When the days begin to grow brighter and the world shows signs of wakening from winter, something stirs within. It's the old desire to participate in the process, an urge to be somehow a part of the eternal promise of new life. I used to tell myself that next year would be different. We would take a trip and not be home-bound all spring. But every year that same old feeling returns, and I can't help wondering what this or that combination will produce. No use to fight it. I've decided simply to yield and enjoy it. Once again, the birds are paired up and I'm sticking close to home for the season.

At the urging of a friend, I have attempted to record a few things that have worked for me. These are things that I have learned, mostly the hard way, over the last 50 years. These habits have brought me satisfaction with my backyard hobby. (It took only one season in the house to convince my wife that the hobby should be backyard, not spare-bedroom.)

My bird house consists of three major parts. On either side of the center walk-in storage area are two walk-in flight pens that are 8' x 10' in size. The roof covers all and extends well beyond the walls to add further shade and protection. The back wall is solid. Three sides are partially covered with wood that extends from the concrete floor up 3-1/2'. This protects the birds from our bird-hunter cocker spaniel. The outside open part of the house is covered with screen for protection from mosquitoes which can and do bring a pox if they get to the birds. The screen makes it more difficult to see the birds, but I consider it a necessity. I have used a vaccine against avian pox, but find the screen more satisfactory.

On the inside of the flight area, and separated from the screen by three or four inches, I use common 5/8" aviary wire. This works well to keep the birds off the screen in which their toes might become entangled. The space between the screen and the wire also keeps the birds away from any cats that get past the cocker spaniel. Cats may be trusted to be interested in birds! Their fish-hook claws can snag a bird against aviary wire and tear it to pieces.

I am very careful to guard against anything on which the birds may catch a claw or snag their seamless leg bands. Small, stiff wire ends, if long enough and in areas where birds light and hop around, may result in a bird's ensnaring itself and twisting off a leg in an attempt to become free.

The center section entry, which leads to either of the flight pens, is a lifesaver and prevents the loss of birds that might dart out an open door. It also is handy for storing seed and other items used in the flight pens.

When it's time for identifying young males in late August or September, I set up a series of cages in which I put three or four young birds that are marked or colored differently enough from each other that I can identify which ones I hear and see singing. These I mark with a blue plastic band which with a blue plastic band on the left leg, then return them to the flight pen. My memory being what it is, I find it helpful to make a diagram of the cages being watched and to record which birds have sung. This gets us started. The process goes on through the fall. It usually works for me. Of course, in breeding season the vents of the sexes begin to show marked differences. I usually check these. The vent area of the cock bird protrudes markedly and in older cocks is rather easily identifiable. The female's vent area is broad and flat and, as laying time approaches, resembles somewhat the area of the laying chicken's vent and abdomen — broad and full. I have never had success with needles on strings and some of the other gimmicks by which some swear to tell sexes. For me, the only sure way is to hear and see the male sing. Of course, if a singing hen (almost a non-happening) lays an egg, one would need to rethink the matter!

One needs to remember that caged birds can feed their babies only from the foodstuff made available to them by their keepers. They will not reproduce effectively if they are not properly fed. Along with a good roller mix of seed and cuttlebone, I offer my birds a formula given to me by Great Aunt Clara about 40 years ago. The mix included two finely chopped hard-boiled eggs, shell and all; two heaping tablespoons of finely rolled bread crumbs; two heaping tablespoons of any kind of dry baby cereal; one heaping tablespoon of wheat germ and about one-quarter spoon of sugar (optional). These I mix well in quantities large enough to last four or five days and store in covered containers in the refrigerator. I feed as much as the birds will clean up, twice a day. This varies according to the number of babies; I start with one tablespoon at a time. I also feed a round slice (quarter of an inch thick) of boiled carrot, a bit of broccoli flower and chickweed, in season. The birds are fond of romaine lettuce, raw cabbage, orange and apple. I have not had a problem with apple as some people report they've had. My birds seem to like the softer varieties of apple better than firm ones such as Granny Smith. A quarter of an orange, especially in hot weather, is another way of giving your birds the liquid they need.

