

THE NATIONAL FINCH AND SOFTBILL SOCIETY



MAY
JUNE
1993



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Presidents' Message:

Are you gathering dandelion greens and flowers, chickweed, purslane, plantain and seed heads of grasses for your finches? If you're not sure how to identify these weeds, call your state or county agricultural extension office and/or check your local library for a brochure or book with drawings or photos. Be careful to collect greens ONLY from areas where they have not been sprayed and not too near a busy roadside as they may be contaminated there by an excess of fumes and dirt. These plants are high in vitamins and minerals and the finches love to eat them, play with them and finally to use them in nest-building and they're free! Besides, if you become known in your neighborhood as a person who will come and collect dandelions you'll be a local hero. I hope all of your nests are full...of dried weeds and chicks!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

NFS Panel of JudgAs, 1993.....	2
Finches In The Last frontier, by Melissa Eisenhouer.....	4
NFS Affiliates, Delegates & Show Dates.....	6
Hand-raising A Gouldian Finch, by Dr. Ubaldo Leli.....	14
A Model Regional Show, by Stephen Hoppin.....	17
Keeping and Breeding The Saffron Finch, by Patrick Vance.....	20
A Letter To The Editor, by Don Armstrong.....	23
Genetics - III, by Robert Cruce.....	25
Ides Of March 1992, by tha Prez.....	29
Going To The National Level Shows, by the Editor.....	30
An Easy Approach to Maxbill Nutrition, by Les Gibson.....	31
NFS Leg Banding Procedure.....	37
NFS Band Order Form.....	39
NFS 1993 Affiliation Agreement.....	40
1992 Champion Exhibitors and EXHIBITORS OF EXCELLENCE.....	41
Classified Ads.....	45
NFS Membership Application.....	49
FINCHSHOP.....	52

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5/6 '92

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NFS PANEL OF JUDGES 1993

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NFS JUDGES PANEL 1993, Cont'd.

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(402) 992 5488

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NDTE: For more information on the Judges' Panel, contact Or. Al Decoteau.

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TO ALL CLUBS WHO WILL BE CONTACTING AN NFS PANEL JUDGE:

PLEASE...Be sure that you are using this current list. It is up to date. Sometimes addresses, phone numbers, etc. change and all other lists are now invalid. Thank you for your attention to this.

Or. Al Decoteau.
June 1, 1993

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Please remember that your "renewal date" is on your address label. Check it and please keep your membership and your correct address up to date. It'll save time and money if Niki doesn't have to send reminders to you.

RENEWALS AND ADDRESS CHANGES SHOULD BE SENT TO:

NFS Membership Services
Niki Sparzak
517 Old North Point Road
Baltimore, MD 21224

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NEXT BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING.

Because a quorum was not present, no business was voted upon at the Board of Directors Meeting on March 26, 1993.

The next Board of Directors meeting will be conducted by mail and will commence about May 1, 1993, with results to be printed in the July/August issue of the Bulletin.

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FINCHES IN THE LAST FRONTIER

by Melissa Eisenhauer

After ordering some new NFSS bands and a pin I also received a little note from Jerry McCawley. He wondered if I would write an article dealing with my experiences raising finches up here in Alaska.

Keeping finches or softbills up here isn't the hard part. On the other hand...getting them here IS! I've lived in Alaska on and off for fifteen years. I've always managed to have at least three or more pairs of finches or softbills. Presently, I live on Fort Richardson which is located in Anchorage. Contrary to popular misconceptions, most of our gorgeous state DOES have seasons! While I may not be able to keep my birds outside as I did in Florida, many years ago, I find that shipping charges are the only real obstacle I've had to deal with. We have several pet shops in town which all seem to carry most of the commonly available finches as well as many varieties of psitticines. There are not many softbills available unless one puts in a special order. If I want anything too exotic, I generally order it myself direct from the breeder.

At the present time I'm keeping and breeding Gouldians, Ivory Canaries and Aurora finches, (*Pytilia phoenicoptera*). I will be adding a pair of Melbas and a pair of Lavender waxbills soon. I've mostly raised African finches for the last fifteen years but got into Goulds three years ago on a whim. A man was leaving the state and sold me his whole collection at a price I couldn't refuse. Over the three years I've seemed to have had phenomenal success with them and sell to clients all over the state. Lucky for me that I work for the Daily News as this gives me plenty of free classifieds! There are only a few esoteric nuances that one must deal with when raising birds up here. Our long hours of sunlight in the summer are easy enough to get around with timers and good old fashioned paper bags. All of my birds are kept downstairs in one of the basement rooms. I have all of their lights on timers for approximately 13 hours a day. Since it's still light out at 11:00 p.m. I simply set a pre-cut, large piece of a brown bag up against the long, narrow window. This seems to have worked rather well and it still lets some ambient light in. I keep my Goulds in a very large custom-built wire and wood aviary which is split into five compartments. They can hear but not see each other. All the cubicles have Vita-lites. As a matter of fact ALL of my birds have them either in their cages or over them. I'm a firm believer in full spectrum lighting. I also like the new Chroma 50 fluorescent tube by G. E. I keep the Pytilias in a large model #7860-1SD cage by Corners Limited. I LOVE this flight cage! It is perfect for smaller birds and very accessible. Having it shipped here cost me almost as much as the cage, but it was well worth it! All my Gouldians have just completed moulting and are going to neat again now. I have 5 breeding pairs and one pair that is almost 7 years old! Believe it or not I use these two older

