



Young cockatiels get to spread their wings in large holding flights.

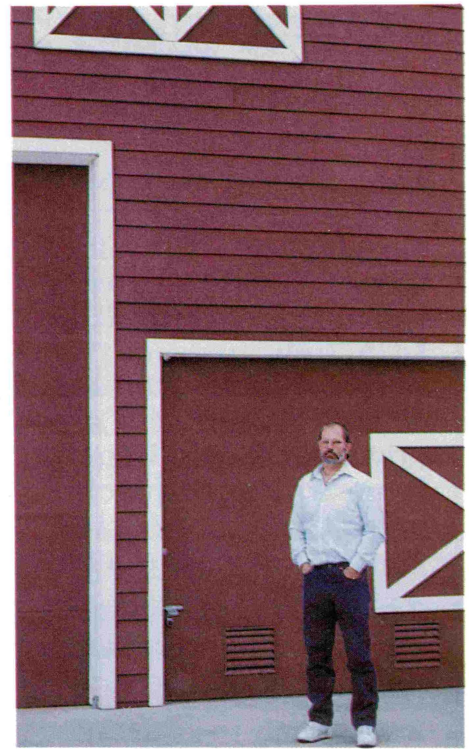
AFA Visits . . .

The Aviary of Arnold Chaney

by Jerry Jennings Fallbrook, California

The cockatiel has been one of America's most enduring and endearing pets during the second half of the twentieth century. It is one of the most popular pet parrots, second only to the budgerigar in numbers. While much is known about large scale budgie breeding facilities, little has been written about parallel establishments in the cockatiel fancy, perhaps because there are far fewer facilities producing large numbers of cockatiels.

As enduring as the cockatiel in aviculture over the past three decades is Arnold Chaney, a native Californian whose interest in birds began at the age of twelve with show pigeons and has spanned a broad range of species both rare and common. His very first pair of parrots were Thick Bills, which he acquired for the ridiculous price of \$25 each, which he gave to the Los Angeles Zoo in the late sixties, when Frank Todd was the zoo's Curator of Birds. Arnold's second pair was



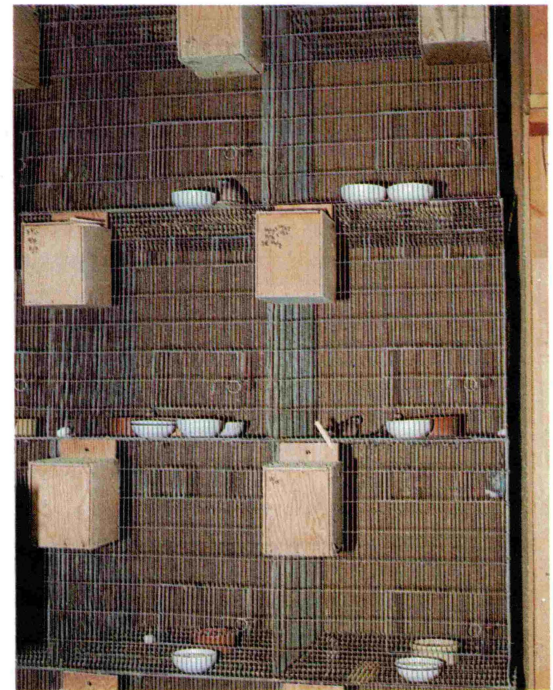
Arnold Chaney in front of his barn/aviary that houses his birds.

Red Shining Parrots, indicating he was not shy in a quest for the best.

Arnold began to import birds before the advent of the 1972 Newcastle Disease outbreak and subsequent quarantine requirements, and



View down aisle showing tiers of cages on both sides with nest boxes mounted on outside for easy access.



Frontal view of breeding cages housing Bourke's Parakeets.

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was one of the first people (along with Dave West) to import the Scarlet-chested Parakeet from Europe along with Stanley and Golden Mantle Rosellas, which were quite rare in aviculture at the time.

In 1971, Arnold purchased an entire parrot collection from the Santa Barbara area of California before his flights were ready, as many of us do. He needed cages quick, and was fortunate to find them through Glen Roskilly. Arnold was a roofing contractor at the time, and traded his much needed services for much needed cages. While the birds were temporarily housed awaiting flights, they began to breed and did so well that Arnold decided to let them continue to cage breed, a style he has maintained with great success to this day.

Arnold, in fact, has raised cage breeding to new heights, literally! His cages, measuring two feet by three feet by two feet tall, are stacked to the ceiling of his large, barnlike building five cages high. Each cage is outfitted with a nest box on the outside for easy inspection and each has an easily accessible food and water dish. Perhaps unique is the total absence of perches and litter trays. The birds spend most of their time on the floor, hanging on the wire, or in the nest box. The absence of litter trays allows the waste seed and droppings to fall through lower cages all the way to the ground where they are easily swept up. The birds actually clean their own cages during the extended time they

are on the cage floors, so droppings never pile up as they otherwise might.

The only potential drawback to the lack of perches may be lower fertility according to Chaney; however, this is a new concept in his breeding program and the data isn't complete. Arnold's breeding system does get results, though, as last year he reared just over 2,000 birds from approximately 300 pairs.

Each cage contains only one breeding pair, each using a nest box measuring 12" x 12" x 12" with a 1-3/4" entrance hole, and filled with wood shavings to a depth of a couple inches. Shortly after young birds are weaned, they are removed to holding facilities.

All the birds are fed a diet based on a seed ration consisting of: 4 parts United Pacific's cockatiel mix, 1-1/2 parts gamebird starter (26% protein), 1 part hulled sunflower seed, 1 part safflower, and 2-1/2 parts straight canary seed. United Pacific's cockatiel mix, in turn, is made up of various millets, sunflower, canary, rape, etc. Arnold likes the hulled sunflower best, because you get nearly four times as many kernels as sunflower in the shell, at just under double the price, so you get twice as many kernels per dollar spent with hulled seed. And, the hulled sunflower is less wasteful and messy.

The above diet is a complete diet for the cockatiels. No greens are given and are not needed since the birds receive the gamebird starter which, therefore, is a critical ingredient. Arnold also keeps a few Rosy Bourke's, which receive the same diet plus a Dutch canary supplement, known as CeDe, which is served dry in a separate dish. None of the birds receive grit, which has never presented a problem.

All the birds receive a water soluble vitamin supplement half the time, and plain fresh water the remainder of the time. Water bowls are changed three times a week and are disinfected each time. The brand of vitamins is altered using either Vitapol or Nopstress. Both are common poultry vitamins and both contain electrolytes.

Arnold rests the birds twice a year, when he breaks down the cages in December and July. The birds are set up again in March and September, respectively. While the birds are being rested, they are placed on an antibiotic such as NFZ/Amifur for a short time as a preventative, which seems to

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