

AFA Convention '96

Keep the Flame Burning

by Dale R. Thompson
Canyon Country, California

For those aviculturists and bird lovers who did not have the opportunity to attend the 1996 AFA National Convention in Concord, California, you can be assured that U.S. aviculture has crossed over the threshold into a new era. The presentations on stage in the speakers' rooms, the talk outside in the corridors, throughout the exhibition hall and into the lounge and hospitality room sometimes reached a fever pitch concerning new ideas, techniques, successes and outlook.

Phrases such as "long term goals," "quality of care," "commitment to a species," "parent-rearing," "flock habitat," "live foods," and speakers discussing their pets as "my children," seemed to insert themselves into even the most stoic of discussions. For the first time we heard terms such as "food anxiety" and a veterinarian describing a patient, not as an individual pet or breeder bird but as a flock of birds meaning your complete aviary.

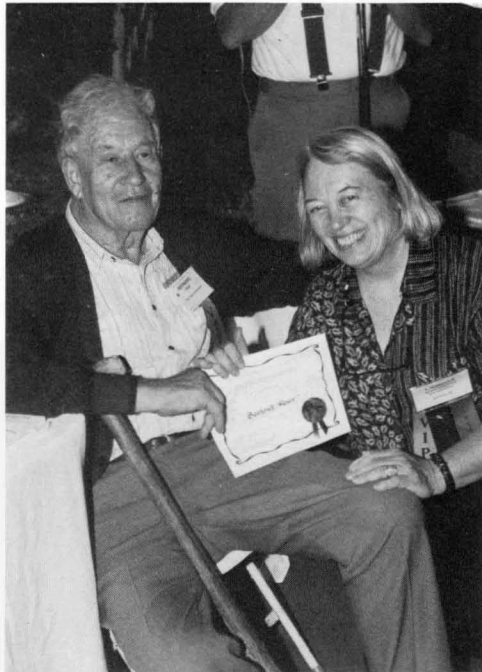
The high points were many.

There was Rosemary Low eliciting emotional response and avicultural resolve with her facts about the plight of the Citron-crested Cockatoo and other seriously endangered Indonesian island parrot species.

There was Lyrae Perry urging a full house of listeners to extend their devotion for the *Psittacula* parakeets with an urgent call to reproduce the Blossom-headed, the Slaty-headed Parakeets and Malayan Long-tailed as they will be the first in this group to disappear from American aviculture.

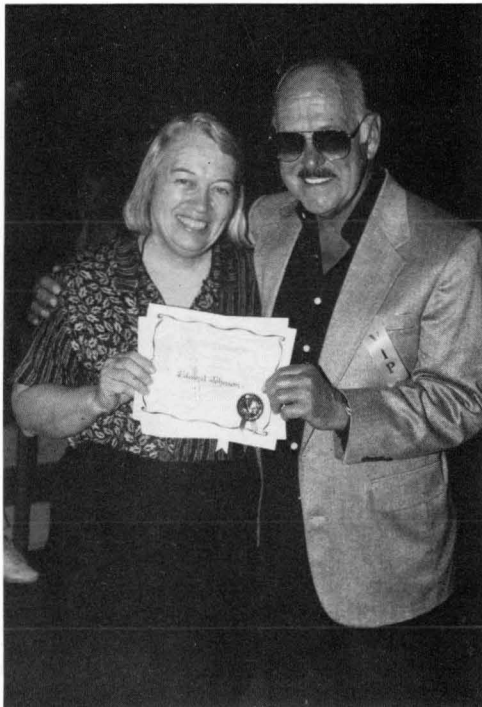
And there was Alan Lieberman giving hope and delight to the wild bird lovers everywhere with his descriptions of the Peregrine Fund's avicultural programs to save rare and endangered Hawaiian forest avian species.

Convention attendees "oohed and aahed" at the world class slides of hornbills shown by John Azua. They gasped at the courage of Chris Shank



The legendary Bernard Roer came up from Arizona for the convention. Laurella Desborough gives him an "Old Tymers" certificate of appreciation.

