



NATIONAL FINCH & SOFTBILL SOCIETY

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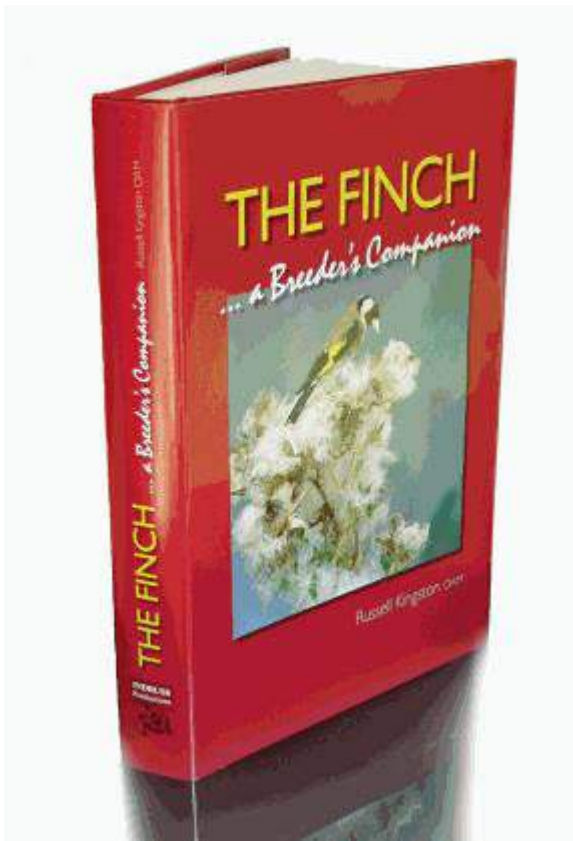
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NFSS MISSION STATEMENT

The National Finch and Softbill Society is dedicated to promoting the enjoyment of keeping and breeding Finches and Softbills to all interested parties, enhancing our knowledge of the proper care of these birds, encouraging breeding programs, and working with other organizations for the preservation of aviculture in this country.

JOURNAL OF THE NATIONAL FINCH AND SOFTBILL SOCIETY

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JOURNAL ARCHIVES ONLINE



www.nfss.org/journal/backissues.html

TABLE OF CONTENTS

2 Mission Statement
& Journal Publication Policies

4 President's Message
Rebecca Mikel



6 Special Election Ballot
Membership Director, Regions 2 & 3 VP



8 Cuban Melodious Finches
Javier Perez

16 Red Siskin Summit
Paula Hansen



20 Getting to Know Your BOD
Rebecca Mikel

26 Remembering Ellis Thornley
Roy Beckham



28 WCZS Show & AFA Convention.
Chelsea Gitzen



On the Journal Cover...  Cuban Melodious Finch

From our fellow NFSS member & article author Javier Perez: This picture was taken with a photo box I made that has a solid blue background. The bird is a male from last year, 3rd generation bred by me.

When banding the Cuban Melodious or handling adult birds you have to be extremely careful because they will put up a fight considering their size, they will be still for a second but within a blink of an eye they will burst with energy and escape from your hands, or even worse break a wing or leg. Don't ever underestimate their size. The best way to safely handle them is by locking their neck between your index and middle finger.

For more information read Javier's article on page 8 of this issue.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



As you know, your Board of Directors meets on a quarterly basis. As a result of those meetings, you are provided with a copy of the minutes which summarize the discussions and actions undertaken during those meetings. Our goal is growth combined with continual improvement, and I feel the current Board has the skill set to achieve just that! The enthusiasm, energy, and skills of our current Board members is such an encouragement to me personally. I'd like to take this opportunity to share with you some of the activity your BOD is involved in.

You'll read in this issue about the AFA conference and the role NFSS played in the Finch/Softbill show hosted at that event through the efforts of The Lory League. This is a new venture for that event and because of the Lory League's willingness to work with NFSS, as well as the efforts of several NFSS Board members, the show was a success. Thank you to all who assisted, participated, and supported this event in any way.

We are continually looking at new avenues for heightened exposure for NFSS. Brianna Morrison,

our new Membership Director, is looking into and will report back to the Board about how LinkedIn might be an option for providing benefits to our society. Scott Golden is working with Cindy Moore to establish some new avenues for growth in the Finch Save Group as it relates to Facebook and the Yahoo group(s). (Please stay-tuned for more details about that!)

Chelsea Gitzen, Editor, has explored options for a new publisher who can provide us with a virtual laundry list of publishing perks and benefits. I'm sure you'll see a difference in future issues of the Journal because of it. As an added benefit – this change comes with a cost savings for the society! Chelsea deserves a pat on the back for the time and effort she spent to investigate several publishers available to us before a decision was finally made.

A HUGE “Thank you” to the Finch Society of San Diego for their generous donation to the NFSS to be used for future Afternoon of Aviculture events. Their donation helps us to continue to achieve our goals in the area of “education.” If you've not attended the National Caged Bird Show and sat in on any of the Afternoon of Aviculture events, you're really missing out. Sally Huntington continues to work to bring in relevant and informative speakers and outdoes herself year after year. This session is scheduled for the Thursday of each “Nationals” week, beginning at 12:00 noon. Stay tuned for announcements regarding the line-up for 2014.

Participation levels in NFSS elections – both “Pro-Tem” and “General” are,

well, embarrassing. We'd like to try to look at options that will encourage a higher level of participation. Scott and Chelsea are investigating options for on-line voting for future elections. There are requirements which must be met in the protocol for elections (i.e. verifying current membership status, avoiding duplication of votes, etc.). Because we must always give compliance with our By-Laws first consideration, every angle of this option will need to be investigated fully. If any of you have thoughts or ideas on this – please drop Scott or Chelsea an email.

“Discussion” does not necessarily mean it's going to happen immediately, or even at all, but we are seriously investigating the available means to provide this option and whether any of them will fit the structure of our society.

Paula Hansen has purchased binders for NFSS Panel Judges and they have been provided with these as well as copies of NFSS membership applications, NFSS brochures, Band Order Forms, and a display board which includes a cross-section of the leg bands available for purchase through NFSS. This will help Judges as they reach out to persons in attendance at shows, informing them of the benefits of being an “official” part of the NFSS.

One of the discussion topics during the most recent BOD meeting was “Department Backup” and “Policies and Procedures.” As a result, Department Managers will begin to

compile step-by-step instructions of the essential functions of their positions. Back-up persons will be identified and cross-trained, and Chelsea is looking into a “common (electronic) location” for storage and access of these documents. This is an integral part of any work environment, and for a good reason – we want to be able to continue “business as usual” with as few glitches as possible if any Department Manager should be unable to perform their job. This is the best way to achieve that. It will also prove beneficial for new persons

moving into Department Manager positions after General Election(s).

