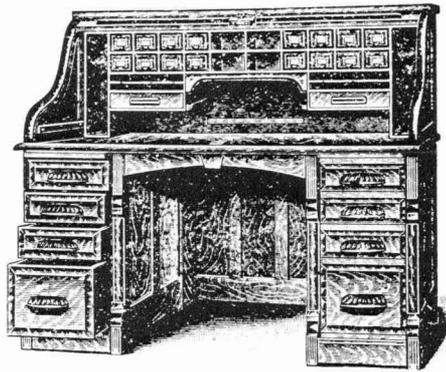


From The Editor's Desk

by Sheldon Dingle



Dr. Baer's article "Perils of Buying Birds" in our last issue has evoked much verbal response. Unfortunately, our publishing deadline was so close that time did not permit putting the responses into print. Our next issue, however, will contain some counter-balancing statements. In the meantime your humble editor will express a few of his personal thoughts on the matter. Just as Dr. Baer's opinion is just that — his own opinion, so the following lines reflect my own attitudes and ruminations and shouldn't be construed as anything more.

There is no doubt that many sick and diseased birds are bought and sold every day. There is considerable traffic in birds and a certain percent of the birds will die, another percent will live but have health problems. Dr. Baer has done aviculture a great service to point this fact out. It is equally true that the Federal and State Governments do not guarantee the health of any birds put on the market and, indeed, some of the birds will be diseased.

This is as it should be. Where, dear friend, can you find a guarantee without strings attached? How much of a guarantee do you receive when you buy birds from the local breeders? I personally know many breeders whose flocks are infested with various parasites, have regular bouts with psittacosis, are periodically afflicted with coccidiosis, and have even had Pacheco's parrot disease. The government nor anyone else guarantees the health of these birds.

Some very conscientious breeders will do all in their power to raise and sell only healthy birds, and occasionally they will give a modest guarantee — perhaps to replace a purchased bird if it dies within one day — or something similar. So too are there conscientious bird importers and dealers. Again, I personally know of several instances where a quarantine station has refused to sell birds that were not up to par. In one case a number of

parrots were farmed out to a private breeder to see if he could improve the bird's health. None of the birds were ever sold. In another case a large number of birds in poor health were donated to the Federal Laboratory at Ames, Iowa, for avian research. Another importer had a shipment of birds that were unhealthy but did not have Newcastle Disease. He begged the government to kill all of the birds but they refused and he had to do the chore himself.

There are good and honest people in all aspects of the bird fancy including importers, dealers, and breeders. There are also crooks in the aforementioned categories. No single category is more clean and upstanding than the others.

Another very widespread malady that pervades all aspects of the bird trade is the disease called S.F.N. — i.e., Something For Nothing. Too many people want something for nothing. Too few people are willing to assume their own responsibility. Regarding bird traffic and bird diseases, again everybody wants S.F.N. People want a guaranteed product, a bird that imposes no responsibility on the buyer, a bird that is no peril, a bird whose condition is secure.

I, dear reader, do not want the government to guarantee me a secure bird — or anything else. You realize of course that the most secure persons in our society are the prisoners of the government. These prisoners are guaranteed their meals, their clothes, their shelter. All of the necessities of life are supplied with no responsibility to the prisoner. The prisoners are getting something for nothing. Or are they? What about their freedom?

I don't want to be a prisoner of the government and I don't want the bird trade to be dominated by government. If we assume our responsibilities there will be no need for government intervention. Once again Dr. Baer comes to the rescue and points out one of the most

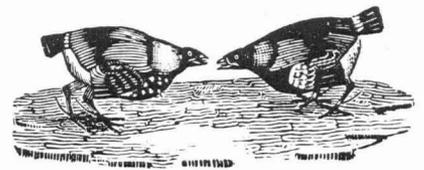
crucial elements of our responsibility in handling bird diseases. Quarantine Your Own Birds. Never buy a bird from an importer or a local breeder and put it directly into your flock. I refer you to Dr. Baer's discussion of private quarantine

found on page 16 of the Dec/Jan Watchbird, Volume IV, No. 6.

