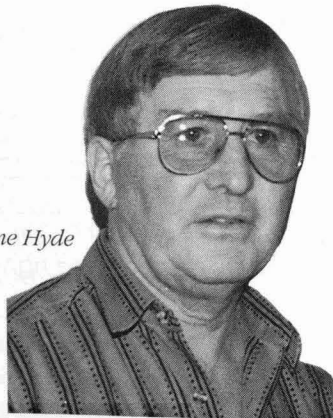


Promoting the USA "Down Under"

by Graeme Hyde, Elliminyt, Australia

Following our attendance at the American Federation of Aviculture's 20th Anniversary Convention in Knoxville, Tennessee, in August 1994, Warwick Remington and I have traveled extensively in southern Australia, especially in our home state of Victoria, presenting our talk-in-tandem — "Impressions of the AFA Convention and American Aviculture." As readers of *Watchbird* may recall, the theme for the 1994 convention was "Down Under and Out of Africa" and the three invited Australian speakers were Barry Hutchins, Warwick Remington and I.

After our commitments to the convention were over, Barry and his wife Ruby travelled to Vancouver to stay with a family relative and to do a lot of sightseeing in that picturesque part of Canada. Warwick and I took the opportunity of spending a further two weeks in the USA. We flew to Boston, Massachusetts, to stay with Emily Wendell and her husband Ron



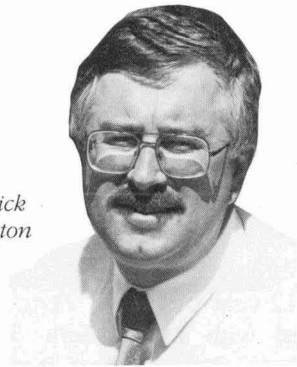
Graeme Hyde

Watkins. Emily had been a house guest of my wife, Margaret, and I during her backpacking trip to Australia in 1991. As we had kept in contact, following her "experience of a lifetime," Emily invited us stay with her and Ron — on their ocean-going yacht which was moored in a Boston marina!

Warwick and I had never been on a yacht — let alone slept in one. It was a new and pleasant experience for us. It didn't bother the two Aussies that,

because of space restrictions, their hosts had to sleep on the deck under the summer stars of Boston.

During our time in Boston we traveled to Brewer in Maine, staying overnight with Bud and Debbie Spalding. As I had read of Debbie's success in breeding African Grey Parrots and Hyacinth Macaws this became an ideal reason for the visit — apart



Warwick
Remington

from the opportunity of seeing more of the U.S. In addition to the enjoyable time spent sightseeing in and around Boston (including Rockport Island), we also visited the *Watchbird* "feature writer on cockatiels," Linda S. Rubin, in delightful suburban Chestnut Hill.

After our week on the east coast we flew direct from Boston to Los Angeles where we hired a car so we could visit the San Diego Zoo, the San Diego Wild Animal Park, plus a few private collections in that part of Southern California. We made a motel our headquarters and this, together with the hired car, made travelling and visiting the zoos and several local aviculturists a real pleasure.

Upon our return to Australia, Warwick and I decided we had enough color slides, covering a wide range of subject matter — from birds to places of historical interest — to assemble a color slide program (with commentary) for presentation to avicultural groups in our home state of Victoria. As mentioned, we titled the presentation "Impressions of the AFA Convention and American Aviculture." Since giving our first talk-in-tandem we have traveled 3,200 miles by car to present our unique program to nine different avicultural meetings.

Our first presentation was at a meeting of the Melbourne-based Avicultural Society of Australia (ASA). This was appropriate as we have both been

active members of this society for many years. We also spoke at the Ararat, Sunraysia, Goulburn Valley, Gippsland and Swan Hill branches of the Avicultural Society of Australia. (The ASA has eleven branches in rural Victoria.) In addition we gave the talk-in-tandem at the Wagga Wagga & District Cage Bird & Budgerigar Society, and the Wodonga Albury Avicultural Society, which are both located in the adjoining state of New South Wales. We addressed the Mornington Peninsula Avicultural Society which meets at Mount Martha which is, effectively, a suburb of Greater Melbourne.

The longest trip from my home in rural Elliminyt (a suburb of the City of Colac) was to Wagga Wagga, a return trip by car of 760 miles. The shortest was to Melbourne — a mere 153 miles return for Warwick and 200 miles (return) for me. On each of the other eight trips we travelled together, linking up in Warwick's home city of Ballarat, an additional 73 miles for me to meetup with him before embarking on the drive to the meeting destination.

Our "tandem lecture" lasted 75 minutes, featured 150 color slides, and embraced a wide range of subject matter from Knoxville in Tennessee to the Great Smoky Mountains in west North Carolina; four zoos: Knoxville, Franklin Park Zoo - Boston, San Diego Zoo, and San Diego Wild Animal Park; to private collections containing softbills, parrots, lovebirds, Cockatiels, lorikeets, macaws, doves, cranes, toucans — and hummingbirds in the wild (wow, what a memorable sight).

It was a great experience sharing our talk-in-tandem, about the AFA convention, American aviculture, and the USA, with so many different Australian aviculturists. As previously mentioned, Warwick and I traveled 3,200 miles by car to speak at nine [quite] different avicultural meetings. We enjoyed every moment of every trip — not to mention the wonderful people we met during our travels. Thus, the 1994 AFA convention, held in Knoxville Tennessee, has been the stimulus (and the means) for effectively "promoting" aviculture and the USA "Down Under." ➤