As I said earlier in this message, I'm encouraged by the efforts of the current BOD – and I am. They each have busy lives

away from the NFSS, yet continue to dedicate a significant amount of time and energy to this Society. As you read through this message and think about some of the projects we're undertaking and believe you could contribute in any way to any of them – Please contact any of your BOD members.

I also can't miss the opportunity to “plug” this year's National Caged Bird Show event – Dayton, Ohio, November 20-22. Check out www.ncbs.org for more details.

Happy Birding!

Rebecca Mikel
NFSS President

THE NATIONAL FINCH AND SOFTBILL SOCIETY

Special Election Ballot

NFSS Membership Number

This must be included or the ballot will not be counted

Dual members will each have one (1) vote and are allowed to copy this ballot

Ballots must be post-marked NO LATER THAN 10 Nov 2014

MAIL BALLOTS TO:
Paula Hansen
2234 Juneau Court S
Salem, OR 97302

MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR

Brianna Morrison

Write in Candidate _____

REGION 3 VP

Only members residing in the states of Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Missouri, Ohio, Wisconsin, Tennessee, Australia, Bermuda, or England may vote for this candidate)

COUNTRY/STATE IN WHICH YOU

RESIDE: _____

Susan Stieve

Write in Candidate _____

REGION 2 VP

Only members residing in the states Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia, or Puerto Rico/Caribbean Basin may vote for this candidate)

COUNTRY/STATE IN WHICH YOU

RESIDE: _____

Kenneth Gunby

Javier Perez

Write in Candidate _____

NFSS 3RD QUARTER BOARD MEETING

BANK BALANCE

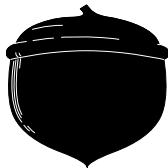
3/31/14: \$34,402.67

6/30/14: \$37,144.00

MEMBERSHIP: 372

- All BOD members in attendance
- Pro-Tem appointments made: Ken Gunby, Region 2 VP; Susan Stieve, Region 3 VP; Brianna Morrison, Membership – there will be a ballot in the Sept/Oct Journal (page 6 - left) allowing membership voting to appoint permanently
- BOD submits the names of Ken Gunby, Clarence Culwell, Bob Peers to NCBS for selection for finch/softbill judge for 2015
- The Finch Society of San Diego has donated \$1,000 to be used for future Afternoon of Aviculture events
- Moving forward with purchase of awards for 2014 NCBS
- Editor, Chelsea Gitzen, selects new Publisher for Journal (Oakland Printing Company) resulting in reduction of costs, shorter turnaround time, and additional technical options
- NARA nominations made and will be announced at 2014 NCBS
- Department Managers will begin writing step-by-step instructions for essential functions of their jobs. BOD will investigate “common” space in which to maintain. Back-ups for all departments will be identified and cross trained.
- BOD approves \$1,000 increase in band budget for purchase of equipment/software
- 3 names presented to NCBS as candidates for Finch/Softbill Judge at 2015 NCBS - Ken Gunby, Clarence Culwell, Bob Peers
- Scott Golden announces the establishment of new Facebook groups for FinchSave: Strawberry/Goldbreast; Songbird; African; Munia/Mannikin; Turaco; Bulbul; Serinus; Blue/Purple Waxbill; Mousebird; Red Siskin; Parrot Finch; Java Finch; Rare Australian; Toucans & Aracaris
- Approved color ad rates for the Journal

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A LOOK INTO KEEPING CUBAN MELODIOUS FINCHES

by Javier Perez
N.F.S.S. Member

My name is Javier Perez. I was born in Cuba and came to the USA in 1992. I've been a member of the National Finch and Softbill Society for 3 years. I have owned and bred birds since I was a little kid at about the age of 8 years old. I have a small aviary where I breed exotic species of finches. But in this article I'll be talking about the Cuban Melodious Finch (*Tiaris canora*), one of my jewels.

ORIGIN & FEATURES

The Cuban Melodious is an endemic finch to the island of Cuba. They were also introduced in the Bahamas on March 23rd, 1963 as an aircraft carrying a consignment of 600 finches from Cuba to Spain made an emergency landing at Nassau. About 200 birds died before they could be released; the rest were set free for hu-

manitarian reasons. (1) This small finch is almost 4 inches long, and is threatened in their country of origin because they are the most common bird captured on the island at 60% each year. As a little kid I remember all of the other kids on the block going out to the fields with bird traps to catch this magnificent finch. Some birds ended up as a pet in someone's home, but most of them were let loose after they were trapped.

Tiaris in Latin means "with head ornament" and *canora* means "singing." There could not be a better meaning of its name. This finch is sexually dimorphic. The male has a black face, dark olive green back, black chest fading to a light gray. The bill is black, surrounded by a black mask covering the throat and into the eyes, which are dark brown. A wide yellow collar around the mask starting from above the eyes to the chest. The female is not as vivid as the male. The female is similar but with a brownish mask and chest instead of the black, a less extensive yellow collar and the color is gray. It lacks the black face and chest which is replaced with a light gray. There is a known yellow mutation in Europe, Australia and Miami where the olive green is a light yellow, face and chest are white and the neck collar is still a vibrant yellow.

HOW I STARTED

My experience with this species was not that easy in the beginning. Some of the birds that I acquired were either infertile or too old. I tried several times breeding them in small cages but I was unsuccessful.



FROM A CUBAN NATIVE HOBBYIST

My first chicks of this species arrived in 2010 inside of an outdoor aviary. It was two beautiful chicks - one male and one female. The second clutch was three chicks - two males and one female. And finally the third clutch yielded two females. I got other pairs at bird shows from different vendors and that's how my breeding stock was started. Since I had success with them in outdoor aviaries I decided to expand and build more flights for a total of 11. Their sizes are 6' long by 2' wide and 6' tall. I have 4 pairs of Cubans in 4 flights and the other flights are used for other species.

BREEDING

I keep my males separated for the whole year since they are territorial and cannot be kept together because they can kill each other. I keep all females in one big flight cage. I wait until they are about a year old before I breed them. That way they will be in perfect condition for breeding. Sometimes the females tend to pick at each other and they lose some feathers. In this case I separate the female with missing feathers and put her in a smaller cage until she grows new feathers. Otherwise the other females would not leave her alone and will continue to remove feathers.

At the end of February when the weather is not cold any more, I start to separate the females. I put them in individual flight cages which are 6' x 2' x 6' in size. I treat them with a de-wormer (Worm Out) followed by a good calcium supplement for the hens. I wait 7 days before I introduce a nest into the aviary which is usually a cylindrical wicker nest, then I introduce the male to the female. Within a few days the male and females will bond and start to sing to one another, male tilting the head back and singing toward the female. This is

when I wait another 7 days to add the nesting material. For nest building materials I use coconut fibers. The male is usually the one that builds the nest. As great nest builders, each male makes a beautiful round entrance leaving it in perfect shape for the female to lay its first egg.