Photos by Sheldon Dingle



Edward Johnson receives an "Old Tymers" certificate from AFA president, Laurella Desborough.

as she spoke of her free-flying flock of Red-vented, Umbrella, Bare-eyed and Triton Cockatoos.

They laughed at the wit and wisdom of Dr. Luis Baptista in his "Husbandry of Finches" presentation. And everyone lucky enough to be present marveled at the exotic creatures of Joe Corvalho during the "Live Bird Performance"—tame and very handleable birds like the Andean Condor, Asian owl, Greater Sulphur-crested Cockatoo and Golden Conure (that flew over the heads of the audience) and a wonderful group of three full-flighted Chilean Flamingos that walked serenely up the center isle to Joe in the front of the room. A truly stunning spectacle was the tame Rhinoceros Hornbill grunting in a wonderful, outrageous voice when Joe fed it pieces of a banana.

We gathered for the "Roundtable on Parent-rearing" and heard four aviculturists of different backgrounds (yours truly being one of them) tell aviculture like it is, especially with regard to the males of certain parrot species. What some perceived as an alarm regarding the Moluccan Cockatoo was only intended as one of several key parrot species for American aviculture to work on.

We watched Phoebe Greene Linden give an impeccable program which elevated psittacine behavior work to the level of a new science. We confronted avian disease from a different perspective with Dr. Brian Speer and considered the importance of avian nutrition with Dr. Kris Kuchinski. From Dr. Al Decoteau we learned how bird-shows began, and we absorbed genetics with Linda S. Rubin (Cockatiels) and Lyrae Perry (Ring-neckeds).

Two remarkable aviculturists, Richard Olsen (pheasants) and Bob Elgas (endangered species—focusing on waterfowl) gave us great insight into the needs of two almost forgotten avian groups both in captivity and in

their natural habitats.

It was from a very insightful aviculturist, Eb Cravens, that we learned about the "natural methods of parrot keeping," allowing parrots and parakeets the freedom of a large planted flight cage in the offseason.

Indeed one of the great highlights of the convention were the three insightful pet bird behaviorists, Phoebe Greene Linden, Sally Blanchard and Bonnie Duncan. Their material reached the heights of what it takes to have a "great" pet in the home. The knowledge these three imparted regarding birds beginning in the aviary, going through the juvenile stage and ending up well socialized birds, is information no bird lover should be without.

Each of these behaviorists spoke on different behavioral areas but their material dovetailed beautifully. One must take notice of the importance of the "stages" of a pet bird's development. It is not surprising that this session was one of the best attended in the whole convention.

Yet, it was in the hallways and social gatherings, beyond the Walnut and Cedar lecture rooms, where the most poignant avicultural talk passed around. In the exhibitors' atrium with its 94 degree heat, AFA members would gather, sweat, hug, giggle and trade ideas. It was incubators and nursery supplies, publications and posters, artwork, tee shirts, jewelry, seed, cages, toys, raffle tickets and so much more.

There was the unofficial race for author/contributor signatures on the copies of Raintree Publications (Joanne Abramson) astounding new book *THE LARGE MACAWS*. There were the animated discussions on sprouted diets and natural vitamin supplements at China Prairie Co., the talk of shower sprays, bird bathing and international rainfall studies at A Fledgling Company, and the newest ideas in feed, seed, packaging, pellets and extruded diets from Hagen, Kaytee, Lafeber, Pretty Bird, Sun Seed and Zupreem.

The 1996 convention just would not have been the same without Sally



Photos by Sheldon Dingle

Left to right, Lynn Hall, Dick Schroeder, Gamini Ratnawira, Susie Christian, Dale Thompson. What a group of bird people. These folks have contributed so much to aviculture over the years—Hall with his rare doves and pigeons (to say nothing of his little desert foxes), Schroeder with his pioneering work with lories and softbills, Ratnawira's paintings of birds are among the very best in the world and are highly prized by those fortunate enough to own them, Christian, whom you remember from the Eclectus issue of the Watchbird, and of course, Thompson, our Editor in Chief and fine bird expert.