If we manage our own birds according to the best avicultural techniques, we can do much to eliminate troublesome diseases. If we shop wisely on the open bird market those dealers who are not responsible will eventually go out of business. These two responsibilities belong to us. Let's not burden the taxpayers with them. There is no such thing as something for nothing. If we, by relinquishing our responsibility, force the government to take over portions of the bird industry, we also relinquish our freedom in those areas and I'm against that.

Well, with the above stated philosophy off my chest I suppose it would be wise to explain my general editorial philosophy. In the Watchbird we are willing to present a very broad spectrum of opinions. We, in fact, solicit diverse opinions. We will publish anyone's articulate and well thought out opinion without taking sides. If something appears in the magazine that you feel is erroneous you should submit a rebuttal. When A.F.A.' Policy is printed it will be identified as official policy.

Now, perhaps we should get on with a few letters that have crossed my desk lately.



Gentlemen:

I am considering raising parakeets as a business. I am trying to gather as much information as I can on this subject. Can you provide any brochures, etc., or sources of information such as magazines, books, etc?

Thank you
C.P.
Austin, Texas

Raising parakeets as a business falls into two categories as I see it. The first is actually setting up and raising the birds. This requires avicultural techniques and skill which can best be gained by associating with other experienced bird breeders. Affiliation with a local club is often helpful. Most of the literature you will find is

written in very general terms and won't be as helpful as several visits to a parakeet breeding operation.

The second category is a legal one. Check with your zoning commission, the building inspectors, a good accountant, and perhaps an attorney. A bird business is like any other business and must take into account the I.R.S., the State Taxes, the various permits and licenses. Good luck. Editor

Dear Sir:

I had hoped that there could be an article in the Watchbird every issue on bird breeding in Florida but I guess it was just a dream. I don't blame your organization. You put out the most desirable of all publications and it is quite understandable that you would like to keep it West Coast oriented.

Sincerely
Mrs. Mike Simmons
Florida State Coordinator

You bring up an excellent point that deserves some explanation. First off, the last thing we want is a West Coast image. We want to reflect and represent aviculture the entire nation over. We want to be and are fast becoming a truly National organization. This is more apparent in our legal and legislative departments than in our publications.

Our magazine, on the other hand, is probably weighted a bit in favor of the West Coast because of a personal handicap I am afflicted with. I have trouble twisting arms across country. Here in California when people see my simian-like 200 lbs approach they run. I usually catch them anyway and squeeze out an article. Unfortunately I don't drag my knuckles across Florida very often. I have to depend upon good people such as yourself to rustle up good articles for the magazine. This is true for most of the Midwest and East. Then when I get a few articles from the east, I have to hold them until they can be used to best advantage. You have been very helpful in getting good material for us. If more members would be as industrious I wouldn't have to grab so many throats around here.

Editor

Dear Friends:

It is with pleasure that I forward my dues for 1978. As a professional and avocational aviculturist, the A.F.A. is of great interest to me. Please continue your fine coverage of current events in the world of birds.

Also please be informed that the contest-winning photo labeled "Rail" on pg. 36 of the Oct/Nov issue is indeed not a

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rail, but a Jacana, or Lilytrotter, related to but not a true Rail.

Many Thanks
Sheri Williamson
Ft. Worth, Texas

We slower folks have a world of problems. Here when my one-track mind thought everything was going well, I get de-railed by a Rail. And not a true Rail at that. The photo was not identified and we couldn't contact the photographer so your humble one-track servant had to do the research. Of all the books I went through, Ripley's "Rails of the World" has the closest pictures. I knew the bird was not in the book and I couldn't find my Lilytrotter volume so I called it a Rail. We sincerely appreciate your fine observation, though, and the trouble you took to correct us. I hope we never get away with a mistake. Editor

A BALANCED RATION FOR LOVE BIRDS

Continued from page 10

who do eat apple. Their reluctance will soon be overcome by curiosity.

Dry whole wheat or cracked wheat bread is an excellent supplement to the ration. The sliced bread is cut into one inch squares and allowed to dry or it can be crumbled and mixed with grated carrot and vitamin concentrate. Hard boiled egg added to the latter makes a good nestling food. The average love bird will eat about one of the dried squares or its equivalent daily along with its other feed. Birds feeding young will consume double or more this amount together with greatly increased quantities of greens and apple.

