

San Antonio 1997 Memoirs of a First Timer

by Lena Baggett, San Antonio, Texas

(Editor's Note: The AFA Delegate from the Alamo Exhibition Bird Club (A.E.B.C.) in San Antonio, Texas had never attended an AFA convention before. She had the creativity to keep a journal of her daily activities and thoughts while at the convention so she could report back to her club with some accuracy (these notes are addressed to her club) and also reflect the ambience and feelings that prevailed. Her notes were sent to me by a third party mole and I believe them worthy of publication so all the members of the AFA can share the sense of wonder and excitement—and more besides—that comes with attending one's first AFA convention. SLD)

It is Aug. 5th '97, the night before my first AFA convention and I am scared to death. My palms are soaked. I had tried on every piece of clothing I own and decided, I have nothing to wear, even though I bought three new outfits. I don't get it.....

So I had a great idea, "Let's start a diary of some type to share with others." That means *you*, A.E.B.C.. Well, I fall asleep around 2 A.M. and wake at 4:45 A.M., 15 minutes before the alarm goes off. YOU CAN'T TELL I'M NERVOUS.

It takes me two hours every morning to feed and clean all the birds, dogs, cat, kids and, don't forget me. Trisha, the second delegate, arrives on time. We're off to our first convention.

August 6, 1997, we enter the House of Delegates hoping we don't trip on the way in. We were not prepared for what happened next. They gave us a tote bag and a beautiful name tag that read, in big letters, FIRST TIMER.

This is a "sign" that means HUG ME and they DID! I felt as if I were at a family reunion. We voted on By-Laws (what a nasty word) at the Delegate meeting. Every club, I don't care who you are, knows what happens when you say BY-LAWS.

If it had been the wild wild west, they would have sheriffs at the door taking side arms. After a long, heated discussion, we finally voted. when I receive my new copy of the new By-Laws, I will give them to A.E.B.C.

We went over the "Chain of

Command," what a wonderful idea. I thought, why can't we (A.E.B.C.) use something like this. So I will give these ideas to our president to look over and present to the members. So look forward to these new ideas coming soon.

Afternoon—it's time for PIJAC certification seminar. This is an extra class I really wanted to attend, and I'm so glad I did. For a new aviculturist, I didn't know a lot but this class taught me a whole new side. If you are like me, you listen to other people talk about their birds. But when they start saying things like VVND, PBFD, or PIJAC, what do these terms mean? You stand there wondering if you should ask—but you are afraid of looking dumb so you stand there and pretend you know and understand everything. Then the instructor says "I've been there. I know what you have been

Photo by Sheldon Dingle



going through." And hands out copies of *Illness/Disorders Identification and Treatment*. Oh, by the way, PIJAC is short for PET INDUSTRY JOINT ADVISORY COUNCIL.

What a night at the San Antonio Zoo. We loaded into three buses. At 7 P.M. we arrive at the zoo. Here you and 300 people are coming through the gates to hear our first greeter say "HI" We all look around. Again we hear "HI." Then to our left we hear "HELLO, I AM OVER HERE!" Then simultaneously 200 bird lovers groan "AWW!!" Our first greeter was a Double Yellow-head Amazon. What a great welcome.

We then follow our tour guide back to the bird aviaries where we had a Fiesta made for a queen or king. There were steaks, chicken, corn on cob, beans, salad, and cookies. They even had Margaritas, beer, wine, ice tea, lemon aid, and cokes.

Trisha and I had just a little *too* much fun.

You should have been there, the zoo was great. We walked around asking questions and checking out all the birds we wished we had.

We just mingled and got to know our fellow aviculturists.

What a wonderful first day. Oh, by the way, my nerves, I don't know just where they went but I lost them around 8:01 A.M. this morning when I received my first welcome hug.

I want to thank you for giving me, as your AFA Delegate, this opportunity to represent A.E.B.C. at the 1997 AFA convention. It was an experience I will never forget. I hope that some time in the future you will all have a chance to attend one also. ➤

Sharon Rosenblatt (standing) and hardworking Lou Dittoe, national and local convention coordinators respectively, were largely responsible for the great success of the AFA Convention in San Antonio.

