

# *AFA in action...* **NEWS and VIEWS**

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AUGUST 1993

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## President's Message

by Jack Clinton-Eitniear  
San Antonio, Texas

Most of you are aware that the regulations are being drafted as required to implement the Exotic Bird Conservation Act of 1992. Currently, only CITES listed (I, II, III) species that were imported during 1991 have been allowed entry, at their 1991 levels. Non-CITES species are allowed without restriction, with only a few exceptions.

A number of AFA special committees have been established to provide input as to the new regulations. AFA wants reasonable, workable guidelines for certification of foreign breeding facilities and breeding consortiums as well as an "Approved List" that actually reflects the current status of species as indicated by reliable data, not opinion. While many think of this bill as an "ending," it is actually only a "beginning." The act will require continual monitoring.

Oh, the care free days of the seventies when we had no bill, and what seemed an endless variety of birds at reasonable prices to choose from. Aviculture has changed. Those days are no more. The irresponsible importation of birds in unthinkable numbers and the historic lack of any United States policy regarding same created a ploughed head attitude into an atmosphere of lawsuits to protect lobsters from the trauma of the cookpot (CITES had always relied upon but it seldom actually worked). Many individuals believe that human life is considered equal in value to that of the other animals that share our planet. Of course, it's speculative as to what aviculture will look like in the next ten or 20 years. Certainly, the next few years will determine whether a number of species continue to be represented in captivity.

The current economic "slowdown" will undoubtedly play a major part with individuals and their decisions as to what species to work with in a captive environment. It is unfortunate, but a fact of life, that a large portion of aviculturists must derive some revenue from their birds. This activity is a double edged sword. First, species representation will be dictated by the pet value of the species. Few people will choose to breed species that bring a low sales price. Second, aviculturists are selling a large portion of the offspring they produce. Given the lack of imports, selling all your progeny leaves you in an awkward position when you need new breeding stock. Finding *good* breeding stock will be increasingly more difficult. As they say, "If they are such good breeders, why are you selling them?" Many aviculturists have created a compromise situation where their "bread and butter" birds are domesticated species, principally cockatiels, so less reliance is made upon selling the offspring of their more rare species. Another situation that has the potential to maintain a number of species is that of the bird club breeding consortium.

Clubs around the country are devoting energy to establishing species through intraclub breeding loans. The common denominator to all programs is that the breeding effort must be managed to maximize genetic variability.

With the coming implementation of the exotic bird act, AFA is readying itself to meet the challenge of managing non-domesticated species populations. A full array of open and closed bands is now available from our business office in any quantity. Our Red Siskin program is serving as an effective model as to what can be achieved within the avicultural community. Finally, we hope to have a full-time employee, within the coming months, who will devote total energy to assisting clubs with consortiums and enhancing AFA's own efforts. The bottom line is, however, that interest in maintaining a large number of species in captivity must come from the aviculturists themselves. I suggest that every member take a critical look at his/her collection and answer the following questions:

1. Are you maintaining unpaired specimens of non-domesticated species?
2. Are you selling *all* the progeny from certain pairs of non-domesticated species?
3. Do you band or micro-chip progeny and maintain genealogical information permanently?

Finally, is there a species that you feel should be receiving more concentrated attention from the avicultural community? I'd like to hear from you. Please seriously consider dropping me a note by writing: AFA, 999 E. Basse Road, Suite 180-164, San Antonio, TX 78209 or telephone (210) 828-5306. I'm looking forward to hearing from you.●

## Bali Mynah Project Needs Funding

Few aviculturists have not heard of the infamous Bali Mynah (starling) and its plight. The future survival of this species may well be determined by the success of a recent conservation initiative that includes captive breeding. AFA would like to further assure the success of this project by providing funding for a planned release of captive bred birds. The project is supported by the American Association of Zoological Parks and Aquariums (AAZPA). Our involvement further strengthens our relationship with the zoological and conservation community. Individuals and/or clubs that would like to donate to this project should contact the AFA Business Office.●

## Open Bands Now Available

Plastic non-traceable bandettes and open traceable stainless steel bands are now available from the AFA Business Office. See the outside dustcover for details.●



Photo by Jack Clinton-Eitnhear

May 15, 1993 — "Board" brains at work . . . considering the complicated ramifications of the Exotic Bird Conservation Act of 1992. L to R: Linda Sun, Chuck Saffell, Kevin Gorman, Morgan Knox, Denise Cabral, Tom Marshall, Gary Lilienthal (standing), Starr Kirchhoff, Jami Kennedy, Aletta M. Long.

