The British Are Coming!
Convention '82 Gossip
by Ms. Beak, alias Rona Parrot
Washington, D.C.

WASHINGTON, D.C.-Washington is absolutely buzzing, birdhearts, over the news of the 1982 AFA Convention! They’re all in a twitter over just what to do and how to welcome such a group to the Nation’s Capitol. After all, darlings, we’ve had just about every kind of Convention imaginable in this city, but Birds, really! They’re wringing their hands in Georgetown. Beak is delighted. Beak hears that Nancy has already been told that feathers are not really proper to wear in August, no matter how apropos it seems. Beak is disappointed.

Well, no matter, birdhearts, chin up. Beak has managed to get a copy of the secret list, the list, birdhearts, of who is coming to speak this year. Beak is bedazzled. It looks like the Queen, herself, is sending us the Who’s Who of British Aviculture! We don’t know where to start, birdhearts, but JOHN STOODLEY, that impressive man who appeared in the last issue of Watchbird and who has raised almost everything with feathers will be here to talk on Pionus and, frankly, birdhearts, looking around, it seems we need all the help we can get on Pionus. As a real treat, darlings, DIDI GRAHAM will be back with her movies and slides, and most of all, her charm, talking on Pheasants and Waterfowl in a mixed collection. The real birdhearts will remember that DIDI is a kingpin in the World Pheasant Association and one of the most effective aviculturists/conservationists in the world. Beak was ready to set up Argus Pheasants in her D.C. apartment after hearing DIDI in Dallas. Now, you Budgie Builders get ready. Mr. ERIC PEAKE, himself, darlings, will be here! You remember the Watchbird article with all those pictures of his artwork? This time he’ll be here in the flesh, birdhearts, talking on several aspects of the exhibition Budgie and showing slides of the best birds of England. Beak hears that signed prints of his work will also be available in the Exhibit Hall. This one is not to be missed. Beak swoons. Another rumor is that ART SNELL may be back also! We sincerely hope so. The Budgie breeders will think they died and went to heaven. England will be making her contribution to the Great Love Bird Debate this year, too. Those nasty, noisy, loveable little creatures will be represented by none other than author, MR. JIM HAYWARD and our old friend, DR. GEORGE SMITH. MR. HAYWARD will address the problem of Peach Face Mutations, while MR. LEE HORTON (United States), DR. RAINER ERHART (United States), and DR. AL DECOTEAU (United States) will address MR. HAYWARD. Beak wouldn’t miss this debate for all the niger in Africa. After all, birdhearts, this may set once-and-for-all whether it’s a Dutch Dark Blue Cinnamon with a White Face or a Cinnamon Blue Double Dark with a Dutch Face. Beak is confused, but excited. GEORGE SMITH will also talk on the validity of hybrids, if any. (Validity, that is.) President TOM IRELAND is standing by with a certain AFA Resolution concerning same. And who knows who else may be coming from the U.K. The American Consulate in London is jammed up issuing visas, and over at the State Department, here in D.C., they are absolutely pacing around, pacing, birdhearts, over a rumor that the Convention Committee may have already invited Princess Diana herself to speak at the Convention! They are terrified, darlings, terrified over what the topic might be... Incubation (Gasp!) (Shudder!) and Hand Rearing! Beak freaks.

SPENKELINK, birdhearts, SPENKELINK. If that doesn’t make you sit up on the edge of your chairs, darlings, then you haven’t been reading the right bird books. Really, birdhearts, Beak looks around and everything’s coming up SPENKELINK! And she’s coming to the Convention! Mrs. SPENKELINK from Holland will be here and we could not be more honored. Think about the most difficult psittacines to breed and Mrs. SPENKELINK has probably done it. Beak is lobbying for at least one session on those cute little Hanging Parrots. Let’s face it, birdhearts, it was a Hanging Parrot that won the Kellog’s two years in a row, now, and Beak does not know even one private aviculturist in the country who has so much as hatched one of those little devils! And how are you doing with your Crimson Bellied Conures?
You haven't even seen one? Oh, Mrs. SPENKLINK, we need help on the Pyrrhura Conures, too. Beak is really excited.

And there are so many other speakers, birdhearts. DICK BAER will be there with his workshop on gadgets, gizmos, and inventions for the bird room. WILLIE PERATINO will jog down the street from the National Zoo to give the ultimate presentation on Eclectus Parrots. GUY GREENWELL, everybody's favorite Senior Ornithologist from the Smithsonian's Conservation and Research Center in Front Royal, Virginia, will bring us up to date on the Rothschild's Mynah census and propagation status. Beak hopes this year GUY will finally let CAROLYN EMERICK do some work on that project. And for all you birdhearts who feel you still want cuddly Macaws and tight-rope-walking-Cockatoos, that little bundle of energy from Florida, author and Bird Psychologist, RISA TEITLER will be here! Beak agrees it is not chic to show your friends your darling little pets while wearing those tacky asbestos gloves lined with steel. A little Taming and Training workshop never hurt anybody. Except possibly RISA, of course. Beak is bandaged.

There is a rumor back East that Mr. "World of Birds" himself, DON BRUNING (Bronx Zoo) has been invited to speak at the Banquet. Beak hopes he accepts since he has a lot to offer beyond those lovely pictures of baby birds with sticks in their feet. And on and on, birdhearts. Speakers, workshops, roundtables, debates, it's endless, darlings. Next time we'll go on with the magic list, but Conventions are much more than that! There are many luminaries, Luminaries, birdhearts, that you'll be rubbing shoulders with and who knows what else. MARGIE MCGEE (Canary Columnist of Cage Bird Magazine) and LEE HORTON (an authority on Love Birds) will dance their way into your hearts every night like they did in Kansas City and L.A. Beak can't wait to see HELEN WILLET (Editor, Avicultural Bulletin) leap uncontrollably into the Tidal Basin (or at least one of the reflecting pools) while PAT BARBERA flashes baby Moluccans from her hot pink sewing basket. They'll love it on Embassy Row. And those Cockatiel people! You never know what they'll do! TOM and DEE DEE SQUIRES will put an ACS band on anything that stands still long enough, while BERT MCAULAY will probably be selling ACS Memberships to canary people like he did in Kansas City. Of course Beak signed up three times. Beak is asking the District of Columbia to rope off Pennsylvania Ave. so DR. MARGARET PETRAK, DR. BOB BERRY, and DR. MARGIE Mc MILLIAN can do a repeat of their Las Vegas performance right in front of the White House. Beak loves your whistle, Margie. And when talking about luminaries, birdhearts, we just can't overlook what Beak understands will be breathing in from the island of Maui. The Hawaiian Connection, darlings. DR. RANDY COLBY! Beak is still reeling from the Kansas City encounter. This man redefines the word "Hospitality!" And his son WILSON! Beak's heart still flutters over those lovely pictures of baby birds with their feet. And on and on, birdhearts, that's all the space we've got for now. But there are more speakers, more luminaries, more fun next time. And just remember, darlings, that's a gossip column without a little gossip? Watch this space.

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