

THE PRESIDENT'S VIEW

by Lee Horton

3rd Annual National A.F.A. Convention

ANNUAL DELEGATE'S MEETING SCOTTSDALE, ARIZONA SEPTEMBER 16, 1977

The American Federation of Aviculture has certainly made great progress during its 1976-77 fiscal year. Evidence of this fact was the success of our 3rd Annual Convention held in Scottsdale, Arizona, in September.

The committee reports given at the Annual Board Meeting on the accomplishments in each subject only enhanced the fact of this success. As President of A.F.A., I feel that much of this information should be passed on to general membership.

The following delegates representing our member clubs, and the coordinators representing individual states made up the board:

STATE COORDINATORS

STATE	COORDINATORS
Connecticut	Nancy A. Reed
Illinois	Kai Juhl
Massachusetts	Mark Runnals
New Jersey	Dr. Barry Adler
Ohio	Dr. Richard Baer,
	Chairman of State Coordinators

LIAISON
Washington, D.C.

Cliff Witt

WATCHBIRD STAFF
California

M. Jean Hessler

CLUB DELEGATES

STATE/CLUB DELEGATE

Arizona	
Arizona Avicultural Society	Ron Dinning
California	
African Lovebird Society	Sharon Clause
	Steve Clause
Avicultural Society of America	Ray Brode
	Roland Dubuc
Bakersfield	Hal Koontz
Butte County Bird Club	Jim Smith
Calif. Game Breeders	Sheldon Dingle
	Dick Mattice
Finch Society of San Diego	Lee Horton
	Frank Kozeluh
Golden West Game	
Bird Breeders	Paul Lawrence
Long Beach Bird Breeders	Joe DeAguiar
	Annamarie Bailey
San Diego Canary Club	Janice Pritchard
Santa Clara Valley Canary	
and Exotic Cage Bird Club	Dianne Klyn
	Nikki McClatchie
South Bay Bird Club	Helen Hanson
South Coast Finch Society	Jerry Jennings
	John Moseley



Guest speaker, Jan van Oosten, from the state of Washington, kept his audience wide awake with a fast moving lecture, *Lacey Act or, See You In Jail.*

Valley of Paradise Bird Club Stan Dumke
Bernie Teunissen
West Valley Bird Society Ginger Weiss

Illinois
Greater Chicago Cage
Bird Club Kenneth Kulas
Ill. Game & Pet Breeders Soc. Craig Hendee
Kai Juhl

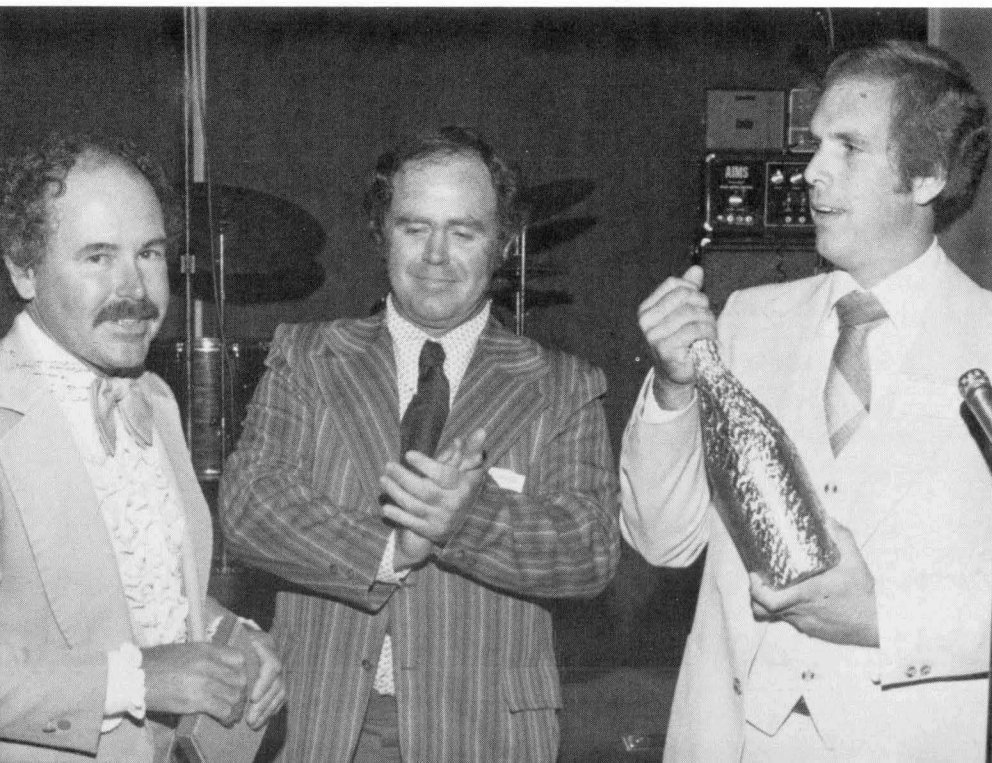
Ohio
Central Ohio Bird Fanciers,
Inc. Dr. Richard Baer

