

# SPBE Bird Show



PHOTOS BY ADRIANNE MOCK AND LINDA RUBIN/Top left, Mary Ellen LePage with Gollie, the Audience Favorite and Sixth Best Novice in Show. Bottom left, judge Linda S. Rubin. Top right, First through Fifth Best in Show. Above, Second Best in Show, a Duyvenbode's Lorikeet.

*By Linda S. Rubin, SPBE-certified panel judge*

For the first time in exactly a quarter of a century, a flash of brilliant feathers caught the eye of spectators during the recent AFA convention where attendees were invited to watch live parrots, “in the feather,” judged at a Society of Parrot Breeders & Exhibitors show. The LoryLeague.org hosted the event Saturday morning, August 6th, along with co-host, the Lineolated Parakeet Society. All three organizations, LoryLeague.org, Lineolated Parakeet Society, and the Society of Parrot Breeders & Exhibitors, are nationally affiliated with the AFA.

The SPBE show was an overwhelming West Coast success with 51 parrots represented by a dozen exhibitors—benching more than 50 parrots qualifies the event as a “major show.” The turnout enabled all top ten parrots—known as the “top bench”—to earn points towards champion and grand champion status. Earning points to finish a champion can mean more to some exhibitors than the lavish show ribbons and awards distributed to winners.

According to show organizer and AFA Northwestern Regional Director Julie Corwin, “The idea was to bring birds back to AFA. Our questionnaire revealed AFA members wanted to see birds while at the convention, so I thought, what about having birds for display? I chose to affiliate with SPBE because of the friendly support they offered. The Lory League could host the event with the Lineolated Parakeet Society as co-host. It was a huge success.”

A first in SPBE history—or perhaps any USA parrot show of the past—was the entry of a Black Palm Cockatoo that came in 6th Best Novice Parrot and won Audience Favorite. The Palm’s owner, longtime AFA board member and AFA Cooperative Breeding Program Chair Mary Ellen LePage, brought the rare Palm for others to see. Gollie, a member of the largest subspecies of the Palm, *Probosciger atterimus goliath* (*Proboscis* is Greek for nose, *gero* is Greek for carry, and *atterimus* is Latin for black), drew a lot of attention. LePage works with a number of cockatoo species and exhibiting Gollie provided a rare opportunity for attendees to directly view a Black Palm Cockatoo, perhaps for the first time.

Other unexpected rarities that were benched included a number of seldom seen species at USA

## 2011 AFA Convention



PHOTOS BY GINNY HEPTIG AND LINDA RUBIN/Top left, Linda Rubin (center) and Julie Corwin (right), present Fran Andersen the Best Bird in Show Bred by an AFA Member Award. Bottom left, Janet Brubaker (left) earns the Best Bird in Show Exhibited by an AFA Member Award." Above is Gollie the Black Palm Cockatoo, and at right is the best in show Double Yellow-headed Amazon.

shows, including a Black Lory, Stella's Lory and a Cloncurry Parakeet, among others.

As the officiating SPBE panel judge, I had the honor of judging the event and was delighted to see both an impressive diversity of species, as well as parrots of very high quality. Considering how far some birds had to travel (including those that came by plane with their owners), the turnout was most impressive.

The SPBE Standard for Exhibited Parrots describes five categories that include conformation (40 percent), condition (30 percent), deportment (15 percent), color (10 percent) and presentation (5 percent). Although each of these categories is assigned a weighted percentage, the birds are actually judged by a one-on-one direct comparison method, rather than assigning actual points, with the weighted categories instead serving as a guide. By SPBE rules, rarity is never an issue in judging, which allows the best bird in the competition to emerge over all.

As required by SPBE shows, the birds are entered in show classifications that are divided into the major geographical regions with subdivisions in the South Pacific, Afro-Asian, and New World distributions, with two additional subdivisions for Open Entries and Novice. Open entries may include birds that are unbanded, or that wear an open (split) leg band. Novice exhibitors may show birds with clipped wings however, these entries are marginally penalized. Without all flight feathers in evidence, it is challenging for a judge to accurately evaluate the back-line, proportions and length when judging the conformation of a bird. However, many novice birds can and do make top bench, as they did at the August 6th show.