birds as foster parents. I've only ever had to have two of the young fostered and this was because this particular pair of Goulds will only raise four chicks. If they have a fifth, they will pitch it out if I don't get to it first. These two older birds are a scream...they are content to sit in their nest most of the day...fostering or not. My poor female is starting to show her age this summer and I fear she won't see another winter. I use all covered wicker nests and find that the Goulds will always choose the smaller of the two that I offer. My Pytilins are using a larger sized wicker one at present. They are on four eggs at present. To say that I'm keeping my fingers crossed is an understatement. They are young birds and this is their first clutch. If there is no success this time I will get a pair of Societies to foster them to. I like to at least give them a chance. They appear to be very bonded and affectionate which gives me hope. They also sit tight when I attempt to look at the eggs, which, I don't have to tell you fellow finch lovers, is a not too common thing for Pytilins. I feel it's very important that us, as bird people, concentrate on Africans while we can still get them and I certainly plan to do my part.

Heating my bird room is really very simple. I use a medium-sized electric floor heater which I leave set on a thermostat. The bird room stays at about 65° most of the year. From December to February it sometimes can get down to 50° if I'm not watching the heater real close. My birds never seem to have any problems from this and the only fatality I've had in years was caused by an escaped fledgling who flew into the drenched wall. Last winter we had a REAL cold spell and the electricity went off for about 16 hours. I was panicked and expected the worst as the two pairs were on chicks. As it turned out, I went nuts for nothing. The bird room thermometer was at 35° and those birds were just fine! I suppose they've just been able to acclimate themselves over the years. When I sell birds in the winter months I like to put their box within a paper bag to play it safe. I also make the client go out and start their car and get the heater going for a few minutes. I've sold birds when it was -40° so every little trick helps.

I also have "care sheets" that I give to each client. I have two different ones that I have developed. One is for people who already have finches and the other is for folks who are buying what may be their first pair. I go over what I feed etc., and tips that have worked for me. One of my most firm beliefs is the feeding of kale or spinach. I just can't say enough about their benefits. My birds' color is stunning and I feel that their superb plumage reflects this diet. I give no menulox to any of my birds except the Pytilins which are wild-caught birds. I also use Nekton-E to prime them for breeding. I give all my birds the opportunity to bathe at least four times a week. We have almost no humidity up here and without frequent baths I'd see a lot of dead-in-shell eggs. Plus, if I don't give them enough baths, they stick their backs up into their water battles and let it stream out onto them! They're a lot more clever than we think.

About eighteen months ago some folks started a bird club up here which

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**NATIONAL FINCH AND SOFTBILL SOCIETY
AFFILIATES, DELEGATES AND SHOW DATES**

=====

NATIONAL CAGE BIRD SHOW, INC.; Kerol Deem, (409) 737-1557

November 18 to 21, 1983 Wyndham Greensprings Hotel, Houston, TX \$59 room
rete. Reservations, (713) 875-2222. Hosted by The Bay Area Cockatiel and
Cage Bird Club. Panel Judge: Dr. A. E. Decoteau

KAYTEE GREAT AMERICAN BIRD SHOW Rhoda Shirley, (515) 243-2255

September 30 to October 3rd, 1993 Des Moines Airport Hilton, Des Moines, IA
\$54.00 room rate. Reservations, (515) 287-4200 or 1 (800) HILTONS. Hosted by
The Mid-America Cage Bird Society Panel Judge: Charles Anchor

CALIFORNIA

Aviary Assn. of Kern Co.; Valme Baker, (805) 765-6110

Capital City Bird Society; Helen Caudle, (916) 933 1619

Show: November 5 to 7, 1993 Modesto, CA Panel Judge: Hal Koontz

Finch Society of San Diego County; Sharon Rusnell, (619) 546 1870

Fresno Canary and Finch Society; Dixie Lea, (209) 584-3764

Show: October 28 to 31, 1993 Medera, CA Panel Judge: Clayton Jones

Golden Gate Avian Society; Claudio Selo, (510) 455 9909

Show: November 11 to 13, 1993 Tracy, CA Panel Judge: Brende Geesey

Kaytee's American Family Bird Show; Sharon Bolivar, ((310) 416-9153

Show: April 24, 1993 Pomona, CA Panel Judge: Dr. A. E. Decoteau

San Diego Bird Show, Inc.; Sharon Russell, (619) 546 1870

Show: November 6, 1993 San Diego, CA Panel Judge: Joe Krader

Santa Clara Valley Canary & Exotic B. C.; Ned Crowley, (408) 258 4601

Show: November 27, 1993 San Jose, CA Panel Judge: Joe Krader

Southern CA Finch & Hookbill Association; Gregory Adan, (310) 379 2416

COLORADO

Colorado Cage Bird Association; Terri McAuliffe (719) 576 9009

Show: October 16, 1993 Colorado Springs, CO Panel Judge: Clarence Culwell

Rocky Mountain Society of Aviculture; Julie Karn, (303) 753-6145
Show: November 13, 1993 Denver, CO Panel Judge: Marty von Raefeld