## Board Meeting in Washington, D.C.

The Board of Directors met during May in Washington, D.C. for their quarterly meeting. Representatives from the Department of the Interior, offices of law enforcement and management authority met with the Board to answer their questions regarding the Exotic Bird Conservation Act of 1992.

A number of additional matters were addressed including but not limited to:

- All returned membership questionnaires were reviewed.
- Both 1993 and 1994 Convention strategies were discussed.

- The proposed fee for AFA FastAds was defeated.
- A number of membership promotions were approved.
- Approval was given to offer open leg bands.
- A CITES report was given.
- A special *AFA Watchbird* issue to promote membership was requested. It will be the Dec/Jan issue.

Copies of the meeting minutes were mailed to all delegates on June 25, 1993. Additional copies are available from the AFA Business Office.●

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## In Memory of Stacy

*by Dale and Mary Ragain  
Sunnyvale, California*

I am writing this letter following a promise I made to "Stacy," a five month old baby macaw.

Approximately 2-1/2 months ago, a coworker came to me with some questions about birds, since we are raising four macaws and two Gray-cheeked Parakeets of our own, and asked for some advice.

My coworker and her husband were very excited following a trip to the neighborhood pet shop to pick up dog supplies, where they met and fell in love with a baby macaw. They wanted to take the bird home but the price was too high for their budget. They were able to talk with the shop owner awhile and went back a few times to visit the baby bird.

I lent them a stack of bird books and video tapes to gain as much information as they could before they made a decision to

invest in a bird for a pet. There was a bird show coming up and I told them they should go look at all the birds and talk with the owners and breeders.

While at the bird show, they decided on a nice, big powder coated cage to keep a macaw in when they found the one they wanted. They also decided on a breeder to visit, since this breeder does not bring his birds to the show, and he apparently cared for the birds well enough to not expose them to possible disease.

It seemed like, as new potential bird owners, they were doing all the right things.

They went to the breeder and selected a three month old, hand fed, Blue & Gold baby macaw. They were thrilled with their new baby and took it home to its nice new, big cage, with

new toys and pellets, fresh fruit and vegetables and with two hand feedings a day.

They called to invite us over to see the new baby, and to make sure that everything looked okay in the new cage the way they had set it up.

This was the day after they had brought Stacy home.

We fell in love again when we saw Stacy. She was so sweet and cuddly. Our friends said she had not wanted to eat her formula that morning and that she still had food in her crop from the night before. They said she wasn't very active either. We held and pet her and my husband and I felt that something was wrong.

While petting Stacy, I felt a loose pouch between her legs and I had never seen anything like it on any of our macaws. Her crop was full and she did not seem very happy at all. We were very worried about her and insisted they take her to a good avian vet right away, preferably ours.

They did take her to an avian vet (not ours) the following day and he kept her overnight. He took x-rays, blood tests and culture, and sent her home the next day with medicine for a yeast infection. He saw the pouch and said maybe it was some kind of inflammation. He also noticed she had a bruised chest and said that babies were pretty clumsy and most likely she fell.

Stacy still would not take her formula and was not happy. The doctor said to just give her the medicine and feed her anyway. The following day, when they checked on her in the

morning, they found that Stacy was bleeding from her chest.

They called their vet right away and he said he didn't know what he could do about it. They hung up and called the breeder that had sold Stacy to them. The breeders said to bring the baby to them right away, so they packed up Stacy and headed out in a rush to the breeders' which was two hours away.

When they got there, the breeder took one look at Stacy and said it was massive crop burn, due to grossly overheated formula, and didn't know how she was still alive. She told them it looked really bad, but that Stacy had a good look in her eyes. She was alert and bright, but obviously in pain.

They left Stacy with heavy hearts.

The breeder fed her, put her in an incubator and called their vet. The vet could not be located for another two days, but Stacy hung on, with the hole in her chest getting larger.

Late one night, days after the burn had begun, the doctor was located and was able to see Stacy. The doctor did not feel there was much hope left, but she did a four hour surgery to remove dead tissue and to pull everything together. The doctor called my co-worker at 1:00 a.m. to tell her that Stacy had made it through the surgery.

The doctor told them that there was a little hope that Stacy could make it through the recovery period, but if she did live, she may need to go through three to five more surgeries. All of her crop was gone and her esophagus, but the doctor found good tissue below and pulled it up tight, to where it almost met with the esophagus.

For the next several days, my co-worker called the doctor for reports on how Stacy was doing. She was hanging in and seemed to have good spirit.

