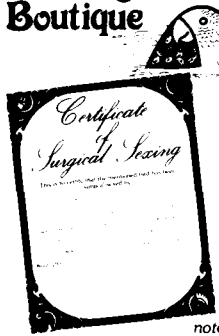


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## NOTICE

All correspondence intended for the editor of the Watchbird should be mailed directly to his address.

Sheldon Dingle  
P.O. Box 340  
Norco, CA 91760

## From The Editor's Desk

by Sheldon Dingle

## Lady Gouldian Finches

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Dear Sheldon:

A responsible competent importer/distributor uses the quarantine period to free the birds of parasites, bacterias or other insults the birds may have. He should determine if there is a virus at work. He should not sell birds at any price unless and until he knows those birds are strong, clean and healthy. Anyone who sells birds for a living has the tools available to determine if the birds are clean. We can think of no justifiable, moral reason why dealers, at whatever level in the sales chain, choose to unload birds on their customers with no regrets.

There will always be a percentage of birds that honestly slip through with undetected problems, but to not address and acknowledge those problems is unconscionable both from the moral and economic aspects.

Unfortunately, as long as price is the sole determinant with so many people, this sorry state of affairs will continue for another long time. The recipients of diseased birds can only protect themselves by quarantining new purchases, separately, for a long enough time, properly diagnose the problem and then treat.

Quarantine birds should be separated by continents of origin. Pachecos, for instance, is not indiginous to Asia or Africa. (Why do you suppose cockatoos and grays die from Pachecos?) Everyone should have a facility such that this separation is possible. Otherwise, it's simply a matter of time before your number is up and your wipe out is complete.

We understand that city real estate is expensive and space is hard to find. We understand how nice and convenient it is to have a large selection at one place.

We also understand your needs. However, birds are not hard goods. They need special care and consideration. Most of all — time. Time to be acclimated, checked, "cleaned" if necessary. The fast buck is soon lost. The quick sale you made just died. Your reputation is shot, or if you have the integrity, you replace your customer's loss. You lose everyway. SLOW DOWN. It's always the same. An importer "sells" Pachecos; a smuggler "sells" New castle. A dealer passes it all on.

Anyone who sells a bad bird after receiving a "bad" bird is just as "bad" as the person who originally sold it or is just plain ignorant of what it takes to care for birds.

If everyone in the business took the time and expense necessary to assure the health of the birds we wouldn't be hearing of all the tragedies year in and year out.

It all comes down to greed. If we could do something about illegal birds . . . but then that's another subject.

Ron LeClair  
Ft. Pierce, Florida



Several years ago you published a letter stating that research was being done on the claim that sunflower seed contained a narcotic and was bad for birds. I have never seen this subject referred to again. Can you tell me if there is any research to substantiate or repudiate the claim that safflower seed is wonderful and sunflower seed is very bad for birds?

P.A. Myers

Although several studies were conducted, I know of no results that condemn sunflower seed. The specific ingredient papavarin that was said to be in sunflower has never been found despite some valiant efforts to isolate it.

For me there is no sunflower-safflower conflict. Both seeds are in my own parrot mix and my wife feeds so sparingly that the birds eat everything they are fed. They are happy, healthy and produce absolutely normal numbers of young.

Ed.



Dear Sir:

I have several large birds which include a blue and gold macaw, an umbrella cockatoo, a double yellow head, yellow nape, a blue crown and a cockatiel. I also have several houseplants which are very attractive to my birds. Consequently, I am concerned about having a bird poisoned through my ignorance of which of my plants may be poisonous to them.

Can you or any of your readers suggest the title of a book or other reference which would give me detailed information on poisonous plants and shrubs? If a plant/shrub is poisonous to a person is it always poisonous to birds and vice versa?

I very much enjoy your magazine. Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,  
Anne Duke

Dear Ms. Duke

Just after your letter arrived I received the Bulletin of the Avicultural Society of Puget Sound. In its "Vet Forum" Dr. Nancy Bauer addressed the subject of toxicology. Thanks to ASOPS's generous reprint policy I include the following for your information.