Bird shows are actually beauty contests at a "moment in time." This is because birds can change from show to show, from week to

week, and even moment to moment. Overall quality as judged by genetic conformation—and superb condition and deportment as reflected by the exhibitor's work invested in show cage training, frequent bathing and top nutritional programs throughout the year—usually provide a bird with a high chance of scoring a win at shows. However, conformation is heavily considered as reflected in the show standard, and judges keep the genetic traits of birds in mind because the winners will often be bred and pass desirable traits onto their offspring. It is the savvy exhibitor who remembers that a bird show is merely a "snapshot in time." And, that Polaroid, (or video), can change from show to show.

Judges are often asked, "How do you decide between totally different species, with birds representing all colors and sizes?" SPBE panel judges are supposed to be able to identify and be familiar with the major characteristics of most parrots, plus we have been rigorously tested and qualified through our own show wins in order to become a certified judge. However, the actual answer is akin to judging apples against oranges. In the end, while considering the SPBE Standard, a judge must ask himself, "Is this the best bird I've seen of this species that is in front of me, compared to the best bird I've seen of that species?" The answers are usually quite clear.

As in most shows, a few of the birds might have placed differently given additional mistings of warm water to tighten feather condition, or extra show cage training to become more at ease and confident on the perch, which can help any bird improve for the next show. As SPBE judges, we try to encourage the strong points in birds and place comments on the show cage tags to help exhibitors chances in the next show.

THE SPBE BEST PARROT IN SHOW plaque went to an

impeccable double yellow-headed Amazon, one of the best that I have seen on the show bench, with impressive conformation, excellent substance, a wide head, pleasing proportions, and in perfect overall condition—reflecting peak plumage, health and vitality. “Mokie” (the Hawaiian name for Moses) is an 18 year-old male owned by SPBE Board Member Janet Brubaker of Missouri, that was originally obtained from an aviary on the big island of Hawaii when he was three years old.

SECOND BEST PARROT IN SHOW went to a striking Duyvenbode’s Lory, also owned by Janet Brubaker. A magnificent example of a lory, it was hard to find a flaw and it was extremely steady on the perch showing well throughout the show. The six-year old Duyvenbode’s Lory, named “Harley,” had been the Number One SPBE Parrot exhibited during 2010, and Janet’s double yellow-headed Amazon, “Mokie,” had been the Number Two Parrot the same year. The Duyvenbode’s also earned the Best Lory in Show plaque donated by the LoryLeague.org show host. Janet explains her perception of the two birds, “If I were to describe my parrots in one word, “Mokie” is majestic and “Harley” is exotic.”

In SPBE, it takes 75 points to complete a champion, 100 points to finish a grand-champion, and a whopping 250 points to join the ranks of a select few in the SPBE Hall of Fame.

Following the show, I learned that “Mokie” had 10 previous Best in Shows, making the AFA show his 11th Best in Show win, with 158 championship points all total. “Harley” also had earned 10 Best in Shows and finished with 155 championship points after the AFA show. Both parrots were grand-champions and well on to their way to the SPBE Hall of Fame.

THIRD BEST PARROT IN SHOW went to a stunning turquoise mutation of the Lineolated Parakeet, owned by Lineolated Parakeet Society President, Fran Andersen, of Michigan. “Linnies” as they are known, have a horizontal deportment while perched that is permitted during judging, and this Linnie’s calm demeanor revealed a well-conformed and nicely conditioned appearance. The turquoise mutation is popular among Linnie breeders and the depth and evenness of color pigment was evident, as standards require. This third generation Linnie bred by Fran Andersen, also earned the Best Linnie in Show plaque donated by the Lineolated Parakeet Society.

FOURTH BEST PARROT IN SHOW went to an outstanding cobalt blue Australian dominant pied Budgerigar—of full exhibition size—known in the USA as the “English” variety. “English” is actually a misnomer, because the term used worldwide is exhibition Budgerigar, which distinguishes it from the smaller variety of pet budgies, or American parakeets as they

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ADRIANNE MOCK/A Rose-breasted Cockatoo relaxes and preens before judging begins.

are sometimes known here in the States. This finely conditioned entry, belonging to Rodney Silva of California, was quite impressive, a real eye-catcher, having a strong stance and powerful back-line throughout the show. It had excellent carriage and “type,” which some fanciers today call “style.” The cobalt color was deep and even and the pied markings symmetrical as required.

