

# San Antonio 1997 Memoirs of a First Timer

by Lena Baggett, San Antonio, Texas

*(Editor's Note: The AFA Delegate from the Alamo Exhibition Bird Club (A.E.B.C.) in San Antonio, Texas had never attended an AFA convention before. She had the creativity to keep a journal of her daily activities and thoughts while at the convention so she could report back to her club with some accuracy (these notes are addressed to her club) and also reflect the ambience and feelings that prevailed. Her notes were sent to me by a third party mole and I believe them worthy of publication so all the members of the AFA can share the sense of wonder and excitement—and more besides—that comes with attending one's first AFA convention. SLD)*

It is Aug. 5th '97, the night before my first AFA convention and I am scared to death. My palms are soaked. I had tried on every piece of clothing I own and decided, I have nothing to wear, even though I bought three new outfits. I don't get it.....

So I had a great idea, "Let's start a diary of some type to share with others." That means *you*, A.E.B.C.. Well, I fall asleep around 2 A.M. and wake at 4:45 A.M., 15 minutes before the alarm goes off. YOU CAN'T TELL I'M NERVOUS.

It takes me two hours every morning to feed and clean all the birds, dogs, cat, kids and, don't forget me. Trisha, the second delegate, arrives on time. We're off to our first convention.

August 6, 1997, we enter the House of Delegates hoping we don't trip on the way in. We were not prepared for what happened next. They gave us a tote bag and a beautiful name tag that read, in big letters, FIRST TIMER.

This is a "sign" that means HUG ME and they DID! I felt as if I were at a family reunion. We voted on By-Laws (what a nasty word) at the Delegate meeting. Every club, I don't care who you are, knows what happens when you say BY-LAWS.

If it had been the wild wild west, they would have sheriffs at the door taking side arms. After a long, heated discussion, we finally voted. When I receive my new copy of the new By-Laws, I will give them to A.E.B.C.

We went over the "Chain of

Command," what a wonderful idea. I thought, why can't we (A.E.B.C.) use something like this. So I will give these ideas to our president to look over and present to the members. So look forward to these new ideas coming soon.

Afternoon—it's time for PIJAC certification seminar. This is an extra class I really wanted to attend, and I'm so glad I did. For a new aviculturist, I didn't know a lot but this class taught me a whole new side. If you are like me, you listen to other people talk about their birds. But when they start saying things like VVND, PBFD, or PIJAC, what do these terms mean? You stand there wondering if you should ask—but you are afraid of looking dumb so you stand there and pretend you know and understand everything. Then the instructor says "I've been there. I know what you have been

going through." And hands out copies of *Illness/Disorders Identification and Treatment*. Oh, by the way, PIJAC is short for PET INDUSTRY JOINT ADVISORY COUNCIL.

What a night at the San Antonio Zoo. We loaded into three buses. At 7 P.M. we arrive at the zoo. Here you and 300 people are coming through the gates to hear our first greeter say "HI" We all look around. Again we hear "HI." Then to our left we hear "HELLO, I AM OVER HERE!" Then simultaneously 200 bird lovers groan "AWW!!" Our first greeter was a Double Yellow-head Amazon. What a great welcome.

We then follow our tour guide back to the bird aviaries where we had a Fiesta made for a queen or king. There were steaks, chicken, corn on cob, beans, salad, and cookies. They even had Margaritas, beer, wine, ice tea, lemon aid, and cokes.

Trisha and I had just a little *too* much fun.

You should have been there, the zoo was great. We walked around asking questions and checking out all the birds we wished we had.

We just mingled and got to know our fellow aviculturists.

What a wonderful first day. Oh, by the way, my nerves, I don't know just where they went but I lost them around 8:01 A.M. this morning when I received my first welcome hug.