A flash shot in the bar where the auction and raffle took place by flashlight and candle. L to R Diane Cataldo, Shirley Johnson (a club delegate), and Carol Watson, from Grants Pass, Oregon. When the lights went out some unknown opportunistic male went about squeezing the ladies. We heard lots of face-slapping in the dark. When the lights came on, only Rick Jordan had a black eye.



L to R Sally Blanchard, Phoebe Greene Linden and Bonnie Duncan. These three animal behaviorists can do amazing things with folks' rogue parrots. They have an uncanny ability to communicate with the birds and with the bird owners also. They aim to put the owner and the bird in touch with each other for a much improved relationship. If your bird is out of hand, you know who to call.

Thanks to the Host Clubs and Sponsors

It took many people to staff the AFA hospitality booth each evening at the convention. The real stars were **Bill** and **Linda Ratto** of the Contra Costa Avian Society, who coordinated hospitality overall and who were there each evening. **Bill Nichelman** of the Capitol City Bird Society was an angel who provided a meat tray each evening, which he prepared at home and personally drove 160 miles round trip to the convention site each day. Wow!

Richard Cuneo of Sebastiani Vineyards donated six cases of wine when it was requested just days before the convention started. **Traci** and **Charles Emery** made sure the wine arrived from Napa in time for the convention then they and **Rebecca Palecki** spent many hours in the hospitality booth.

Sally Slaughter of Modesto stuffed attendee packets at home before the convention even started and drove them to Concord in her van. Other helpers in the exhibit hall and hospitality room include **Jan Carpenter**, **Cathy Knight** and friend **Katy**, **Tani Robar**, **Susan Ranta**, **Jim Rowe**, **Pat Shoemaker**, **Donna Tondreault**, **Judy Hemsworth**, and **Cecelia** and **Tim Haentjens**. My thanks to all.

Diane Grindol

Host Clubs

Chairpeople

Donna Tondreault - Regional Vice President

Diane Grindol - Northern California Host Club Coordinator

Sally Slaughter - Packets Chairperson

Bill & Linda Ratto - Chairpersons of Hospitality

Capitol City Bird Society

Donated food for Hospitality Room Wed, Thurs. & Fri

Central California Avian Society

Volunteers for Exhibit Hall

Contra Costa Avian Society

Pickup at airport & Exhibit Hall Volunteers

Foothill Bird Fanciers

Donated for Speaker Airfare & Exhibit Hall Helpers

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Central Pennsylvania Cage Bird Club
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**Fantastic Donations, Happy Winners, and Generous Bidders
characterized the AFA Convention '96.**

Auction and Drawing

Saturday Eve Drawing - Super Six

ITEM	DONOR	WINNER
Goffin's Cockatoo	Cockadoodletoo-Diane Owens	Linda Warring
Humidaire Incubator	Humidaire	Yvonne S. McGee
AICU Brooder	Lyon Electric	Joyce Sievers
Breeder/Pet Cage	Animal Environments	Kristen Bates
Tec Tonic Air Cleaner	Health Way Inc.	Cheryl Hammond
Brooder/Incubator	Petriatric Supply	Mary Perry

Saturday Eve Drawing

ITEM	DONOR	WINNER
Baby Congo African Grey	Summit Birds/Linda Lasarzig	Marion Lekawa
Baby Yellow Nape Amazon	Saddleback Farms/Wanda Elder	Donna Reynolds
Solomon Island Eclectus pair	Laurella Desborough	David Norton
Pacific Parrolets pair	Parrolet Ranch/Sandee & Robert Molenda	Diana Hansard
Portable Brooder	Dean's Animal Supply	Bob Queen
Playpen	Expandable Habitats	Kathleen Szabo
Book/The Large Macaws	Raintree Publications	Wendy Crane
Set of 4 Prints	J & M Toos	Tiffany Latino
Basket of Baby Bird Supplies	Avitech	Lisa Johnson

Daily Drawing

	DONOR	
Anne's Aviary	Rare Bird International	Bob Elgas
Feather Farm	The Feather Tree	J & M Toos
Golden Oaks Aviaries	Kellogg Inc.	Mary Brashear/Flying Feathers
Nature's Findings	Bar Ale	Donna Reynolds
Sunseed	Hancock Publishing	Tani Roberts
L & M Bird Bands	Sunshine Bird Supplies	Pet Bird Express
Fenix Research Group	Kaytee	Avian Specialties
Judee's Crazy Corn products	Stat Marketing	Pet/Ag, Inc.
Deer Creek Publishing	Lafeber	L & M Animal Farms
Medical Diagnostic Service	Zoogen	Wildwood Seed & Specialties
Polly Dolly Toys	Kong Co.	Hagen, Inc.

