

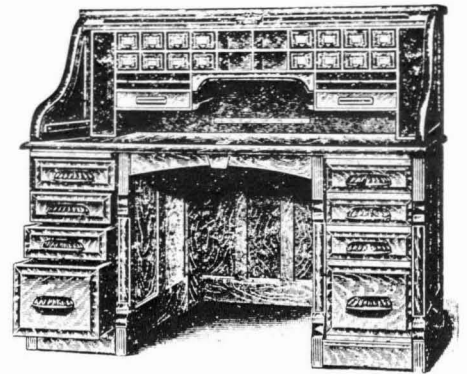
NOTICE

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



Dear Sir:

I am in receipt of your Oct./Nov. 1978 issue, an excellent edition with its usual complement of informative articles.

However the article on the "The Splendid Bourke" by Joseph Crosby, its accompanying photo's and especially that on the back cover of the issue are in my opinion in bad taste as is any award for the creation of an impure or hybrid species of wildlife.

It is to be noted that the AFA is dedicated to conservation of bird wildlife through encouragement of captive breeding programs, scientific research and education of the general public. It is suggested that this purpose be enhanced by dedication to the preservation of bird wildlife in captivity in their "pure" forms.

Further, consideration for the reclassification of an Endangered Species such as the Scarlet-Chested to a captive self sustaining category will certainly not be enhanced by publishing this article.

Very truly yours,
Charles Sivelle
President
American Pheasant and
Waterfowl Society

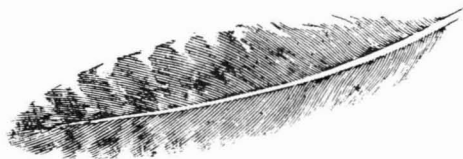
Dear Charlie:

Thank you for your compliment on the Watchbird magazine and your comments on the article, the Splendid Bourke. Personally, I agree with you and am not in favor of promoting hybrids and mutations. However, the reason this particular article was published was to demonstrate that the two species are, in fact, closely related.

Many scholars have questioned whether the Scarlet-chested and Bourke Parakeets were related, and whether the Bourke is, in fact, correctly classified as a *Neophema*, since the other six species of the genus are very similar to each other and all different from the Bourke. The fact that the F_1 offspring are fertile tends to confirm their relationship and was of extreme interest to some of our readers in the scientific community, whom I've heard comment.

I believe A.F.A.'s first and foremost priority is to the preservation bird wildlife in captivity in their "pure" form as you suggest, and believe that goal can be accomplished without prejudice despite frequent forays into the arena of domesticated forms.

Jerry Jennings
Associate Editor



Dear Mr. Dingle

As a member of the American Federation of Aviculture and a subscriber to the Watchbird Magazine, I would like to voice my objection to certain remarks contained in your answer to a readers' question in the Oct/Nov issue (From The Editors' Desk column.)

I refer to the statement, "In California most of our illegal aliens eat only beans

and tortillas and are very helpful to American agriculture."

Whatever the intent, the effect is surely insensitive and at worst cynically racist.

I feel that the remarks I refer to are unbecoming the editor of such a valuable and beautifully executed publication.

Johnny Otis
Los Angeles, CA

My dear fellow, anyone can recognize various ethnic groups just by looking at them. There are no aspersions cast when one differentiates between a German and a Japanese. There is merely a noticeable difference in appearance. By the same token, sir, each ethnic group has its own traditional food associated with it.

If government statistics and general knowledge warranted it, I would have said "In California most of our illegal aliens eat only spaghetti and meat balls".

Please do not take offense where none is offered.

Ed.



Dear Sir

All bird breeders know the dangers involved in exhibiting with regards to spreading diseases. I would like to bring to your attention a bad habit some judges

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have. They come to the shows with their suitcase plus a probe (a stick or C.B. antennae with a chrome ball tip). They proceed to probe the benched birds, often touching the vent. Need I say more?

They do this to see if the bird will sit still; often times they don't. If the bird leaves the perch it is generally disqualified, *although it was perfectly still until the judge probed it*. The bad part of this is the chance of spreading a bad disease from one bird to the next. I don't think any judge should touch any bird at all and then fiddle with the next ones on down the line. When I don't let people handle my own birds, I don't feel they should be handled at a show.

Another obvious fault among many of the judges is the inability to count eight toes and nails on the birds. If they have trouble counting toes, any ten year old could volunteer to help with this problem.

I am sure there are many other faults too numerous to mention, but one concerning health is of paramount importance to all concerned.

Yours respectfully,
J.B.
Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.

Your letter points out at least two separate problems — judges and diseases. Both can be disastrous. If you choose to show your birds neither problem is easily avoided.

I'm sure that all shows strive for sanitary conditions and a disease-free environment but whenever hundreds of birds come together from hundreds of locations there is an increased disease hazard. It all boils down to you pays your money and takes your chances.

The judge problem, as I see it, likewise has no cure. When you enter your bird in a show you tacitly agree to subject yourself (your bird at least) to the whims and vagaries of the judge. There is no appeal to a higher authority. The judge is a small god for the duration of the show.

The only way to avoid the disease hazards of a show is to avoid the show. There are, however, two ways to get out from under the caprices of the judge. In a great huff, gather your violated bird to your breast and withdraw with an outraged dignity. Or, more to be desired, when the judge probes your bird, you, sir, with your umbrella or cane, jab the judge vigorously in the vent. You will be escorted out with a damaged dignity but with a look of infinite satisfaction on your face.

Ed.

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