CONNECTICUT

Connecticut Association for Aviculture; Chris Voronovitch, (203) 649 8220
Show: October 23, 1993 Manchester, CT Panel Judge: William Parlee

New England Finch Fanciers; Russell Armitage, Jr., (293) 346 5875
Show: November 27, 1993 E. Hartford, CT Panel Judge: Dr. Al Dacoteau

FLORIDA

Aviary & Cage Bird Society of South Florida; Lan Brower (305) 931 3468
Show: August 21, 1993 Margate, FL Panel Judge: Jon Hoffman

Exotic Bird Club of Florida; Mary Petty, (487) 632-7494

Florida State Fair Exotic Bird Show; Cleire Remo, (913) 482 5352

Gold Coast All Bird Club; Hika Mariscano, (305) 929 1606

Gulf Coast Exotic Bird Club; Diane Pittman, (913) 772-1159
Pet Show: November 21, 1993 Ft. Meyers

Greater Brandon Avian Society, Inc.; Carola Millar, (813) 971-1190
Show: September 18, 1993 Tampa, FL Panel Judge: Ken Gunby

Jacksonville Cage Bird Assn.; Paul D. Stickwah, (994) 744-5811

Suncoast Avian Society; Joa Ventimiglia, (913) 392 9391
Shows: October 16 and 17, 1993 Tampa, FL
Panel Judges: Conrad Meinart and Stephan Hoppie

Sunshine State Cage Bird Society; Dale Laird, (407) 657 7989
Show: October 9, 1993 Panel Judge: Kenneth Gunby

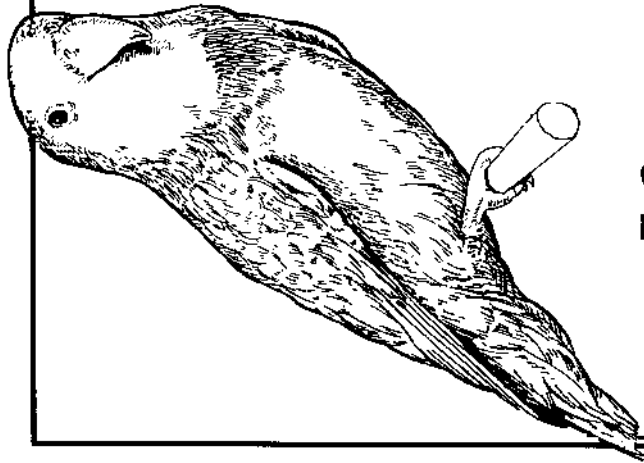
West Florida Avian Society, Inc.; Barbara Farrall, (904) 683 1634

GEORGIA

Central Georgia Exotic Bird Club; Dawn Miller, (404) 460 8233

HAWAII

Honolulu Canary and Finch Club; Lorraine Chang, (998) 595 3689



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ILLINOIS

Greater Chicago Cage Bird Club; Jane Muscato, (700) 305 9043
Show: November 6, 1993 Rolling Meadows, IL Panel Judge: Clarence Culwell

Illini Bird Fanciers; Jen Marcott, (217) 347-9680
Show: June 5, 1993 Shelbyville,, IL Panel Judge: Conrad Meinert

Springfield Pet Bird Club; Tom Rood, (217) 774 5265
Show: September 11, 1993 Springfield, IL Panel Judge: Tom Rood

INDIANA

Indiana Bird Fanciers; Conrad Meinert, (219) 269 2873
Show: October 9, 1993 Fort Wayne, IN Panel Judge: Harold Bowles

West Central Indiana Bird Club; Tom Rood, (217) 774 5265

IOWA

Mid-America Cage Bird Society; Rhode Shirley, (515) 243 2255
Show: Hosting the 1993 National Cage Bird Show, Inc.

KANSAS

Kansas Avicultural Society; Jamee Williams, (316) 663-5609
Show: October 9, 1993 Wichita, KS Panel Judge: Paul Williams

Heartland Canary & Finch Club; Jamea Johnson, (913) 686 2774
Show: October 23, 1993 Lawrence, KS Panel Judge: Laure Bewley

KENTUCKY

Central Kentucky Cage Bird Society; Steve Sletes, (606) 223 2600

LOUISIANA

Gulf South Bird Club; Evon Kruse, (504) 649 2392
Show: October 16, 1993 New Orleans, LA Panel Judge, Marty von Reesfeld

Cajun Canary Club; Ernie Brown, (504) 834 5100

Capital Area Aviculture! Society; Tim Schexnaydre, (504) 562 3579

MAINE

Maine State Caged Bird Society; Sheryl Adame, (207) 727 5633

MARYLAND

Baltimore Bird Fanciers; Deb Clark, (410) 242 8471
Show: October 16, 1993 Baltimore, MD Panel Judge: Roddy Gabel
Bird Mart: June 19, 1993 Severn MD For info: (410) 485-7842

Maryland Cage Bird Society; Theresa Brown, (410) 735 7662
Show: September 11, 1993 Frederick, MD Panel Judge: Ken Gunby

MASSACHUSETTS

Massachusetts Cage Bird Association; Oiana Smith (508) 540 3214
Show: October 16, 1993 South Easton, MA Panel Judge: Brenda Geesey

