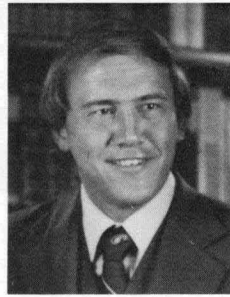


# President's Message

by Jerry Jennings  
Woodland Hills, California



Jerry Jennings

The AFA's 12th annual convention in New Orleans was an outstanding success and left the convention goers with a good deal of useful information not to mention the inspiration it offered us to go out and be even more creative in our avicultural pursuits. An underlying theme of the conference was the notion that breeders must redouble their efforts if we hope to have a diverse number of species with which to work in the years ahead. It was noted that fewer countries remain in the export wildlife trade this year than last and the pace of countries closing is accelerating.

For the first time ever at an AFA conference, several speakers made presentations on softbills, an area of aviculture too long overlooked by most of us. It was amply demonstrated that softbills are actually no more difficult to keep than most psittacines or finches, while they offer a wonderful cornucopia of color patterns and interesting behaviors far more numerous and diverse than practically all other bird groups combined. Coincidentally and most auspiciously, the International Softbill Society held its first meeting and presented its members with the first issue of their bulletin, *The Honeycreeper*, which is quite informative. Dues are \$15 per individual annually. Interested breeders may contact this organization at: Softbill Society, c/o National Aquarium in Baltimore, Pier 3, 501 E. Pratt Street, Baltimore, MD 21202.

The business of AFA was conducted in an atmosphere of enthusiasm that bodes well for our future. A number of new faces have appeared in the executive committee, with the addition of Tom Marshall as first vice president, Ann Bickham as executive secretary, Dallas Johnson as northeastern regional vice president, Tony Silva as midwestern regional vice president, Dick Dickinson as Northern California regional vice president, and Dick Stocker as Southern California regional vice president. It is with great pleasure that I welcome them aboard the executive committee. I would also like to publicly thank outgoing officers Don Cavender, Lorene Clubb, Linda Sun, Bill Wilson, Jim Coffman, and Aletta Long. These people have made invaluable contributions to AFA and their support is appreciated by everyone. Don Cavender also did a splendid job of putting together the convention in New Orleans.

As we head into the fall months I would urge our members to look forward to our winter regional conference, which will be held in conjunction with the International Foundation for the Conservation of Birds' Second Jean Delacour/IFCB Symposium on Breeding Birds in Captivity. The symposium will be held February 11-15, 1987 at the Sheraton Universal Hotel in Hollywood, California and promises to be one of the most interesting and informative avicultural gatherings ever. AFA will hold its winter board meeting on February 11th, the day before the speaker sessions begin. AFA members should indicate on their registration forms that they are AFA members, as this will directly benefit AFA, since there will be only one registration fee, paid directly to IFCB. Please note that the deadline is November 1, 1986 after which the fee increases. I look forward to seeing you at the symposium. ●

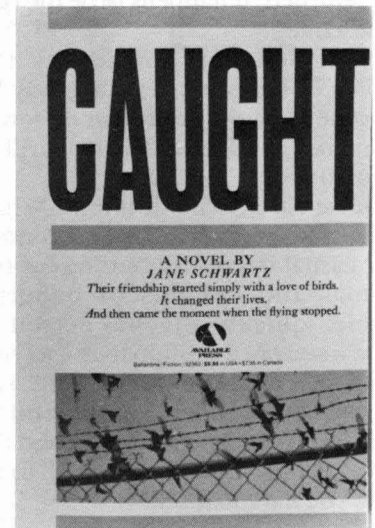
## AFA Mid-winter Meeting—Feb. 11, '87

### IFCB Symposium—Feb. 12-15, '87

If you are planning to attend the AFA Feb. 11th mid-winter meeting and the IFCB Symposium, register before November 1, '86 for the most favorable price. **If you are an AFA member, please make sure you indicate it on your registration form.**

IFCB Symposium information and registration appears on page 39 in this issue of *Watchbird*.

# EX LIBRIS



by Jane Schwartz  
Review by Jan Parrott-Holden  
Vancouver, Washington

There are certain things that simply cannot be described unless you have experienced them (things like winning a marathon, climbing Mt. Adams and flying). Jane Schwartz says as much in her wonderful novel, *Caught*, a book tailor-made for bird lovers.