For nests, I have offered a variety of cup-like containers including tuna cans and cottage cheese cartons. Now I use commercial plastic nests onto which I sew or tape a bit of flannel cloth for a bottom liner. If screen nests are used, cloth covering is especially important so that the birds do not catch their toenails and hang themselves. I shred 3" x 4" squares of burlap and give them to the birds so that they can fashion their own nests. They also like to use horse hair and make beautiful nests from it. In the past when I kept Shetland ponies, an abundance of hair was readily at hand.

Banding, as well as identifying, gives your birds a sort of class. The babies' feet will be right for banding sometime between five and eight days old, depending on the kinds of birds you have and the rate at which the birds are growing. Some parent birds are better feeders than others, and their babies do grow better than those
from poor feeders. Some breeders look for the little feathers forming on the wings as a sign for size for banding. I simply watch the feet. In large clutches, not all babies from the same nest will be ready on the same day. If you band too soon, the band comes off and may be lost. If you wait too long, you may injure the foot or not be able to band at all. Pushing three toes forward and through the seamless band and pulling the band over the foot, and over that toe that extends backward, and up the leg until that last toe slips through, requires dexterity and skill. The reward comes later when you spot a bird and think, "That's my bird." Sure enough, the band confirms it (or blows a hole in your self-confidence).

Seamless, color-year coded, numbered bands make a number of helpful practices possible. I could never tell all my birds apart, remember which were related, which produced well, or which were mated, without numbers and written records. I also find the colored plastic marker bands helpful. I use blue for males and red for females. My seamless bands go on the right leg, my plastic bands on the left. Anytime when handling a bird is a good time for me to trim extra long toenails. This is a routine part of setting up pairs for breeding.

Although I occasionally use a male with more than one female, I have never had very much success with the practice. In colony breeding, I find that the hens tend to destroy or steal each other's nests. Over the years, I have discovered what kinds of birds my customers like. My own tastes include a wide variety of color and variation, but my buyers tend to like clear yellows and reds. In order to let my birds pay their own way, those are the colors for which I strive mostly. Since I have lived in the same location for almost 30 years, I no longer need to advertise. A sign at the feed store and word-of-mouth bring enough people to clean out any extra birds by the time breeding season is half over.

The newspaper has rarely been a happy source of advertising for me. Additionally, I have found it a good policy to replace any birds which are supposed to be singers and do not sing or which die suddenly upon leaving my place.

Canaries like to bathe and will do so almost every day, if given a chance. When I am color feeding through the drinking water, I offer bath water only for a limited time and then remove it so that the birds go back to the color food.

Following the advice of Dr. Bob Vanderhoof, his son, John, and Gene Hall, I finally found a way to cure the wheezing which sometimes is found in canaries. It's a medication used for worming cattle, Ivermectin. We dilute it greatly (one part medication to nine parts water) and simply dab the diluted mixture under the canary's wing. What a relief to go into a pen of birds at night and not hear any wheezing.

I'll always remember the first little yellow and green birds given me by a lady who would later become my mother-in-law. She kept a cage (about 3' x 4' x 4') out-of-doors. It stood elevated on legs and was covered with a single layer of aviary wire. Each year, a nest or two of babies would be produced. Frank, her husband, was as fond as she was of hearing the song in the yard. In summer, the cage caught the shade of buildings or trees. A canvas tarp was partially draped around it to keep out the cold wind. Occasionally, a gopher snake would find its way into the cage only to trap itself by feasting on a helpless bird and then being too big to leave by the hole through which it entered!

Those were the days when the common canary hens sold for one or two dollars. Singers might bring as much as five. I'll never forget watching five dollars fly away one time when I was cleaning my outside cage, and a green singer escaped. Before I could grab the garden hose and douse him with water, he was gone. Sometimes if you can get water on a bird so that he is good and wet and can't fly, you can retrieve him. Another age-old method was told me by my grandfather who said that a sure way was to sprinkle salt on the tail of the bird. Somehow I could never get close enough to the birds of western Oklahoma to do that! Although I never managed to catch the little wild goldfinches and other fantastic creatures that sang in our fields and trees, I must say that I found many ways to enjoy the bird world. Raising canaries has been a delight for me.