I want to thank you for giving me, as your AFA Delegate, this opportunity to represent A.E.B.C. at the 1997 AFA convention. It was an experience I will never forget. I hope that some time in the future you will all have a chance to attend one also. ➔

*Sharon Rosenblatt (standing) and hardworking Lou Dittoe, national and local convention coordinators respectively, were largely responsible for the great success of the AFA Convention in San Antonio.*



*Strong supporters of the AFA (left to right) Gene Richards, Ogden, Utah, Bob Jennings, Fallbrook area of California, and Margie Loewen, State Coordinator from Idaho. These folks really had fun at the convention.*



*In the front center with name tags and ribbons are two well received speakers from the San Antonio Zoo, Robert Webster, Curator of Birds, and Traci Reddick, keeper. They are flanked by some of the excellent members of the San Antonio Zoo's Bird Department staff.*



*AFA President, Gary Clifton visits with Lorraine Smith, Nomination Committee Chair, (center) and Yvonne Catena, new Regional Director for the Mid-Atlantic Region.*



# 1997 AFA National Convention, San Antonio, Texas

*With a Southern Flavor*

*by Dale R. Thompson, Lemon Cove, CA*

**I**t was a delight to hear so many southern dialects and drawls at San Antonio, Texas where this year's National convention was held. Yes, the Texans were there in force. It has been many a year since the convention met in Texas and it was certainly a delight to be there this year.

San Antonio was just as Jeff Clark, of Sun Seed, had predicted—the best location for the 1997 AFA Convention. This is not only a tourists' city (Remember the Alamo!) but one for culture, entertainment, and enjoyment. Due to San Antonio's famed "Riverwalk," it is a walking city. One can amble through a variety of stores from a mall-style to small antique shops.

One balmy evening, I had dinner with two great avicultural friends (until 1:00 A.M. in the morning). We shared a small outdoor table right at the side of the meandering river that runs through San Antonio. Crowds of people mingled and passed by, just enjoying the sights, sounds, and smells of the restaurants, shops, small sidewalk-cafes that border this unique Riverwalk. The river itself was landscaped with tropical vegetation, much of it hanging from the bridges over the river. Flat-bottomed boats travelled slowly along the river, boats filled with tourists leisurely enjoying the very pleasant evening—a wonderful evening for me, to say the least.

It was the AFA Convention, however, that was the real draw for hundreds of aviculturists. It was the time of year to hear updates on various avicultural successes and failures. Old friends were reunited and new friendships were kindled. All were there to learn from the many well-known speakers

and specialists at the convention.

Those enjoying the African parrots were in attendance in full force and listened to two excellent sessions on the African Greys and *Poicephalus* parrots, respectively. The presentations were given by Jean Pattison, a highly respected and successful breeder of African parrots. It was very rewarding for me to hear and speak with Pattison, the "African Queen."

Approximately half of the convention's seminar time was allotted to particular species or families of birds while the other half was given to educational and "hands-on" themes.

Two high-interest groups of parrots—the Amazon parrots and the cockatoos—were presented by Jim Murphy in his very unique and informative way.

Joanne Abramson spoke on her beloved macaws while Gail Worth spoke on caiques and *Pionus* parrots—two top experts with these birds, to say the least.

The many different families of parrots were well represented with Wayne Schulenburg on lorries, lorikeets, and the beautiful shining parrots; Dale Thompson on the Australian parakeets and the two main groups of conures; and a real expert, Steve Martin, on training birds.

The educational and "how to" talks covered many areas crucial to aviculture. One of the best attended was Gail Worth's "*Guidelines for Crating and Shipping*." Two other talks of great interest were "*Avian Pediatrics*," and "*Handfeeding*" by Darrel Styles, DVM. "*Artificial Incubation*" by the imitable Rick Jordan was equally well received.

Other talks covered legislation affecting aviculture while still others touched on veterinary medicine for the aviary and breeding programs, Dr. David K. Phalen's "*Biosecurity for Pet and Aviary Birds*" being one of the best.

A very outstanding presentation was given by Natasha Schischakin on "*Neotropical Conservation Programs*." This was a talk that every aviculturist should have heard—what conservation efforts are really going on in the wild. What an education.