Oregon
Columbia Canary Breeders Vern Bright
Joe McLaughlin

Texas
The Fort Worth Bird Club Bob Smith

Delegate at large Charlotte A. LeDoux

President, Lee Horton (left) was presented a special award, including champagne, for the excellent leadership he provided AFA throughout his first year term. John Moseley (right) presented the Awards with Steve Clause (center) assisting.



Space will not allow me to relate to you all of the details of our meeting, but I will try to give you some of the highlights.

ATTORNEY REPORT

The first report given was by our attorney, Mr. F. Morin, Jr., regarding the Newcastle crisis and our Federal law suit. In short, he stated a few details regarding the court hearings that had transpired. He said at this point he felt the Federal Government would be appealing Judge Byrne's refusal to dismiss them as a defendant. This would open

the door for an appeal by A.F.A. if it so chooses.

Mr. Morin stressed the fact that one of the most positive results of our hearings and court decisions was the extremely good exposure we received with the news media, the courts, and especially the compassion of the general public.

WASHINGTON LIAISON REPORT

Continuing the legal stand was our Washington liaison, Cliff Witt. Cliff's report was so well done and easy to read, I have included the complete report.

"This past year has been one of becoming recognized in Washington, D.C. as a viable special interest, consumer group. A year ago, while government agencies were aware of our existence, little was known of our size, level of organization, activities or interests. We were of little consequence in the larger scheme of things. In addition there was a pervasive attitude that all exotic bird and animal imports were inherently cruel and damaging to the ecosystems of the world. Maintaining anything in cages was inhumane and posed dangers to other animals and humans in the form of physical harm or disease.

Politicians and bureaucrats trying to

take advantage of this attitude to gain recognition for doing something (anything!) by proposing restrictive regulations were quite surprised when they met stiff resistance put up by AFA and other groups.

1. Early in the year an attempt was made by ZOOACT to bring together the various "animal-user" groups (Zoos, Circuses, performing animal exhibitors, marine life exhibitors, bird breeders, etc.) under one roof to discuss policy to confront the barrage of legislation and regulations being drawn up for 1977 which would affect us all. The AFA was included in this group. Thus far nothing concrete has come from the decisions made at that meeting.

2. The single most important event which enhanced our position in Washington, D.C. was our aggressive stance on the Newcastle issue. Overnight we became, in the eyes of the government, a force to be reckoned with. They were surprised at the information we had, frustrated that we could stop the depopulation by simply contacting our members, very displeased with our law suit, irritated by the letters we wrote, and generally shocked by the reality that there is a large, well-organized group of bird breeders and dealers who will not tolerate having their basic rights pushed aside.

Our actions were also being watched (with some nervousness) by the other animal user organizations like PIJAC, AAZPA, and ZOOACT. We were, however, the only group to take positive action at the time and gained enormous respect (Respect, not necessarily open admiration).