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Macaw Landing Foundation
Public Viewing Aviary
Third Thursday of each month
Jonas Beach Center, exit 308 off I-5
1919 N. Jantzen, Portland, Oregon
Mon. - Fri. 10:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.
Sat. & Sun. 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
Bird care seminar. Speaker Pat Huff, D.V.M.
Macaw Landing - 7:30 p.m.
For information call: (509) 286-0862

Greater Chicago Cage Bird Club
Spring Bird Fair
September 17, 1994
10:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
225 E. Elk Grove Blvd., Elk Grove Village, IL
(1/2 mile east of Arlington Heights Road)
Semi-annual event, open to the public.
Features a wide variety of birds, cages, toys, seed, treats,
and equipment for sale.
For everyone from single pet owners to serious breeders.
General information: (708) 705-6260

Erie Cage Bird Club's Annual Auction
September 17, 1994
2006 Norcross Rd., Erie, PA
Public welcome, no admission charge.
Starting at 11:00 a.m.
For info: Diane Holtz (814) 886-2675

Capital District Cage Bird Club
Bird Show / Bird Mart
September 17, 1994
Howard Johnson Motor Inn
Albany, New York
Use exit 23 New York State Thruway
Info: Charles Galusha (518) 866-5263

The Aviculture Society of Puget Sound (ASOPS)
presents its
Fourth Annual Exotic Bird Fair
September 24, 1994
10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Seattle Center Fag Pavilion
For more information contact:
Carla Richie (206) 968-3358 or
Ann Jones (206) 868-7871

Town & Country Feathered Friends
7th Annual Bird Fair
September 25, 1994
11 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Westinaw County Fairgrounds
on Ann Arbor-Saline Road
Saline, Michigan
For info contact Nancy Egger
11533 Newman Rd., Brighton, MI 48116
or call (313) 227-6203
Town & Country Feathered Friends meets in Michigan Center the 4th Wednesday of every month.
Contact Secretary Barb McManus, 8735 Greenwillow, #8, Brighton, MI 48116.

Coastal Bend Cage Bird Club's
5th Annual Bird Fair
September 25, 1994
9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.
Moose Lodge, 8001 S. Padre Island Dr.
Corpus Christi, Texas
For info:
Linda Young (512) 961-2704

Black Hills Exotic Bird Fair
September 25, 1994
10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Howard Johnson's Motor Lodge
1-90 and LaJosie, Rapid City, South Dakota
For info contact:
Black Hills Cage Bird Club
4796 Greenfield Lane, Rapid City, SD 57701
(605) 393-1720

Association of Avian Veterinarians
Aviculture Seminar
Sept. 30 and Oct. 1, 1994
Nuggest Hotel, Reno, Nevada
Theme subjects: Common Problems Associated with Breeding, Hatching and Rearing Exotic Birds
Call AAV Conference Office, (303) 756-8380
or (303) 759-8861, Denver, CO to receive registration brochure information.

Classic Feathers
All Cage Bird Show
October 1, 1994
Class A Divisions: O.A.V.
D.A.V. Hall
State Route 117, Defiance, OH 43512
Finch & Cockatiels - Harold Bowles
Color Bred Canaries - Ken Klinger
Hookbills & Budgies - Ceci Guymon
Type Canaries - Sig Larson
For info call: Dennis Seiberneck (419) 784-5985

Coastal Bend Cage Bird Club
5th Annual Bird Fair
September 25, 1994
9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.
Moose Lodge, 8001 S. Padre Island Dr.
Corpus Christi, Texas
For info:
Linda Young (512) 961-2704

Minneota Pet Bird Society Bird Fair
October 9, 1994
10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Howard Johnson Hotel
3320 West Russell St.
(use Russell St. exit off Interstate 29)
Sioux Falls, South Dakota
Information, call Donna Kappenman (605) 334-4691

Cage Bird Club of Charlotte County
Show & Expo
October 9, 1994
Charlotte County Memorial Auditorium
Punta Gorda, Florida
ACS, ALBS, SPEE, Pet Shows
For more information contact:
Mark Runyon (813) 475-3440 or Warren Panem (813) 743-2099

Greater Rochester Hookbill Association
presents their
11th Annual Parrot Exhibition
October 15, 1994
10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Rochester Museum & Science Center
Eisenhart Auditorium
657 East Avenue, Rochester, NY
Admission $1.50 / children under 12 free
For further information contact:
Denise Teese, show chairman (716) 798-9033