MICHIGAN

Grant Lakes Avicultural Society; Joan Lenon, (616) 677 5082
Show: October 16, 1993 Grand Rapids, MI Panel Judge: Harold Bowles

Mid-Michigan Bird Club; Mary Lou Terwilliger, (517) 463 5695
Show: November 6, 1993 Panel Judge: Martha Wigmore

Mid-West Cage Bird Club; Patrick Vance, (313) 443 0643
Show: November 13, 1993 Detroit, MI Panel Judge: Roddy Gebel

Motor City Bird Breeders; Patrick Vance, (313) 443 0643
Bird Fair: June 6, 1993 Detroit, MI Panel Judge: Martha Wigmore

Society of Canary and Finch Breeders; Patrick Vance, (313) 443 0643
Show: October 30 & 31, 1993 Livonia, MI Panel Judge: Tom Rood

MINNESOTA

Upper Midwest Bird Show & Sale; Nellie Rohe, (612) 854 7168

MISSOURI

Greater Kansas City Avicultural Society; Jim Leach, (816) 254 0415
Show: October 16, 1993 Grandview, MO Panel Judge: Kenneth Gunby

Heart of America Hookbill & Finch Society; James Johnson, (913) 268 3209
Show: April 24, 1993 Blue Springs, MO Panel Judge: Clarence Culwell
Show: October 17, 1993

Missouri Cage Bird Association; Dennis Burhans, (314) 441 0525
Show: November 5 & 6, 1993

NEW JERSEY

South Jersey Bird Club; Raymond Passaro, (201) 281 9224

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Birds of a Feather Avicultural Society; Denise McCabe, (603) 485 0104

New Hampshire Avicultural Society; Larry Martin, (500) 392-9137
Show: October 9, 1993 Panel Judge: Brenda Geesey

NEW YORK

Astoria Bird Club; Lealie Laber, (516) 431 9267

Ruffalo Canary & Sedgebird Society; Devid Cooper

Finger Lakes Cage Bird Association; Rena Rouse, (315) 252 7673

Rochester Cage Bird Club; Vicki Steffenhagan, (716) 964 2840

Show: November 30, 1993 Rochester, NY Panel Judge: Harold Bowlas

NORTH CAROLINA

Charlotte Metrolina Cage Bird Society; Marvin Yoder, (301) 746 8665

Raleigh-Durham Caged Bird Association; Karen Whitlow, (919) 851 5824

OHIO

Classic Feathered; John Neff, Jr., (419) 784-5985

Show: October 2, 1993 Defiance, OH Panel Judge: Conrad Meinert

Cleveland Cage Bird Society; Maureen Mehozonak, (216) 234 7674

Show: October 9, 1993 Cleveland, OH Panel Judge: Earl Courts

Toledo Bird Assn. & Zebra Finch Club of America; Kaye Young, (517) 263 4786

OREGON

Rose City Exotic Bird Club; Sally Smith, (503) 658-5242

Show: November 6 & 7, 1993 Portland, OR Panel Judge: Clayton Jones

OKLAHOMA

Bird Fanciers of Oklahoma; Gene and June Miller, (405) 382 7066

Show: September 25, 1993 Oklahoma City, OK Panel Judge: Cecil Gunby

PENNSYLVANIA

Central Pennsylvania Cage Bird Society; Pat Krichten, (717) 632 8892

Show: October 23, 1993 Grantville, PA Panel Judge: Brenda Geeey

Chester County Bird Breeders; Barbara Archibald, (215) 644 1760

Show: September 25, 1993 King of Prussia, PA Panel Judge: Tom Rood

Delaware Valley Bird Club; Kris Kroner, (215) 628 4143

Show: November 13, 1993 Creamery (?), PA Panel Judge: Charles Anchor

Greater Pittsburgh Cage Bird Society; Dr. Lindsay Clack (412) 323 6438

Bird Auction: May 16, 1993 For info: Sue Hartwell, (412) 795 1984

Show: November 6, 1993 Monroeville, PA Panel Judge: Conrad Meinert

Philadelphia Avicultural Society: Rick Szlachta, (215) 635 2097

SOUTH CAROLINA

Palmatto Cage Bird Club: Malvin Yoder, (803) 459-5319

Hosting the Carolina Classic, September 11 & 12, 1993 Anderson, SC

Panel Judges: Dr. A. E. Decoteau and Conrad Mainart

TENNESSEE

Middle Tennessee Cage Bird Club: Eva Ouffey, (615) 361 5939

TEXAS

Bay Area Cockatoo & Cage Bird Club: Karol Oaem, (409) 737 1557

Hosting the Kaytee Great American Bird Show

Fort Worth Bird Club: Clarence Culwell, (817) 220-5568

Texas Bird Breeders and Fanciers Assn: Claranca Culwell, (817) 220-5568

Show: November 6, 1993 Killeen, TX Panel Judge: Ray Johnson

VIRGINIA

Paninsula Cage Bird Society: Linda Oja, (804) 874 8581

WISCONSIN

Badger Canary Club: Patricia Ripple, (414) 527 1980

Show: October 23, 1993 Milwaukee, WI Panel Judge: Tom Rood

INTERNATIONAL AFFILIATES

Cage Bird Society of Hamilton: Peter Webb, (416) 575 0858

Confederacion Ornitologica Nacional: Rafael Saurez, (809) 752 4433

Budgerigar & Foreign Bird Society of Canada: Brian Eddy, (416) 244-6976

Hosting the 34th Annual Canadian National Show, October 14 to 16, 1993

Ourham Avicultural Society of Ontario: Vincent Moase, (416) 723 1978

Show: September 24 to 26, 1993 Pickering, ONT Panel Judge: Tom Rood

Essex-Kent Cage Bird Society: Alfred Mion, (519) 948 6398

Show: October 1 to 3, 1993 Windsor, Ont. Non-panel judge.

