

In memory of

Cheryl Ann Durgan

Cheryl Ann Durgan, 59, of Gardiner Road died Wednesday, May 2, 2012, at her residence.

She was born in Troy, N.Y., on Jan. 14, 1953, a daughter of William H. and Rose P. (Snyder) Hoffman.

She graduated from Averill Park High School in New York in 1971. She attended many colleges and was recently attending University of Maine.

She was employed by the City of Bath as head of general assistance for 18 years. On Oct. 1, 2001, she was employed as activities director for Augusta Rehabilitation, Country Manor in Coopers Mills, Field Crest Nursing Home and as a coordinator for Catholic Charities in Augusta.

Cheryl Ann was always positive. She loved her birds, dogs and cats. She would go to the animal shelter frequently and come home with a new pet.

She was president of Maine State Caged Bird Society and president of the Capital Area Wheels R.V. Club/Good Sam.

She is survived by her husband, Richard A. Durgan, of Dresden; two sons, Bryan Lewis, and his wife, Alyason, of Maryland, and Brett Lewis and his wife, Melissa, of Maryland; one sister, Darlene R. Schnoop, and her husband, Mike, of Augusta; five grandchildren; many great-grandchildren; and numerous nieces and nephews.

Eduard J. Hamilton

By Josef Lindholm III, Curator of Birds, Tulsa Zoo

I saw Elvis in Tijuana. It was Elvis in his decline, heavy-set, in that iconic white high-collared suit glittering with rhinestones. His hair was a brilliant orange yellow. But all that garishness did not compare to the burden he bore: Five boxy wooden cages, each with at least a dozen male Painted Buntings, strung down his back. It was the end of the day, and this bird seller was heading home. In those pre cell-phone days of the early '80's, I sorely wished I had a camera.

My guide was Ed Hamilton. Most of my visits to Mexico were in his company, including my first one in 1980. They were definitely aviculturally edifying. In those days there were stacks of cages along the street, filled with Painted and Indigo and Rainbow Buntings, and Northern Cardinals. There were also Emerald Toucanets and Green Jays. There might be a few Silky Flycatchers, ornate relatives of the Phainopepla. Those were usually sold by the same person who offered Jilgueros (Brown-backed Solitaires) and Clarinos (Slate-colored Solitaires), prized songbirds. In 1980, I found it disturbing that the value of these Solitaires, right there on the street in Mexico, was eighty US dollars, and wondered how long they could withstand such demand. Somehow, these two species (*Myadestes occidentalis* and *M. unicolor*) managed to do so, and today neither is considered at risk by conservationists.



On the other hand, the Green-cheeked (or Red-fronted) Amazon is today unarguably endangered, with a Mexican wild population of less than 2,000. In 1980, Ed showed me cardboard boxes full of half-grown chicks, their feathers treated with hydrogen peroxide, resulting in bright yellow heads combined with the red foreheads they already had. While munching an enormous pork rind he had bought out of another cardboard box on the sidewalk, Ed explained that because the Green-cheek was not valued as a talker, they were thus disguised and sold as "Azteca" Parrots. Similarly treated were the cages of Half moon (Orange-fronted) Conures, masquerading as Carolina Parakeets. Every so often some of these "enhanced" birds would appear over the border and cause some minor excitement.



I understand this is now a thing of the past in Tijuana, but as an avicultural historian, I appreciate having seen it. It was also most instructive to accompany him on trips to Los Angeles wholesalers and, in those days before the Wild Bird Conservation Act, view rooms full of Alder (Tucuman) Amazons and Great-billed Parrots. My only visit to the Pomona Gamebird Show, in 1988, was in his company, affording me my first look at Zenaida Doves, Sulawesi Ground Doves, Madagascar Partridges, and the White-winged subspecies of the Common Pheasant.

Other adventures with Ed were of a more academic nature. In 1983, on my one visit to the Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology, I admired a series of recently-collected study skins from Malaysia. My only visit behind the scenes at the Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History, was to the Ornithology Department, in 2000, in the company of George Smith, the English psittacine authority, who, typically, kept Ed and me well entertained on the drive from the AFA National Convention and back.

