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The Sixteenth Annual Convention: A Perspective

by Dick Ivy
Yorktown, Virginia

If one word was required to describe AFA's 16th annual convention, it would be "challenge."

It was the challenge of serving the faithful AFA supporters while being dealt high hotel, food and program costs in the shadow of the nation's capitol, the challenge of trying to work in the strictures of a new by-laws, and making democratic compromises and decisions during a hot and muggy August week and a fire-damaged heat-air control at the Hyatt Regency at Crystal City, Virginia, poised on the busy I-395 artery that pumps commuters into the heart of Washington, D.C.

Conventioners were plied by animal rightists and naysayers, and informed by members of the working group of their plans for suggesting legislation restricting the entry of wild-caught birds into the U.S.

A lack of enough officers to maintain a continual quorum to conduct business resulted in only a few hour's worth of business, and less time than that with the House of Delegates, and with the skills of AFA-spawned avicultural support over the years being challenged at the national level by some, most of the 300 or so conventioners nevertheless returned home Sunday, August 13, with things to do from educational seminars, talks in the hall, the hospitality room, and the hotel restaurant.

The new president, conservation research committee chairman Jack Clinton-Eitniece of Texas, with a slate of many energetic first-timers from the AFA support ranks, promised to correct the problems of the by-laws to make the business meetings run smoother and to provide new support to its member clubs and state coordinators. New and reelected board members met Saturday night, and Eitniece conducted an open forum with AFA members early Sunday morning to answer questions and receive suggestions, an activity he hopes to continue at the mid-winter meeting in February. Among the by-laws changes is to be a restoration of voting rights for committee chiefs, state coordinators, and club delegates.

Veteran AFA workers maintained that the by-laws did not restrict votes,

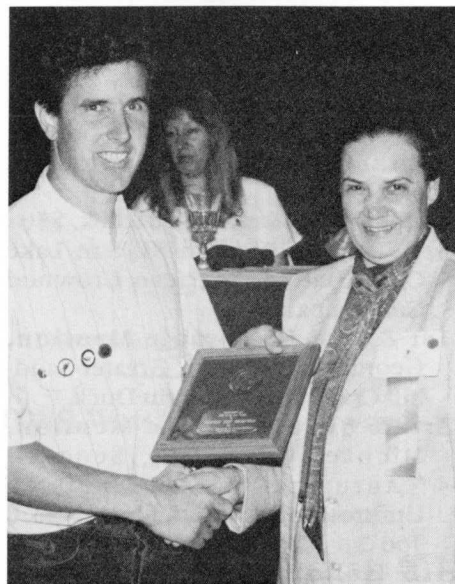
but did not specifically state the right, leaving it open to the interpretation of the president. Whatever, the amendment will correct that, and members of the House of Delegates will soon receive a ballot with several amendments for change.

Avian research coordinator DVM Susan Clubb got her approvals for sizeable grants for veterinary research projects. Decided was rejection of funds designated for avian projects not approved or open ended by AFA. For specified grants, clubs should donate direct to the foundation where the grant will be used.

General donations to the Avian or Conservation Research funds are accepted. Some research funding by AFA, Clubb said, completes the requirements for funding for submitted projects, especially for those involving student research assistants. AFA does not accept checks written to persons, but rather to institutions.

The convention had fine speakers from America and abroad with the latest techniques in aviculture, updates on veterinary research and practice, and directions of avian activity. There were free seminars on Saturday and Sunday, from tips on how to have a healthy bird by Dr. Rose Ann Fiskett to canary answers presented by Loren Wilson of Wilson's Parrots.

The commercial room had the largest congregation of sellers in AFA



Avy Award for Show Category (finches/canaries) went to Marty Van Raesseld.

Photo by Dick Ivy

history, and freely-admitted weekend customers wheeled baskets and carried bags of bargains, some many items, past the display of the winners and other fine entries of the 1990 photo contest at the exhibit hall entrance.

They also had to pass Ann Clevenger of San Diego, California, passing out information about next year's convention there at a hotel arranged by convention chairman Dick Schubot.

