



Twice the Winner

AFA Life Member Sally Huntington Scoops AFA Show Award at the 2005 National Cage Bird Show!

By Linda S. Rubin
AFA National Show Awards Chair

Left: AFA Show Award winning Black Grey Society Finch bred by Sally Huntington. Photo credit: Sally & Vince Huntington.

DALLAS, Texas, the site of the 57th National Cage Bird Show (NCBS), drew an enthusiastic crowd at the November 19th Saturday evening banquet, where hundreds of exhibitors watched as AFA Life Member Sally Huntington took top honors as the recipient of the 2005 AFA National Show Award. The prestige of winning the AFA award for *"Best Bird Bred & Banded by an AFA Member"* is highly coveted by exhibitors because it embodies the combined tally of votes from eighteen certified show judges representing all eighteen divisions of the National Cage Bird Show. The presentation in Dallas marks a decade of recognition by the American Federation of Aviculture acknowledging the accomplishments of its members who breed and exhibit birds by national show standards. Exhibitors work many years, usually decades, to perfect their stock. Due to their success on the show bench, winning birds are more likely to be bred upon returning home and so show standards serve to reinforce exceptional bloodlines by rewarding superior genes on the show bench. The AFA National Show Award recognizes and embodies that achievement.

The winning bird, a superb Black Grey Society Finch, initially won "Best Finch or Softbill in division" - the top award presented by the National Finch & Softbill

Society (NFSS). The NFSS is both an AFA national specialty organization and a member organization of the NCBS. Huntington's exceptional Society Finch went on to win the AFA National Show Award, because it placed highest in the show as a bird bred and closed banded by the exhibitor.

NFSS Panel Judge Dale Laird who judged the NFSS Division commented that it was the best Society Finch he had ever seen and that he knew he could not have asked for a better representative of the NFSS division that day. For Sally Huntington, the 2005 NCBS marked her second win of the AFA National Show Award, but judging from the loud cheers and thunder of applause that evening, you would never have known. Apparently, all agreed it was an honor well deserved, another time around.

To qualify for the AFA national show award, exhibitors complete an AFA show registration form for each division in which they enter qualifying birds. Exhibitors must include the name of the species or variety, the exhibitor's personal band code with the band number of each bird (engraved on the exhibitor's closed, traceable leg bands), and the exhibitor's signature indicating they are a current member of AFA. The AFA Show Awards Chair meets with the NCBS Scannell Tally Committee at the conclusion



AFA National Show Awards Chair Linda S. Rubin (left) presents AFA Life Member Sally Huntington (right) with the 2005 AFA National Show Award at the NCBS banquet. Photo credit: Alyssandra Young.

of the show to determine the highest-ranking bird bred by an exhibitor who is a current AFA member. The potential winner's name is checked in the AFA database at that time to be certain the qualifying individual is a current, paid member of AFA.

The first AFA National Show Award was presented at the 1992 Great American Bird Show (GABS) in Metairie, Louisiana, in tribute to AFA members who show their birds. AFA voted to reinstate the award in 1996, and a show awards project chair was named and the award given nearly every year since to both the Great American Bird Show and the National Cage Bird Show, in recognition of the two largest national shows in the country. Because the AFA Show Awards Committee became functional late in the year, the award was only available in 2005 at the NCBS. However, plans are to present the AFA Show Award at the GABS in 2006.

The American Federation of Aviculture is a federation that represents local, state, regional and national bird clubs and organizations, as well as individual and other classes of avicultural members. Countless bird club members across the country participate

in their local bird shows each year and a number of exhibitors become involved at the national level. Because bird shows can serve as a popular gateway into the world of aviculture, it is a significant source of finding prospective AFA members and member clubs. With its mission to promote the advancement of aviculture, AFA continues its outreach programs to involve all aspects of our avian community.



The 2005 AFA National Show Award. Photo: Linda S Rubin

AFA National Show Awards (founding) Chair and Northeast Director Linda S. Rubin established the AFA National Show Awards committee in 1996, which she chaired through 1999, and again in 2005. She has put her experience as a seasoned exhibitor and panel judge to work in promoting the committee's goals and outreach program for current and potential members who enjoy exhibiting and improving the species of birds that they raise. For a full feature article on the AFA National Show Awards, see the June 2006 issue of BIRD TIMES magazine for the cover story. Future press releases on the 2006 AFA show awards will appear throughout the year on the AFA website at www.afabirds.org. Please contact Linda at LSRafa@aol.com if you are interested in helping by serving on the committee. ■

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