I personally spent much of Saturday with the finch and softbill presenta-

tions. These are two most important areas in aviculture when it comes to long-term survival in captivity. Top experts in their fields, Martin Vince and Robert Webster were invited to speak about softbilled birds. Personally, I just couldn't get enough of the things they had to say so I had lunch with them and learned more on diets, husbandry, and propagation of a variety of softbills such as broadbills, bee-eaters, barbets, and toucans. What a delight.

Other action was ongoing also. Over 80 aviculturists came together as founding members of a new conure society. Readers interested in learning more about this conure society should contact Sandi Brennan at 505-281-7729.

Something unique this year were the workshops on parrotlets (Sande Molenda); genetics relating to the *Psittaculids* (Lyræ Perry); and cage bird exhibition (Miki Sparzak).

Having personally served the AFA as Speaker Chairman for many years, I know what a tough job it really is. That said, I must really congratulate Wanda Elder on a job well done. This was her first venture into this arena and she really rose to the occasion.

Much of the AFA work is done by volunteers—and they seldom seem to get the credit deserved. Bud Dittoe is typical of that unsung volunteer. He maintained a close watch on all the audio/visual equipment and was an expert in getting things prepared for the speakers. He *always* had a smile, a kind word, and a helpful hand.

The registration table seemed to be the hub of all things coming and going during the convention. Great avicultural problems were solved along the registration side tables; laughter, photos of baby birds, and more all showed up at the registration area. Thanks to Natalie Frumin-Weiss and her fabulous crew for all the work they did.

There was Texas hospitality all over the convention—and even those not from Texas picked up on the warm attitudes and joined in. The most influential Texan of all, however, was Robert J. Berry who had his guiding hand on everything and, although he stayed mostly in the background, his was the personality that epitomized "Texas Hospitality" and made the convention one of the very best we've ever had. ➔

## AFA CONVENTION '97 EXHIBITORS

Absolutely Aussie  
African Parrot Society  
Amazona Society  
Asiatic Breeders Association  
Avicultural Society of America  
Avocet Manufacturing  
Breatheasy Systems  
Brinsea Products  
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Creative Bird Accessories  
Fancy Publications  
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International Parrotlet Society  
Johnson's Jungle  
Just Parrots Magazine  
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L'Avian Pet Products  
M & M Artistic Designs  
Magic Zoo II  
Mike Wilhite Exotics  
National Finch & Softbill Society  
P E Zoogen  
Painted Pony Jewelry  
Patty's Parrots/J&M Toos  
Perches By Bear  
Phoenix Unlimited  
Pretty Bird International  
Pure Air Systems  
Rolf C. Hagen USA  
Society of Parrot Breeders & Exhibitors  
Sun Seed Company  
The Art of Jose Portuondo  
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## AFA CONVENTION '97 SPONSORS

Alamo Exhibition Bird Club  
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Chester County Bird Breeders  
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Continental Cargo  
Corners Limited  
Dallas Cage Bird Society  
Delco Bird Club  
Kookaburra Pet Shop  
Long Beach Bird Breeders  
National Cockatiel Society  
Northwest Exotic Bird Society  
Old World Aviaries  
Orchid Tree Exotics  
Parrot Junction  
Payne's Parrots  
Pet Lovers Gallery  
Sunshine State Cage Bird Club  
Zupreem

## WINNERS OF THE SUPER 6 DRAWING

**Young Goffin's Cockatoo**  
won by Rebecca Singletary, WA  
**Pastel Bird Portrait**  
won by Veta Holloway, SC  
**Avocet Incubator**  
won by Jami Kennedy, CA  
**Barretta Parrot Cage**  
won by Bonnie Steinberg, TX  
**Healthmate Air Cleaner**  
won by Marie Sannino, WV  
**Tree House Play Pearch**  
won by Bob Jennings, CA

*Dwight Greenberg passes the bat while Kirsten and Damian Bates cough up their contribution to the "Nickle a Day for the AFA" program. The Bates also support the AFA on their "Up at Six" web site on the internet.*