Once the nest is complete, the female does not take too long before the first egg is laid. A normal clutch is between 2 to 4 eggs, and the eggs are white in color with a few brown dots. The incubation period is 13 days. The incubation is done solely by the female. This species tends to be a light sitter the first couple of days. As soon as they hear you the male will sing to the female and she will come out of the nest. But after a week they can be the tightest sitters. Some days you won't see the female at all. Even if you try inspecting the nest the female won't come out. I have never had females abandoned nests or chicks because of nest inspections.

Once the chicks hatch the parents will begin to feed the chicks within 48 hours. The chicks will beg just like a canary and nothing like other estrildid finches, so it's a good thing they're great parents and we don't need to foster them. This is a crucial time when you have to keep an eye on the male since he could toss the chicks out of the nest if he is too accelerated (in heat) into breeding again. If this happens and the chicks are alive reintroduce them back in nest. This would be an extreme case since both of them are good parents and this rarely happens. This has never happened to me in the 4 years I've been breeding them. Most of the time if you see a chick on the floor of the aviary it's because the parents were startled out of the nest dragging the babies out with them, or if they are first time parents.

Cubans can reuse the same nest several times since there will be no fecal matter left in the nest after the chicks fledge. They tend to have one of the cleanest nests after fledging compared to other species. This is because parents will remove the fecal sac when they feed the young. But I usually destroy it after 2nd or 3rd clutch.

Chicks fledge at about 2 weeks of age. This is when I band them with size B if it fits, if not then a size C. When banding the Cuban Melodious or handling adult birds you have to be extremely carefully because they will put a fight considering their size, they will be still for a second but within a blink of an eye they will burst with energy and escape from your hands or even worst break a wing or leg. Don't ever underestimate their size. Best way to safely handle them is by locking their neck between your index and middle finger. When banding the Cuban Melodious or handling adult birds you have to be extremely carefully because they will put a fight considering their size, they will be still for a second but

within a blink of an eye they will burst with energy and escape from your hands, or even worse break a wing or leg. Don't ever underestimate their size. The best way to safely handle them is by locking their neck between your index and middle finger.

Chicks can be left with parents for another 2 weeks after fledging right before they start to get their adult plumage. A month after fledging you can differentiate males and females but they won't be fully colored until the 3rd month. Males will start to molt around the face first and you will see dark black feathers coming out. Females will be duller and will have more of a brown color.

I know Cubans can raise their own young without live food, but I still supply them with it. It doesn't matter what size of mealworm you feed them because they won't swallow the mealworm whole, they will squeeze the contents and leave the skeleton. I believe this is crucial to prevent parents from tossing chicks out. A



Cuban Melodious male on the left, female on the right. (Photos by Javier Perez)



good egg food mix and sprouted seed is also necessary if you want to be successful with this species. My egg food mix consists of eggs, veggies, vitamins, cod liver oil, wheat germ oil, Probiotics, Breeders Blend, vitamins, sprouted seeds and commercial dry egg food (Higgins). I also supply them with cucumber, millet, apple and sometimes oranges.

This year I'm breeding them in smaller flights. The flights I'm using are 30" x 18" x 36"H. I believe that a tall cage will increase their flight muscles vs a long cage. There is nothing better than gravity to do this. With all food and water containers placed on the lowest part of cage the bird will have to use more energy when it has to fly up to perch vs flying from one perch to the other. So far my birds have a good weight and breeding is going well.

Cubans will breed year round, and once they start to breed they won't stop unless you intervene. I have always bred them in individual pairs without any other birds in their flights.

DIET & FEEDING

The Cuban Melodious is not a picky eater. I feed them a finch mix which contains white millet 30%, canary seed 30%, red millet 30%, German millet 5%, and Japanese millet 5%. They also love tender guinea grass (*Panicum maximum*). I also supply them with a mix of charcoal, cuttlebone, crushed egg shells and Oyster shell daily. When they are breeding I give them a soft food mix made out of commercial egg food, boiled eggs, cod liver and wheat germ oil, and a multi-vitamin supplement. I also feed them 6 mealworms daily when they have chicks in the nest. This will encourage them to feed the chicks.

You have to keep an eye on the amount of soft food you offer them since the Cuban Grassquits tend to gain weight dramatically. Sometimes I think they gain weight just by drinking water. One way to help in the prevention of obesity is by offering them some greens in their diet like cucumbers, apples, oranges, collard greens, cabage and others. I once had a few

males that were overweight and I had no problem with infertile eggs at least that year. But if they continue to be overweight they won't breed or will have infertile eggs, or even worse they will die. That's why I prefer a lean bird with a slight amount of fat on its body than an obese bird.

I had a couple of obese Cubans and was able to get them to a more manageable weight on a 80% canary seed and 20% red millet the first week and then giving them entirely 100% canary seed. After about a month on this diet they lost almost all their fat reserves. Some might not agree with this method but the benefits are much greater with a good lean bird than an obese one. They will live longer with a good weight. Captive longevity averages 7 years.

MY PERSONAL THOUGHTS

There is lots of information describing the Cuban Melodious Finch as an aggressive bird. They are aggressive while they are in breeding mode towards their own kind but can coexist with other species with no problem. Males that are single tend to be more aggressive than mated pairs. Like I always tell everybody when they ask me if the birds are aggressive with other

species "each bird will have their own personality some will be bullies and other will be docile" but I had never had a problem with them chasing other species around. I believe this is a magnificent species to work with, they're always in constant movement. If you see them perching for longer than 5 minutes there is probably something wrong with them. They can also be great songbirds but their original song can be lost if you have other songbirds within the same room. They have been known for imitating Cuban Bullfinch and Yellow Face Grassquits. They're also hardy birds who rarely get sick and can tolerate temps in the upper 20's.

I think every breeder should have the opportunity to own one of these little gems. You are all welcome to visit my Youtube channel where there are videos of my Cubans in their flights here: youtube.com/user/JAVIERPEREZJZ

REFERENCE

(1) birds.audubon.org "American Birds 105: Sympatry of Grassquits on New Providence Island, Bahamas, Based on Analysis of CBC Data by Anthony White, John Bjerke, Paul Dean, Kathleen Sealey"







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RED SISKIN CONSERVATION

A JOINT EFFORT OF ORGANIZATIONS

A note from the editor...

As many in our organization are already aware thanks to Paula's efforts, the Red Siskin is a species which is declining drastically in the wild due to a large amount of illegal trapping and habitat loss. The species is listed as endangered by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (aka CITES), the World Conservation Union, and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. The Smithsonian Institution is currently working with a number of organizations including the NFSS to try to establish a solid conservation & monitoring effort for the remaining Red Siskins still living in the wild. They held their first meeting for this effort recently and our Board Member Paula Hansen attended to represent our organization and lend advice where needed. She has brought back copious information for us to consider and act upon.