New Zealand Finch Breeders Assn.: New Zealand, Mrs. E. M. Foster

Queensland Finch Society: Queensland, Australia Gavin Dietz

Zebra Finch Society, England: Brian Binns, Manchester, England

=====

HAND-RAISING A GOULDIAN FINCH FROM THE EGG: A PERSONAL EXPERIENCE.

by Ubaldo Leli, M.D.

=====

It is well known from both anecdotal reports and people's direct experience that the beautiful Gouldian finches (*Poephilia gouldii*) do not make good parents. Although many breeders foster the Gouldian chicks under Society or, less frequently, Zebra finches in order to increase their productivity, some aviculturists would like to have parent-raised chicks at some point in their career. Also, often times one is faced with the need of saving chicks thrown out of the nest by parents with unsynchronized breeding cycles.

I started keeping Gouldian finches three years ago, when I acquired a mixed color pair: a black-headed female and a red-headed male. I will not attempt to describe the beauty and sweet temperament of these birds, which is known virtually to every bird enthusiast. My Gouldians are kept in my bird room, in the company of many diverse avian species ranging from hummingbirds and honeycreepers, to fig parrots and african greys. They are housed in a 3' x 1.5' x 1.5' cage, lit from 6:30 am to 8:00 pm. Temperature and humidity range from 68' to 75' F, and 60 to 80%, respectively. I feed them finch mix, spray millet, soft egg food and cuttlebone all year round.

The first year my pair went to nest at the end of October. Prior to breeding, the female acquired a dark ash-colored beak, and the male a red tip on its bill. They also began to consume much more egg food than normal. I gave them a nest box of corrugated cardboard of 5" x 5" x 5", with the upper half of the front side open, filled with undone ropa. They laid many fertile eggs (35), with a clutch size of 5 or 6, but never set for more than a week. I managed to foster 5 chicks under societies. I also tried to incubate a clutch artificially in my Roll-X incubator. Setting was 99.5' F and 50% humidity. Three eggs hatched and one chick lived for 5 days. Autopsy revealed a gram-negative infection and a lesion on the mouth. At the time I was using Rodybush handfeeding diet (regular) diluted in Gatorade, and I was feeding the chick with a tiny spatula. The spatula was responsible for the mouth lesion.

The next year I changed the nest box and used a wooden 5" x 5" x 5" box with a 1.2" hole instead of the open front, hoping that the hen would sit more comfortably, being more protected. She certainly sat better than the previous year, but at day 12 she stopped. The second clutch was fostered under zebraa, which did a fine job and raised all the chicks faster than the societies. The third clutch came too early and found me unprepared for fostering. Because the hen was sitting, I waited, hoping for a miracle. On day 15 I checked the nest and nothing was there. It did not take long to

realize that the male had cleaned house after the eggs hatched. I found two nestlings on the floor of the cage, but one died shortly after. The survivor was gaping and begging, and I decided to undertake the task of hand-feeding this chick from day 1.

The day-old chick was placed in an aquarium brooder with a temperature of 95° F and 60% humidity. For the first three feedings I gave the tiny chick only Pedialyte (every hour), heated to 105° F. Then I introduced the diet described in table 1, diluted with Pedialyte to a very liquid consistency. I was able to adjust the consistency so that the crop was totally empty every 1.5-2 hours. To feed the chick I used a thin painting brush through the fourth day, then a pipette.

The chick was fed every two hours around the clock until it reached a weight of 5 grams (at birth the bird weighed 1.2 grams). The night interval was between 1:00 am and 5:00 am. The parents, of course, feed the chicks more often, but the hand-feeding procedure causes an enlargement of the crop so that it empties every two hours on the average. When the feather tracts started to appear through the skin I added peanut butter to the diet, and thickened it somewhat. I banded the chick at day 14 and it flew at day 27. The weight chart showed in Figure 1 is a daily record of its weight gains.

Weaning was slow and difficult, and was effected by leaving the chick with older, independent siblings from a previous clutch, but still feeding it at least four times a day. The weight chart (Figure 1) shows a notch caused by a sudden drop in weight at day 31. That is because I tried to decrease the feedings too fast. The weaning process I played by ear, checking the weight gains or losses. Every time the chick would lose more than 10% of its body weight I would increase the feedings again. There must be a better method, but it worked and the bird finally weaned. Unfortunately I lost this chick due to a caretaker's neglect during one of my trips out of town. May it join in Bird Heaven my two Andean emerald hummingbirds that died of the same "disease": an unskilled caretaker.