The doctor went away on vacation and left Stacy in the care of the breeder. Stacy had a tube coming from her throat to be fed every two hours and to receive water every hour. While the doctor was away, the stitches on Stacy's chest and neck came out and she was taken to another vet for a second surgery.

More tissue was removed and re-stitched, and again Stacy came through with flying colors. She went back to the breeders' again for supportive care and my co-worker and her husband went to see the baby every weekend.

When the doctor returned from vacation, she found Stacy's incision leaking and coming apart (which was from shoulder to shoulder and all the way up the front of the neck), and decided she needed another surgery to repair the incision.

When the doctor told my co-worker about the last surgery, she and her husband didn't think they could handle the stress, heartache and financial cost any longer and asked if we would take Stacy for free or they would have to put her down. I called my husband and he said yes, take her.

We didn't go to work the next day, Friday, and made an appointment with our own vet. Then we took off to get Stacy. When we got there, Stacy was standing on a tree perch and, like they said, her eyes were bright and full of life, but it was heartbreaking.

She didn't have trouble with her perching at all, but she was too weak to do any climbing and was doing just a small amount of playing with a toy. Her appearance was very bad. She was bare on her neck and chest, with a hole where her crop was originally, and an awful, clear, slimy fluid running from the hole in her neck. It had run down all over her lower chest, tail feathers, legs and feet where it lay thick and sticky. She smelled very bad, but those wonderful eyes made you want to hug and protect her.

After we were given her care instructions and a teary good bye from the breeder and the medication instructions from their vet, we left and went directly to our vet. Stacy rode well in her carrier during the ride. She was making little beeping sounds

Photo by authors



Stacy, a 5 month old Blue and Gold Macaw, with massive crop burn. The tube extending from the throat was used to give food and water.

and I gave her water with juice.

When we got to our vet, the doctor said that things didn't look good for Stacy but she would like to give her another chance.

The doctor said due to the high cost of treatment with only a very small chance of success, she would donate all of her services and medications at no cost if we could handle the intensive care. The doctor, my husband and I agreed that it was worth a try.

The doctor did blood work, cultures, and gave us instructions on how to give Stacy her injections, and she sent us home with new formula and new medications. (We would have to inject Stacy twice daily.) We were also to continue to feed and water Stacy every hour. The doctor told us to come back in three days.

I took Stacy to work with me so I could look after her. The people at work were very supportive and wished Stacy well. I took her in the sun and she loved it. She would swish her tail, flap her wings and preen.

I had given her an Ivory bath to get all that sticky stuff off her feet and feathers; she looked brand new and shiny. It seemed she really liked being clean. I made her a small baby bib to absorb all of the leaking so it would not run all over her and she looked really cute.

It seemed she was always hungry and wanted to eat. I felt so sorry for her because she was not able to eat by mouth. When we took Stacy back to the doctor, she said that Stacy had a really bad infection along the incision and saw that the hole was much larger now. She told us it was time for more surgery.

Two hours later, the doctor said that at first she thought there was no use in continuing; Stacy had quit breathing during surgery, but started again on her own. The doctor thought that just maybe there was a chance . . . and continued the surgery. She cut away all of the dead tissue, removed old food, flushed out the mass of infection and treated it with antibiotics and then re-stitched the wound.

We took Stacy home in an incubator Monday night. It was amazing how well she looked, still bright eyed and eager to be fed. Her stitches looked good and there was no infection.

On Thursday, after her last feeding, we gave her the injections, and as we did this her feeding tube came out. We called the doctor at home and she told us to bring her in the next morning.

We left her with the doctor that next morning and we went to get her later that evening.

The doctor brought her out for a visit and then went to insert the feeding tube again. Twenty minutes later she came out to say "no go."

There was extensive tissue damage. The infection had taken too much good tissue. It was time . . . we had to let her go.

My husband, the doctor and I all hugged. And cried. We left for home broken hearted, empty and angry. We never saw Stacy again.

We give our heartfelt thanks to a very special, highly competent, generous, humanitarian, avian doctor and her team for all they did to give Stacy every possible chance to live. The damage was too great, but no one could have done more.

This has been a long letter, I realize, but I just want people to know the terrible things that Stacy went through and how much this little bird wanted to live.

She never gave up. We had to give up for her.

My husband and I keep hearing from vets and breeders alike, that this is a "common" problem. We feel people have not been warned enough. It has not been stressed just how awful this really is. It should be a standard warning everywhere that birds are dealt with.

I am writing to bird magazines, authors, vets, breeders, pet shops, bird food manufacturers, and all should have permanent warnings posted (very large), as well as handouts to take home.