Auction

ITEM	DONOR	BIDDER
Avian Medical book	Wingers Publishing	Trevor Ashington
Mini Brooder	Petriatrics Supply	Jeff Clark
Micro Chip Reader	Avid	Joe Freed
Mini Brooder	Foster Parrot/Rainbow Aviculture	Mark Like
Signed Print Set	Bob Elgas	Melanie Allen
Hand Painted Feather	J & M Toos	Bob Queen
Orginal Watercolor Painting	Beth Greenberg	Kathleen Szabo
Orginal Oil Painting	Bob Elgas	Kim Hodgson
4 Fine Art Prints	J & M Toos	Kathy Millikin
Fine Art Print	Kathy Millikin	Katy Secor
Brooder	Dean's Animal Supply	Rockie Mooney
Bird Shower	Shower Bird	Lois Kay
AFA Conv.'96 T shirt	AFA	Kathy Millikin
AFA Conv.'96 T shirt	AFA	Jerry McCawley
500 lbs Pretty Bird Product	Pretty Bird International	Veta & Bob Holloway
500 lbs Pretty Bird Product	Pretty Bird International	Jami Kennedy
So. African Wildlife T shirt	Trevor Ashington	Katy Secor
Bird Photo Poster	ParrotDise Posters	Lisa Johnson
2 Books	Neon Publication	Rockie Mooney
Fine Art Print	Gamina Ratnavira	Mark Hagen
Book by Rick Jordan	Joe Freed	Jim Hawley
Book by Rick Jordan	Joe Freed	Gary Lilienthal
Playpen	Neon Pet Publication	Katy Secor
Cage	Mark Hagen	Kathy Montgomery

Blanchard and "Spikey" (Black-headed Caique) sitting on the floor in the Sheraton lobby surrounded by the attentive parrot breeders and pet owners with hours of questions concerning their pet bird's behavior...or the three young Princess of Wales Parakeets flying around Eb Cravens' room...or the fantastic food and drink refreshments sponsored by the Capital City Bird Society in the hospitality suite—just one of the tremendous services donated to the convention by many Northern and central California cage-bird clubs and societies.

It was after hours in this same hospitality room that one could overhear exciting and imaginative discussions about pairing, bonding and breeding success with endangered and rare parrot species, rare softbills, finches, etc. Here the zoo-person met the pet-owner, the pheasant lover visited with the raptor rehabilitator. It was a meeting of past friends after a year's separation and old time breeder meeting the new breeder with a myriad of questions. Talk focused upon larger cage environments and the New England aviculturist who wire-enclosed a full acre for his birds; a proposed network for disseminating updated feather-plucking information, lists on safe or toxic plants and chewing materials and on natural bird toys and nest enclosures.

And everywhere injected into the conversation was the passionate flame for conservation of avian species in captivity (consortiums) and the preservation of wild environments.

It has been many months since one of our guiding lights, Rosemary Low, characterized international aviculture as "being at the crossroads." In Concord, it was apparent that a vast majority of aviculturists have passed the crossroads and know the path we must now take.

Adopt a species, parent-raise (or at least have the parents begin the process), work with others, cherish your flock, let your fledglings learn to fly, begin to socialize your young parrots, catch the passion of Bonnie Duncan, inspire, observe, question, research, learn—and keep the flame burning!!!

