

ADELAIDE '89 You are invited to attend

the Fifth National Avicultural Convention

to be held at the University of Adelaide Union Complex

April 21st - 24th, 1989

The city-centre location of the University of Adelaide will be most convenient for both delegates and non-delegate partners.

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We will keep you informed as further information becomes available.

Hosted by The United Bird Societies of South Australia Inc. on behalf of The Avicultural Federation of Australia Inc.



NOTICE — as of September 1, 1987, all correspondence intended for the editor of the *Watchbird* should be mailed directly to the AFA business office. Send to Sheldon Dingle c/o AFA, P.O. Box 1568, Redondo Beach, CA 90278.

AGA visits . .

Willonghbys' Connecticnt Aviary

by Jerry Jennings Woodland Hills, California

Nestled in a verdant colonial suburb of Hartford, Connecticut, just down the road from the historic homesite of the colonial Protestant minister, Johnathan Edwards, is the aviary of Wilma and Walt Willoughby.

Situated on a wooded acre, the Willoughbys have comfortably adapted their collection of Australian parakeets to the varied New England climate of warm, muggy summers and cold, snowy winters. Where many would shrink from outdoor housing of their birds, the Willoughbys have met the situation head-on with a relatively delicate group of birds and with great success.

Shortly after acquiring their home, the Willoughbys built a barn with wide swinging doors in the rear of their sprawling yard. Out of concern for the deed restrictions on their lot, the barn was built in conformity with the colonial architectural style demanded by the homeowner's association. When queried about the barn's purpose, the association was informed the barn was to house antique carriages. The carriage concept was immediately replaced with flights for parrots.

The barn is set on a cement slab and opens completely on the side facing the house. There are windows on the sides and skylights in the ceiling to permit the maximum amount of sunlight. A number of flights have been built inside the barn to house a variety of Australian parrots. Most of the flights are four feet wide by ten feet long and approximately seven feet high. The nesting area is in the rear away from the front door and food service area, providing a minimum of disturbance. In addition to the single flights, there is one large community flight in which Princess of Wales are colony bred. At present the colony contains four pair of Princess, which have reproduced quite successfully. There are several individual California breeder cages set up in the remaining space. With the exception of the California breeders, the floors of all the flights are covered with a layer of sand to provide a softer substrate for the birds' feet.

With the exception of the colony of Princess of Wales, all birds are bred one pair to a flight. Other birds in the collection include Australian red cap parrots, crimson wings, and several types of rosellas. The big attractions, however, are the various mutations, which include the blue Princess of Wales and the blue Pennant rosella, blue Bourke's, and rosey Bourke's.

Naturally, the Willoughbys couldn't stop when their barn was full so they adapted a part of their basement to birds. One would think this would have been the place to start, but the basement still has more than enough room. The basement (houses don't have basements in California or Arizona) is as large as the entire floor plan of the house and its ceiling rises about two feet above ground level. Spaced every few feet around the ground level are small windows allowing light and fresh air in from the outside. The Willoughbys have adapted these windows in a manner to allow birds to fly from a flight in the basement through the open window into a flight outside. The birds are allowed to go back and forth at will, yet may be shut in on a stormy winter's day.

All of the Willoughbys' birds are kept

immaculately clean. They are fed a diet of finch mix containing 50% canary seed, plus oats, safflower, a little sunflower seed, cut corn, grated apple and carrot, cooked beans, and broccoli. Clovite vitamins are added into the soft foods, and fresh water is provided on a daily basis.

The diet during the coldest winter months is supplemented with commercial breakfast cereals of dried dates, fruits and nuts. These are fed in place of greens such as carrots and corn which tend to freeze during very cold temperatures. The birds also get pellets and additional amounts of hulled oats added to their seed mix in the winter.

During the winter season, the birds are closed in only on stormy days. The barn is unheated and keeps the birds only a few degrees warmer than the outside ambient temperature. During the worst part of the winter, Wilma moves the perches higher up in the flights, closer to the lights, which provide some heat.

The Willoughbys' interest in birds goes back to Wilma's father, the wellknown German aviculturist, Joseph Dexler, who lives near Frankfurt. Germany where Wilma was born. As a child growing up, Wilma often helped her father with the bird chores, which were many, as the Dexlers live on a farm and maintain quite a large collection of birds. Joseph Dexler has been raising birds for many years and has line bred a pure strain of the golden mantle rosella since 1954, and was the first to produce the blue Princess of Wales in 1964. Joseph Dexler was also one of the founding members of the German bird club known as the Austausch Centrale(AC), which now boasts over 30,000 members.

Though Wilma was her father's assistant, she showed no personal interest in having her own collection in Germany. In the mid sixties, while working for the U.S. Department of defense in Germany, Wilma met Walt Willoughby, who also worked for the U.S. government as an accountant. They fell in love, married, and moved to the States in 1966. It was not until 1979 that Wilma developed an independent interest in birds. In 1980 her father helped fuel that interest when he sent her a pair of blue Princess of Wales. The rest is history.