Our actions were being watched by other government agencies also, like USDI.

There are many important spin-offs from our Newcastle action.

a) The Dept. of Agriculture has come to recognize the aviculturist or "Pet Bird Industry" as important in American society and business and has so stated in various public meetings.

b) USDA not only is willing to work with us on problems, but is eager to work with us.

c) The U.S. Dept. of the Interior has become more hesitant about issuing regulations restricting the maintenance of birds in captivity — but beware, this will not last.

d) We now have the respect of other organizations as a force that can produce money and political pressure.

e) Congressmen and Senators are aware of our existence now.

f) Dick Baer has given USDA, and therefore, indirectly, other agencies, organizations and government officials, a

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Cliff Witt (left), and Ruth Hanessian received Bronze Avy Awards for their outstanding and untiring work in legislative activities. Both are from the Washington D.C. area. Steve Clause (right) tended to presentation duties.



Sylvia Cannon, Wickenburg, Arizona, provided an extremely unusual fantasy display of hand decorated eggs.

NOTICE

BIRDS IN CAPTIVITY SYMPOSIUM

The 1st International Birds in Captivity Symposium will be held in Seattle, Washington from March 8, 1978 through March 12, 1978. Sessions will deal with husbandry, nutrition, medicine, sexing techniques, behavior, reproduction and ornithological studies done in the wild. A panel discussion will be held after each topic session and there will be a special panel on conservation. All presented papers will be published after completion of the Symposium. For more information please write:

IECF
Jan R. van Oosten,
Chairman
1008 James St.
Seattle, WA 98104

new definition of the "aviculturist" which was badly needed and which is reshaping the government's outlook and thinking about people who keep birds—a suburban and urban phenomenon worth serious consideration.

3. Other legislative activity has been surprisingly little thus far in 1977. The Injurious Wildlife Proposal remains just a proposal. The various Bills were expected to come to hearings in Congressional committees and subcommittees are currently dormant. This is worrisome because it gives one the feeling that Interior and the environmentalists groups are preparing something big. In addition Carter issued an Executive Order in July to restrict the import of all exotic species. We are still waiting for the action on this.

We are currently riding the crest of a wave in Washington. It is imperative, however, that we work diligently and constructively with USDA in any way we can. It is our best opportunity to maintain and build credibility with the government. We must make dramatic efforts to stop the smuggling. On this one point alone our enemies can destroy us. Even if few smugglers are arrested, our efforts will be recorded in high places while the continuing pressure on the smugglers will at least slow them down and force some of them out of business.

THE FUTURE: Remember, the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture is not our enemy. A lot of good will come from a solid working relationship with USDA. The enemy is the U.S. Dept. of the Interior. We can expect USDI to make a great effort to end imports and deny possession of birds to all but those who can meet outrageous requirements. This will take the form of:

- a) Legislation promoted by USDI.
- b) Legislation promoted by environmentalist groups with large monetary resources.
- c) Regulations issued by USDI.
- d) Regulations issued by the U.S. Public Health Service.

At the moment, the AFA projects a strong image in the Nation's Capital. We must do whatever is necessary to maintain that image. We must continue to be aggressive and ever-present. To do this we must know what is going on and everyone can help. If you read about something or hear about something we should check out in Washington, please contact one of the following people, even if you don't think it's important."

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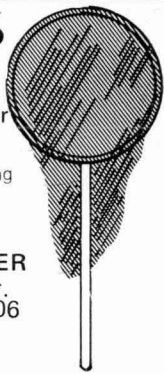
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EDUCATIONAL REPORT

The Educational Committee with co-chair persons Steve and Sharon Clause had prepared an excellent slide program for the board, with narration and music on the Newcastle outbreak. Two slides were projected simultaneously, one of beautiful healthy birds of many species and the other of the U.S.D.A. depopulating aviaries. After the viewing of this very emotional show the board members praised the committee on its excellent work.