I designed my diet based on the fact that the shorter the time a bird spends in the nest, the higher the protein content in the diet must be (R. Low, Handrearing baby parrots and other birds, Blandford Press, Poole (1987) 32-33). For example, the budgerigar spends an average of 4 weeks in the nest and needs about 20% protein in the diet. So, finches need a rather high protein diet. Also, the content of fat in the food determines how long it will take to pass through the crop. The higher the amount of fat, the longer the transit time. The food should remain in the digestive system of the bird long enough for the proteins to be absorbed, but not long enough for the food to become spoiled or hard, in which case food poisoning or crop impaction might ensue. Spinach and carrot baby foods were added to make sure that the chick's crop would not become impacted. It is well known that the presence of fruit and vegetables can prevent formulas from becoming stone-hard, which tends to occur, especially with products that do not require cooking. Also, the carotene of the carrot helps with the coloring, and the

spinach contains beneficial calcium.

Of course, the sweet disposition of hand-fed Gouldians is unmatched by any other species that I know. The intelligence of these little jewels, however, is a bit questionable. I would not advise anyone to try to raise a finch from egg, except under emergency conditions; but my experience proves that it can be done. Perhaps there is even a specific market for this kind of hand-reared finch. I believe that the diet described in this article could be used with other birds with food requirements and development similar to the Gouldian finch.

I hope I have been of some help to the many aviculturists who have had to face the disappointment of seeing their precious chicks vacuumed away by overzealous parents, out of their proper breeding cycle. These notes offer some guidelines, which, combined with a lot of personal dedication may save a few chicks.

Table 1.

Hand-feeding diet for Gouldian finches.

Mix 2 teaspoons Nutri-start Baby Bird Food (Lafebre) and 3 tablespoons of cold water. Cook according to the instructions of the manufacturer in a double boiler or in a microwave, stirring often.

Add 2 teaspoons purified soybean protein (many companies produce it), and 1 teaspoon Nekton tonic-K, 1 teaspoon strained creamed spinach and 1 teaspoon strained carrot baby food (first or second foods).

All through the development add to one daily feeding one pinch of Prime (Hagen) and one pinch of Nekton MSA ground in the mortar to a fine powder.

When the feather tracts start to be visible through the skin (about day 8) add 1 flat teaspoon creamy peanut butter to the formula prepared as above. Also, every other day add three drops of cod liver oil and 1/8 teaspoon finely ground cuttlebone to one of the feedings.

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SUPPORT FINCHSAVE

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A MODEL REGIONAL SHOW

Region 2 - Stephen Hoppin, VP
Hosted by Sunshine State C. B. S.
October 10, 1992

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Editora note:

You should be making plaaa now for the regional show in your region. The fall show season will roll around before you know it!

The following is Stephen's report on the regional show thnt he organized with the nble assiatance of quita n few NFSS members from vnrious clubs in his region. I waa the judge at this large show and I was impreased by the beautiful diaplay Stephen and othera had aet up and plensad by the success of the meeting, in terms of the amount of information exchanged, friendahips begun snd raneued and the financial contribution made to NFSS. I've wnited till now to print this report so that it will be befora you aa you are planning your own Regional meeting.

"The 1992 Southeast Regional Meeting began at 6:15, shortly after the judging wss complete. As Regional Vice-president I introduced the Delegates, Alternate Delegates and Judgea present. The 1992 NFSS Bnnd Report from the September/Octobar Bulletin was presented. Stndards Reports were given and NFSS members present were invited to participnte in n Standard Committee of their choica.

I talked nbout my peraonal experiences with the FINCHSAVE Program and about being selected to serve on the FINCHSAVE Committee.

Denise Barth communicated to nll the past devnetation of Hurricne Andrew on many bird breeders, the Miami Metro Zoo, etc. and decribed the humanitarian efforts of South Florida Avian Relief.

The NFSS Raffles were held:

The Pair of NFSS close-banded Blue-faced Pnrrot Finches (bred and donated by Stephen) were won by Phil and Denise Gerth of Deerfield Gench, FL.

The pair of Gouldians donated by Sarah Stuart were won by Jerri Winfer of Winter Park, FL.

The Auatralian Finch poster donnted by Jose Aleman was won by Jerri Wiesenfeld of Jackaoavilla, FL.

The NFSS dispiny/anles booth was buey with customera.

Receipta	Snlas	\$ 89.89
	Rnffle	<u>353.99</u>

Total doneted to NFSS Treasury \$ 443.90

Many thanks to all attending,

Sincerely, Stephen Hoppin™

Stephen and his helpers made very good use of the beautiful NFSS display boards created by Mertha Wigmore. The morning of the show Stephen consulted with the show manager about a suitable location for the NFSS table and helped to move the assigned table into position. Dale Laird, the manager, gave NFSS a prime location in a highly visible area, thanks to Stephen's courteous requests. Not all shows are fortunate enough to be able to set up displays outside in the sunshine in October but if you follow Stephen's model and come prepared with clean, pressed, colorful tablecloths your table can look nice anywhere. Stephen and his team had also made bright, eye-catching signs advertising the raffias and had the birds displayed in clean suitable cages. The poster was on display, protected in a Plexiglas poster frame.

Your regional show can have the NFSS display boards for your booth if you contact Pat and Mery Krichen (FINCHSHOP) about scheduling and shipping. With about two weeks notice UPS can deliver the boards anywhere across the country for about \$35 one-way. As of the 1993 show season NFSS will reimburse your club for the shipping as soon as you send the UPS receipt to Miki. We will need a member of your local club to deliver the boards to your local UPS office.