Today, Wilma tends to the daily chores of the birds, while Walt is at work. Walt, too, has developed an interest in the birds and is especially interested in hand feeding babies, which they prefer to do only when the parents refuse to care for their young. Walt also serves as chief cage and aviary builder, a task at which he has done a fine job.

In the future, Wilma and Walt would like to work with several other mutations including the yellow Princess, the red golden mantle rosella, and the powder blue Pennant rosella, which has white head and wing patches.

Their goal in aviculture is to learn as much as possible about the nutrition requirements and breeding habits of Australian parakeets and other varieties of birds and to ensure the successful captive breeding of these species.

The Willoughbys are very active in organized avicultural activities. They belong to the Connecticut Association for Aviculture, the New England Cage Bird Club (Massachusetts), and they have been members of the AFA since 1980. Walt currently serves the American Federation of Aviculture as the AFA state coordinator for Connecticut. In fact, it should be noted that Walt, as AFA state coordinator, was very instrumental in rallying Connecticut aviculturists in a successful effort to twice defeat a proposed Connecticut state law to ban the sale of wild-caught birds.

Wilma is quite proud of her husband's efforts on behalf of AFA and is happy that in America the people can make a difference. She says that in Germany, aviculturists are very tightly regulated. German bird breeders are not allowed to transport or sell birds from one state to another without permits, even temporarily for a show. She notes that, in Germany, all birds must be close banded and cannot be sold without a veterinary certificate and a CITES permit. When I asked her why a CITES permit, which is supposed to be used only for international trade, she replied, "the German government wants it that way." Without dedicated AFAers like the Willoughbys, perhaps the same would happen in America.

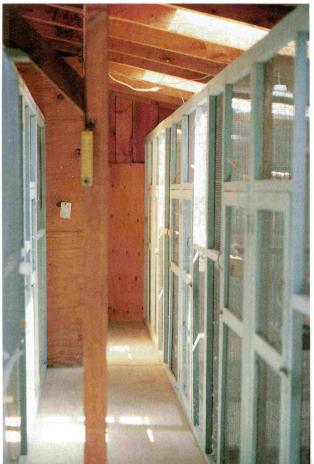
The Willoughbys enjoy traveling, and occasionally return to Germany for family reunions. Recently, they visited Puerto Rico, where they got a firsthand view of the Puerto Rican Parrot Project, which is a U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service program to captive breed and reintroduce the highly endangered Puerto Rican parrot. They have two children, John and Michele, who are both in college. Perhaps they, too, will become aviculturists, making it three generations. ●

Willoughby photos continued on next page.





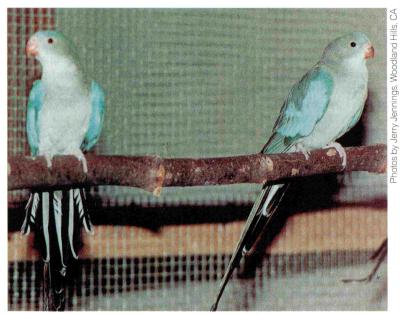
The outdoor flight is an extension of the basement flight. The birds enter and exit through the window seen at the bottom rear of this flight. During cold weather the birds can be confined to the warm basement.



Looking down the aisleway in Willoughby's aviary barn.



Exterior view of aviary barn with Wilma Willoughby in front.



Blue mutation of the Princess of Wales parrot.



A colony of Princess of Wales parrots.



N. JONAS ENGLUND

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A painter from childhood, Englund began exhibiting in 1983. He found the visual arts more immediate in statement and more permanent in effect. "When a musician performs or an artist paints, it is chiefly to bring pleasure to others, to evoke an emotional response from them. Music is the more difficult form: it is an abstraction without permanent, tangible existence. It often requires a group effort. A painting is a more personal effort with a physical presence. All an artist needs to communicate is a wall to hang his painting on and light enough to see it."

PARROTPHERNALIA

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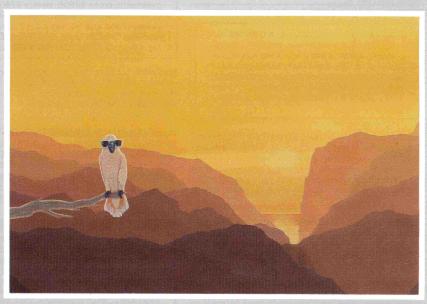
Englund's parrot fantasies emerge from his fascination with the larger exotic birds and his impulse to whimsey. He sees parrots as intelligent, with distinctively human characteristics and identifiable personalities, and he depicts them in humorous combinations with things or events that would not normally occur. His appeal to the child in us who delights in flights of fancy is given weight and significance by the startling appropriateness of his juxtapositions and the insights they suggest.

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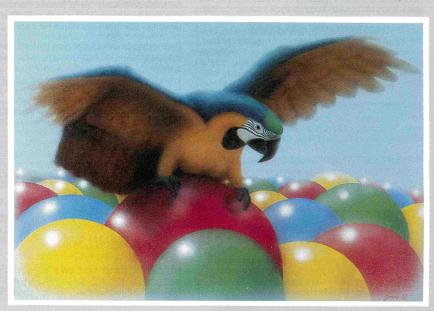
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