

# Reflections: the '91 Convention

by Sheldon Dingle  
Los Angeles, California

Gentle readers, the only way you can really enjoy the excitement of the emotional and intellectual tumult of a convention is to attend the thing. Those of you who did have your own memories and experiences and they may be somewhat different than mine, some of which you'll read here.

The following few paragraphs are intended as an overview of the AFA's 17th Annual Convention primarily

from my own point of view. Please don't hold President Eitnrear responsible for what I write — he already has enough to worry about.

First off, I can honestly say I really enjoyed the three days I spent at the convention. I think that location is one of the keys to a good convention and I was very pleased with the San Diego area (Sea World; San Diego Zoo; Tijuana, Mexico; Wild Animal Park, etc.) and also with the Red Lion

Hotel. There were plenty of things to see and do if one wanted a break from the birds. This way one can have the best of both worlds.

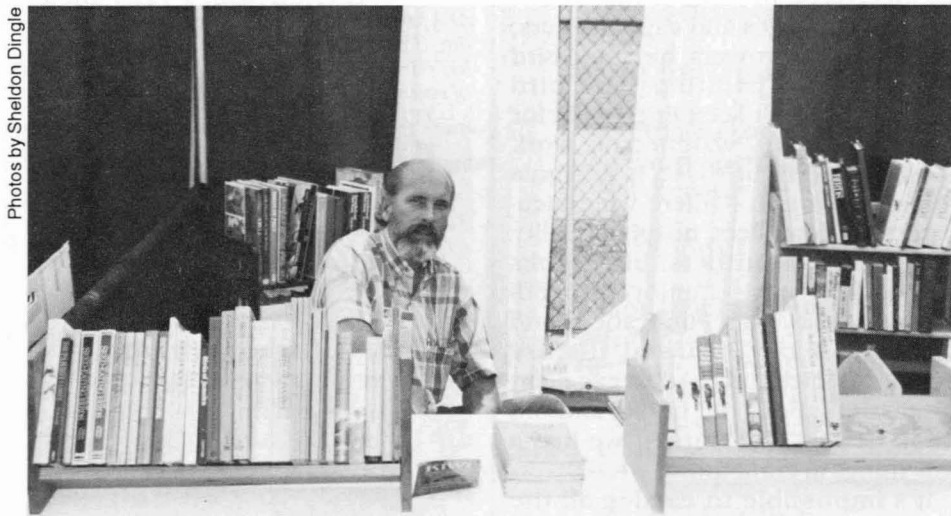
The first world, so to speak, is always the actual business meetings of the AFA which, of course, I did not attend. They began on Tuesday and I arrived on Friday. I did hear, though, that Jack Eitnrear presented a professionally made video tape (a 30 second segment and a 15 second segment) which promotes the AFA on national television during certain community service time slots. Good show. Evidently Jack presented other items thus far held in confidence but I know for a fact that he had to leave town and didn't return until several days later. Hmmm.

With the business and committee meetings taking up most of Tuesday and Wednesday, things didn't really liven up for the visitors until Thursday at which time the conference speakers began their sessions and the commercial displays were set up.

I think that for most convention visitors, the scheduled speakers are the highlight of the whole thing. This convention had an excellent line-up of speakers gathered from various parts of the world and from the cream of the local crop. Do yourselves a favor and send 20 bucks to the Home Office for a proceedings booklet that contains the talks in written form. There's no use in my talking here about what you missed in person.

If the formal talks are an important part of any convention, I think the *informal* meetings are even more important. By this I mean all the social intercourse that takes place in the cocktail lounge, the restaurants, the exhibit building, even in the hallway. Conventions are about *people*. You have great opportunities to rub shoulders with exciting (and excited) bird people from all over. You will make friends with people from many diverse parts of the world. On your trips abroad, you'll visit them. When you go across the States, you'll stop in to see the buddy you met at the convention. People, people, people, that's what it's all about.

I really enjoyed meeting quite a few people I hadn't seen for a number of years. There was Don Tucker, president of World Pheasant Association U.S.A. whom I hadn't seen for five or six years. I refreshed his memory of the time about 20 years ago when he helped me catch my prize ringneck



Commercial displayer — Michael Dee represented a special interest in old, rare, and hard-to-find books.