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the day after the show and they may be going on from there to another show. Please, if you want the boards at your regional show, make the arrangements soon as their "travel plans" are scheduled on a first-come-first-served basis and they always go to the Great American Bird Show and to the National Cage Bird Show and so cannot be with you on those weekends. (P.S. I think we should apply for a frequent-flier card for those boards! They get a lot of mileage every year!)

Your Regional Vice-president or your local club delegate can also order NFSS merchandise on consignment and not have to pay until it is sold. You could have videos, handbooks, t-shirts and pins for sale at your booth.

Brochures are provided, free of charge, for you to hand out and if you need some now to have available at club meetings, call or write to the home office. I also have hand-outs with suggested band sizes, band order forms and the banding procedure page (enlarged) from the Bulletin. Call if you need some.

In Orlando there was a banquet the evening after the show and so most exhibitors were planning on staying over. This very large show is in a spacious motel and the finch and softbill division is judged in a large room separated from the other divisions. I know that this isn't possible at all shows but Stephen's plan to hold the meeting immediately after the judging in the same areas where the birds had been judged could basically be done anywhere. It permits people to be watering and feeding birds as others are gathering around for the meeting and a lot of friendly conversations are started among exhibitors at that time.

The topics of the meetings will certainly vary widely from one to another but if you'll look at the topics Stephen focused on in Orlando I'm sure you'll get ideas for what you want to discuss and you'll find that the audience of "finch folks" will have questions and ideas that they want to suggest too.

In the 1993 show season NFSS will give a poster to each regional show to be raffled. These posters, made in the Netherlands by the photographer Pietar Van Den, are high quality photographs of Gouldian Finches showing, in excellent color, the common and the very rare color mutations. There are 49 photos on each individual poster. Mr. Julio Meteo, the President of the Confederacion Ornitologica Nacional in Bayamon, Puerto Rico has provided these posters at a minimal charge to NFSS and we thank him for his assistance.

The plaques that your delegate will receive for your awards will be engraved "Regional Show" and are sought after by exhibitors. Finch exhibitors will be watching the NFSS Bulletin for the announcement of the location of each of the six Regional Shows so they can plan their travel schedule around those dates.

Start now - follow the excellent model that Stephen and his great group have provided - add your own special Regional touches - and write up a report for the Bulletin.

Best wishes for your Regional show in 1993.

KEEPING AND BREEDING THE SAFFRON FINCH

by Patrick Vance

The Saffron is an attractive finch that has gained increased popularity in the past few years. The Saffron hails from South America. In the wild it is concentrated in Peru, Columbia, Ecuador, Venezuela and the Guianas. It is a larger finch, comparable to the Java Sparrow in size, about 6", but more streamlined than the somewhat heavy-bodied Java.

The Saffron has a bright orange forehead and crown, yellow head, greenish-yellow back and tail, and a bright yellow chest and underparts. The female is considerably paler beneath and lacks the bright orange forehead. She is also typically smaller.

Diet: This is one of the easier finches to maintain. They have very simple nutritional demands. My Saffrons seem quite content with a basic seed diet, supplemented with large amounts of greens. I feed seed in three separate dishes. One contains canary seed, the second a good finch seed mix that is vitamin-fortified and the third a mixture made for small hookbills to which I add hemp. I also feed eggfood to them several times a week but it is largely ignored except when they have chicks to feed. At that time they devour every morsel of their eggfood. Saffrons are not very fond of fruits, although mine enjoy apple slices and grapes. Contrary to the literature, live food is not essential to the successful rearing of chicks, nor to bringing the Saffron into breeding condition. However, live food is certainly not wasted if offered as the parents will eat huge amounts of live food, usually attacking it within seconds of it being placed in their flights. I feed mealworms and fly larva. Additionally, the Saffron finches relish spray millet, as does every winged creature I've ever encountered. Cuttlefish bone and plenty of fresh water should always be available to these birds. Second only to the Pekin Robin, the Saffron is the biggest fan of water of any of the species I keep.

Housing: The Saffron is a very active bird, and although they can be successfully kept and bred in cages, they are far happier in a flight. These birds must have adequate space to exercise. They are far more enjoyable in large enclosures that contain natural tree branches where they remain active and rather vocal, singing from branches at the top of their flight cage. Although they're active finches and have bright personalities they are also quite reticent, particularly in small enclosures. I get quite a bit of enjoyment viewing my Saffrons in their flights, especially when they think they're not being watched and they exhibit the full charm of their personalities.

I keep breeding pairs individually in a small flight. These birds can be quite aggressive and should never be housed with small or less sturdy finches. Non-breeding Saffrons may be kept in groups as well as mixed with

Larger finches such as Jervas, or small Grass Parakeets such as the Bourke or Scarlet-cheated Parakeets. Because of their aggressive personalities it is important to keep an eye on them until you are convinced that everyone housed together is compatible. I would strongly caution against housing these birds, or any finch, with cockatiels or budgerigars. Of course, every bird has its own personality and temperament and there are exceptions to every rule, whether in matters of housing or in breeding and diet.