FIFTH BEST PARROT AND BEST NOVICE IN SHOW went to a rare mutation cockatiel, exhibited by Shanna Dollarhide of California. The cockatiel was in perfect condition and extremely steady on the perch with good deportment, proportions and type. The mutation, a suffused silver—informally referred to as “emerald,” “olive,” or “suffused yellow”—was an excellent example of the diluted grey in this suffusion of melanin pigment, which still mystifies many cockatiel fanciers today.

The nomenclature journeyed through an evolution over time from when I first formally classified it (“The New U.S. Suffused Yellow,” NCS Journal, Volume XV, No. 5, September/October 1998), following its debut by Margie Mason at the 1995 National Cage Bird Show. Eventually, after producing enough cross mutations to effectively evaluate, I phenotypically classified the mutation as a suffused silver, while genetically classifying the nomenclature as a dilute grey suffusion for the Cockatiel Foundation show classifications and as documented in the maga-book article, “The Colorful Side of Cockatiels,” BowTie Popular Bird Series: Cockatiels, c. 2007. The suffused silver earned the Best Cockatiel rosette donated by the Cockatiel Foundation, another national affiliate of AFA.

SIXTH BEST PARROT went to a superb sex-linked grey-wing (single factor) female Lineolated Parakeet, also owned by

Fran Andersen. Another steady Linnie on the perch, and nicely conditioned, it did not have quite the skull width of the Linnie who placed third best parrot as required by the Linnie standard, but was otherwise a lovely representative. The grey-wing was another splendid example of a less commonly seen dilute mutation for attendees to see.

SEVENTH BEST PARROT went to another impressive Double Yellow-headed Amazon owned by AFA National Drawing Committee Co-chair Pat Chinnici of Nevada. Strong in conformation, this superb Amazon might do even better in the future if it were exhibited in a traditional show cage to show off its lines. It also deservedly earned Second Best Novice entry.

EIGHTH BEST PARROT IN SHOW went to a beautifully conditioned Senegal Parrot owned by Elizabeth Ann Atkinson of California, which also placed Third Best Novice in Show. The Senegal was a very well-conditioned bird of good substance and proportions that merited a top bench placing and might go higher in the future with additional show cage training.

NINTH BEST PARROT IN SHOW went to a very lovely, well conformed Yellow-naped Amazon parrot owned by Mariana Meija, also of California. Conformation, proportions and overall quality made it a strong contender along with the other Amazons benched at the show. With added confidence perching, it could do very well at future shows.

TENTH BEST PARROT IN SHOW went to a splendid Mitred Conure, in good feather, with a strong back-line which it displayed most of the time. The Mitred, named “Peanut,” also owned by Fran Andersen, was a longtime pet of 18 years and, as I was later told, a close buddy to a Chattering Lory that was also entered in the show.

Misting with warm water to tighten feather condition, or additional show cage training to become more comfortable—exemplifying confidence and fearlessness on the perch—can help any bird improve for the next show. Not all birds will necessarily show well during their moment in front of the judge, which is one of the main reasons why a bird may not advance at a bird show. Judges are seeking a well-conformed, finely conditioned parrot that sits up high on the perch as if to boast, “Look at me!” It is not merely the stance, but an elegance, poise, and style—with flair—that grabs the judge’s attention while the bird stands erect, claiming with a fearless air of confidence, “You many now admire ME!”

The show’s top awards were presented at the AFA Saturday evening gala banquet. Janet Brubaker’s Double Yellow-headed Amazon won the AFA plaque for “Best Bird in Show Exhibited by an AFA Member.” Fran Andersen’s turquoise Lineolated Parakeet won the plaque for “Best Bird in Show Bred, Banded and Exhibited by an AFA Member.” Traditionally, AFA has presented a plaque to the national shows for many years for the

“Best Bird in Show Bred & Banded by an AFA Member.” It was most noteworthy to see this award, established in 1995, also presented at an AFA show event.

