePage** for getting all the local volunteers to help with the raffles and Silent Auction. Specifically **Rusty**, his girlfriend, and **Carol** and several others whose names are not readily at my fingertips, were consistently there to make the raffles run smoothly. They showed how important and valuable the local clubs and members are to making a great convention. Also, the lovely Nancy Speed who made the ticket drawings more fun with her effusive demeanor and running commentary. Last, but far from least, **Sue Hutson**, **Andy Sandford**, and **Carol Woodson** (the Virginia one, there were two at the convention!) who walked in and just went to work without even being asked. I guarantee that things would never have run as smoothly without their dedication to AFA.

I know there were many others who helped in other areas, but I need to make sure that everyone knows just how hard working all of the above folks have been and why the raffles/Silent Auction were so successful. To all the unsung heroes behind the scenes, a very appreciative thank you! See you in Miami! ❖