*Please* help stop this unnecessary injury to babies like Stacy, in any way that you can. It should never have happened!

Suggest giving out written warnings, posted warnings on walls and adding warnings to package labels. Try publishing warnings on bird tapes or bird books . . . with large, whole sheet, permanent warnings in every issue.

I have also found out, from other bird owners who do not read much about birds, that most are unaware of the dangers of Teflon, avocado, chocolate, household plants and chemicals to their birds.

Please see the attached warning example. This sheet could be copied and given to people buying and handfeeding baby birds or used as an example to create your own.

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## W A R N I N G !

### DID YOU KNOW . . .

- **Overheated handfeeding formula can seriously burn the crop and kill your baby bird.** Sadly, it happens all the time. Microwaved food creates "hot spots." After heating (any method), stir well, let set three minutes, stir again. Use a good quality food thermometer (not your finger) to test for correct temperature, then feed. Suggest using human baby food warmer or heat water and place baby food in water to heat. Remember to stir, wait, stir and check temperature. It should be between 98° and 103°F (ask a good avian vet). The extra caution, effort and time is well worth it!
- **Overheated Teflon is toxic to birds.** Be cautious. When overheated, it can kill your bird. It's best not to use. It is in cookware, irons, ironing board covers, bread makers, etc.
- **Avocado is toxic to birds.** The skin, pit, leaves and bark are toxic. They are best avoided.
- **Chocolate is toxic to birds.** It contains a toxin that can make your bird sick.
- **Household plants are toxic.** Many are. Look in the yellow pages for your "poison control center" and ask for a list. Keep molds away from birds also.
- **Household chemicals are toxic.** Most are. Follow directions. Use alternative cleaning products that are safe for birds. Do not use insecticides or pesticides. Do not use any chemical sprays near birds.
- **Get to know a good avian vet.** Get a good health care book and subscribe to an avian magazine. Read. Read. Read. Join a bird club, feed a good diet, get a big cage . . . love your bird with the right kind of care.●

## Getting a Good Start

by Carol and Mark Runyon  
Englewood, Florida

Here's a picture of our six year old son, Kyle and his Indian Ringneck, Buddy. Kyle and Buddy accompanied us to a number of shows in Florida, where Buddy was exhibited and placed regularly in the novice division in SPBE. He made sixth best of all on top bench at the Sunshine State Cage Bird Show in Orlando in 1992. Kyle was one thrilled six year old, especially when John Franchek gave Kyle his second place trophy since sixth place didn't receive a trophy.

He feeds and waters his own birds, which consist of Buddy, a Gold Capped Conure, several normal cockatiels and some whitefaced cockatiels. He also assists us in our store and with all our breeders at home. We think it's great he wants to help us with the birds and breed and show some on his own. He is now a member of SPBE and ACS. We hope this is a lasting thing with him. It teaches him responsibility, sportsmanship, kindness, science and also, inevitably, birth and death. He knows people from all over the state and out of state also. You ought to hear him tell his Kindergarten teacher all about the bird shows. She probably thinks we are a whole family of crazy people!●

*Kyle Runyon and his good friend Buddy, an Indian Ringneck Parakeet, show off some of their trophies.*



*Venezuela's first conservation stamp, Orinoco Geese.*

## Venezuela Launches First Conservation Stamp and Print in South America

The Ministry of the Environment of Venezuela, in conjunction with National Art Publishing Corp. of Fort Myers, Florida, have announced the development of the first "Conservation Stamp and Print Program" in South America. This program will benefit waterfowl and wildlife, and will be patterned after the United States Federal Duck Stamp and Print Program, which began in 1934.

Since its inception, the U.S. program has raised over \$400

million for the acquisition of 4 million acres of wetlands. The Canadian program, in existence since 1985, has generated over \$20 million, which has funded more than 200 conservation initiatives.

"I plan to continue my commitment to expand wetlands conservation worldwide, to protect our flora and fauna resources," states David H. Boshart, President of National Art Publishing.

### The Venezuelan Program

A national art competition, by invitation from the Ministry of the Environment, was held in Caracas where the beautiful depiction of Orinoco Geese by Fernando Porras was chosen on March 9, 1993 as the winning image. This species (*Neochen jubata*) is one of Venezuela's most popular residents and lives along the wooded banks of the Orinoco River and its tributaries.

The highly detailed watercolor will be reproduced on stamps, first day covers, limited edition prints, pins, etc. which will be offered to collectors and conservationists around the globe.