In Spite of the Power Blackout ... Luminaries Light Up the '96 Convention

by M. Jean Hessler, Costa Mesa, CA

No, not those little containers with candles that add light and a quaint touch to holidays. These luminaries were Olde Tymers, the senior aviculturists, that lit up the convention. Olde Tymers showed up 32 strong. Now, that's a big heap of avicultural experience when you consider they all had 30 years plus of working with birds.

Attention to our experienced aviculturists will be a continuing thing. These folks will be revered and encouraged to be among us at every chance that presents itself. There has been a criterion of qualifications developed by the Olde Tymers Committee. The Committee will maintain the growing list of our avicultural treasures as their

names and accomplishments are brought to our attention.

To honor the Olde Tymers and to educate and entertain the rest of the folks, we are going to feature at least one legitimate old time aviculturist in each issue of the *Watchbird* beginning November/December 1996.

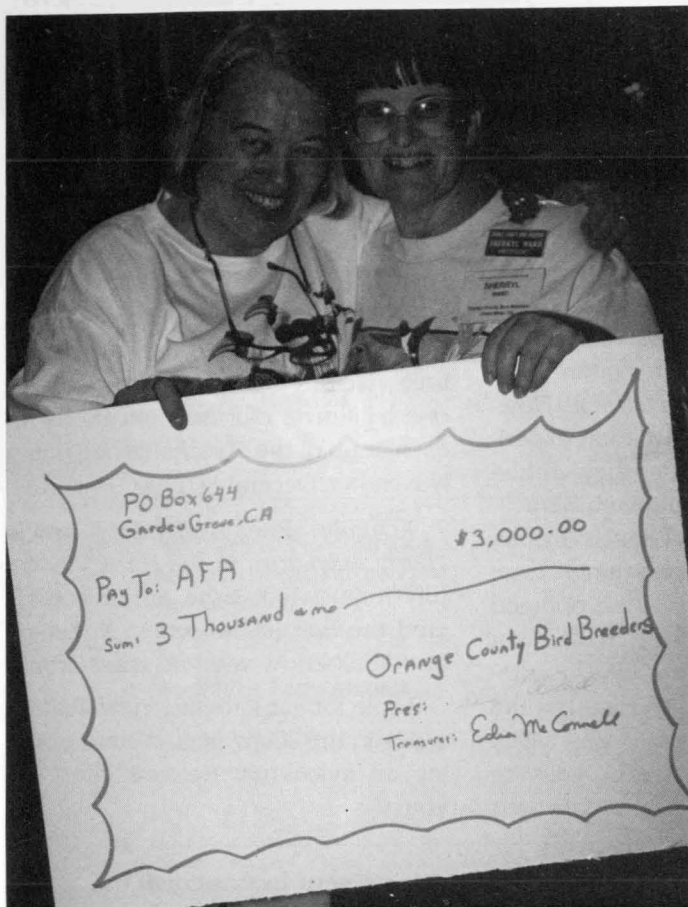
Actually, Rae Anderson's article "Early Aviculture in the U.S.A." in the July/August 1996 issue can be considered the first of the series. Anderson just didn't know what he was starting.

Look forward to this new feature series in the *Watchbird*. We are opening an avicultural treasure chest for you.

The following Olde Tymers were present in Concord

Trevor Ashington	Anthony Guinta	Aletta M. Long
Luis Baptista	Lynn Hall	Yvonne Smojo McGee
Robert J. Berry	Helen Hanson	Ruth & Glen Mitchell
Don Cavendar	Jim Hawley, Jr.	Bob Nelson
Roland Cristo	Donald Hudson	Mickey Ollson
Charles Collins	Jerry Jennings	Bernard Roer
Al Decoteau	Edward Johnson	Wayne Schulenburg
Laurella Desborough	Ken Kalenak	Joyce Sievers
Dick Dickenson	Roger Kenny	Dale R. Thompson
Bob Elgas	Ivo Lazzeroni	Donna & John Tondreault
Steve Garvin	Janet & Gary Lilienthal	