The New York Finch and Type Canary Club
2nd Annual Canary and Finch Show
October 15, 1994
Plattdeutsch Park Restaurant Annex
1132 Hempstead Turnpike, Franklin Square, NY
Reginald McCarthy judging Exotic Birds
For more information contact:
Dennis Seiberbeck (513) 378-4799

Miami Valley Bird Club's
3rd Annual Bird Fair
October 16, 1994
IU.E. Hall
1675 Woodman Dr.
For more information call:
(513) 869-2404 or (513) 868-5006
or write to P.O. Box 565, Vandalia, OH 45377

Avicultural Society of Tucson (Arizona)
Ninth Annual Bird Fair
October 16, 1994
Tucson Exposition Center, Marketplatz, USA, 1st Irvington Road
9:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Demonstrations, lectures, raffles
(first 1st bird grand prize).
Contact Su Egen, P.O. Box 41501, Tucson, AZ 85717-1501
Phone & fax: (520) 326-0009

Garden State Park Racetrack
South Jersey Bird Club
September 17, 1994
11 a.m. to 5 pm.
Bird sale room, and more.
For more information contact:
Denise Teese, show chairman (716) 798-9033

Sunshine State Cage Bird Society
proudly presents
The 23rd Annual Exotic Bird Show
Saturday, October 8, 1994
9 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Moose Lodge, 8001 S. Padre Island Dr.
Corpus Christi, Texas
For info contact: Bob Hence, show manager (509) 753-8949

For information call (303) 756-8380 or (303) 759-8861, Denver, CO to receive registration brochure information.
**Avian Trade Shows & Seminars**

**Central Kentucky Cage Bird Society's**

5th Annual All Bird Show and Fair

**October 22, 1994**

10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The Continental Inn

801 New Circle Road N.E., Lexington, Kentucky

General Admission $1.00 / children under 12 free

Judges:

Dr. Al Decoteau - Hookbills

Geraldo Cherta - Colorbred Canaries

Ray Rudell - Type Canaries

For more information call Boo Shea (606) 744-3481

**Canary Club of Kentucky**

Exit 137)

0-5

Bird Club

Anchor (708) 543-3757

Marl<

write

American

- Ignacio Perea

Helton

Varieties

Carl

78222

Whiteaker, Missouri

children 512

Yorl<

Blvd., Roseville, CA

pm

56x408

children under 12 free when accompanied by adults

59x644

General Admission $1.00 / children under 12 free

Connecticut Association for Aviculture

presents its

18th Annual Exotic Bird Show

**October 22, 1994**

**"Tail-U-Win" Hall**

175 Adams Street, Manchester, CT 06040

For information call:

Show Secretary Bill Voronwitch at (203) 549-8220

**Capitol City Bird Society's**

18th Annual Bird Show

**October 22 & 23, 1994**

Sat. 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. / Sun. 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Roseville Fairgrounds

All American Blvd., Roseville, CA

Admission: $3 adults, $1 youths (12-17), children under 12 free when accompanied by adults

For more information contact:

CCBS, P.O. Box 417100, Sacramento, CA 95841

or

Mariliana Mejia (916) 452-2037

Linda Nichelmann (916) 722-4604

Suzie McKinney (707) 448-0680

**Exotic Bird Club of Florida**

Bird Show

**October 29, 1994**

Holiday Inn Cocoa Beach Resort

1300 N. Atlantic Ave.,

Cocoa Beach, FL 32931

Reservations: (407) 783-2271

For information contact:

Maureen O'Beirn

613 Dianne Dr., Melbourne, FL 32935

**Middle Tennessee Cage Bird Club**

hosts an annual

Fall Show/Fair Extravaganza

**October 29-30, 1994**

Nashville, Tennessee State Fairgrounds

Creative Arts Building

One day judged show - Sat., Oct. 29

Show chairman Bill Hite (615) 643-2017

Runs simultaneously with a 2-day fall/fair Oct. 29-30.