*By Paula Hansen
Board Secretary*

After having just come home from a Red Siskin Conservation Workshop at the Smithsonian, I now understand all those involved in conservation of Red Siskins in Venezuela and Guyana. They badly need more help and support, especially with Siskin husbandry for the captive part of the conservation program. There is a lack of knowledge with hands-on Siskin care among those trying to save the species in these countries. We as hobbyists in the US have the necessary knowledge about how to the care for these birds. Our methods can be applied along with our help to ensure the success of their captive breeding programs.

As hobbyists we also know from our challenges with other species how difficult it can be to learn about husbandry just by reading articles, but it really isn't that complicated if someone shows you how. We support each other by trading tips on the internet and it has really

increased our success in breeding birds. The history of the Gouldian Finch in aviculture is a perfect example: there are more Gouldians in captivity than in the wild, and the Save the Gouldian Fund program is led by hobbyist/conservationists, much like they're attempting to do with the Red Siskin.

If you have bred or kept these birds and in your experience have formulated fostering and acclimizing techniques, you can help these conservation efforts as consultants by sharing your information. That in itself would help a lot toward recovering these birds in the wild. Another way to support this important conservation effort is by donating directly to the zoos in Guyana & Venezuela leading this effort through our donation button on the NFSS site. They need help now to renovate facilities and to hire as well as train keepers to run them.

The Red Siskin is becoming pulled into an "extinction vortex," a vicious cycle of illegal trapping, small population size,

and inbreeding causing further declines. This is why the Smithsonian and other conservation partners are stepping up with their scientific research to support those working for Red Siskin conservation in these two countries. They realize that this support has to increase even more and that aviculturists (that's us!) have a crucial role to play now. Big donors want data before they will write those checks. The Smithsonian knows they can do the research but don't have the hands-on experience that hobbyists and breeders do. They see that our hobby is even more valuable than scientific "experts" when it comes to maintaining these birds.

The goal of this summit and recovery project has been to begin developing a comprehensive recovery plan for the Red Siskin species in its natural environment. The first meeting was held in the Washington area at Smithsonian facilities to include a diverse set of experts from USA, Venezuela and Guyana during early July of this year.

Future efforts include "High resolution screening of captive birds for evidence of hybrid origin... management of genetic diversity and ongoing studies of phylogeography, characterizing: habitat use, foraging, breeding ecology, and seasonal variation in behavior, map

potential reintroduction sites, understanding habitat requirements, assessing potential reintroduction sites, supporting conservation genomics, collecting and genetically analyzing samples of wild Venezuelan Red Siskins (both contemporary and museum) as well as Venezuelan canaries [among many other efforts]," according to the project's meeting minutes.

The main partners in this project include the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History and its Conservation Biology Institute, Parque Zoológico y Botánico Bararida, Instituto Venezolano de Investigaciones Científicas, and PROVITA (Venezuela-based conservation NGO).

The American Bird Conservancy, a US based Non-government Organization, also has a sponsor for this project. It is likely that other conservation organizations will also make important contributions to planning and implementation Specie Recovery Plan Part I – Overall Structure of the breeding program and reintroduction.

Visit our website at nfss.org to make a donation via our new donation button and join. Contact Paula Hansen to join the NFSS Siskin Facebook group for future communications and updates at: bands@nfss.org.

"They see that our hobby is even more valuable than scientific 'experts' when it comes to maintaining these birds."



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Centerfold	\$240	\$1,195	\$245	17%
Inside Cover	\$90	\$450	\$90	17%
Inside Back	\$90	\$450	\$90	17%
Full Page	\$85	\$413	\$97	15%
Half Page	\$60	\$294	\$66	15%
Quarter Page	\$35	\$174	\$36	15%

Black & White Journal Ads

Ad Size	One Issue	Full Year	\$ Saved	% Saved
Centerfold	\$180	\$900	\$180	17%
Full Page	\$60	\$306	\$54	15%
Half Page	\$40	\$204	\$36	15%
Quarter Page	\$20	\$102	\$18	15%

GETTING TO KNOW YOUR BOARD MEMBERS

REBECCA MIKEL ~ NFSS PRESIDENT

Hi – I’m Rebecca, and I’ve been serving as your NFSS President since January of this year. I served previously as Secretary since 2006 and in that capacity I’ve conducted audits of the financial records, served on the election committees for prior elections, as well as various other society-related responsibilities through the years. My husband Andrew and I keep several species of finches and softbills as well as a few hookbills (Bourkes, Scarlet Chest, Princess of Wales). Both of us enjoy showing our birds, participating primarily in the Midwest area shows as we live in Michigan, although we do travel to the National Cage Bird Show each year. We won the NCBS in 2012 with a Silver Eared Mesia (below), winning the Val Clear Award.

In 2013 we won the Val Clear award again with a Speckled Tanager. I will confess, while I do enjoy participating in showing, the BIGGEST reason I go is to see my birdy-friends! We all live so far apart that I seldom see them otherwise, and the NCBS is such a wonderful event to gather, socialize,

and have a fun weekend with others who enjoy birds as much as I do! More than once, I’ve threatened to leave the birds behind when I’m packing to go to NCBS!

My other “loves” are my husband Andrew, my family, all animals, and flower gardening.

Andrew grew up in the U.K. so has a special interest in European birds. He also spent several years as a professional gun dog trainer, working on a large shooting estate on the island of Anglesey, a small island in the Irish Sea between the coasts of Ireland and Wales. For several years after moving to the U.S. he operated a large training and breeding kennels, training dogs for field trial competition which were then shipped around the world to their new owners. He also grew up in a “birdy” family as his grandfather kept birds for singing competition.

My family is an important part of my life – I’m the eldest of 4 children with 1 sister, 2 brothers, and several nieces





My niece, Karlee, and her horse, Peaches, at the local 4-H fair. She won 1st place in the costume contest - the theme was "Fictional Characters." (Photo by Rebecca Mikel/NFSS President)

and nephews. My sister and I share a love of horses and together compete in cross-country racing (25 and 50 mile distances) with Arabian horses. Most of the races we compete in are "riding" races, although we have competed in a few "driving" races in which you ride in a cart. They are well-governed and monitored by teams of vets and racing staff, with frequent checks by the medical teams to ensure horses are not placed in danger and are "fit to continue"...(no one seems to care

about the riders however!!). My sister also competes in dressage and also owns and shows miniature horses. On those occasions I accompany her to help out. She purchased a miniature stallion a few years ago from what was essentially a "rescue" situation, began work with him, and eventually won the American Miniature Horse Association World Show with him in 2012 (photo on the bottom of page 23). I couldn't have been more proud of both of them. My nieces, Karlee

and Lorrin, both compete at the local level with their horses, and “show day” is a full family event as we all go to help, watch, and cheer them on. Our local 4-H fair is also an annual family activity for us. For the past 20 years we’ve camped at the same spot in the fairground campgrounds and spent the week. Nearly every member of the family enters SOMETHing in one or another of the competitions taking place during the week (horses, sheep, poultry, flowers, vegetables, cooking, arts, etc.). I won the flower competition last year with an arrangement of Loos-strife and Gooseneck. For me, flower gardening is a good “therapy,” as well as time with my birds.

