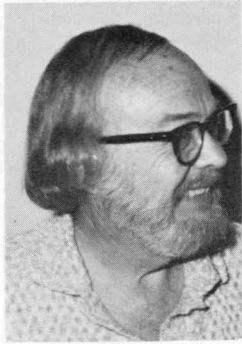




## HOW TO START A BIRD CLUB



Russ Sutton

Article III, section 2 of the A.F.A.'s articles of incorporation as a non-profit California corporation says in part "to engage in activities designed to support and assist bird clubs and avicultural so-

cieties in their formation and to promote the expansion of aviculture."

In this issue of the Watchbird we are publishing guidelines outlining, for those who may be interested, the steps to follow to successfully organize a bird club.

In the future, copies of this article will be available to anyone interested, along with a set of by-laws used by a successful bird club. Space prohibits the inclusion of the by-laws herein.

The following guidelines and advice will provide enough ideas and information to enable you to put together a good, active club. This information does not have to be followed exactly. As you progress and grow, circumstances may dictate other means of achieving your goals.

- I. If there are only a few persons interested in forming a club, do the following:
  - a. Advertise in the classified section of the local paper stating a bird club is being formed and invite inquiries by telephone.
  - b. Place notices of the bird club formation in pet and aquarium stores, giving a phone number.
- II. Gather six or more persons at a meeting in someone's home. Explain the benefits of forming a club as follows:
  - a. Education of all concerned.
  - b. Improvement of breeding methods.
  - c. Trading, buying and selling of birds.
  - d. Social communication and interaction between those with a common interest.

If those in attendance agree, proceed with the next step.

- III. Your first meeting will be primarily organizational. Once temporary officers are selected, establish a time goal to get other interested persons in becoming charter members. This may be 30, 60, 90 or 180 days, however, keep in mind the following: The date chosen for the club to officially be established

as an ongoing, viable organization will, from year to year, be the date or day of the week or month that newly elected officers will take office. This date should not conflict with National holidays or vacation time, which for most people is in the summer. Select or elect the following pro-tem officers:

- a. President — To act as chairman at meetings.
- b. Vice-President — Assistant to the President.
- c. Secretary — Keep notes or minutes re decisions made.
- d. Corresponding Secretary — Compose and mail meeting notices. These should arrive 5 to 7 days before a meeting and have a simple map and directions.
- e. Treasurer — To keep books and funds.
- f. Publicity — To place advertising and meeting notices. (See I-b.)
- g. Fund Raising — Raffle, donations from merchants, etc. At the beginning any of the above can handle two assignments. For example — e & f; f & g; a & e; a & f.

IV. Agree on a regular meeting day and time whether it be weekly, bi-weekly or monthly.

V. Select a name for your club which will not conflict with others in your community but will establish your identity and location. (City, County, Region, etc.)

VI. Determine your creed, outlining reasons for your existence such as improving breeding, education of all concerned, trading, buying and selling of birds amongst members, group purchasing power, etc. Put this motto or creed into a comprehensive paragraph which should appear on newsletter, roster and publicity.

VII. Consider rotating meeting places if you are going to meet in homes, which will probably be more convenient until your club has too many members to fit into anything but a large hall. Each host or hostess might serve liquid refreshments and cookies or cake. No alcohol until after the meeting, if at all. A good idea is to limit these costs at so much per person and require each person attending to contribute that amount to each hostess. Or have the club collect an amount from each attendee and give the hostess an amount to cover expenses, restricting each hostess to the same amount. **COMPETITION BETWEEN HOSTESSES IS DEADLY** and can ruin your club.

VIII. Establish annual dues. Your club will need funds for the following:

- Printing and mailing meeting notices.
- Procure a door prize, bird oriented.
- Local news media advertising.
- Poster supplies.
- Printing of roster of members. Names, addresses & phone.
- Purchase of raffle tickets for sale to members & guests.
- Refreshment cost, each meeting.

The door prize can be eliminated as membership builds, if you wish.

Considering double digit inflation, it is doubtful that a club starting today can survive on just a few dollars dues per year such as two or three dollars. Have each officer (see a,b,c,d,e,f,g), report at the next meeting an amount needed to cover his or her annual expenses per member. This will help in arriving at an annual dues that will keep the club solvent. In my opinion, dues assessed per individual rather than per family is preferable. No matter how you decide there will be problems such as, an adult member whose spouse comes along or a junior member whose parent provides wheels but remains for the meeting and partakes of refreshments.

IX. ★ By-Laws Committee should be appointed by the Chairperson Pro-Tem. This committee can be composed of as few as one or as many as all seven officers. The By-Laws should be approved and ready to go into effect at the same time the club has reached its time goal, or before.

For the charter party, and installation of formally elected officers, you may wish to have a pot luck dinner at a members home or a banquet at a restaurant. For this event you might consider having someone prominent in avicultural circles as guest speaker and even installing officer.

X. The elected officers form the Executive Committee or Board of Directors, whichever you wish. There should be seven elected officers, including the President. The President only votes if there is a tie among the other six, although he may enter any discussion. My advice is that your club be formed as a general bird type club rather than a specific bird type club such as canary, finch, budgie or whatever. There are many reasons for this opinion. A few are as follows: A general club attracts a broader spectrum of interest. The programs can be on many subjects rather than one. The raffle, which is the best fund raiser, can have any species of bird, seed, cages, supplies, etc. As time goes by, and membership gets

larger, specific type bird clubs can be encouraged to form by your club or out of the membership.

The general membership meeting agenda should be as follows:

- a. Minutes of the last meeting, read by the Secretary.
- b. Treasurers report, as follows:  
Beginning balance. (which was the ending balance from the previous report).  
Income, during the month. Indicate profit or loss.  
Expenses during the month.  
Ending Balance. As of the meeting date.
- c. Raffle Chairperson announces items for raffle.  
Acknowledge donations by members or merchants.  
Club purchases. Push ticket sales.
- d. Door prize drawing. This possibly should be done first, thereby encouraging members to be on time.
- e. Old business:  
Committee reports, if any.  
Board decisions, by President, if any.
- f. Future plans, if any.
- g. Program. The program can be on any avicultural subject. In the be-

ginning various members can relate their personal experiences, successes and failures, seeking advice from others. When available, knowledgeable speakers will gladly speak on a subject in their field.

- h. The raffle. Tickets for this event should be sold to members and guests as they arrive and as soon as the chairperson tells of the items on the table. Also at this time for last chance gamblers. They can be sold for 3 or 4 for \$1.00. The first ticket drawn gets first choice and so on.
- i. Refreshments served. Be sure to acknowledge the hostess and give thanks for a job well done. Buffet style is best. In another room, if possible.

This ends the meeting. If the information is available an announcement about the next meeting place and speaker would be appropriate sometime during the early part of the meeting.

A successful club's newsletter announces plans for the next meeting and never contains items about the last meeting. The rationale behind this is that newcomers care nothing about what happened in the past but will be interested in what is going to happen in the future ■

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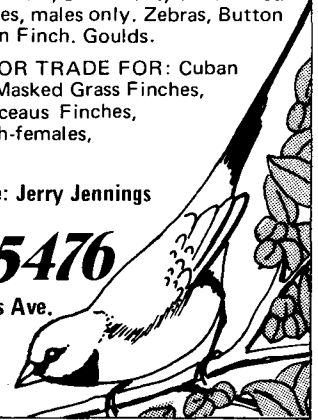
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