

What a Great Convention!

News and highlights from the 36th annual gathering of aviculture enthusiasts

By Lyrae Perry



This year's theme was "The Magic of Birds," as AFA's 36th annual convention commenced in St. Petersburg, Fla., Aug. 4–7. In so many ways, this was really a magical convention, complete with wizards, magicians and treasures of all kinds. The vendor exhibit hall offered an exciting array of new products and equipment to put magic into your breeding program. There were bird toys, jewels, artwork, limited edition collectibles, and specialty items available.

Many specialty clubs were represented in the hall, as were our long time supporters and vendors. Speaker presentations were exciting and thought-provoking, with amazing images, and a first breeding award. We haven't seen many of these in recent years and it's always wonderful to learn about first time breeding successes.

Old and new friends kept the vendor hall buzzing with conversation and camaraderie day and night. This is one of the few conventions where we were within short walking distance of a great variety of restaurants with terrific food, interesting shops, a pharmacy and even a really good grocery store. This was appreciated by all those who were handfeeding babies or those folks just looking for alternative, healthy food or snacks.

If you wanted to go to the pier, there was an old fashioned trolley to ride. The pier and shops were pretty great, and then a group of us had dinner on the top floor restaurant. The spectacular view from our tables was magnificent and it was like being on a cruise ship. The red fruit Sangria was refreshing and the food was terrific.

There were plenty of other good, local restaurants to visit and the hospitality in St. Petersburg was amazing. This was one of the best conventions AFA has ever had. We are so grateful for

the friendship and support of our sponsors.

Each year our convention sponsors donate merchandise, funds, the cost of tour buses, refreshments and gifts and prizes. Please show them your appreciation by using their products and recommending them to others. Some of our sponsors are individuals, clubs or businesses, and you can show your appreciation for their generosity by making a purchase at the AFA online store or by becoming a sponsor at next year's convention yourself.

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| Volunteer appreciation night | <i>Bird Talk Magazine</i> |
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| Tour bus to zoo | Orange County Bird Breeders |
| Tropical Splendor magic show | Imperial Bird Club |
| Coffee break | Nancy Speed |
| Coffee break | Rolf C. Hagen (USA) Corp/HARI |
| Passport Challenge | Kaytee/Super Pet |

Board of Directors Meeting

The August board meetings are a little different than the regular board meetings held during the rest of the year. Since the August meeting takes place at the convention hotel, there are always delegates, AFA members and other interested parties that attend. This year was no different in that respect, and it was great to see so much interest in the business of AFA.

The board meeting was called to order at 8 a.m., on Tuesday, Aug. 3. There's always a full agenda, and some of the most important items to be discussed involve the budget and the convention activities. Brent Andrus, AFA's CFO distributed the financial reports to the board for review. Mark Moore, AFA publications chairman, presented the convention program and unveiled the convention artwork for 2010. Mark previewed the new merchandise for sale at the AFA vendor tables in the exhibit hall. He also announced that the *Watchbird* is caught up —yay, Mark! The board meeting was recessed, to reconvene on Sunday, Aug. 9.

Convention Registration Opens

Carol Woodson was a marvel to watch as she handled the demanding job of registration. She made it look easy and greeted everyone with a smile and an enthusiastic welcome from beginning to end. Thank you to ZuPreem for donating the badge holders this year—they were perfect! Carol made sure that everyone got a badge ribbon proclaiming their status:

Ist-Timers, Speakers, BOD, etc. The rest of the attendees got to choose from an assortment of multicolored badge ribbons. Some folks strung ribbons together creating whole paragraphs! Favorites were: No Whining, Trouble Maker, Plays Well With Others, Rock Star, My Ribbon Is Better Than Yours, Party Animal, Somebody, Nobody, and my personal favorite—Royalty! This was such a hit that Carol promised the ribbons will be available for next year, with a whole new set of phrases.