My job in my “real life” is as the General Manager of a manufacturing firm in Elkhart, Indiana which is a division of a larger corporation. I love my work, but jokingly say “it pays for my hobbies, but takes too much time away from each of them.”

I also serve as a “Clerk” at our local church – a small, country church which is close to home and filled with local “farm” families. They’ve been a wonderful extended family and support system when both Andrew and my sister who were battling cancer a few years ago. Their love and encouragement, combined with that of my family and other, dear friends really carried

me through that difficult time in my life.

Overall my experience with the NFSS has been a positive one. As I mentioned in a previous “President’s Message” – some of my “best” friends are persons I didn’t know “pre-NFSS.” I look forward to the next 2 years as your President and working with the outstanding group currently serving on the Board of Directors.

If you’re ever traveling through Southwest Michigan – our door is always open and we have plenty of room for company. Stop in and see us – we love visitors!

president@nfss.org
facebook.com/rebecca.mikel.7

Photo (bottom of this page):
Andrew & I. Photos (right): Top - Hubby, Andrew, with “Kirby” - our English Springer Spaniel. Center - My sister, Kelly, and I with Meschack. Bottom - My sister, Kelly, competed with her miniature stallion and eventually WON (against 100’s of horses from several countries). The best part of the story - he was basically a “rescue” from a small farm in Indiana and probably would have died within a few months had she not taken him. AND, she is just a few months out from cancer surgery/chemo/radiation at the time she participated in this competition.





A note from the editor...

This feature article, "Getting to Know Your Board Members" is a new series of articles we will be publishing in each issue until we've highlighted each BOD member. The purpose behind this is to engage our members and make our Board more accessible to them. This will hopefully also help to generate an interest in who runs our BOD, as well as to possibly encourage members to participate and volunteer in the future. Our Board regularly asks for our help or volunteerism with their various projects and they greatly appreciate members who step up to the plate!

Each article in each issue will spotlight a different Board member and provide some insight into their life, their flock, and/or their family. In some way they will let us into their personal life and get to know them, even if it's just for a minute. This is a personal sacrifice on their part they're kind enough to share with us. They will also include any personal social media profiles (if they feel comfortable doing so) which our members can use to connect with outside of groups, forums or Journal issues.



ATTENTION NFSS MEMBERS!

Do you know of a potential affiliate club or advertiser & would like us to send them a copy of our Journal?

Are you attending a fair, convention, meeting or show & would like to bring copies of our Journal to potential new members?

Send a mailing address + # of copies needed to editor@nfss.org





Mountain States Avian Society
5th Annual Show
September 20th and 21st, 2014



African Love Bird Society

ALBS Regional Show

2 Rare and Eying Shows and 2 Peach Faced Shows each day
2 Days, 8 Love Bird Shows

ALBS Panel Judges: Josh Maple, Roland Dubuc, Wendy Edwards, Gary Morgan



National Cockatiel Society

NCS Sanctioned Shows

2 Days, 4 Cockatiel Shows

NCS Panel Judges: Josh Maple, Clarence Culwell, Deb Dollar, Roland Dubuc



North American Parrot Society

NAPS Regional Show

2 Days, 4 Parrot Shows

NAPS Panel Judges: Clarence Culwell, Josh Maple, Deb Dollar, Roland Dubuc



National Finch and Softbill Society

NFSS Sanctioned Show

NFSS Panel Judge: Clarence Culwell

Non-NFSS Show Judge—Deb Dollar

Corporate Sponsors

MSAS would like to thank our Corporate Sponsors. Without them we would not be able to hold this quality of show:

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seeds and mixes
3725 East 48th Avenue
Denver, CO 80216-3013

Brighton Comfort Inn

Show hotel for MSAS
15150 Brighton Road
Brighton, CO 80601
303-654-1400

Jeremy—The IT Guy

Webmaster for MSAS
Jeremy@theitguyllc.com

Show Hall

Adams County Fairgrounds
Main Exhibit Hall
9755 Henderson
Brighton, CO 80601

For Complete Show Information

Contact:
Jesse and Peggy Avila
303-663-0399
pjbavila@aol.com

Show Hotel

Brighton Comfort Inn
15150 Brighton Road
Brighton, CO 80601
303-654-1400
Group Name: Mountain States Avian Society
"The Bird Show"
Group Rate: \$79.00

REMEMBERING ELLIS THORNLEY

By Roy Beckham
NFSS Member

In late July as Zebra Finch breeders in the U.S. were converging at the West Coast Zebra & Society Finch Show, we were losing one of the most influential Zebra Finch breeders the world has ever known in Australia. After returning from the show, it was with such sadness and a heavy heart that I learned of the passing of Ellis Thornley of Queensland, Australia on July 28th.

If you've ever kept a Zebra Finch, your hobby was probably touched in some way by this knowledgeable, caring and sharing Aussie. His influence spanned generations as he helped authors, researchers, hobbyists, bird clubs, and so many more. Ellis was always willing to share his extensive knowledge of finch care and showing. He had extensive experience in the care of finches and was always willing to help those new

to the hobby. He enjoyed the challenge of showing and had a keen eye for the subtle differences in mutations and colors. Many people throughout the world started their friendship with Ellis in online forums and email lists, but his communication and influence with well-known breeders and authors dates back to well before the internet was readily available. He showed me letters he exchanged with breeders in England and Europe where they traded information as they tried to understand the new mutations that were showing up in Zebra Finches. You will find Ellis quoted in one of the earliest Zebra Finch specialty books "The World of Zebra Finches" by Cyril Rogers (1986) as well as numerous other books and articles.

It was in one of the online email lists that I first became acquainted with Ellis in the late 1990's. My first visit with him was in 2001 on a visit to Australia.



EXPERT AUSTRALIAN HOBBYIST

There he welcomed me into his home and he lured to his famous feeder plate, the first wild Chestnut Breasted Mannikins and Owl finches I've ever seen. I could hardly contain my excitement and this just encouraged Ellis to attract even more birds to the backyard. He was a very big-hearted and generous man who never tired of discussing finches and always went out of his way during my visits to introduce me to other Australian finch breeders and their birds. He did this for many people from all over the world and we used to joke that he could make a mint if he just put a collection bucket by the front door.