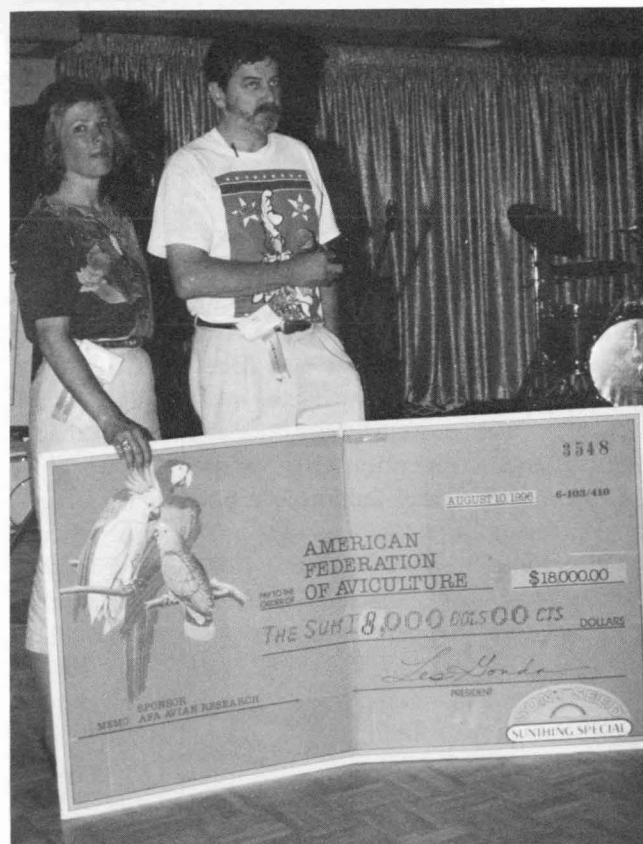




AFA President, Laurella Desborough (left) accepts a \$3000 check from Sherryl Ward, president of the Orange County Bird Breeders who, once again, led the way in club support for AFA.



L to R Laney Rickman, Eb Cravens and Darlene M. Vigil. Eb never had it so good. And the ladies look happy too.



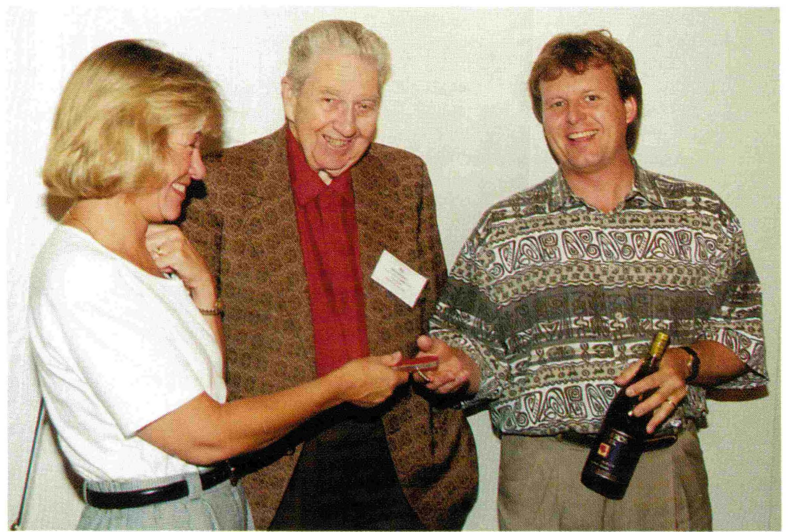
Jeff Clark, representing Sun Seed, and his wife Janice, present a \$18,000 check to the AFA. Clark and Sun Seed have been marvelous supporters over the years.



The 1996 convention had a very beautiful "theme" T-shirt—a pair of Indian Hornbills painted by Wayne E. Smyth. Here Robert J. Berry, AFA's Executive Director (on the right), tries to find a T-shirt large enough to fit S.L. Dingle. The only one really large enough had already been taken by Jim Hawley, the AFA's Chief Financial Officer (not shown due to lack of a wide angle lense). In the end, the hornbills were impressed on a dropcloth and Dingle threw it over his head and went off happy.



Sergeant Major Mitchell (AKA Dwigit Greenberg) was present to push the Major Mitchell's Cockatoo membership drive. This oversized pink parody of a cockatoo grinned and cast a plethora of pink feathers all over the hotel (he was molting, of course). The whole crowd had a lot of fun.