For years Ed was a fixture at AFA convention exhibit halls, where he was known as a source for birds that were otherwise not often seen by aviculturists. I remember especially the San Diego National Convention of 1991, where he offered Great-billed and Grand Valley Mannikins (*Lonchura grandis* and *L. teerinki*) and other rare finches from Indonesian New Guinea.

Ed applied his immense knowledge of the rules and regulations regarding the international bird trade to creating his own company, South American Imports in the early 1980's. He established contacts in Guiana and imported a number of Red-billed Toucans and Black-necked Aracaris which I saw at his apartment in San Diego. He also provided birds from Paraguay. He supplied the core collection for the Graham Amazon Gallery at the Vancouver Aquarium, and was present at its opening in March, 1983, when

he was presented to Her Majesty the Queen.

In 1989 he traveled to New Zealand and brought back Slender-billed Corellas and Leadbeater's Cockatoos that had been bred by aviculturists there. Ed also made collections in Puerto Rico, exporting Ridgeway's Troupials, which were feral there, as well as the first Ruddy Quail Doves I'd seen. Of particular interest were Black-faced Grassquits (*Tiaris bicolor*), which Luis Baptista, Chairman of the Department of Ornithology and Mammalogy of the California Academy of Sciences, was most grateful to receive. These modestly patterned relatives of the Cuban Melodious Finches are common throughout most of the Caribbean, but the birds Ed supplied from Puerto Rico were the first Luis was able to obtain.

Dr Baptista's integration of aviculture with ornithological research, involving such seed-eating birds as Pearl-headed Mannikins, White-crowned Sparrows and Cuban Melodious Finches is well known and fondly remembered. He was especially eager to work with Black-faced Grassquits as he believed they very closely related to the common ancestor of all the Galapagos Finches, the quintessential examples of adaptive radiation, with which the Academy has had a long history.

I got to accompany Dr. Baptista to the San Francisco Airport to pick up the Grassquits Ed shipped from San Diego in 1981. It took a while for the birds to arrive at the freight office, so Luis and I sat in his car eating ice cream while listening to classical music, one of that polymath's many fields of expertise. Ralph Vaughan Williams' The Lark Ascending came on the radio, and Luis gave a detailed explanation of how faithfully the composer recreated the various elements of the aerial display song of the European Sky Lark.

Luis worked with captive Black-faced Grassquits for years, a project which was still ongoing when he co-authored "On the Origin of Darwin's Finches" which



appeared in *The Auk*, the journal of the American Ornithologist's Union (Baptista & Trail, 1988). From his research on captive and wild specimens of this and other finch species, Luis presented extensive data to support his theory that the genus *Tiaris* was an excellent candidate for a proposed ancestor of the Galapagos Finches, a hypothesis that has been verified by more recent research (Sato et al, 2001).

Ed and Luis were already friends before Luis assumed his curatorial duties in San Francisco. They had met when Luis was Curator of the Moore Laboratory of Zoology at Occidental College in Los Angeles. Ed had many friends in the ornithological community. For some years he worked towards a Master's Degree at San Diego State University, compiling an enormous amount of data on Tinamous, which proved useful to many people, among them the great natural history illustrator Guy Tudor, while he was preparing plates for his South American field guides. Ed's academic adviser was Dr. Don Hunsaker, regarded both for ornithological and herpetological research. Ed maintained a strong interest in herpetology. My first experience in "roading" (driving slowly down back roads, looking for reptiles in the high-beams) were with Ed and his brother Larry, near San Diego in 1980. We encountered Sidewinders, but my most vivid memory was of a solpugid or "Camel Spider." (Years later, an out-of-perspective picture of two of these arachnids, taken during the Second Iraq War, was a popular piece of "webjunk"). Ed introduced me to Sean McKeown, initiating a long friendship that began while he was Curator of Reptiles at the Honolulu Zoo, continuing through his Curatorship at the Chaffee Zoo in Fresno. In 1981, Sean took me through Honolulu's Manoa Valley to collect Black-and-Green Poison Arrow Frogs (introduced from Panama in 1932). Most went to the California Academy of Sciences' Steinhart Aquarium and a few found their way to Ed.