I so enjoyed our conversations about finches, Australia, and life's priorities. He had a wonderful and balanced perspective on life. A wisdom gained through experience. While it was the Zebra Finch that Ellis was most known for, he kept many types of birds and

like all well-rounded individuals, his interests took him into other non-feathered pursuits as well.

I will miss being able to ask him about some new Zebra finch color or nest box, the latest in Australian politics or chatting about where to look for wild Zebra Finches over a cup of tea while eating his slightly hard and a little darker than intended biscuits. I will forever be grateful for the knowledge he shared and mostly, his friendship.

Ellis is survived by his wife June and his children, Michael, Sharon and Leanne and their families.

Photos: Left (from left to right) - Frank Sundgaard Nielsen of zebrafinch.info, myself, and Ellis Thornley in September, 2006. We laughed about guys from three continents coming together to talk about a little red-beaked finch. Below - Ellis with a Crimson Rosella. It was photographed on a trip to the O'Reilly's Rainforest Retreat. Ellis and June took my wife and I there.



WCZS SHOW & AFA CONVENTION MY FIRST EVER BIRD EVENTS

By Chelsea Gitzgen
Journal Editor

As I made my way through the crowd at the 2014 American Federation of Aviculture conference and West Coast Zebra & Society Finch Show, it was pretty clear I was at my first large bird events. I didn't try to hide my excitement, taking everything in and trying to meet as many new finch hobbyists & feathered friends as possible while capturing thousands of photos with my bright red camera.

Every U.S. color mutation seemed to be accounted for at the WCZS Show, with plenty of offspring to purchase. Garrie Landry's detailed advice for each color was also a source of invaluable knowledge. At the AFA convention's NFSS-sanctioned Show in comparison, there were a very wide range of species that I had never seen before, including gorgeous Turacos from Kateri Davis and stunning Strawberry Finches from Nancy Ingram.

As first experiences go I knew these would be my most memorable, and luckily I had fellow NFSS members to make that possible. It was a very expensive venture to say the least, and because I left everything to buy at once within single paycheck - I was operating on a shoe-string budget with just enough for food and some finchly splurging. I had also left half of my clothes back home in Georgia after a recent visit so I could make room for dresses and shoes I bought along the way. I'm still surprised I got away with wearing yoga pants and a beach dress the whole time while others were wearing formal wear - but luckily our NFSS members did not fault me for my fashion choices or lack of funds! In fact to make me feel even more welcomed they purchased a few auction items just for me which have earned an honored spot in my bird room.

Throughout the entire WCZS Show and AFA convention, there was no time for feeling out of place or alone. Everyone within our organizations who attended was eager to meet new members and properly

introduce them to their fellow hobbyists. Where else will you receive a giant hug with your hello except for the friendliest show in the West?

Whenever I found myself around a group of NFSS members large or small throughout these events, I knew I'd be sure to laugh and enjoy myself. We are truly blessed as a group to have such ambassadors for our cause, the types who are repeatedly told in a large room of people, "Everyone wishes they were over here with you right now!"

Overall the entertainment value and knowledge disseminated at these events is definitely bar none. As a first timer I can honestly say I'll be attending each year for many to come!

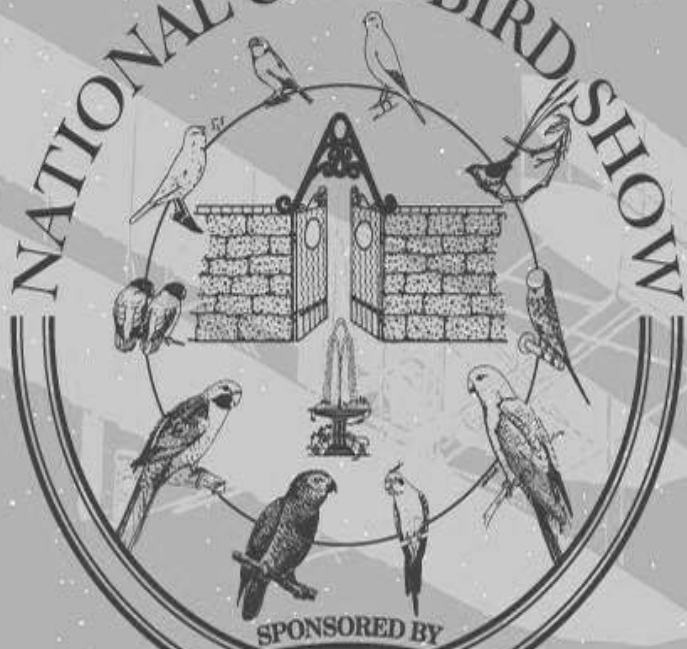
Photos: Page 27 - A Yellow-Streaked Lorieet hams it up for visitors in the aviary section of the AFA convention (top). Finch expert Garrie Landry judges while giving detailed mutation-specific guidance to a captivated audience at the WCZS Show in Sacramento (center). Mandy Stanford of the Oregon Zoo's avian program presents a people-friendly rehabilitated Milky Asian Owl to AFA visitors during a behind-the-scenes tour (bottom). Page 28 - A Penguin swims for visitors at the Oregon Zoo (top). NFSS Judge Clarence Culwell examines the top winners of each category to find his best in show during the AFA convention's last day (center). Debbie Goodrich shows off her impeccably trained Macaw "Oly" at her booth for Parrot Embassadors during the AFA conference, the outreach program she created to educate the public about parrots and domesticated birds (bottom). Page 29 - Sally Huntington, Vice President, introduces Scott Golden, 3rd Vice President, as a speaker at the AFA conference on the topic of Parrot Finches in Aviculture (top). Roland Cristo, Legislative Liaison, speaks to an overly full room of aviculturists during his guest speaker presentation on the topic of breeding soft-bill songbirds (center). Sally Huntington presents the topic of hand feeding finches, here she is pointing out details about her aviaries (bottom).







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NATIONAL CAGE BIRD SHOW



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2014 REGIONAL SHOWS

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Birds of A Feather Avicultural Society

27th Annual Show & Mart

Date: October 25

Judge: Dr. Al Decoteau

Location: All Dogs Gym & Inn,
505 Sheffield Rd., Manchester, NH 03103

Contact: Ray Shwartz 603-362-6106 president@boaf.com
Other Divisions: Parrots, Cockatiels; Registration & Staging: 7:00
- 9:00 a.m.; Vendor setup starts at 7:00 a.m.; Doors open to Public
at 10:00 a.m.; Admission: \$6.00 - Children under 12 free with
paying adult. www.boaf.com



Florida Canary Fanciers Inc.