Some of the U.S. 1st Breeding Award winners, L to R: Jerry Jennings - Swainson's Toucan; Dick Schroeder - Fairy Lorikeet; Craig Snodgrass, Lowry Park Zoological Garden - Chestnut-capped Ground Thrush; David Blynn (picking up) for Tony Alexander's Bird Farm - Greater Vasa Parrot; Hugh Bower (picking up) for Carol Anne Calvin/Stash Buckley - Java Mannikin; John Vanderhoof - Yellow-bibbed Lory.

Photos by Sheldon Dingle

pheasant to put in a show. In the process, Tucker kneeled on my bird's tail and the bird managed to run off, leaving every single tail feather behind. It goes without saying that Tucker's pheasant won the show. But we had a great time talking about mutual friends and the bird world.

Another highlight for me was when Dr. Rainer Erhart sat down at the breakfast table and shared a meal. We talked about old friends and enemies, commented on their prosperity or poverty and generally had a good time.

I only had a few moments in passing with Lee Phillips but really enjoyed seeing her. Lee and Rainer have both defied the ravages of time and look younger and brighter than ever. I was impressed.

At breakfast another day, I had the great pleasure of visiting with Bob and June Smith from Jackson, Michigan. We had met about one week earlier at Jerry Jennings's place and had a good conversation about birds and about how long it takes Jennings to get a barbecue going.

Other old friends and acquaintances I saw for the first time in years included Dennis and Dena Ferris at whose home I spent many and many a happy hour; and Roland Christo — we used to shoot letters to each other like ping-pong balls; and Roger Bringas, world traveler and collector of rare mutations; and Jerry Jennings whom I actually see rather often; and Jack Eitniewar who is such a handsome fellow over the phone; and Dr. Luis Baptista, a brilliant scientist and extraordinary personality — a shocking conversationalist, he'll wake you up; and Dale Thompson, a dearly held friend from his days as keeper at the L.A. Zoo; and Nancy Vigran, so talented and energetic; and Lynn Hall, always the perfect host when one visits his outstanding collection of rare doves and pigeons. Lynn still has the old fire. He became positively animated at Eitniewar's reference to duck hunters. It took a whole day to calm him down and convince him of Jack's innocence; and good ol' Doc Clipsham who spent a day or so analyzing my aviaries a few years ago; and Gary Lilienthal who tried to introduce me to an old correspondence buddy Luther Dean. Somehow I missed Luther for three days — our paths didn't cross; and Gail Worth, more beautiful than ever, whose very name conjures up myriad memories of connected people, places and

events.

But enough of this. These are just a few of the stimuli that evoked many, many memories of the AFA people, good and bad, over the years. These things mean nothing to you, of course, but the point is that when *you* attend a convention, *you* have these oh-so-human thoughts and feelings and you may realize that you are not dead yet.

Actually, the socializing with the old and new friends takes place continuously during a convention. It began for me when I first entered the commercial exhibit area ten minutes after checking in.

What a mecca for aviculturists. Every modern device known to man seemed to be present at this show. There were cages and cage builders, seed and seed growers, birds and bird farmers, bird paintings and bird artists — I hadn't seen Eric Peake for years, although I watched his work develop and flourish, so it was nice to visit him again — there were incubators, egg candlers, hospital quality brooders, air purifiers, bird books and book sellers — I enjoyed spending money at Avian Publications and at Michael Dee, Natural History Books. Mr. Dee and I had an excellent discussion about old books and old book dealers and learned we had a few things in common.

It's impossible to catalog all the details of the commercial exhibits but no matter what your specific interest in birds might be, there was something for you in the commercial zone. It amazes me how extensive the avicultural support community is.

Also in the exhibit area was a great display of the entries in the AFA photo contest. It was a pleasure to see the professional criticism employed by the AFA judges in placing the various photos. Among the talented and artistic judges were Dale Thompson, an outstanding avian photographer; Jean Hessler, whose exceptional eye has earned her bread for years; Gamini Ratnavira, himself a master wildlife artist and electric personality; Deanne Harriman, who brought good judgement and a professional's eye for detail to the group. This esteemed and learned panel was so good as to invite my participation. I secretly and hurriedly picked my favorites before the distinguished commentary and criticism could confuse me and was glad to learn that the real judges agreed with my choices



AFA president Jack Clinton-Eitniewar presents the "President's Award" to Vicki Fletcher for her carefully detailed and tedious, long hours of volunteer work as Chief Financial Officer.



Chuck Saffell, Bronze Award for membership recruiting.