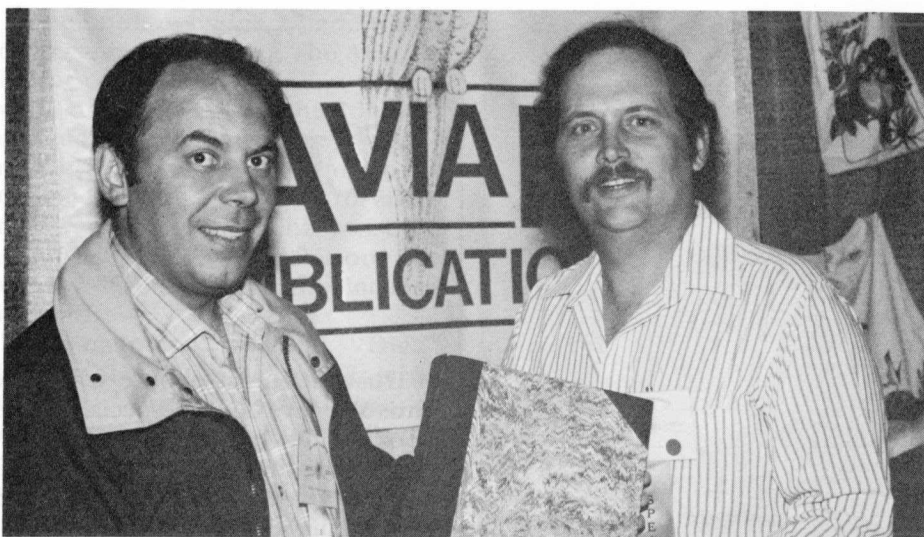
Stuffed turkey was on the banquet menu, and convention chairman Tom Marshall (who else) sang a delicious ode to departing president Phyllis Martin. First breeding awards and Avy awards were presented by Dale Thompson, and retiring officers were cited for their devotion to aviculture and AFA.

Specialty societies met, and the African Parrot Society, organized by Isabel Taylor of North Carolina and Randy Carg of Iowa, had its first meeting Thursday night, attracting 29 for their slide show. Other things were happening as well. Starr Kirchhoff of Portage, Michigan, avid AFA supporter and legislative coordinator of Bird Clubs of Michigan, whooped it up on receiving a Fax at the hotel informing her of a favorable decision concerning breeders selling birds not compatible with the breeding program in a proposed state act.

Hospitality, hindered by a no corking rule of the hotel, was nevertheless conducted deliciously by the National Capital Bird Club, Maryland Cage Bird Society, Inc., and Bird Clubs of Virginia by the members of the Peninsula Caged Bird Society of Newport News.

Hearts were made glad by winning raffles, buying birds and aviary appointments, and finding new directions. Tom Adams of Pennsylvania was ecstatic as he shopped at the exhibit hall with \$1,000 AFA dollars won to spend at commercial booths. A total of \$975 was won to spend there by four other lucky winners.

One member from Salt Lake City said she never saw so much rain, and two of the days were its cause. It was hot and wet in and out of the convention, the pressure is on to guide our futures, but as the old saying goes, truth will win and cool heads prevail. Let us meet the challenge on all fronts with the officers you have chosen to conduct national avicultural business and convene in San Diego with fresh, new accomplishments. ●



Current President and past Conservation Committee chair Jack Clinton-Eitniet receives a limited edition of Tony Silva's book on endangered parrots from Silvio Mattacchione. The book, donated by Mattacchione and Silva, is valued at \$1,000 and will be raffled off at the winter meeting. See special envelope insert, this issue, for raffle tickets and information.



First breeding awards went to (from right): Chelle Plasse (Long-tailed Cissa), Jerry Jennings (Choco Toucan, Collared Aracaris), Phyllis Martin for Jan van Oosten Salvadori's Fig Parrot, Musschenbroek's Lorikeet), Eric Peake for Joan Davis (Great Billed Parrot), and Kevin Clubb (Fiery-shouldered Conure). Not pictured is Michael Atkinson (Edward's Fig Parrot) and Bill Lasarzia (Desmarest's Fig Parrot).

Phyllis Martin, past president, received a Cuban Macaw print from the Board as an expression of their appreciation for her efforts over the years.