Ed.

#### POISONOUS PLANTS

Many house and garden plants may be poisonous to your birds. The following list of some common ones has been compiled from *Caring For Your Bird* by Dean R. Axelson, D.V.M., *Bird Owner's Home Health and Care Handbook* by Gary A. Gallerstein, D.V.M. and from *The Bird Care Handbook* by Sheldon Gerstenfeld, D.V.M. Look for

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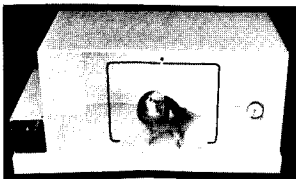


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<i>Cherry</i>	<i>Monkshood</i>
<i>Clematis</i>	<i>Morning glory</i>
<i>Conifer</i>	<i>Mountain Laurel</i>
<i>Cowslip</i>	<i>(Kalmia sp.)</i>
<i>Daffodil</i>	<i>Narcissus</i>
<i>Daphne</i>	<i>Nightshade</i>
<i>Datura</i>	<i>Oleander</i>
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<i>Elephant's ear</i>	<i>Poinsettia</i>
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<i>Foxglove</i>	<i>Potato (shoots)</i>
<i>Golden chain</i>	<i>Privet</i>
<i>(Laburnum)</i>	<i>Rhododendron</i>
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Open Letter to Finch Fanciers:

I have kept exotic finches for over fifteen years. I have had breeding success with more than a dozen different species, among them Red-Cheeked Cordon Bleu, Strawberry, Melba, and Black-Crested Finches.

While I could write further articles like my "Three Successes with Exotic Finches" (*A.F.A. Watchbird*, Dec./Jan. 1982), I think we would all profit more from a series of articles each describing how a number of different fanciers achieve success with a particular species. Such a discussion would enable us to separate what the particular species requires from what an individual fancier happens to provide.

I invite you to join me in a project. If enough of us were to report essential facts about our successes, then these facts could be organized by species. Summaries could be written and helpful conclusions could be drawn.

With this purpose in mind, I have designed a Breeding Success Report Form. This one-page form seeks to elicit the central facts of a breeding success through a simple fill-in-the-blank, check-what-applies format. I believe the form will prove easy to fill out while providing a basis for meaty and

revealing summaries.

If you would like to participate in this project, then please send me a SASE for copies of the report.

Sincerely,  
John C. Rounds  
52 North Mill Road  
Cranbury, NJ 08512



Dear Mr. Dingle,

I read in the Feb/Mar issue of *Watchbird* the letter from Martha Coleman of Childersburg, Alabama. To say that I was upset or angry would be the understatement of the decade. That was four days ago that I read it. My anger has not diminished — but rather it constantly increases.

It made me sick at my stomach. I am shocked, horrified, disgusted, ENRAGED. I was not aware that these gestapo-like tactics could be used in this country. Those tactics abused every citizen's right to the privacy of his own home. The government is using my tax monies to pay an exorbitant salary to these hired killers?

I am not stupid. I know Newcastle must be kept out of the country. I know her Blue Fronted Amazon had to be destroyed because it had Newcastle. The nation's birds and poultry must be protected. But they did not have to destroy the rest of the birds. All they had to do was quarantine them and wait and see if they actually caught Newcastle.

Common sense tells one that just because the Blue Front had Newcastle, it does not necessarily mean the rest would catch it. They might catch it — but they also might not. The U.S.D.A. only needed to destroy one bird. Instead they destroyed 154 birds including their dearly loved pets while the family stood crying and pleading for justice and mercy.

Incidentally, I did double check the above with several excellent, trusted, responsible and respected avian veterinarians in this area. *FACT: It was not necessary to kill the other 153 of her birds.* They were murdered. Even a criminal gets a trial by a judge and jury. the USDA set themselves up as judge and jury. Mrs. Coleman was deprived of her rights as well as her birds.