Kevin Gorman, himself a Bronze Award recipient for serving as chairman of the Red Siskin Breeding Project, recognizes Linda Sun for her strong support and hard work on that project.

Photos by Sheldon Dingle

on nearly every account. The difference is, they knew *why* they made their choices.

The two more-or-less formal occasions were, first, the Friday luncheon with an excellent speech given by Kevin Gorman who also handed out some awards (a detailed breakdown of the various awards and who received them for what can be found elsewhere in this issue).

Second, of course, was the traditional Saturday evening banquet with President Jack Eitniear's kenote address and the presentation of more well earned awards. I like lunches and banquets. I did not get this fat by missing many. Also, almost everyone at the whole convention is together in one huge ballroom. This gave me plenty of chances to table-hop and corner folks who had so far successfully eluded me.

In this tricky manner, I cornered a couple of old friends from the great Pacific "Northwet," Vicki Fletcher, blessings upon her check signing hand, and Jeri Wright who *is* always right.

Likewise I cornered Helen Hanson and Aletta M. Long, both of whom have, over the years, left me with honorable battle scars. I love a good adversary.

Believe it or not, I caught Dick Schroeder with his pants on. Long pants, that is. His traditional shorts just weren't up to the formality of the situation.

And Linda Sun was on hand, always quiet but hard working. And at my own banquet table I had the great company of Dale Thompson, Jean Hessler, Nancy Vigran, Aletta Long and (blessings on their heads) Norman and Paddy Lambert. When Eitniear's proposed two group photographs of award winners turned into about 50 individual portraits, I ran out of film. Norman Lambert and his trusty Pentax to the rescue. But then, what are friends for if not to bail you out?

Most of this meandering is meaningless to those of you not present at the convention. But it is not my intention to rerun the convention for you. You can buy the proceeds from the Home Office. What you *can't* buy, though, is the memories and experiences, the emotions and thoughts that remain forever with everyone who attends an AFA convention.

I'll be there next year. I hope to meet *you* there. ●

# Avy Awards Presented at the 1991 Convention

by Dale R. Thompson  
Chairman of the Avy Awards Committee

## 1990 U.S. First Breeding Awards

**Tony Alexander's Bird Farm**  
for  
Greater Vasa Parrot  
*Coracopsis vasa*  
Hatched June 28, 1988

**Lowry Park Zoological Garden**  
for  
Chestnut-capped Ground Thrush  
*Zoothera interpres*  
Hatched October 11, 1989

**Mario and Dyann Paulik**  
for  
Striated Lorikeet  
*Charmosyna multistriata*  
Hatched July 10, 1990

**Roddy Gabel**  
for  
Rufous-backed Mannikin  
*Lonchuras bicolor* (subsp.)  
Hatched January 13, 1990

**Carol Anne Calvin  
Stash Buckley**  
for  
Java Mannikin  
*Lonchura leucogastroides*  
Hatched August 10, 1990

**Jerry Jennings**  
for  
Swainson's Toucan  
*Ramphastos swainsonii*  
Hatched May 22, 1990

**Loriidae Production Network**  
for  
Yellow-bibbed Lory  
*Lorius chlorocerus*  
Hatched June 22, 1990

**Alden Chustz**  
for  
Olive-throated Conure  
*Aratinga nana nana*  
Hatched May 15, 1990

## 1990 Zoo Avy Award

**Jackson Zoological Park**  
for  
King Vulture  
Establishment of an individual  
species of bird

## 1990 Watchbird Avy Award

**Kevin M. Gorman**  
for  
"Breeding the Endangered  
Venezuelan Black-hooded  
Red Siskin"

**John Vanderhoof**  
for  
"Breeding and Preserving  
the Family Loriidae"

## 1990 Silver Avy Awards

**Roger Heroux**  
for  
1989 Show standards in cockatiels

**Carolyn Goodman**  
for  
1990 Show standards in cockatiels

## AFA Bronze Service Awards

presented at the Convention  
banquet, August 10, 1991

**Chuck Saffell**  
Palmetto, Florida  
membership recruiting

**Gary Lilienthal**  
Boston, Massachusetts  
Cooperative Working Group on  
the Bird Trade (CWGBT)

**Vicki Fletcher**  
Puyallup, Washington  
President's Award

**Kevin Gorman**  
Rochester, New York  
Conservation Committee

**Dale R. Thompson**  
Canyon Country, California  
Avy Awards Committee

**Trudi Dam**  
Haines City, Florida  
Ethics Committee