House of Delegates Meeting

The House of Delegates enjoyed the preview of the current merchandise for sale at the AFA store. Mark Moore showed off the newest T-shirts, polo shirts and sweatshirts with the gorgeous Blue & Gold Macaw art by Wayne E. Smyth, the Official Program, the Proceedings on CD, and the newest AFA CITES lapel pin (No. 26) of the Plum-headed Parakeets.

Past President Tom Marshall surprised the group and presented AFA with it's own flag. He described each element of the flag design, which was carefully thought out and had meaning. It's a very nice tribute to the history and mission of the AFA. Thank you Tom, for such a unique and inspiring gift.

Tampa's Lowry Park Zoo

We all headed off to Tampa's Lowry Park Zoo after the HOD meeting. Thank you again to the Orange County Bird



Breeders for covering the cost of the bus to Tampa's Lowry Park Zoo, we would not have survived the walk!

The zoo staff greeted us at the front gate and we were sorted into three large groups. Each group got a special personalized walking tour of the zoo. As luck would have it, I was in the group headed by Dr. Larry Killmar, Ph.D., Director of Collections for Tampa's Lowry Park Zoo, who was slated to speak about the first breeding of the Shoebill Stork later in the week.

I love this zoo for so many reasons.

It's beautifully landscaped and is the region's only dedicated zoological garden. Tampa's Lowry Park Zoo is a really



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affordable leisure destination and center for education and endangered species conservation. The big fountain near the entrance is a life-sized sculpture of manatees with fountain jets recessed in the ground. The weather was very hot that afternoon and children of all ages were playing in the water as it squirted up. I can tell you I wasn't the only person tempted to go play in the fountains that day, huh Jim and Marilyn?

Throughout the zoo, the construction of the enclosures allows you to get really close to the animals and birds. The animals seem perfectly happy and accepting of this arrangement, which makes for an intimate experience that is not available at other zoos. There are more than 200 species of birds in the free-flight aviary. They have a Lorikeet Landing, an Indonesian themed Sulawesi Aviary and an exhibit with hundreds of native Australian parrots in the Bushland Budgies exhibit.

Tampa's Lowry Park Zoo is also well known for its community outreach and educational programs. The Florida Education Center or "zoo school" includes kindergarten, pre-school, daycare, camps, birthday parties, Boy Scout and Brownie workshops year-round classes and programs for teens, sleepovers and behind the scenes tours.

We were treated to lunch at the Safari Lodge. The menu choices included rotisserie chicken, pasta and several other healthy options. You could also get ice cream with custom mix-ins. We were all especially impressed with the air conditioning

that could only be described as FABULOUS. Thank you to Tampa's Lowry Park Zoo for a wonderful tour and lunch!

President's Reception

The President's Reception marks the official kick off for the convention. President Hawley welcomed everyone and opened the vendor exhibit hall on Wednesday night after the zoo tour. The reception was a perfect opportunity for the attendees to view and buy products, visit with the vendors, check out the raffle tables, the silent auction tables, and mingle with friends. Two past presidents, Dr. Benny Gallaway and Tom Marshall were there to share in the opening festivities.

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Keynote Address

The Magic of Birds was brought home to the House of Delegates with the appearance of Mr. Wizard (Dr. Benny Gallaway), who immediately conjured the attention and humor of the crowd with a wave of his wand. The delegates were immediately whisked away on a journey to the past...recalling the history of the American Federation of Aviculture. We witnessed the contrast between the response today, as compared to the response in the 1970's when AFA became the voice of aviculture. In those early days, exotic Newcastle disease (VND) resulted in passionate responses from aviculturists, the poultry industry and the USDA.

In sharp contrast, the recent Newcastle event was barely noticed and fostered little allegiance from the membership. Why? For one thing, there were no birds being euthanized. AFA has done a good job working with the USDA and APHIS since the 1970's—and what a difference this cooperative effort has made on both sides of the table. Open lines of communication saved countless birds over the years, and thousands of taxpayer dollars. Today, AFA is working closely with Dr. Chester Gipson and his department at USDA to continue this productive and beneficial relationship.