Strong supporters of the AFA (left to right) Gene Richards, Ogden, Utah, Bob Jennings, Fallbrook area of California, and Margie Loeven, State Coordinator from Idaho. These folks really had fun at the convention.

Photos by Sheldon Dingle



In the front center with name tags and ribbons are two well received speakers from the San Antonio Zoo, Robert Webster, Curator of Birds, and Traci Reddick, keeper. They are flanked by some of the excellent members of the San Antonio Zoo's Bird Department staff.



AFA President, Gary Clifton visits with Lorraine Smith, Nomination Committee Chair, (center) and Yvonne Catena, new Regional Director for the Mid-Atlantic Region.



1997 AFA National Convention, San Antonio, Texas

With a Southern Flavor

by Dale R. Thompson, Lemon Cove, CA

It was a delight to hear so many southern dialects and drawls at San Antonio; Texas where this year's National convention was held. Yes, the Texans were there in force. It has been many a year since the convention met in Texas and it was certainly a delight to be there this year.

San Antonio was just as Jeff Clark, of Sun Seed, had predicted—the best location for the 1997 AFA Convention. This is not only a tourists' city (Remember the Alamo!) but one for culture, entertainment, and enjoyment. Due to San Antonio's famed "Riverwalk," it is a walking city. One can amble through a variety of stores from a mall-style to small antique shops.

One balmy evening, I had dinner with two great avicultural friends (until 1:00 A.M. in the morning). We shared a small outdoor table right at the side of the meandering river that runs through San Antonio. Crowds of people mingled and passed by, just enjoying the sights, sounds, and smells of the restaurants, shops, small sidewalk-cafes that border this unique Riverwalk. The river itself was landscaped with tropical vegetation, much of it hanging from the bridges over the river. Flat-bottomed boats travelled slowly along the river, boats filled with tourists leisurely enjoying the very pleasant evening—a wonderful evening for me, to say the least.

It was the AFA Convention, however, that was the real draw for hundreds of aviculturists. It was the time of year to hear updates on various avicultural successes and failures. Old friends were reunited and new friendships were kindled. All were there to learn from the many well-known speakers

and specialists at the convention.

Those enjoying the African parrots were in attendance in full force and listened to two excellent sessions on the African Greys and *Poicephalus* parrots, respectively. The presentations were given by Jean Pattison, a highly respected and successful breeder of African parrots. It was very rewarding for me to hear and speak with Pattison, the "African Queen."

Approximately half of the convention's seminar time was allotted to particular species or families of birds while the other half was given to educational and "hands-on" themes.

Two high-interest groups of parrots—the Amazon parrots and the cockatoos—were presented by Jim Murphy in his very unique and informative way.

Joanne Abramson spoke on her beloved macaws while Gail Worth spoke on caiques and Pionus parrots—two top experts with these birds, to say the least.

The many different families of parrots were well represented with Wayne Schulenburg on lorries, lorikeets, and the beautiful shining parrots; Dale Thompson on the Australian parakeets and the two main groups of conures; and a real expert, Steve Martin, on training birds.

The educational and "how to" talks covered many areas crucial to aviculture. One of the best attended was Gail Worth's "*Guidelines for Crating and Shipping*." Two other talks of great interest were "*Avian Pediatrics*," and "*Handfeeding*" by Darrel Styles, DVM. "*Artificial Incubation*" by the imitable Rick Jordan was equally well received.

Other talks covered legislation affecting aviculture while still others touched on veterinary medicine for the aviary and breeding programs, Dr. David K. Phalen's "*Biosecurity for Pet and Aviary Birds*" being one of the best.

A very outstanding presentation was given by Natasha Schischakin on "*Neotropical Conservation Programs*." This was a talk that every aviculturist should have heard—what conservation efforts are really going on in the wild. What an education.