#### AFA CONVENTION '97 DRAWING DONORS

**Absolutely Aussie** - Gift Item from Australia  
**Alaska Bird Club** - T Shirt  
**Aviary of Naples Florida** - Bird Toy  
**Bacon's Eclectus Cove** - Baby Female Solomon Island Eclectus  
**B & B Birds** - Wooden Nest Box  
**Bird Country** - Bird Country Bird Cage Litter  
**Black Stump Hollow Farms** - Male Sun Conure  
**Bluff Feed Store** - Bale Nestbox Shavings  
**BOE Bird Ranch** - Fallow Green-cheeked Conure  
**Brinsea Incubators** - Octagon 20 Incubator & Microwave Heating Pad  
**Celestial Parrot** - 2 Large Feed Cups  
**Corners Limited** - Euro Cage Breeding Unit  
**Corpus Christi Pet Ranch** - Cage Perch  
**Custom Cage Works** - Black House Cage  
**Debbie Cady** - Lory Print, Framed  
**Dee O'Farrel** - Proven Pair Pacific Parrotlets & Pair Red-rumped Parakeets  
**Doven Aviary & Pet Supply** - Brass Cockatiel Cage  
**Fancy Publications** - Bird Talk Magazine Subscription  
**Flint Avian Supply** - Box of Cuttlebone  
**Fly Bye Nite Aviary** - Bird Toy  
**Folse's Feather Farm** - Metal Nest Box  
**Hidden Forest Art Gallery** - Limited Edition Artists Proof, Signed & Framed  
**Jack's Bird Gyms** - Large Jungle Gym  
**John P. O'Neill, Ph.D.** - Two Pionus Prints and One Western Tanager Print  
**Johnson's Jungle** - Mousepad  
**Just Parrots Magazine** - Just Parrots Magazine Subscription  
**Kookaburra Pet Shop** - Baby Male & Female Red-sided Eclectus  
**Lafeber Company** - Nutri-Berries, Avi-Cakes, Pellets  
**L'Avian** - Bean Cuisine and Plus Parrot 100  
**LM Animal Farms** - Pets Picknic; Outrageous Fruit & Totally Nuts  
**Lyon's Cockatiels** - Male Cinnamon Pearly Pied Cockatiel  
**Mac's Aviaries** - Baby Blue & Gold Macaw  
**Macaws & More** - Pretty Bird Print, Pretty Bird feed & TKD bird toys  
**M & M Artistic Designs** - Embroidered Apron & Cap and Sterling Silver Earrings  
**Natasha Schischakin** - Spix's Macaw & Red-tailed Amazon Posters  
**Omar's Exotic Bids by Fran** - Two Bird Books  
**Out on a Limb** - Bird Toys and Silver Earrings  
**Patty's Parrots** - Four #1 Signed & Framed Prints  
**Payne's Parrots** - Plastic Habitat & Supplies  
**Perches by Bear** - Two Acrylic Bird Toys  
**Pet Garden** - Baby Nanday Conure  
**Pet Lovers Gallery** - 1998 Calendar  
**Phil Ashmore** - Wire Carrying Cage  
**Pups & Exotic Birds** - Wild Bird House  
**Red Tail Express** - Baby Lutino Ringneck  
**Rolf C. Hagen USA** - Tropicana Prime Vitamins & Stowaways  
**San Antonio Feathered Friends** - Computer Software & Key Ring  
**S & P Wholesale Pets & Supply** - White Cockatiel Cage  
**STAT Marketing** - Embroidered Jacket  
**Sun Seed Company** - Bucket of Fabulous Fruit, Nut 'n Like It, Handfeeding Formula,  
**The 3 "B"** - Gold Mystery Goodie Box  
**Up at Six Aviaries** - Convention 97 Sweatshirt, Signed

*Happy winners of the super six drawings. L. to R. Bonnie Steinberg, TX, Bob Jennings, CA (in the background), Jami Kennedy, CA, and Veta Holloway, SC. Lucky folks.*



Photos by Sheldon Dingle



*Kathleen Viewig, State Coordinator for Massachusetts, shows off a beautiful AFA T-shirt featuring artwork by Wayne Smyth who added his personal signature to the shirts. All the T-shirts were sold out immediately.*