The Educational Committee also reported that an information survey had been sent to the member clubs and the results indicated that member clubs were interested in slide/tape programs dealing with all aviculture subjects which would be used as programs at their meetings. With this in mind, the Newcastle program was prepared for viewing at the convention. This is currently available to member clubs. Also, all lectures given at the convention were taped and future programs will be available on the various subjects. Pamphlets will also be produced on various aviculture topics. Subjects will include, "How To Stimulate Growth In Your Clubs", "Educational Resources Available In Your Community For Use By Member Clubs", etc.

Additional slide/tape programs now available are "Australian Finches" and "The African Love Bird".

WATCHBIRD REPORT

The Annual Watchbird report was given by Editor Sheldon Dingle. This report showed our growth from August

1974, when the Watchbird was only an eight page newspaper, to March 1976, when it had grown to a thirty page magazine with a color cover. By January 1977, we were producing a forty page magazine with color covers as well as inside color pictures. With the tremendous growth, the Watchbird Staff has found it necessary to reorganize and re-vamp the publications department. The nine following steps have been taken since January 1977:

1. Contacted Publications Guide for rate, data, status comparison.
2. Contacted major specialty magazines for rate and data comparison.
3. Hired professional help to revise our rate and data cards and to design ad contracts.
4. Consulted with an editor of four specialty magazines for professional advise and counsel regarding production and growth of "Watchbird".



Guest speaker, Al Valenzuela, Phoenix, Arizona, put some 'pasazz' into his lecture on the use of setting hens as foster parents.

Recognize anybody? The convention lectures drew large attentive audiences.



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5. Added two associate editors to the staff.

6. Added three advertising representatives including two on the east coast.

7. Measured the percentage of ad space in comparable magazines. Their average is 80%. Ours is 40-50%.

8. Measured percentage of subscription renewals and found that the renewal notice system was not adequate.

9. Computerized Watchbird mailing list and programmed automatic renewal notices for a higher renewal percentage.

Mr. Dingle then listed the present production problems and the need for a larger backlog of pictures and articles, a central location for phones, files, research library, etc., and a secretary or typist.

As for the future, Editor Dingle stated that the format of the Watchbird would remain basically unchanged. However, special theme issues will be added with articles covering preparation of birds for nesting, what to do during the winter months, birds in literature and art, an all parrot issue, an all finch issue, an all dove and pigeon issue, and others.

In future issues, new columns to be initiated include: new products, A.F.A. news-activities, meetings, etc., and A.F.A. personality profiles.

He also stated the possibility of a future newspaper publication on a bi-weekly or a weekly basis to handle club news, show dates, classified ads, and other time related news.

Then following was a report by myself on the need of an improved distribution program for the Watchbird as well as A.F.A. membership. Possibilities discussed included using professionals and the need for a greater effort in placing posters and brochures in retail outlets, etc.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

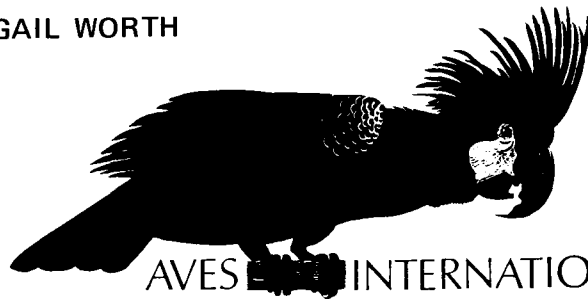
The Membership report showed an increase of 150% in individual memberships during the past fiscal year and an increase of 250% in member clubs during the same period.

NEW BUSINESS

New business centered on the need for a central office and of having area meetings in different sections of the country.

In all, the annual meeting was very productive and as president again, I wish to thank all the Committees for their great efforts and obvious progress during the past fiscal year. With continued effort this year will bring even greater progress for A.F.A. ■

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