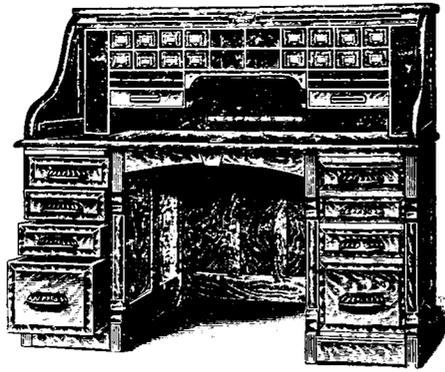


From The Editor's Desk

by Sheldon Dingle



Beginning with this edition, Sheldon L. Dingle, your humble servant, will assume the editorial task of publishing a few letters from our readers. Some of them may elicit an editorial comment. The same editor will also answer some of the questions that arrive by mail.

Please feel free to use this column to express your thoughts to the other "Watchbird" readers. We will withhold your name or publish it according to your indication.

The letters published here were written before we began to publish letters so we feel some of the writers should remain anonymous.

Dear Editor:

At the Los Angeles County Fair last year we talked to some people at the A.F.A. display. They told us how the parrot was fed by hand as a baby. A few months ago my son brought home a baby crow. We tried to feed it but it wouldn't eat and finally died. Could you let me know who feeds baby birds so this won't happen again.

A. Nonymous

As it happens, an experience I had years ago might shed some light on this matter. A young friend gave me a nestling orphan crow. I went to the various books and worked out a food formula and thought everything was under control. The little crow, however, wouldn't cooperate. He refused to eat. Frantically, I called the boy who had acquired the bird and he told me I had to talk to it before it would eat. So I talked. I spoke common English. Nothing. I quoted Shakespeare in Elizabethan English. Nothing. I spouted Chaucer in Middle English. Nothing. This was a truly plebian crow. Finally my wife suggested talking crow and after a few honks and caws the little fellow popped his mouth wide

open. We fed him successfully until he took his freedom. If your son brings another crow home, please call me and I'll demonstrate crow talk. I don't know how to put it into print.

Editor

Dear Sir:

I am a printer and paste-up man — and have been for the past twenty-five years. I love to work at good printing. I also enjoy looking at it. I am taking time out to tell all the people involved in printing and publishing the "Watchbird" magazine that they are doing a superb job. I never saw a magazine that was so well layed out and printed. All the type-families seem to fit perfectly. Keep up the wonderful job. We all enjoy it.

Sincerely,
Mr. E. Haasis
Monrovia, CA.

Dear Sir:

I have followed, with interest your work and dedication. May I say that you and your staff have done a superb job. Your last issue especially possesses great class in comparison to any other ornithological literature and is second to none.

I am enclosing our company's catalogue. We surely enjoy the lovely artwork throughout the pages of your magazine. For example, page 22 of the Feb./March issue. Could you do something with our catalogue to advertise on a 1/4 page?

Ignacio-Perea
D.P. Ornithologist
Sunshine Birds and Supplies

From a Midwestern state we received an enjoyable two page letter covering many subjects. In the following excerpt the writer touches upon several aspects

of aviculture we all recognize.

Dear Sirs:

I have found many people here that I never realized raised birds but they will not join any club nor will they associate with any one to talk about birds except within their own small groups. They fear the government and most of them claim to have been threatened with loss of birds because of neighbor complaints, etc. They say that by joining clubs we are bringing the government right down on our heads.

A. Nonymous

Your letter points out at least four problems in the bird fancy. First, you mention people who RAISE birds, but, if the truth be known, far too many folks KEEP birds rather than raise them. Pet birds excepted.

Secondly, bird clubs are useful only to the extent they actually teach better avicultural techniques and offer their members substantial help when the need arises. The only purely social club I favor is Myford Holmes' Diogenes Club wherein a member is expelled if he speaks so much as one word to a fellow member while in the clubhouse.

Third, you mention neighbor complaints regarding birds. This is probably the largest single hazard to the backyard breeder. Your club can minimize this type of casualty, however, by educating its members and recommending common-sense bird collections. Most neighbor complaints are justified.

And fourth, you point out that many aviculturists fear the government's attitude toward aviculture. These troubles are not easy to resolve but by uniting and moving in the right direction we can work on all four problems at once.

In my opinion, American aviculture is in its' infancy. It will see phenomenal growth and eventually rival European aviculture. It won't happen, though, if we bury our heads in the sand and hope the problems dissolve.

The existing bird clubs are the key to the avicultural future. Our clubs must produce more professional-quality hobbyists. The four problems brought up here can be handled by well organized, unified clubs that are dedicated to improving aviculture. Your own club can do much to improve your local situation. The A.F.A., with your help, can enhance your program and carry the burden of the State and National level problems.

A lone voice crying in the administrative wilderness will not be heard. The deep, strong, low rumble of an avicultural mass cannot be ignored.