I personally spent much of Saturday with the finch and softbill presenta-

tions. These are two most important areas in aviculture when it comes to long-term survival in captivity. Top experts in their fields, Martin Vince and Robert Webster were invited to speak about softbilled birds. Personally, I just couldn't get enough of the things they had to say so I had lunch with them and learned more on diets, husbandry, and propagation of a variety of softbills such as broadbills, bee-eaters, barbets, and toucans. What a delight.

Other action was ongoing also. Over 80 aviculturists came together as founding members of a new conure society. Readers interested in learning more about this conure society should contact Sandi Brennan at 505-281-7729.

Something unique this year were the workshops on parrotlets (Santee Molenda); genetics relating to the *Psittaculids* (Lyrae Perry); and cage bird exhibition (Miki Sparzak).

Having personally served the AFA as Speaker Chairman for many years, I know what a tough job it really is. That said, I must really congratulate Wanda Elder on a job well done. This was her first venture into this arena and she really rose to the occasion.

Much of the AFA work is done by volunteers—and they seldom seem to get the credit deserved. Bud Dittoe is typical of that unsung volunteer. He maintained a close watch on all the audio/visual equipment and was an expert in getting things prepared for the speakers. He *always* had a smile, a kind word, and a helpful hand.

The registration table seemed to be the hub of all things coming and going during the convention. Great avicultural problems were solved along the registration side tables; laughter, photos of baby birds, and more all showed up at the registration area. Thanks to Natalie Frumin-Weiss and her fabulous crew for all the work they did.

There was Texas hospitality all over the convention—and even those not from Texas picked up on the warm attitudes and joined in. The most influential Texan of all, however, was Robert J. Berry who had his guiding hand on everything and, although he stayed mostly in the background, his was the personality that epitomized "Texas Hospitality" and made the convention one of the very best we've ever had. ➔

AFA CONVENTION '97 EXHIBITORS

Absolutely Aussie
African Parrot Society
Amazona Society
Asiatic Breeders Association
Avicultural Society of America
Avocet Manufacturing
Breatheasy Systems
Brinsea Products
Continental Cargo
Creative Bird Accessories
Fancy Publications
Feeding Tech
Hidden Forest
International Parrotlet Society
Johnson's Jungle
Just Parrots Magazine
Lafeber Company
L'Avian Pet Products
M & M Artistic Designs
Magic Zoo II
Mike Wilhite Exotics
National Finch & Softbill Society
P E Zoogen
Painted Pony Jewelry
Patty's Parrots/J&M Toos
Perches By Bear
Phoenix Unlimited
Pretty Bird International
Pure Air Systems
Rolf C. Hagen USA
Society of Parrot Breeders & Exhibitors
Sun Seed Company
The Art of Jose Portuondo
WB Saunders

AFA CONVENTION '97 SPONSORS

Alamo Exhibition Bird Club
American Lory Society
Arizona Avian Breeders Association
Arizona Seed Crackers Society
Aves International
Birds in Glass Houses
Boudro's Restaurant
Capitol City Caged Bird Club
Chester County Bird Breeders
Coastal Bend Caged Bird Club
Continental Cargo
Corners Limited
Dallas Cage Bird Society
Delco Bird Club
Kookaburra Pet Shop
Long Beach Bird Breeders
National Cockatiel Society
Northwest Exotic Bird Society
Old World Aviaries
Orchid Tree Exotics
Parrot Junction
Payne's Parrots
Pet Lovers Gallery
Sunshine State Cage Bird Club
Zupreem

WINNERS OF THE SUPER 6 DRAWING

Young Goffin's Cockatoo
won by Rebecca Singletary, WA
Pastel Bird Portrait
won by Veta Holloway, SC
Avocet Incubator
won by Jami Kennedy, CA
Barretta Parrot Cage
won by Bonnie Steinberg, TX
Healthmate Air Cleaner
won by Marie Sannino, WV
Tree House Play Pearch
won by Bob Jennings, CA

Dwight Greenberg passes the bat while Kirsten and Damian Bates cough up their contribution to the "Nickle a Day for the AFA" program. The Bates also support the AFA on their "Up at Six" web site on the internet.

