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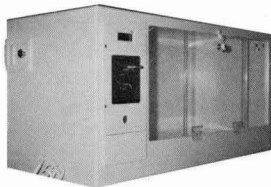
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Avian Research Fund 1993 Seminar

by *Laurella Desborough*
Co-director of Avian Research Fund
Martinez, California

On January 23 and 24, the Avian Research Fund held its sixth annual seminar. The Parrot Breeding and Handrearing Seminar was held at the San Ramon Marriott Hotel. Aviculturists came from across the U.S., but especially from California, to attend this informative and fun event. Everyone enjoys the Friday and Saturday evening hospitality parties where good food, bracing drinks and great conversations are enjoyed. Old friends share tips on handfeeding and questions on diseases. New friendships add a measure of excitement to the atmosphere.

The 1993 seminar provided participants with information on breeding hookbills. They learned from Denna Ferris about breeding conures and from Dale Thompson about breeding Amazons. Kay Muser presented informative and challenging material on pediatrics and nursery management. Dr. Julie Cummings held the audience's attention with emergency procedures. Dr. Branson Ritchie gave us some good news about Psittacine Beak and Feather Disease and polyomavirus. Dr. Scott McDonald helped us to see that a lot of information can be obtained from performing a necropsy. The complexity of breeding parrots and returning them to the wild was presented by Susan Healy. Keeping and breeding toucans was presented by Jerry Jennings. Dr. Scott McDonald discussed the pre-purchase

and post-purchase exam. Special sessions in the late afternoon included: setting up the softbill aviary, handfeeding discussion, rare Amazons and teaching parrots to talk. The two days went by very quickly. Some out-of-state participants came early or stayed later to see the sights of San Francisco or tour the Napa-Sonoma wine country.

How did this seminar get started? After a particularly exciting demonstration/lecture on handfeeding exotic birds at the Contra Costa Avian Society in the spring of 1987, several members discussed the need for more information and for research funds. Thus was "hatched" the Avian Research Fund. Three people started and worked on the fund for the first two years: Wayne Arthur of San Francisco, Laurella Desborough of Concord, and Judy Kiefer-Meyer of Alamo. Wayne had been handrearing exotic birds for several years. Laurella had spent 15 years as an educator and Judy was a management level nurse. Starting with the 1990 seminar, Laurella and Judy have directed the fund and organized the seminars.

The first seminar was organized around the topic of the exotic bird nursery. Recognizing that a tremendous amount of information was available for bird breeders about handrearing, handfeeding, pediatric problems, and diseases, the first seminar was arranged. From the beginning, the seminar organizers

have understood that busy professionals, avian veterinarians and serious aviculturists have little time to spare. Speakers at the seminar are treated with respect and consideration; the fund pays for their travel, their accommodations and their food while at the seminar.

The organizers seek to make sure that all seminar speakers and participants are treated to the best service at the hotel. Along with a day or two of slide lectures and panel discussions, a varied and tasty breakfast is provided in the morning, and at lunchtime a great buffet of truly fine food is served. In addition to breakfast and lunch, each participant receives a copy of the printed *Proceedings of the Seminar*.

Each speaker writes an article about his/her topic; this material is produced in a *Proceedings of the Seminar*. In addition to the speaker articles, exciting articles from other veterinarians and aviculturists are presented in the *Proceedings*. Ads are solicited to pay for the printing costs. However, not just any ads, but advertising that is relevant to the reading audience: formulas, pelleted diets, supplements, cages, incubators, brooders, and also ads from many sponsors such as northern California bird shops. Also included in each year's *Proceedings* are the letters from the recipients of the previous year's donations of funds for research.

The main purposes of the Avian Research Fund, to educate and to fund research, are met in the annual seminar. Although approximately 60% of the attendees at the seminars are from California, others come from many states in the United States. We have regular attendees such as John Goss from Florida, Darlene Fitchet and Judy Phalen from Phoenix and Wanda Elder from Tennessee. We have had participants from South Africa and New Zealand. We ship copies of the *Proceedings* to Australia, Europe, Africa, Central and South America, and Singapore. Sometimes we must have the letters of request translated by a professional translator.

We believe these *Proceedings* have a great value as research material for aviculturists whether they have large or small breeding facilities, and also to bird curators at zoos and to avian veterinarians. Every other issue, we print weight charts on a variety of species.

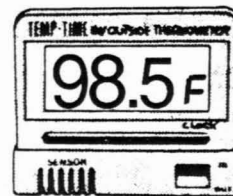
Recordkeeping forms are included which can be copied and used by breeders. A variety of legal contract forms relating to the bird business are included for the use of readers. The articles contain up-to-date information on diseases such as PBFD and polyomavirus.

In addition to providing educational material through the seminar lectures and the printed *Proceedings*, the Avian Research Fund donates the profits from each seminar to avian research. The first five seminars generated \$65,000 which was donated to research. Recipients of these funds have included: Department of Avian Science at University of California, Davis, Dr. Jack Gaskin, University of Florida, Dr. Branson Ritchie, University of Georgia, Research Committee of Association of Avian Veterinarians and Research Committee of American Federation of Aviculture. During the past five years, \$16,666 has been donated to the Research Committee of the American Federation of Aviculture.

We understand that these funds have been generated because so many aviculturists have participated in the seminars and aviculturists and veterinarians have been generous with their time and knowledge. In addition, we acknowledge the assistance of many local people who help with registration and the drawings. We also recognize the significant contribution of our exhibitors and advertisers. All put together, the seminars have been a lot of fun for the speakers and the participants. There has been a lot of networking and involved discussions on diseases, breeding of specific species and just plain gossip at the evening hospitality parties. People have a good time and come away from the seminar with new information, new friends and good memories.

The two fund organizers, Laurella and Judy, generally start planning the next seminar even before the immediate one is over. The main focus of the next seminar has to be decided and the speakers contacted. Writers of additional articles need to be contacted, a seminar date selected and a hotel contract signed. During the year, orders are filled for the latest *Proceedings* and may include orders for past issues. During the year, the seminar continues to educate and generate funds for research. ●

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