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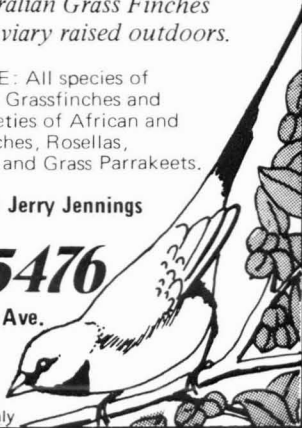
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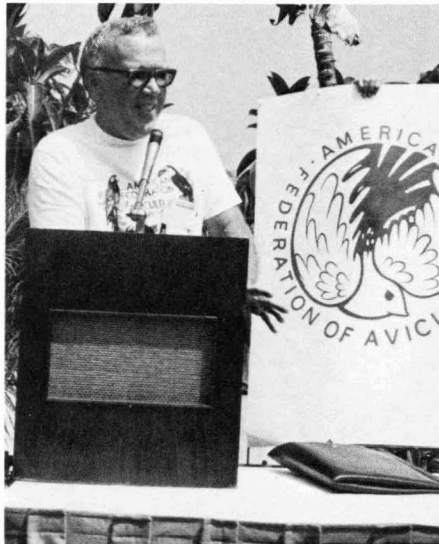
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# 1981 Convention Chatter

by Sheldon Dingle  
Norco, California



Convention chairman Don Cavender explains the form and function of the AEA during the "kickoff" outdoor meeting at the convention.

All of you stay-at-homes missed the avian highlight of the year — the A.F.A. 1981 Annual Meeting and Convention. Some of you recluses still think that the A.F.A. is a nice little club that has a pretty little magazine — *but you are wrong.*

The A.F.A. is the single most important avicultural organization in the United States and is gaining in strength and reputation all around the world. Members came to the San Diego convention from as far away as Sweden, England, Australia, Korea, Puerto Rico, Holland and South Africa to say nothing of the far corners of the United States.

And everybody had a marvelously congenial good time. The San Diego weather was perfect. The hotel was a warm friendly place with an atmosphere of a tropical paradise. There was plenty to eat and drink and more to see than one could pack into two weeks. And the talk, my word, the talk. Everyone seemed to say, "Let's talk about something new for a change — like birds." There must have been ten thousand little private deals made, some over coffee, and some under the influence. The outcome could be surprising to a few.

The Annual Meeting was convened under the direction of President Richard E. Baer and was conducted smoothly with much being accomplished. The business details are available in the minutes and can

be gotten from your club delegate or state coordinator.

One of the first orders of business, however, was the counting of the ballots to determine the new officers of the A.F.A. The results were as follows: President — Tom Ireland; 1st Vice President — Cliff Witt; 2nd Vice President — Lee Phillips (our first lady vice president); Corresponding Secretary — Phyllis Martin; and Chief Financial Officer — Janice Pritchard. The elective office of Corporate Secretary was changed to an appointed post of Executive Secretary and was filled by Helen Hanson who manages the Home Office. Dr. Baer continued to preside until he turned the gavel over to Tom Ireland at the banquet Saturday evening.

After the business was completed the really enjoyable part of the convention began. Never before has there been so many expert and entertaining speakers assembled all in one place. No matter what your avian interest might be there were experts to talk to you. Subjects ranged from pigeon parasites to peacock pheasants to hummingbird diets to canaries and conures to endangered species to importation to waterfowl *ad infinitum.*

And tours. The San Diego area has some of the finest private collections in the world and they were all open to the A.F.A. tours. The San Diego Wild Animal Park



John Mentze releases 300 pigeons before the news media as the convention got under way.

Photos by Larry McPhail

and the San Diego Zoo are the finest in the world and Sea World attracts visitors from all over the globe. All of these places were open to the A.F.A. tours with curators and keepers giving tips and behind-the-scenes peeks. One bus even took an unscheduled expedition out across the uncharted hinterlands but it eventually arrived safely back home. Another bus on the way to the mind-boggling Schulman collection got caught in a little Los Angeles disagreement wherein the riders in two cars on the freeway exchanged a few gunshots. Nothing serious, but the out-of-town visitors were unaccustomed to the pop of gunfire and the smell of burnt gunpowder. It's all in a day's work to the natives.

Another really outstanding aspect of this '81 convention was the commercial display area. To tell the truth, I didn't think to count the booths but a great hall was filled to capacity with an excellent assortment of displays that were really good. The one show that impressed me the most was an X-rated video tape shown by the Hookbill Hobbyists. One of their members rigged a one-way glass that looked into a nest box of a pair of sun conures. We watched in living color the hen come, lay an egg, exit, come back in followed by the male and settle down to some serious love-making. It was a fascinating performance.

The display hall had tight security too. I was refused admission once, thrown out once, and finally had to go get a name tag to get by the burley guard. The fact that my tag said Tony Silva didn't bother him. The whole show was given a lot of P.R. and about 5000 non-convention visitors came through at the appointed visiting hours. The five hosting clubs, African Lovebird Society, Finch Society of San Diego, Hookbill Hobbyists, San Diego County All Bird Breeders Association, and the San Diego County Canary Club did an outstanding job and deserve our accolades. It is still true that the A.F.A. gets it strength from the grass-roots club members.

I think that it can safely be said that this convention was the biggest and best yet in A.F.A. history. The mood was good, there were no serious hassles (even though I tried to start a couple), and everything went perfectly. My wife, who is not really convention oriented, gave it her highest marks so far, so it must have been an overall splendid affair.

We all look forward to the coming year under our newly baptized President Ireland (I mean literally — he was hove into a swimming pool, watch, suit, shoes, and all) and anticipate the great 1982 convention in Washington, D.C. ●



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By Dr. James E. Rich

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