18th Annual Show

Date: December 12

Judge: Kenneth Gunby

Location: Ramada Gateway Hotel,
7470 W Irlo Bronson Memorial Hwy., Kissimmee, FL 34747

Contact: Brian Byrne 912-344-7196 tintin211@yahoo.com

Other Divisions: Canary/Type, Colorbred, & Song

www.forlidacanaryfanciers.com



Society of Canary & Finch Breeders

Annual Show

Date: October 18

Location: Livonia Elks Lodge #2246,
31117 Plymouth Road, Livonia, MI 48150

Contact: tielnmore@aol.com or 313-247-5900

Fri 10/18 entry check-in 5:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Sat 10/18 entry check-in 7:00 am - 9:00 a.m.

Spectator Entry Fee \$4.00

www.scfbmichigan.com



& other
delegates

Mountain States Avian Society

6th Annual Show

Date: September 20 & 21

Judge: Clarence Culwell

Location: Adams county Fairgrounds S. Main Exhibit Hall,
9755 Henderson Road, Brighton, CO 80601

Contact: Jessie Avila 303-663-0399 pjavila@aol.com

Other Divisions: 4 NAPS shows, 4 ALBS shows, 4 NCBS
shows; www.msasbirds.org



Cascade Canary Breeders Association

45th Annual Show & Sale

Date: October 18

Judge: Laura Watkins

Location: Evergreen State Fairgrounds,
Bldg 501, 14405 179th Ave. SE, Monore, WA 98272

Contact: Doug White at 360-793-0459 or dwhite3511@msn.com

Other Divisions: Canary

Registration: Friday, October 17, 5 p.m. to 7 pm;

Saturday, October 18, 7 a.m.

Showing Fee: \$1 per bird entrance fee

Admission: \$3 per person & \$5 per family.

www.cascadecanary.com

SEPT 7

Mid America Cage Bird Society

(www.macbs.org)

Feather Fair on Sept 7 at Iowa State Fairgrounds, Walnut Center, E 30th St. & E University, Des Moines, IA Contact: President - John Thielking at 239-851-8132 or JThielking@comcast.net



National Institute of Red Orange Canaries

(www.niroc.org)

Annual Show on Sept 27 at Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church, Westchester, IL Contact Jorquin Torres 312-259-2779 druprr@gmail.com

New York Finch & Type Canary Club

Annual Show on Sept 27 at St. Jude Church School, 1696 Canarsie Rd, Brooklyn, NY 11236 / Contact Nizam Ali or Stan Kulak barstand@verizon.net 718-967-6899

Illini Bird Fanciers Inc.

(www.illinibirdfanciers.com)

Annual Fall Bird Fair on Sept 28 at Illinois State Fairgrounds Bldg 801 E Sangamon Ave., Springfield 62791 / Contact: Heather Knudsen at fairs@illinibirdfanciers.com or 217-801-5191

SEPT 27 & 28

Fort Worth Bird Club

(www.fortworthbirdclub.com)

Annual Show on Sept 27 with Judge Ken Gunby at Cleburne Conference Center, 1501 W. Henderson, Cleburne, TX 76033 Other divisions include Parrots, Canaries, Budgies & Cockatiels / Contact: Cheryl Burns fwbc@fortworthbirdclub.com or thebirdmart@fortworthbirdclub.com

Essex-Kent Cage Bird Society

39th Annual Show on Sept 27 & 28 at Fogolar Furlaw Club, Uvide Hall, 1800 E.C. Row, North Service Rd., Windsor, Ontario / Contact: Dave Sylvester at d.sylvestr@gmail.com or 519-727-3766 Other divisions include Canaries & All Hookbills

OCT 4

Colorbred Canary Club of New York

(newyorkcolorbredcanaryclub.com)

Annual Show on Oct 4 with Judge Hiram Rampersaud at 1696 Canarsie Rd., Brooklyn, NY 11236 Contact Jorge Garcia 917-217-4535 jorge_g2828@yahoo.com

OCT 11 & 12

Kings County Canary Club

28th Annual Show & Mart
on Oct 11 at St. Jude's Hall
Contact: Dan Griffin at 917-741-3124
or dgriffi11@optonline.net

Canary & Finch Society

Event: Annual Show Oct 11 & 12 with
Judge Armando Lee at Sheraton Hotel,
15700 John F. Kennedy Blvd., Houston,
TX 77032 / Contact: Debbie Eaton at
Debbie-eaton@sbcglobal.net

Suncoast Canary & Finch Club

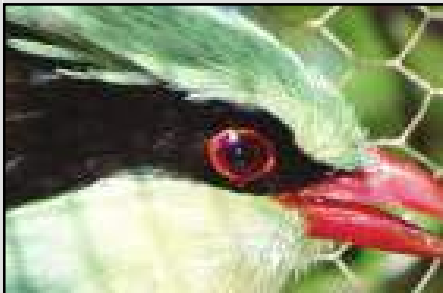
(suncoastcanaryandfinchclub.com)

Annual Show on Oct 12 at Char-
lotte Harbor Event & Confer-
ence Center, 75 Taylor St.,
Punta Gorda, FL 33950 Contact Al-
exander Villarreal at 941-625-7500
Contact: vetagator@yahoo.com

OCT 18

Baltimore Bird Fanciers

Annual Show at Tall Cedars Hall,
2501 Putty Hill Ave., Parkville
MD 21234 / Contact: Christine
Roberts, 11 Prettyboy Garth, Park-
ton, MD 21120; 410-343-1807
compteacher@yahoo.com



Affiliated
Club
Events



OCT 25

Central California Cage Bird Club

Annual Show & Fair at MRPS So-
cial Hall, 133 N Grant, Manteca,
CA / Contact Jane Perez & Terry
Ryan janep.plymouth@gmail.com or
209-245-3582 Other divisions include
Color, Type & Song Canaries

AFFILIATED CLUBS

CALIFORNIA

Central California Cage Bird Club

Meetings: 3rd Sun. of the month at 3800 Cornucopia Way #B, Harvest Hall, Modesto, CA 95358-9492 / Contact: Jane Perez at janep.plymouth@gmail.com or 209-245-3582

Finch Society of San Diego (www.finchsocietyofsandiego.com)

Meetings: 4th Sun., 2-4 p.m. Poway Elks Club, 13219 Poway Road, Poway, CA 92064 / Contact: Sally Huntington—5634 Carnegie St., San Diego, CA 92122; 858-452-9423 sdfinchsociety@gmail.com

West Coast Zebra & Society Finch Show (July 25 & 26, 2014 in Sacramento)

Meetings: No club meetings, show committee meeting in July.
Contact: Sally Huntington, 5634 Carnegie St., San Diego, CA 92122
858-452-9423

COLORADO

Mountain States Avian Society

Meetings: 2nd Sat. 1 p.m. at Animal Central, 8308 Church Ranch Blvd., Westminster CO 80021 / Contact: Gary Morgan, 15341 Kingston St., Brighton, CO 80602; 303-659-9554 burdmn@aol.com
NFSS Delegate: Jesse Avila, 7910 Greenland Road, Franktown CO 80116
303-664-0399, pjbavila@aol.com