Ed kept his childhood home, in San Diego's hillcrest neighborhood, filled with animals into his 20's. His parents and brother and sister were understanding. The Common Marmosets in the family garage included the infamous animal that dampened Johnny Carson's hair during a Joan Embery visit. The already lush family garden become lush still as young Eduard also indulged a lifelong passion for exotic plants. Ed's personal avicultural, herpetocultural, and horticultural enterprises continued as he lived in places of his own. In the 1990's, he became the only person I knew of to attain real success in breeding the Scaly-crowned Weaver (*Sporopipes squamifrons*) (Lindholm, 1995). More recently, his enthusiasm extended to tropical fish. The last time I saw him, he offered to send me Endler's Livebearers (*Poecilia wingei*), enigmatic and endangered wild guppies, found in only a few places in Venezeula, and now increasingly maintained in this country. In the 1980's, Ed brought my father some Hedge Orchids (*Epidendrum sp.*), which (as Ed predicted) flourished outdoors in a Berkeley garden. I remember his excitement upon receiving seeds of various Kangaroo Paws (*Anigozanthos sp.*), years before these Australian plants became widespread in Southern California gardens.

Growing up a short distance from the San Diego Zoo (in the days when anyone under sixteen was admitted free), it was natural that someone with Ed's interests would spend all the time he could there. He quickly came to the attention of the zoo's staff, especially K.C. Lint, Curator of Birds from 1946 to 1976, who remained a close friend until he died in 1992. Commencing in 1974, when he was 15, Ed interned with the Zoological Society of San Diego, in the Education, Public Relations, and Curatorial departments, and held a part-time job in the Grounds department in later years. I first heard of him in 1979, when he published a brief article on pheasants in *ZooNooz*, the Zoological Society's magazine (Hamilton, 1979). I



had read *ZooNooz* religiously since I was 12, and being a year younger, was in awe when I was introduced to him a few months later. Ed immediately greeted me with enthusiasm and kindness, and was valuable mentor and generous friend for the rest of his life.

Joan Embery, the Zoological Society's Goodwill Ambassador for 32 years, was Ed's lifelong friend. He became Senior Keeper of Exotic Animals at the Joan Embery Institute of Wildlife Conservation, overseeing a diverse assemblage of outreach animals, ranging from Toco Toucans and an Andean Condor, to an Aardvark and Ruffed Lemurs. At the same time, remained enthusiastically involved in all sorts of horticultural, avicultural, hepato-cultural organizations.



Ed's death, in December 2010 from a brain aneurysm was entirely unexpected, and a great shock to his wide circle of friends. When my wife Natalie and I arrived at the Casa del Prado, in Balboa Park, we presumed the people we saw with elaborate floral displays and rare living plants were attending an orchid show being held nearby. Instead, they were bringing them to Ed's well-attended memorial service. With such an abundance of horticultural tributes, people who might have sent flowers were instead encouraged to contribute to the San Diego

Botanical Garden Foundation (of which Ed was President), California Rare Fruit Growers, the San Diego Turtle & Tortoise Society, San Diego County Game Bird Breeders, The Joan Embery Institute, and the San Diego Floral Association, all of whom were represented by people who participated in the Service, along with Ed's brother Larry, his Father SFC USA (Ret.) Joseph Hamilton, his son Joseph, and his dear friend Sandra Graff. The famed wildlife artist Gamini Ratnavira related Ed's assistance with his aviaries. Joan Embery presented a Toco Toucan. And the rest of us shared stories, many of them relating to Ed's penchant for tast-

ing and eating almost anything. Ed's kindness, generosity, and enthusiasm were enjoyed by many people, and will be fondly remembered.

References

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