All licensed hunters will be required to purchase the Bs 800 (approximately \$9.50 U.S.) stamp. Stamps and prints will go on sale September 1, 1993, and will be removed from sale on August 31, 1994 — with all unsold product to be destroyed, insuring the collector's investment value.

For further information and a free color brochure, contact: National Art Publishing, 11000-33 Metro Parkway, Fort Myers, Florida 33912. Phone 1-813-939-7518. Fax: 1-813-936-2788.

Please be advised that very limited paid advertising monies are available for this program, since the majority of all funds raised go directly to wetlands acquisition and management. Therefore, your support and cooperation in publishing this release will be highly appreciated by committed conservationists in South America.●

**AFA says  
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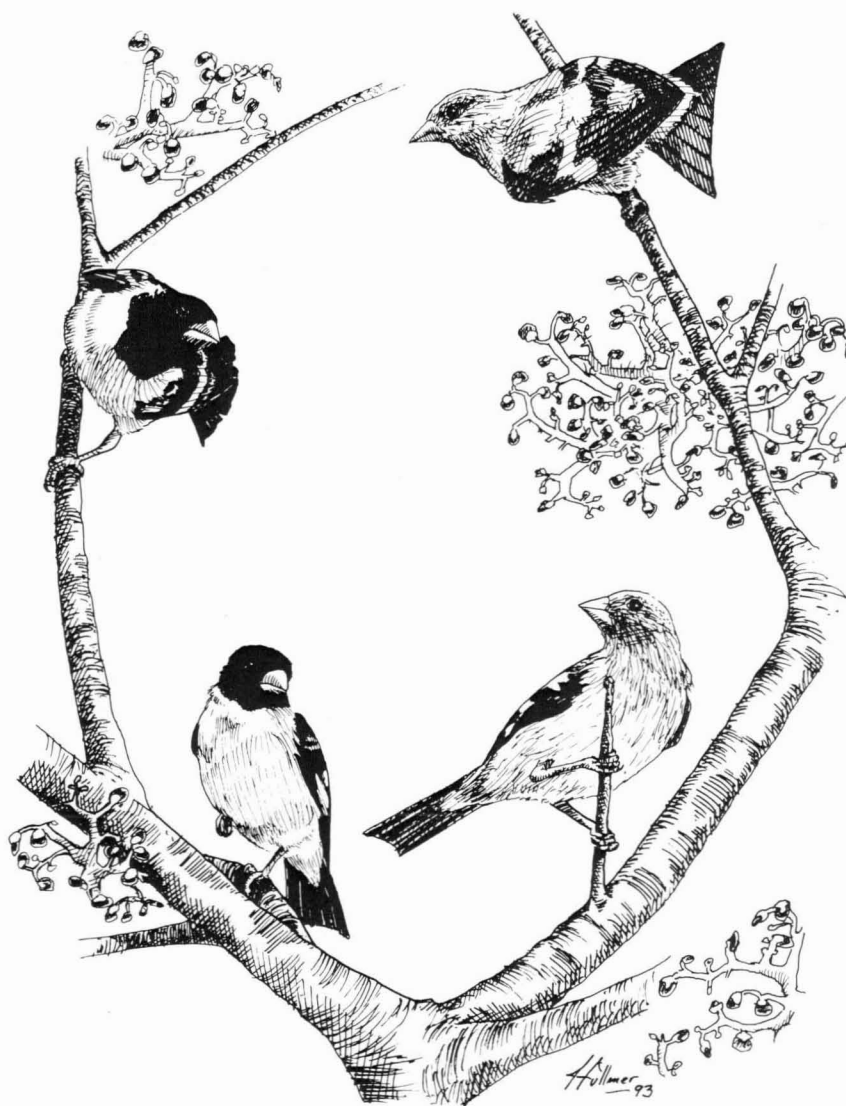
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Mary Danza  
Jett Diane  
Gloria Ferraro  
Michal Gaborek  
Lynn Garrett  
Rita Smith  
Linda Whippo

## Limited Edition Pen and Ink of Siskin Available



Venezuelan Black-hooded Red Siskin  
*Carduelis cucullata*

The AFA Red Siskin program is offering a limited edition pen and ink drawing of Red Siskins to raise funds. Each drawing is 14" x 16" and numbered as well as signed by the artist. The artist, Jay Fulmer, will also provide hand-colored copies for \$50. Black and white copies are \$28 which includes postage and handling. One hundred percent of the purchase price will go to the Red Siskin program. This program is the only national breeding consortium, involving an endangered species, that involves only private sector aviculturists. To purchase either the black and white or colored copies, contact the AFA Business Office at (601) 484-0931. ●

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