

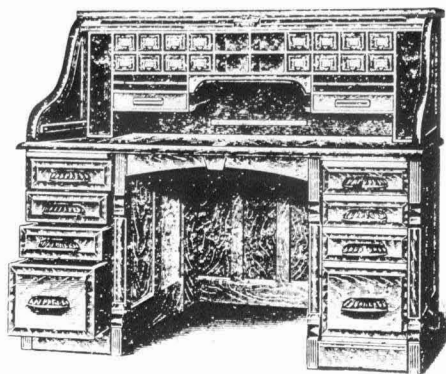
NOTICE

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 Editor,

According to my record my subscription is up for renewal. If you have a computer it will be six months late. Enclosed find a check to renew us — don't want to miss a single issue.

We are constantly delighted with your photos — hats off to your great talents.

In what manner does a subscriber and member purchase a longer membership, two years, or three, for instance?

Keep up your fabulous work and causes.

Now, may I suggest a column by average aviculturists? I refer to the small scale, independent enthusiasts who by labor and love of feathered friends have learned valuable lessons that should be shared.

Dorothie M. Slade
Wheatland, Ca.

Thank you for your accolades and appreciation. Your letter deals with a number of points beginning with membership. We do use a computer and are presently switching to a faster, more efficient computer for your better service. If any questions or problems arise regarding your magazine please contact A.F.A. membership services listed on the first page of the magazine.

I too share your delight with the photos we publish. All credit, of course, goes to our really fine staff of photographers and to our Art Director, M. Jean Hessler. Without them we could do nothing.

Now I refer to your suggestion about articles by average aviculturists. I examined at random a few of our past issues and found that about twenty-five percent of our articles were written by professional zoo people or by veterinarians. The remaining seventy-five percent were written by what I consider average aviculturists. "Average" is, of course, an ambiguous word. Most of our articles were written, however, by smaller scale, independent enthu-

siasts who by labor and love of their feathered friends learned valuable lessons and shared them with us.

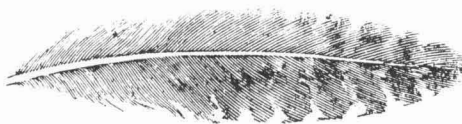
What may throw you off the track is the language of our articles. Most of them are written in a rather formal style; they are usually grammatically correct; they are generally well organized; and they most often have good photo support. These are signs of an above average professional staff of writers — right? Wrong. Dead wrong.

These are signs of a harried, weary, almost blind old editor poring over obscure manuscripts, pipe in mouth and magnifying glass in hand — with piles of research books all over the desk and floor.

Honestly, madam, it is easier to translate Latin, Hebrew or Sanskrit than to decipher Average Aviculturinese. It is only through the most herculean efforts that I am able to make order out of most of the manuscripts that cross my desk, (that should get me a raise). But I don't want to discourage the average aviculturists from sending manuscripts, to the contrary, I encourage such action. We invite any who chooses, to send material to us. All I ask is that the manuscripts be typed and double-spaced and photo support is appreciated.

Someday, when I am about to go belly up, I will publish all of the articles just the way they are received. Then, from my station in Old Editor's Nirvana, I'll take perverse pleasure in observing all the ruckus the illiterate Watchbird causes.

Ed.



Dear Mr. Dingle,

I felt I had to write you this letter to let you know that I am very pleased to have subscribed to the A.F.A "Watchbird"

magazine. My husband and I have found it to be extremely informative and helpful for those of us who own birds. We own a Blue Fronted Amazon and a Cockatiel whose name is "Gray". Our two birds are magnificent creatures and are in the finest health.

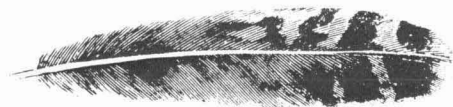
We have learned a lot in this past year about birds and we have a great love for them. I want to take this time to thank you and the President Richard Baer and your staff for helping people like us to see the beauty of birds and the advantage of owning birds.

I want to start an aviary very badly, but unfortunately we are still in the Air Force and we don't have the advantage of staying put. But someday we hope to start one. In the mean time we have a great chance to obtain a lot of information on avian life as well as to observe varieties and species of birds all over the world.

Sincerely,
Beth and Dwight Greenberg
Tullahoma, Tenn.

Thank you for your very kind thoughts. If anything we have done has enhanced your love and appreciation for birds then we are rewarded. While you are in a rather mobile state of affairs you might consider setting up a bird room rather than an outdoor aviary. Many delightful birds can be kept and bred in small cages indoors. Lovebirds, budgies, canaries, finches, and a number of other birds do very well in individual breeding cages that can be well established in one room of your house.

I appreciate very much your offer of thanks to President Baer and the "Watchbird" staff. In fact, I want to emulate your example and offer my own thanks to our glorious leaders. Thanks, Glorious Leaders!!!



Dear Sir,

I would like to compliment you on your excellent, many times witty writing ability. In my opinion it's the most informative and entertaining part of the magazine. I can hardly wait for the next issue!! I must also compliment you on your tactfulness when certain persons bring their "gripes" to you about the A.F.A. and "gripes" about your responses to questions. So here's to a breath of fresh air. Keep up the good work!!

Respectfully yours,
Michael Hart



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Dear Sheldon:

I received my Watchbird last week and as always it is a work of art. No other aviculture magazine is in the same ball park. Many publications will print anything just to fill space between the covers. AFA has never been in that class. Last year when I edited a national bulletin, I received the letter you published from J.B. of Fla. criticizing the methods of judging birds. I did not publish it. Judges are criticized by every one except the winners now. Must we open the door for more?

When I went to my first bird show many years ago, I viewed it much as old J.B. does. Why use a pointer to move a bird, can't they be judged better if they are motionless and not moving around? The answer is no, a good judge will look at both sides of the bird, also the front and back view. A blind bird, will always give you only his good side. Would J.B. want a bird that is blind to go best in show. You must also move a bird to get the right wing and tail carriage.

As for judges not being able to count to eight, I don't think so, eleven maybe, unless he happens to be a retired saw operator. All standards do not disqualify a bird for missing toes or nails.

If J.B. is afraid of disease leave his birds at home in their glass house. I believe there was another man with this obsession, I think his name was Hughes.

Regards,
Tom Squyres
Ft. Worth, Tex.

You present a lucid and credible point of view from the judge's camp. I, however, have no qualms about criticizing judges or anything else. I believe in a laissez-faire attitude wherein everything is open to scrutiny and all things eventually balance and reach their own level based on their merit. Judges, like everyone else, should be evaluated and this process naturally involves criticism. Of course, a wise man disregards unsupported and frivolous criticism.

I tend to agree with you that a judge is within his rights when he jabs a bird to make it move. Perhaps the health hazard could be minimized if between birds the judge would dip his probe in a sterilizing solution. Old J.B., by the same token, ought to sterilize his cane between judges.

Ed.

Animal care technician needed for management of bird farm. Basic veterinary knowledge and five years experience in breeding and training of large parrots. Working knowledge of Spanish preferable but not necessary. 40 hours week at five dollars per hour plus commission on all sales. Albert Lynch, 20118 Hy. 99, Lynwood, WA. (206) 775-5521.

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