Those of us who lived through those early days of AFA are proud to know that our organization made a difference in the world for aviculturists and birds. We are even more excited that the focus for AFA is on education now. We are moving ahead

as an organization and as individual aviculturists to strengthen our knowledge of birds and our avian management techniques.

Hospitality Central

Thank you to Andy Sanford and Ivan Fruge'—Curators and Keepers for the Night Owls every evening during the convention. Everyone appreciated the munchies, the liquid refreshments and those peaches were fantastic! Darrel, Kelly, Marshall, Brent, John and Sandee kept us all giggling.

Specialty Meetings

The Specialty Bird Club Meetings are a super opportunity to learn more about a species you're interested in, and to make contact with the breeders who raise them. Many of the specialty clubs go out of their way to help AFA with the convention and support activities to promote aviculture. The AFA Convention is proud to provide the time and space for these important meetings. Thank you to everyone who participated.

The following specialty organizations met at this year's convention:

- Florida Federation of Aviculture
- International Conure Association
- Northwest Lory League
- Lineolated Parakeet Society
- Cockatiel Foundation, Inc.
- Pionus Breeders Association
- The Caique Enthusiasts

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Games

This year, AFA offered some fun games that tested your knowledge of birds and aviculture. No one knew how this would fly, but when the games got started, it was apparent that everyone was having a great time!

The games offered this year included Birdy Bingo, JeopBirdy and Flocking Feud. Thanks to Jason Crean, Robin Shewokis and Jan Chaney.

First-timers' Impressions

Linda Lewis, Sarasota, Fla.—Linda attended the talks and I asked what her impression was as a first timer at the AFA convention: She stated that the presentations were of varied levels from beginner to advanced and that they were very good. "I really enjoyed the presentations by Josee Bermingham, Robin Shewokis, and the AFA4 Kidz event."

AFA offers a variety of presentations to help beginning aviculturists, pet owners and more advanced birdkeepers. This was AFA's first AFA4Kidz seminar.

Caitlin Nagy, Newport Richey, Florida—Caitlin's favorite programs at the convention: "Fledging Age" by Josee Bermingham, Lara Joseph's presentations, and she felt the level of the talks was very good overall. She said she learned a lot and had a good time. Caitlin saw her first Great Billed parrot at this convention. She commented that it would be helpful if there was a public address system to make announcements of upcoming

events, speakers, etc. Caitlin found out about the AFA convention via the internet doing random networking, and she learned more about us from the Houston Parrot Festival in January of this year.

10-Year Convention Attendee Impressions

John Lewis, Carson, Calif.—John is an experienced finch breeder and now works with conures and lovebirds. He liked the Puerto Rican Amazon talk and the Blue and Gold Macaw talks, saying they both contained lots of useful information

Brinsea, The Incubation Specialists—commented that it was a nice gesture for the vendors to be able to put ad stuffers into the convention tote bags at no charge.

I visited with all the vendors and exhibitors in the hall during the convention and I can tell you that the quality of the merchandise was exceptional. Our vendors are also very generous—each of them donated items for many raffles and also for the Passport Challenge, which was sponsored by Kaytee/Super Pet.

The Passport Challenge is more than just a chance for convention attendees to win some great merchandise. Its purpose is to make sure each attendee visits all of the vendor tables. This gives both parties the opportunity to meet, learn and discuss the merchandise offered. Vendors stamp the passport books and at the end of the convention there's a drawing with a lucky winner who goes home with something from ALL of

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the vendors. Thank you to our vendors who participated in the Passport Challenge this year.