The title, *Caught*, exemplifies the philosophy of the book's major characters — a group of Brooklyn Flight flyers during the late 1950s. These men, and they are all men, live and breathe, the sport of pigeon flying. They spend hours each day training a "kit" of birds to perform unerringly as one. Those

*Continued on page 14*



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that separate from the flock are "caught" by another flyer's kit. They are then his birds. Seldom, if ever, are they returned. It happens to be the rule of the game.

When Schwartz introduces the heroine of her book, a young lady by the name of Louise, the reader discovers the intensity and indescribable thrill of pigeon flying.

Louise dares to be different. While her older brother and his friends forsake their casual interest in birding for the traumas and delights of puberty, "Louie" quickly attaches herself to Casey, a seasoned rooftop flyer. Defying the all-male tradition of the game, she becomes his "chaser" or apprentice. Casey immediately teaches her, and the reader, the secret of the sport: "To be good, you have to lose."

Everytime Louise loses, the reader gains. For Schwartz' knowledge of pigeons, and her wonderful feel for their importance to pigeon people triumphs again and again. The terminology is correct. The bond between apprentice and tutor is touching. But the hallmark of this book is the way Schwartz captures the passion of the pigeon-flying sport. To those who have only raised the fancy breeds, it is a particularly enlightening manuscript. For those who opt for exotic cagebirds, it opens the mysterious door into the world of rooftops, where intense dramas are performed against a backdrop of limitless sky.

And, to everyone who has pondered their own miraculous induction into the avian hobby, it provides an answer. Louise states it simply: "Only a year before I would have thought the sky was empty....Now I searched the skies for it, knowing that any minute the microscopic figure of a bird would appear, winging its way out of the distance, either lost or heading for home."

The miracle of bird flight was never so poignantly portrayed, reminding us that "even when the bird walks, we see that it has wings!"\*

*Caught*, by Jane Schwartz, was published in 1985 by Available Press (a division of Ballantine Books), New York. It sells for \$5.95 (paperback).

\*quote by Antoine-Marie Lemierre, French author

#### A Note About Flights

The Domestic Flight is a high-flying pigeon which was traditionally flown from city rooftop lofts (most notably in New York City). The sport, which was once immensely popular, declined substantially with the urban growth experienced over the past thirty to forty years. ●



Dan and Iva Walton with their U.S. First Breeding Avy Award for breeding the Java bill mynah (hatched 5/6/84).

Photos by Linda Sun, Riverside, CA



Terry Carr of the Audubon Zoological Park receiving U.S. First Breeding Avy Award from Dale R. Thompson for breeding the toucan barbet (hatched 10/15/84).



June Halfon receiving the U.S. First Breeding Avy Award, on behalf of Walter English of Woodland Park Zoological Gardens, from Dale Thompson for breeding the common trumpeter (hatched 5/25/84).

## Avy Award Winners for 1985

We are honored to award the following persons and institutions on their accomplishments in the field of Aviculture.

### 1985 Gold Avy Award

David West for outstanding contributions to the field of Aviculture.

### U.S. 1st Breeding Avy Awards

1. Grosbeak Starling  
(Hatched February 17, 1984)  
Metrozoo, Miami, Florida
2. Toucan Barbet  
(Hatched October 15, 1984)  
Audubon Zoological Park
3. Black Parrot/Lesser Vasa Parrot  
(Hatched July 29, 1985)  
Richard Reely
4. Common Trumpeter  
(Hatched May 25, 1984)  
Woodland Park Zoological Gardens
5. Java Hill Mynah  
(Hatched May 6, 1984)  
Dan & Iva Walton

### 1985 Watchbird Avy Awards

1. Steven H. Amos  
*Captive Management of Gray-necked Wood-rails*
2. Fred and Lyrae Perry  
*Introduction to the Psittacula Family*

### Avy Appreciation Awards

1. Linda S. Rubin for outstanding service given to the National Cockatiel Society
2. Dr. Al Decoteau for outstanding service given to the New Hampshire Avicultural Society ●