Fair chairman:

Winifare Crawford (615) 890-6906 or

Joy Johnson (615) 965-3386

**Greater Chicago Cage Bird Club**

62nd Annual Cage Bird Show

November 5, 1994

(more info top of next column)

12:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Rolling Meadows Holiday Inn

3405 Algonquin Rd.,

Rolling Meadows, IL 60008

Phone (708) 259-5000

Judges:

Type Canaries - Harold Sodamann

German Canaries - Harold Sodamann

American Singer Canaries - Mike Bacon

Colored Canaries - Ignacio Perea

Finches & Softbills - Brian Bins (England)

Lovebirds - Lee Horton

Hookbills - Ray Johnson

Budgerigars - Don Langel

American Cockatiel Society - Carl Helton

National Cockatiel Society - Lee Horton

General information: (708) 705-6260

**Capital Area Avicultural Society**

8th Annual Cage Bird Show, Fair, Sale and Swap

November 12 & 13, 1994

Bellerfonte Hotel, Great Hall

7370 Airline Hwy., Baton Rouge, LA

Sat. - 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. / Sun. - 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

For information call Kathy Enwin (504) 926-5547

**Way Out West Bird Expo,**

**Arizona's Biggest Bird Mart**

**November 13, 1994**

State Fairgrounds

9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Everything from finches to macaws,

cages, feed, bird toys and more

$4.00 adults / $2.50 seniors / $1.50 children 5-12

For vendor info: (602) 973-9292

**46th National Cage Bird Show**

Manchester, New Hampshire

November 17, 18, & 19, 1994

The Center of New Hampshire Holiday Inn

603) 625-1000

For more information call:

Denise Bourgault (603) 893-8870 or

Charles Anchor (708) 543-3757

Judges:

Borders - Tony Flumerudo, California

Cockatoos - Margaret Moore, England

Type - Steve Haley, England

Old Varieties - Ray Rustulll, Missouri

Hartz - Mark Whiteaker, Missouri

American Singers - Richard Hoey, New York

Lipochrome Color - Bob Metheny, Texas

Melanin Colorbred - Wilfred deYart, Belgium

Finches & Softbills - Don Langell

Type - Steve Haley, England

Cockatoos - Lloyd Bailey, Wyoming

Lovebirds - Walter Petty, Florida

American Singers - Mike Bacon

Colored Canaries - Ignacio Perea

Hookbills - Ray Johnson

Budgerigars - Don Langel

American Cockatiel Society - Carl Helton

National Cockatiel Society - Lee Horton

General information: (708) 705-6260

**Cascade Canary Breeders Association**

26th Annual Canary Show

Executive Inn Convention Center

5700 Pacific Highway East (I-5 Exit 137)

Tacoma (Fife), Washington 98424

(206) 622-0060

**Judging Only - November 26, 1994**

9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Open to Public - November 27, 1994

10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

For info: contact Bruce Brennan (206) 466-6673 or

Terry Aberton (206) 639-6533

**Kentuckiana Cage Bird Society and Feathered Friends**

sponsor their

6th Annual Exotic Bird Fair

December 3 & 4, 1994

**Alamo City Bird Mart**

**"Biggest Little Bird Mart in Texas!***

December 10, 1994

10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Live Oak Civic Center

8101 Pat Booker Rd., off Loop 1604

24,000 sq. ft. of breeders cages and supplies,

seminars, microchipping clinic, raffle.

For vendor info call: (210) 648-0788

or send for space application:

2611 Tucker, San Antonio, TX 78222

**Arizona Aviculture Society Bird Mart**

December 11, 1994

10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Tower Plaza Mall

38th St. & Thomas Rd., Phoenix, Arizona

Adults $3.00 / Children 12 & under free

For vendor info call Susan at (602) 381-9934 or

Pam at (602) 973-0667

**Florida State Fair**

All Bird Exotic Bird Show

February 18 & 19, 1995

Tampa, Florida

Pre-registration recommended before Jan. 20, 1995

Info: Lisa Hinton, AgriBusiness Dept.,

P.O. Box 11766, Tampa, FL 33688

Call 1-800-345-0247

or call Dale Laird, show committee (407) 657-7989

**Bird Clubs of Virginia's**

11th Annual Convention & Bird Mart

April 1 - 2, 1995

Holiday Inn Koger Executive Conference Center

1201 Koger Center Blvd., Richmond, VA 23235

Hotel reservations: (804) 379-3800

For convention info. contact: Kris Peters (804) 784-3975 or

Jo Englens (804) 994-2191 / (804) 994-5458 (fax)

or write to BGV at above address