Species Basket Winners

- Macaw, won by Laura Barwick
- Cockatoo, won by Adrienne Mock
- Toucan, won by Laney Lowrey

Three-Day Raffle Winners

- Flip video—Cheryl Burns
- Garmin GPS—Nicholas Mooney
- Glass set—Andy Sanford
- Large parrot collage—Georgia Hayes
- Bird Lover's Club Basket—Marty Wochstader
- Companion Bird Journal/Penguin—Shawna Augustine
- Tea pot/cups/salt and pepper shakers—Kathleen Szabo
- Jewelry collection—Caroline Efstathion
- Eric Peake framed print of a Moluccan—Andy Sanford
- Macaw fan—Susan Jackson
- Flamingo collection—Kelly Williams
- Parrot cage—Nancy Speed
- 2011 Parrot Festival Conference registration—Shawna Augustine won, donated it to Mimi Grzymala
- Weaning kit—Ivan Frugé
- Two-night stay at Hilton—Janice Lang

Saturday Banquet and Awards

Super 8 winners announced, congratulations to all our winners!

- Framed print of Gamini's Puerto Rican Amazon Parrot—donated by Gamini Ratnavira, won by Mary Duma
- Belize Jungle Jaunt—donated by Carolyn and John Carr, won by Cheryl Shields
- Brinsea Mini Advance EX Incubator—donated by Brinsea, won by John Borneman
- Hand-stitched king-size quilt—donated by Ardith Raine and Pat Chinnici, won by Keith Feierabend
- \$400 King's Cages gift certificate—donated by King's Cages, won by John Borneman
- Pearl and diamond pendant—donated by Pat Chinnici and worn and displayed all week by Carol Woodson, won by April Blazich
- \$1000 Visa cash card—donated by Dr. Christopher Chinnici, won by Carol Stanley
- Avian library collection—donations from several collectors, won by Mona Tuomi

Silent Auction

The Silent Auction continues to be one of the most popular money making events at our convention. The auction items range from new merchandise to antiques. The tables were filled again this year with treasures to excite the collector in all of us. AFA thanks all the donors and participants for making this event such a great success!

- Sterling silver parrot pendant with diamond accents

- Prehnite and peridot set in sterling silver, rhodium-plated
- Harmony Kingdom "Last Laugh"
- Lexicon of Parrots plus DVD Version 3
- Harmony Kingdom "Love Nest"
- Set of six Wedgewood Parrot Plates
- One-of-a-kind computer bag with Cuban Macaws
- Hand painted wine glasses
- Guy Harvey Blue and Gold artwork
- 1939 issue of the *Saturday Evening Post*
- Gamini Ratnavira framed Blue and Gold Macaws print
- Flamingo framed needlepoint
- Harmony Kingdom "Small Wonder"
- Hand beaded Blue and Gold Macaw earrings
- Crochet afghan
- Set of four Monticello Parrots by Sadek
- Blue and Red Parrot masks
- Pretty Birds limited edition poster
- Pillow and towel and slipper set
- Birds of Australia \$10 silver coin
- Harmony Kingdom "Great Escape"
- Flamingo beaded sleeve
- Toucan watering can
- Hand crafted Convention 2010 tile
- Leather coat, donated by Andy Sanford
- 16 x 20 framed print of parrots
- *Nido Adoptivo* Nestbox sponsorship from Laney Rickman
- Framed batik of Collared Lories
- 16 x 20 framed print of parrots
- Framed complete set of CITES pins
- One-of-a-kind backpack w/Hyacinth Macaws
- 4 Wildlife Profile -National Wildlife Federation Plates
- Canvas giclee Print, Saint Vincent Amazon
- Book: *Caiques, Their Care, Breeding and Some Natural History*
- Beaded amulet purse, Caique design created by Marion Packer

Live Auction

Thank you to Mark Moore for doing a great job again this year with the live auction.