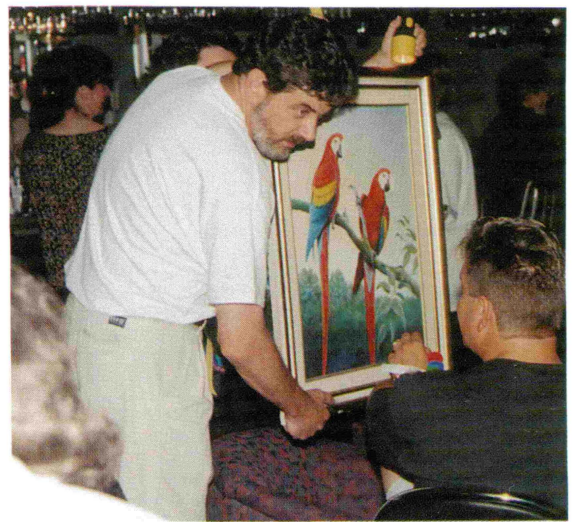
Al McNabney (Center) was very thirsty. Mark Hagen (Right) had a good bottle of wine but couldn't open it. Dr. Susie Ellis, blessings on her well prepared head, had a corkscrew in her purse —hmmm—so the affair ended very happily. I should like to know more about Dr. Ellis.



Dwigit, the Great Pink Sergeant Major Mitchell's, was chief auctioneer. Trevor Ashington added South African action to the shindig and brought it up to riot status. Lots of money was made and when the lights went out someone plucked Dwigits tailfeathers. Ashington went home with a sly grin.



On the left, Beth Greenberg (who feeds and cares for the big pink cockatoo above) donated a beautiful watercolor of Derbyan Parakeets. It brought \$700 at auction and Kathleen Szabo (R) took it home. Rick Jordan is looking happily on.



Jeff Clark got the crowd going at the auction where he raised the ante on a wonderful Bob Elgas original oil painting of macaws.

Deadline Schedule

November/December '96
 Sept. 1 - editorial copy
 Sept. 15 - display ADS

January/February '97
 Nov. 1 - editorial copy
 Nov. 15 - display ADS

March/April '97
 Jan. 1 - editorial copy
 Jan. 15 - display ADS

May/June '97
 March 1 - editorial copy
 March 15 - display ADS

July/August '97
 May 1 - editorial copy
 May 15 - display ADS

September/October '97
 July 1 - editorial copy
 July 15 - display ADS

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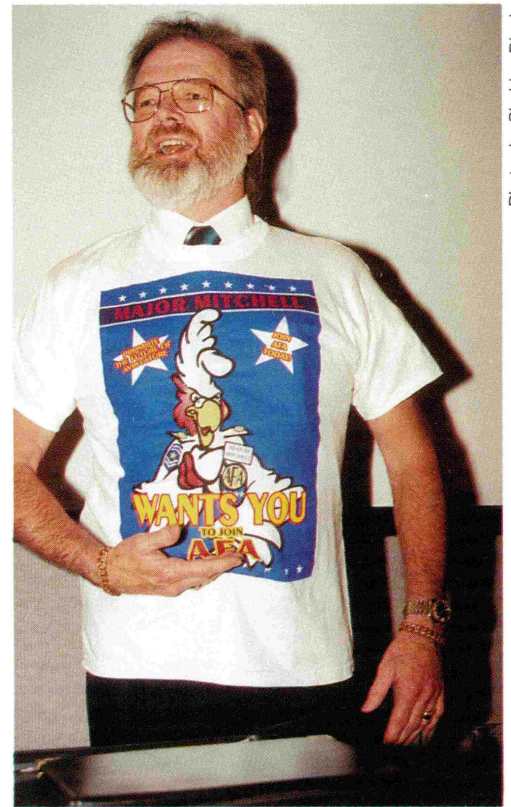
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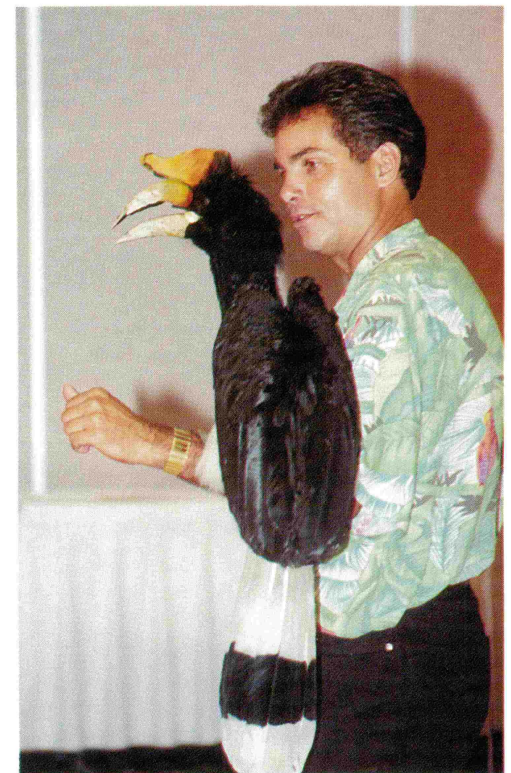
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You think Regional V. P. Richard Hazell is wearing a special Membership Promotional T-shirt. Actually, he has on a plain white T-shirt with a hole cut in it to show the tattoo on his hairy chest. Sun Seed sponsored the real T-shirt.