Birds kept in flights may be provided the different seeds in separate dishes to cut down on waste. Birds kept in breeding cages must be fed a seed mixture as space limits the number of receptacles that can be accommodated. A minimum of five receptacles is necessary to properly feed birds kept in breeding cages, including the container for water. The other four receptacles are necessary for the small seed mixture, and sunflower seed fed apart, the container for greens, apple and dried bread, and the one for oyster shell.

Other seeds, both starch and oil, greens, vegetable, fruits, and supplements, may be fed the caged bird provided the ration is nutritionally sound and balanced and that it is accepted by the bird. Availability and cost play a large part in this selection and variation in the ration from time to time may make it more interesting to the bird.

NEW MUTATIONS

Continued from page 42

yellow shoulders and flights. No young with pied markings have been produced from such birds, but efforts continue and hopefully this variation will someday be established.

In the old books dealing with the Agapornis during the 1920's and 1930's, mention has been made of hybrids between many different species, such as Peach Face x Masked, or Fischer's and even crosses between Madagascar x Black-cheeked, etc. These publications state the young so produced are fertile. In recent years we have known that hybrids within the eye-ring group are fertile, but crosses with Peach Face and others are thought to be mules. There needs to be a great deal of work done to document

hybrids and their fertility. This information is very valuable to us for future work with our birds.

Possibly the African Love Bird Society could set up a committee to deal with this subject, and club members could participate. So much can be done, work that should have been done years ago. We have long needed an organization to help improve our Agapornis, by setting standards, and helping to educate through shows and publications.

If we do our job well, that is, keep good records, close band our birds, foster carefully controlled experiments, and cooperate with various avicultural organizations, we will have the African Love Birds with us for a long time. These delightful little birds will continue to add variety and color to grace our aviaries. The future looks good.

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CLASSIFIED RATES — \$5.00 minimum charge for 4 lines of type (average 7 words per line). Additional charge of 9¢ per word for ad running over 28 words. (28 words to include name, address and phone.) All copy to be **RECEIVED BY 15th** day of month preceding publication. One inch boxed ad - 58 word maximum — \$12.00.

FOR SALE: Red Head — \$175.00 African Grey — \$399, Sulfer Crested Cockatoo — \$900.00 Double Yellow Head — \$250.00, Finches Amazon — \$115.00, Pioners — \$180.00. Much more. (714) 531-5027. 9752 13th St., Santa Ana, CA. 92703.

WANTED: All birds and parrots for re-sale, also wrought iron, etc. parrot cages. Teddy's Pets, 724 Fillmore St., San Francisco, CA. 94117. Quote prices.

FOR SALE: Hyacinth Macaws at prices you can now afford! True Galerita Sulphur-Crested Cockatoo male — talking — \$2000.00. Jaybird Hollow Bird Farm, Rt. 1, Box 86, Yellville, Arkansas 72687. Call (501) 436-7330.

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HYACINTH MACAWS — Evenings and weekends. 1-203-438-9376.

FOR SALE: BUDGIES, Exhibition Type; CANARIES, Columbus Fancy Crested & Crest/Breds, Red Factors. Arlene Chandler, PO Box 54, Pacific Palisades, CA 90272. (213) 454-6971.

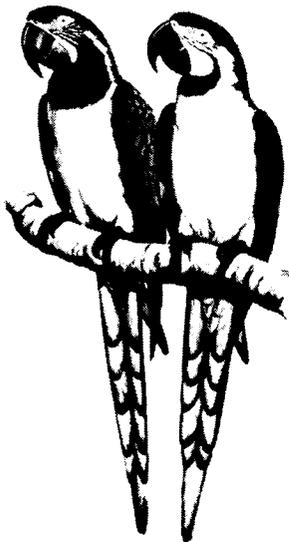
WANTED: NORWICH CANARIES. "PARROTS OF THE WORLD" Original Publication. Arlene Chandler, PO Box 54, Pacific Palisades, CA 90272. (213) 454-6971.

FOR SALE: 3 to 5 month old normal cockatiels. \$45.00 each. 10% discount for orders of 10 or more birds. Twin Oaks Bird Farm, Rt. 3, Box 114A, Chandler, Okla. 74834. Phone 1-405-258-2791.

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