- Theme Piece—Blue & Gold Macaw framed print, by Wayne E. Smyth—Dr. Benny J. Gallaway
- Baby Blue & Gold framed print by Wayne E. Smyth—Tom Marshall
- Adult Blue & Gold framed print by Wayne E. Smyth—won by Brent W. Gattis, donated to AFA's Legal Defense/Assistance Fund

President's Awards

This year's awards went to the following individuals with heartfelt thanks from President James C. Hawley Jr.:

- Benny J. Gallaway, Ph.D.
- Larry Ring, Esq.
- Jace Sanders
- Wayne E. Smyth
- Genny Wall, Esq.
- Mark Moore
- Nancy Speed



Passport Winner

The popular Passport program was started to help convention attendees and vendors get to know each other better and learn about the products offered. The passport book is given to all registered attendees. When they visit a vendor in the exhibit hall, the vendors put a stamp in the passport book. At the end of the convention, passport books are collected and there's a drawing for a large box containing a donation of merchandise from each of the vendors.

This year's lucky winner was Rockie Mooney. Congratulations, Rockie!

Service Award

This year's Service Award went to Wanda Elder for her many years of hard work and loyalty to AFA. Wanda is retiring from the position of First Vice President for AFA so that she can spend more time with her husband and travel. The special award was an ostrich egg with a beautiful painting of a Double Yellow-headed Amazon by Beth Greenberg, above.

Starfish Awards

A special award presented by President Hawley to people who are making a difference every day for AFA.

- | | |
|---------------------|------------------|
| • Brent Andrus | Diane McKinney |
| • Laura Barwick | Sandee Molenda |
| • Cheryl Burns | Gamini Ratnavira |
| • Mary Lou Chambers | Grenville Roles |
| • Andrew Cook | Linda S. Rubin |
| • Walt Frey | Danny Sigmon |
| • Ivan Frugé | Fred Smith |
| • Chester Gipson | Romona Smith |
| • Lynn Hall | Carol Woodson |
| • Genny Heptig | Jamie Whittaker |
| • Mary Ellen LePage | Kelly Williams |
| • Tom Marshall | |

AFA Lifetime Membership Gift

Each year donations are given by convention attendees to pay for a lifetime membership for an individual. This year's collection was taken for past president Benny J. Gallaway, Ph.D. He was very surprised and appreciative. Congratulations, Dr. Gallaway! Thank you, Rockie Mooney, and all those who made it possible.

Special Contributions to AFA

We are grateful to the individuals and bird club members who go out of their way to help AFA each year with their gifts and support. Thank you for your dedication and support...it means so much!

- Beth Rowan presented a check for \$2,000 on behalf of the Middle Tennessee Cage Bird Club
- Kelly Williams presented a check for \$1300 on behalf of Chester County Bird Club
- Brent W. Gattis donated the fine art print of a Blue & Gold Macaw to AFA's Legal Defense/Assistance Fund and the item was re-auctioned, raising \$1,300

Close of the Board of Directors Meeting

The board reconvened Sunday morning after the convention to complete business. President Hawley appointed new committee chairs, meetings were set for November 2010 through August 2011, and a number of other issues were discussed.

Dr. Chester Gibson of the USDA was recognized at the board meeting and said a few words about the proposed regulations. Dr. Jeleen Briscoe was also recognized and stated the proposed rules would be out for comment by August of 2011.

The board meeting was adjourned. Thank you to all who helped or contributed to make this a great convention! Our convention is only possible with the generous help and support of AFA's Board of Directors, vendors, affiliated clubs and volunteer members. These wonderful people are the real magic in our organization. They've donated countless hours and resources because of a belief in the value of aviculture, and for the love of birds.

AFA extends a heartfelt thank you to all the attendees for joining with us to learn more about caring for our pets and flocks, and helping celebrate the Magic of Birds.

Our conventions give aviculturists the opportunity to educate themselves on everything from legal issues to veterinary practices and species management. We get to meet and bond with others who are of like mind and passionate about birds. And, we have a lot of fun!

Please join us for the 37th Annual AFA Convention, in San Francisco, Calif., Aug. 3-6, 2011. For more details, go to www.afabirds.org.

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