FLORIDA

Florida Canary Fanciers, Inc. (www.floridacanaryfanciers.com)

Meetings: 3rd Sun. every other month, 2:00 p.m., Perkins Restaurant, Davenport, FL / Contact: Ruth Ann Stearns 352-394-3668 or ra.canary@gmail.com

Suncoast Canary & Finch Club (www.suncoastcanaryandfinchclub.com)

Meetings: 1st Wed. of every month at 7p.m., Collingswood Animal Hospital, 1419 Collingswood Blvd, Port Charlotte, FL 33948
Contact: vetagator@yahoo.com

ILLINOIS

Greater Chicago Cage Bird Club (www.gccbc.org)

Meetings: 3rd Fri., except Nov & Dec, at 204 S. Villa Ave., Villa Park, IL 60181 / Contact: Robert Wild, 305 Grosvenor Ct., Bolingbrook, IL 60440
630-980-4416, wild@comcast.net or secretary@gccbc.org

National Institute of Red Orange Canaries (www.niroc.org)

Meetings: 4th Fri. monthly, Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church, Westchester
Contact: druprr@gmail.com

Illini Bird Fanciers Inc. (www.illinibirdfanciers.com)

Meetings: 4th Sun. of the month from Noon to 4 p.m. at 3233 Mathers Rd., Springfield, IL / Contact: Karen Williams at 217-391-4648 or contact@illinibirdfanciers.com

AFFILIATED CLUBS

IOWA

Mid America Cage Bird Society (www.macbs.org)

Meetings: 4th Sun., locations vary; Exceptions: No Nov. meeting.

Contact: President - John Thielking, 239-851-8132, JThielking@comcast.net

MARYLAND

Baltimore Bird Fanciers (www.baltimorebirdfanciers.org)

Meetings: 3rd Sun., 2 p.m. at Towson Library, 320 York Rd., Baltimore, MD

21204 / Contact: Christine Roberts, 11 Prettyboy Garth, Parkton, MD 21120

410-343-1807, compteacher@yahoo.com

MICHIGAN

Society of Canary & Finch Breeders (www.scfbmichigan.com)

Meetings: 3rd Sat. of month, location varies.

Contact: Mary Tarsitano 586-781-6429 or mtarsitano@gmail.com

MISSOURI

Gateway Parrot Club (www.gatewayparrotclub.org)

Meetings: 3rd Sun., 2 p.m. at Varieties Exotic Bird Store, 60 Meramec Valley Plaza, Valley Park, MO 63088, (Exceptions: No meetings in June, Aug & Dec)

Contact: Christine A. Kinkade, 2412 Angela Dr., High Ridge, MO 63049

636-343-8097 Boardmember2@GatewayParrotClub.org or

President@GatewayParrotClub.org

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Birds of a Feather Avicultural Society (www.boaf.com)

Meetings: 2nd Mon. at Villa Crest Retirement Home

Contact: Ray Schwartz, 19 Olde Common Dr., Atkinson, NH 03811;

603-362-6106 President@BOAF.com or Prismsdad@aol.com

NEW YORK

Colorbred Canary Club of New York (www.newyorkcolorbredcanaryclub.com)

Meetings: 1st Sun. each month at 50-21 193 St., Fresh Meadows, NY

Contact: Jose Zelada, 20 N Goodwin Ave., Elmsford, NY 10523; 914-345-5707

JZelada@optonline.net

Kings County Canary Club

Meetings: 3rd Sun., 5 Frank Ct., Brooklyn, NY 11229

Contact: Kathleen Guise Schaefer, 5 Frank Ct., Brooklyn, NY 11229

718-332-3413, kanarykate@aol.com

New York Finch & Type Canary Club

Meetings: 2nd Sun. each month except July & August

Contact: barstand@verizon.net

AFFILIATED CLUBS

NEW JERSEY

Garden State Bird Association (www.gsbirda.com)

Meetings: 1st Fri. of each month, 7:30 p.m., 409 Route 1 & 9 South, Elizabeth, NJ / Contact: Rui Goncalves, 908-868-1605
ruijoncalves65@icloud.com

TEXAS

Alamo Exhibition Bird Club (www.aebc.org)

Meetings: 4th Sun. at 2 p.m., Kirby Senior Center, San Antonio, TX
Contact: alamobirdclub@yahoo.com

Canary & Finch Society

Meetings: 2nd Sun. at Sheraton Hotel, Houston, TX
Contact: windsong.hj41@gmail.com

Fort Worth Bird Club (www.fortworthbirdclub.com)

Meetings: 2nd Sun. (except April & May) at Fort Worth Botanical Garden Center, 3220 University Dr. - North of I-30 in Fort Worth
Contact: Cheryl Burns fwbc@fortworthbirdclub.com or thebirdmart@fortworthbirdclub.com

Texas Bird Breeders & Fanciers Association (www.texasbirdbreeders.org)

Meetings: March 29th & Nov 1st, Mayborn Convention Center, Temple, TX
Contact: Barbara Irwin 817-572-6262

WASHINGTON

Cascade Canary Breeders Association (www.sites.google.com/site/cascadecanary)

Meetings: 4th Sun. of the month in Woodinville (check website for more info)
Contact: dwhite3511@msn.com

CANADA

Essex-Kent Cage Bird Society (www.essexkentcbs.com)

Meetings: Member homes, Windsor, Ontario
Contact: Julianne Mion 519-948-6398; julianne@mnsi.net

PUERTO RICO

Asociacion de Criadores de Finces, Inc.

Meetings: 7 p.m., Tue., Las Catalinaís Mall, Food Court Area
Contact: Juan Alicea, 12203 Urb Serenna, Los Prados, Apt. L-302, Caguas, PR 00727; 787-479-7405; juanalicea@yahoo.com

THE NFSS IS PROUD TO AFFILIATE WITH THE FOLLOWING:

American Federation of Aviculture (www.afabirds.org)

P.O. Box 91717, Austin, TX 78709

Avicultural Society of America (www.asabirds.org/home.html)

Contact: Steve Duncan, P.O. Box 3161, San Dimas, CA 91773
Founded in 1927, this is the oldest aviculture society in the US

National Animal Interest Alliance (www.naiaonline)

2014 JUDGES PANEL

4TH VICE PRESIDENT - JUDGES PANEL / STANDARDS / RESEARCH
VINCE MOASE - JUDGESPANEL@NFSS.ORG

NIZAM ALI

135-11 114th St.
South Ozone Park,
NY 11420
781-835-8590

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Tulsa, OK 74107
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lbewley@yahoo.com

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903-569-6979
elmaridodealba@yahoo

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