Advertiser's Index

Avigene Service, Inc.	18
Caged Bird Hobbyist Magazine	12
Cuttlebone Plus	39
Everybody's Bird Mart (Pomona, CA)	49
Finch and Canary World Magazine	19
Firethorn Supply	51
Followill Aviaries	15
Gold Crown Macademia Association	49
Grubco	15
Hagen, Rolf C. (USA) Corp.	21
Humidair Incubator Company	9
Lima's Exotic Birds	27
L/M Animal Farms	inside back cover
L & M Bird Leg Bands	50
Lyon Electric Company, Inc.	45
Magnolia Bird Farm	36
Nekton U.S.A., Inc.	17
Pet Warehouse	53
Prememium Nutrition/Zupreen	inside front cover
Pretty Bird	41
Raintree Macaws	36
Raintree Publications	47
Sun Seed Co., Inc	back cover
Sunshine Bird Supplies	37
The Wright Roost	49



Joe Corvalho put on a really entertaining free-flight bird show. One of his guests was this great Rhinoceros Hornbill—in keeping with the convention's Asian bird theme.

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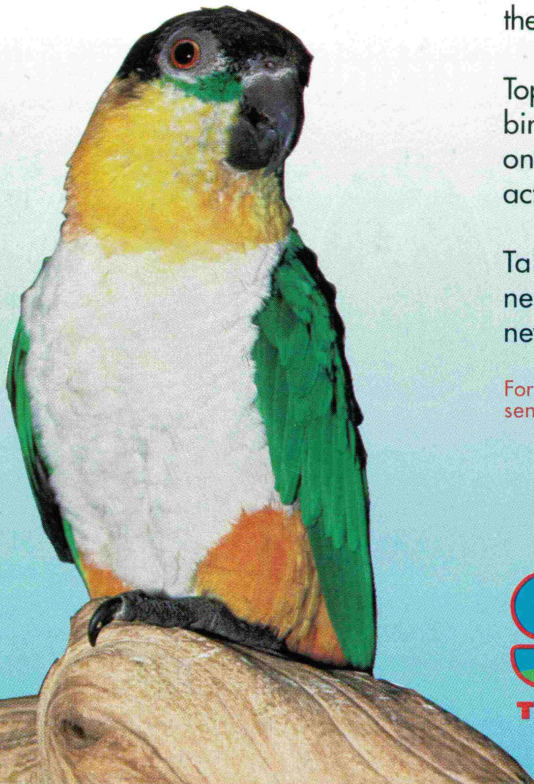
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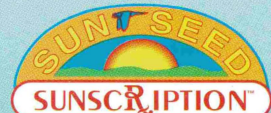
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