Now since it was not necessary to kill them, one might almost conclude that it was done with malice aforethought.; almost as if they got a bounty per head. Maybe they were just sadists? Sure makes you wonder!!

May God have mercy on the slimy little souls of these monstrous fiends. I

cannot. Instead I will pray — on my knees — every day of my life the Lord God Almighty gives to these storm trooper hypocrits exactly what they deserve. I would give them what they deserve if I could.

I sincerely hope that Mrs. Coleman finds out the names of each individual involved and makes it *Public* knowledge exactly who they are and what they have done. I hope she tells their family and their children what they have done, what monsters they are. I hope she puts it in the newspapers, television, national magazines. I hope she sues them for millions of dollars. They may not understand love, affection and compassion but I'll bet they would understand if they were sued for a great deal of money.

I hope Mrs. Coleman goes to every local bird club, pet shop, breeder, pet owner and bird lover and asks them to write to every elected official in their state, to write their Senator and House of Representatives. I hope she gets signatures from everyone in the whole country.

I have written to all our elected officials in my state about this. If it could happen to her, it could happen to any one of us.

I have heard that the USDA will kill 5,000 birds in the quarantine stations if one bird has Newcastle. I don't know if that is true or not — but I rather suspect it is. If so — it must be stopped. The world is running out of parrots. The world cannot afford wholesale slaughter of parrots. What they did to Mrs. Coleman was a crime against nature, a crime against mankind, a crime against God; but if they are killing thousands, maybe millions, of birds unnecessarily, in their quarantine stations, in addition to the other crimes, they commit a crime against all our future generations.

I believe we need some publicity on this. I think the public should be informed.

I offer my services to AFA in regard to the senseless slaughter of parrots. I have no money, but I could write letters and obtain signatures on petition. I am sincere and dedicated.

I am, of course opposed to the proposed law by the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) which is supposed to be rammed down our throats in 1985. Any bird lover would of course oppose this — but I am willing to work at it. Anything I can do for the AFA regarding this law, I will do. I have seen some of the literature — prop-

aganda — put out by HSUS and other factions desiring to push this law into existence before any opposition can be organized — like they did in New York — and the nicest thing I can say is that they are very misinformed and are entirely without adequate knowledge. I will also contact Dr. Roger Harlin in Oklahoma City as I have heard that he is your representative in Oklahoma City and I know he is a knowledgeable and dedicated person as well as a respected veterinarian.

I don't know if you will publish this letter or not. You may feel that it's a bit "strong." (Believe me, I've toned it down a great deal.) I hope you do publish it. I hope Martha Coleman reads it and knows that others understand and feel her hurt and misery, her anger and loss. Oklahoma is far away from Alabama but tonight perhaps this lady in Oklahoma can reach her hand across the miles to the lady in Alabama. We only want the same things: freedom from persecution by the USDA, freedom to have and to hold our beloved birds without fear of the sound of gestapo boots on our front porch.

Sincerely,  
Charlotte F. Buchanan  
Tulsa, Oklahoma

*My Dear Ms. Buchanan*

*Yes! Yes! Of course I'll publish your letter. I'll do anything you ask. Believe me, I'm extremely relieved that you are on our side.*

Ed.



Dont renew my membership because your Book gets Poor For Information with every copy. You have to be a Dr. to understand what the people are writing about. They us all of these Big words not to say anything just to fill up Space. Their isnt anything in their to healp the Small Breeder, Just Figures and Numbers.

Thanks Anyway  
(Name withheld at editor's request)

*The above letter points out a previously unknown problem that I should like to address. If enough of you who can't read these words would have a friend or neighbor write to me I'll prepare large format coloring books to send in lieu of the Watchbird. To keep our illiterate members happy we'll even throw in a box of crayons. We aim to please.*

Ed. ●

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