In addition to the large SPBE rosettes awarded to the top bench, SPBE rosettes were additionally awarded to the top 10 novice bench:

- 1st—Suffused Silver Cockatiel—Shanna Dollarhide
- 2nd—Double Yellow-headed Amazon—Pat Chinnici
- 3rd—Senegal—Elizabeth Ann Atkinson
- 4th—Pearl Male Cockatiel—Shanna Dollarhide
- 5th—Rose-breasted Cockatoo—Julie Corwin
- 6th—Goliath Black Palm Cockatoo—Mary Ellen LePage
- 7th—Pineapple Green Cheek—Karyn Paulson
- 8th—Senegal—Nancy Atkinson
- 9th—Cloncurry Parakeet—Julie Corwin
- 10th—Sun Conure—Nancy Atkinson

Lavish gift baskets of bird food products and toys, donated by Fran Andersen, went to the Judges’ Favorite—the Best in Show Double Yellow-headed Amazon owned by Janet Brubaker; Audience Favorite and Most Uncommonly Shown Species—the Black Palm Cockatoo placing 6th Best Novice, owned by Mary Ellen LePage; and the Oldest Bird in Show—the 70-year-old Double Yellow-headed Amazon, placing 7th Best in Show and 2nd Best Novice, owned by Pat Chinnici.

Blessing’s Lory Food and Lory Powder were presented to the Duyvenbode’s lory owned by Janet Brubaker, and the Black Lory, Stella’s Lorikeet, and Chattering Lory owned by Fran Andersen. Best in show SPBE top bench rosettes and novice top bench SPBE rosettes were donated by Janet Brubaker, and additional special ribbons and “fun” awards were donated by Julie Corwin.

Section sponsors—as practiced at larger shows—supported their chosen areas of the show classifications and included: Linda Blessing (Blessing Lory Food), Janet Brubaker (SPBE Director), Fran Andersen (Feathers End Aviary), Julie Corwin (Sharing Our Hearts), Mary Wilson (Woodland Acres), Carol Stanley ([www.Aviculture.TV](http://www.Aviculture.TV)), Sharron Deason (Desert Rainbow Aviary.com), Don Williamson (Sharing Our Hearts), June DiCiocco (Hideaway Farm), Jason Crean (Beak’s Birdhouse), MTeez Aviaries (Sacramento, CA), the Schmitz Family (Capital City Bird Society), and [LoryLeague.org](http://LoryLeague.org).

Through the efforts of many individuals, exhibitors and organizations, the attendees at the AFA convention were provided once again with the opportunity to exhibit and attend a bird show. It takes a collaboration of many knowledgeable and experienced workers to help carry off a show without running into snags—or at least making it appear there are none!

Many thanks to show organizer Julie Corwin, the [LoryLeague.org](http://LoryLeague.org) and Lineolated Parakeet Society who hosted the



ADRIANNE MOCK/Judge Linda S Rubin entices two Green-cheeked Amazons to perch.

event and to SPBE show aficionados: Janet Brubaker, Mary Wilson, Fran Andersen, Rodney Silva, Teresa Haire, and volunteers Ginny Heptig and Natalie Frumin who all helped make the show the success it was 25 years ago! I remember the first show well at our 1986 convention in New Orleans with SPBE Panel Judge Dr. Al Decoteau presiding as judge. We hope SPBE shows at AFA will continue the tradition they began so that our feathered finest are present at future conventions for all to enjoy.

For more information on the organizations participating in the show, contact the the Society of Parrot Breeders & Exhibitors at [www.SPBE.org](http://www.SPBE.org); the LoryLeague.org at [www.LoryLeague.org](http://www.LoryLeague.org); the Lineolated Parakeet Society at [www.Linniesociety.org](http://www.Linniesociety.org), and the Cockatiel Foundation at [www.CockatielFoundation.com](http://www.CockatielFoundation.com). To learn more about the pet qualities of some of the winning birds, read this article online by visiting [www.birdchannel.com](http://www.birdchannel.com).

*Linda S. Rubin qualified as a certified panel judge for cockatiels and parrots, judging shows since 1984 throughout the US, and in Puerto Rico and Canada. She has 35 years experience as an avian educator, national speaker and author of several books on her website, [www.CockatielsPlusParrots.com](http://www.CockatielsPlusParrots.com). Linda currently serves as Specialty Organization Vice President of the American Federation of Aviculture, Inc., Founding President of the Cockatiel Foundation, Inc., and writes as a Bird Breeder Expert and columnist for *BowTie’s Animal Network*, *BirdChannel.com*.*

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