

Prudence, Perseverance and Progress

A Message From the Executive Director

by Robert J. Berry, Houston, Texas

Where has the time gone? It seems only yesterday that I agreed to accept the position of AFA's Executive Director. Actually, yesterday was last February and it doesn't seem possible that so much could be accomplished in such a relatively short time. There's no doubt about it, AFA is on the move. The positive momentum that has occurred under the leadership of President Desborough and the enthusiastic and active support of the Board of Directors in generating and maintaining this momentum is quite exciting. The future of AFA is bright. Granted every organization has its share of problems. However, many of these are being identified and addressed. Improved communications and infrastructure within the organization are a number one priority.

For those of you who were unable to attend the New Orleans convention you have perhaps already heard of the positive sense of excitement that was in the air. The quality of the speaker's program was outstanding. Many new faces were with us for the first time. The addition of Special Seminars was so well received that they will undoubtedly become a regular part of our future conventions. A number of organizations that had dropped their memberships in AFA are now re-affiliating. New groups are seriously considering joining.

Special events and extra time scheduled in the exhibit hall allowed more time for socializing and shopping the booths. The Legislative Roundtable resulted in productive and meaningful dialogue with representatives of the USFWS. We were especially pleased to have Ken Stansell, newly appointed director of the Office of Management Authority, along with Mark Phillips and Roddy Gabel, participate in these open and candid discussions. Even though the main restaurant and bar in the Radisson were closed due to recent flood damage, most people took the inconvenience in stride—New Orleans doesn't lack for restaurants and bars. The closing banquet was an outstanding event—excellent food, lots of laughter and fun for all.

Now we look forward to Concord, California and an exciting and produc-

tive year ahead. Even though the re-authorization hearing in Washington next month on the WBCA is requiring a lot of our time and resources, Convention planning for '96 is already underway. It's going to be a "blockbuster"! And, by the way, we plan to have the complete convention schedule in your hands by early June so that you can make your plans to attend well in advance.

The AFA Registry has now had a trial run and is being fine-tuned and put into final form. Active promotion and marketing should begin by the first of the year. AFA has been approached to participate in the planning and management of bird programs for a major Conservation and Research Center that is currently being developed. The membership committee has an exciting new membership promotion that will hopefully be announced before the Holiday Season. Our 1995 "Aviculturists: For the Birds" Fund-raising Campaign is underway. Every member's participation in this campaign is important to the future growth and development of AFA. Please support this campaign.

Few members understand that our membership fee covers both dues and the cost of producing the *Watchbird Journal*. As members of AFA we can take a great deal of pride in the quality of this publication. The magazine is the lifeblood

of our organization. However, the cost of producing the magazine is quite expensive and the major portion of our membership revenues goes for this purpose. Consequently, it is essential that AFA has additional financial support for funding the majority of our other projects and programs. Even though we have outstanding volunteer support within our organization to develop and operate our programs and provide membership services, these programs and services all cost money. For example, the decision not to publish Convention Proceedings this year was strictly a budget decision. We all wanted the proceedings published, the discretionary funds to cover this expense were simply not available.

Just stop for a minute and remember what AFA has done for aviculture, what AFA is doing for aviculture and what AFA can do for aviculture. *More than ever before, your support of our fund-raising appeal is critical. Make your donation to the future of our organization. Make your donation to the future of aviculture.*

Your Officers and other members of the Board of Directors are working diligently to improve, promote and expand the scope and influence of the AFA. As your Executive Director, it is exciting and rewarding to be a part of this. I feel certain that it will be for each of you as well. ➔



At the end of the convention a special meeting was held to evaluate all the things that went right. From left to right: Robert Berry, Mary Perry, Laurella Desborough, Jean Murphy, Sharon Rosenblatt, Diane Hansard, Jim Hawley, Jerry McCawley and Dale Thompson.

Photo by Sheldon Dingle