AFA CONVENTION '97 DRAWING DONORS

Absolutely Aussie - Gift Item from Australia
Alaska Bird Club - T Shirt
Aviary of Naples Florida - Bird Toy
Bacon's Eclectus Cove - Baby Female Solomon Island Eclectus
B & B Birds - Wooden Nest Box
Bird Country - Bird Country Bird Cage Litter
Black Stump Hollow Farms - Male Sun Conure
Bluff Feed Store - Bale Nestbox Shavings
BOE Bird Ranch - Fallow Green-cheeked Conure
Brinsea Incubators - Octagon 20 Incubator & Microwave Heating Pad
Celestial Parrot - 2 Large Feed Cups
Corners Limited - Euro Cage Breeding Unit
Corpus Christi Pet Ranch - Cage Perch
Custom Cage Works - Black House Cage
Debbie Cady - Lory Print, Framed
Dee O'Farrel - Proven Pair Pacific Parrotlets & Pair Red-rumped Parakeets
Doven Aviary & Pet Supply - Brass Cockatiel Cage
Fancy Publications - Bird Talk Magazine Subscription
Flint Avian Supply - Box of Cattlebone
Fly Bye Nite Aviary - Bird Toy
Folse's Feather Farm - Metal Nest Box
Hidden Forest Art Gallery - Limited Edition Artists Proof, Signed & Framed
Jack's Bird Gyms - Large Jungle Gym
John P. O'Neill, Ph.D. - Two Pionus Prints and One Western Tanager Print
Johnson's Jungle - Mousepad
Just Parrots Magazine - Just Parrots Magazine Subscription
Kookaburra Pet Shop - Baby Male & Female Red-sided Eclectus
Lafeber Company - Nutri-Berries, Avi-Cakes, Pellets
L'Avian - Bean Cuisine and Plus Parrot 100
LM Animal Farms - Pets Picknic; Outrageous Fruit & Totally Nuts
Lyon's Cockatiels - Male Cinnamon Pearly Pied Cockatiel
Mac's Aviaries - Baby Blue & Gold Macaw
Macaws & More - Pretty Bird Print, Pretty Bird feed & TKD bird toys
M & M Artistic Designs - Embroidered Apron & Cap and Sterling Silver Earrings
Natasha Schischakin - Spix's Macaw & Red-tailed Amazon Posters
Omar's Exotic Brides by Fran - Two Bird Books
Out on a Limb - Bird Toys and Silver Earrings
Patty's Parrots - Four #1 Signed & Framed Prints
Payne's Parrots - Plastic Habitat & Supplies
Perches by Bear - Two Acrylic Bird Toys
Pet Garden - Baby Nanday Conure
Pet Lovers Gallery - 1998 Calendar
Phil Ashmore - Wire Carrying Cage
Pups & Exotic Birds - Wild Bird House
Red Tail Express - Baby Lutino Ringneck
Rolf C. Hagen USA - Tropicana Prime Vitamins & Stowaways
San Antonio Feathered Friends - Computer Software & Key Ring
S & P Wholesale Pets & Supply - White Cockatiel Cage
STAT Marketing - Embroidered Jacket
Sun Seed Company - Bucket of Fabulous Fruit, Nut 'n Like It, Handfeeding Formula,
The 3 "B" - Gold Mystery Goodie Box
Up at Six Aviaries - Convention 97 Sweatshirt, Signed

Happy winners of the super six drawings. L. to R. Bonnie Steinberg, TX, Bob Jennings, CA (in the background), Jami Kennedy, CA, and Veta Holloway, SC. Lucky folks.



Photos by Sheldon Dingle



Kathleen Viewig, State Coordinator for Massachusetts, shows off a beautiful AFA T-shirt featuring artwork by Wayne Smyth who added his personal signature to the shirts. All the T-shirts were sold out immediately.

