

the Work of Artist John Brasaemle

Sheldon Dingle,
Alhambra, California

Although only recently into avian art, John Brasaemle is a stranger to neither art nor birds. In the mid-seventies he exhibited southwest watercolors at the Bluedoor Gallery in Taos, New Mexico. Along came three children and out the window went the time to paint his own projects. He kept his hand in by painting scenery every year for local high schools' drama presentations, and by illustrating various special requests, including three educational books. In 2001 the opportunity arose for him to make a career change. John retired after thirty years of teaching elementary school art.

Birds entered his life many years ago via a great little parakeet. Then came two, and then more. While the kids were at piano practice, John and his wife, Carol, would visit a local pet store and look at the myriad of birds. John the artist liked the brightly colored ones, but Carol won out and Snickers, the African Grey, joined the clan. Then came breeding greys and membership in AFA and the local bird club, RMSA.

As retirement loomed, John began looking at how to use his talents in all that free time. Through Carol's writing, the *Original Flying Machine* and John were connected and he has illustrated for each of their issues. He has been fortunate to also be published in two other bird magazines. Initially John used everything to research his artwork, but now he prefers seeing the actual type of bird, do sketching, and take copious photos for reference. Through the club's annual show, member's birds, and continually looking for contacts, he is building quite a library from which to work.



John is not an ornithological illustrator, but rather tries to capture the essence and life of the bird. Instead of painting every feather he works with textures, patterns, and layered colors to give the impression of each species. The eyes need to make contact with the viewer. It is the eyes and the posture that make his paintings most successful. In the nine months since retirement, John has painted over one hundred birds and hundreds of drawings. He has gone from committed teacher to committed painter.

John has been a member of AFA for over ten years. He has been a delegate from their local club and both Brasaemles are very committed to their birds and to AFA. ❖