Breeding: This is one of the easiest finches to breed, yet due to their shy and reticent nature they may be very reluctant to breed if housed in areas where there is often commotion. It is important that they feel secure in their surroundings. I keep a single pair to an enclosure, providing them with a natural nesting basket. Literature suggests nestboxes for this species, however, when given a choice my Saffrons have always chosen the basket and no pair I've kept has ever used a box. I fill the nest with Bermuda grass and the Saffrons add feathers and paper to complete the job. Saffrons have one annoying habit in that they seem to truly love tearing up newspaper, filling first their nest, then the water cup and each of their food dishes. They then scatter extra paper around the flight to complete the decor!

Once set up in a breeding situation, the pair wastes little time in setting about business. Mating soon begins and this cannot possibly be missed by the keeper of Saffrons. The male will chase the hen very aggressively, both emit loud cries and appear to bang their bodies against the sides of the flight. The noise is incredible. This usually continues for up to five minutes or so until mating occurs. Typically within a week they've finished nest building and the eggs are laid. The hen usually lays 3 or 4 greenish-colored eggs that are speckled with black and brown markings. The hen does all of the incubation, leaving the nest frequently to eat and drink and quickly returning to the nest. It's amusing to see her leave the nest, eat and drink for a minute or two and then return to the nest like a bolt of lightning. I've been told by friends that the male feeds the hen. I've never witnessed this though I don't doubt that some males may indeed feed their mates. During the approximately 16 days of incubation the male busies himself by sitting outside the nest singing constantly. It appears that he's boasting to anyone who will listen of his great accomplishments. Once the chicks hatch the parents begin a frenzied task of feeding the chicks and at this time will eat many foods earlier ignored. The male does much of the feeding and nearly all of it once the chicks fledge at 18 to 21 days. Chicks beg for their meals by standing on a branch, vigorously flapping their wings with their mouths wide open. The parents cannot miss this subtle (?) hint that they're hungry. The fledglings are quite shy the first few days and will look at the keeper very cautiously with their extremely large eyes. Within a day or two they're already pros at getting to the branches and perches at the top of their flight. The chicks wean very quickly and should be removed about 14 days after fledging if the parents are permitted to nest again. At this time it is important to keep an eye on the male for any signs of aggressiveness toward his mate or towards the chicks. In either case, it's best

to remove the hen until the chicks are old enough to be removed. The male will complete the task of weaning his progeny. Although the chicks fledge and wean rapidly they are very slow to gain their mature color, typically taking from 10 to 14 months to complete the juvenile moult.

An unrelated aside concerning the Saffron - they seem to be quite adept at escaping from their flights. They typically escape Houdini-like without even being noticed. How a bird this size can slip by me through an open door while I'm servicing their flight and not be noticed is rather astounding and yet it's happened dozens of times. They are truly capable fliers and difficult to apprehend. Chasing them has to rank up there with running the marathon for aerobic exercise! One nice thing about the Saffron is that they never bite when caught.

There are a few drawbacks concerning the Saffron, namely their aggressive behavior at breeding time and the difficulty in maintaining them in show condition. I've never been able to exhibit my Saffrons as they tend to pluck each other, particularly when nesting. They tend to start their moults in September. They are also quite flighty in small enclosures and can easily injure themselves in a show cage where they tend to panic. The Saffron bleeds easily about the beak. Outside of these small drawbacks the Saffron is a beautiful, highly active finch with a bright and charming personality. They are very strong, sturdy birds and in the three plus years that I've kept them, there has never been any signs of any sickness whatsoever. Although their song cannot compare with that of the canary, it is still quite pleasant and certainly loud enough to be easily heard above the vocalizations of my other 400+ birds.

I would strongly recommend this charming finch to anyone.

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Editor's note: As far as I know this is Patrick's first article for the Bulletin. Quite a nice beginning I think you'll all agree. I hope he'll write a lot more and a lot more often! You'll get to see a lot more of Patrick this season. He passed his apprentice judge's test and will be doing his three apprentice judgments this fall. Make a point of meeting him...he's a neat guy, a good companion and he does REALLY well with his birds.

Thanks Patrick, keep in touch!

P.S. I'll give you a hint as to how that Saffron gets past Patrick...he's a VERY slim guy! Makes me green with envy!

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A LETTER TO THE EDITOR

from Don Armstrong

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I don't recall seeing a "Letters to the Editor" column in the NFSS Bulletin, but several of the comments in the last issue (January/February, '92) have inspired me to write and toge in my two cents worth.

In the "News and Notes", Brenda touched on an issue which recently provoked a fair amount of controversy here in the northwest--namely, the fact that a number of bird marts and other events are operated for profit and do not necessarily "benefit the birds". I agree with her sentiments, and would personally prefer to patronize well-run events which set aside at least a portion of the proceeds for conservation, research, etc. The fact that a bird fair is sponsored by a nonprofit organization does not, however, mean that funds will be generated for "education, information-sharing or any other broad based benefits to aviculture," I have known commercial event organizers who were far more knowledgeable about--and concerned with--their birds than are the leaders of many local clubs. There are any number of saints and sinners in the world of aviculture, and they can be found in both the profit and the nonprofit sectors.

I would also like to take exception, in a gentle way, with Brenda's remarks about the AFA. When the Board opted to sever our ties with that body, it may have been doing the most appropriate thing for the Society. However, I see no reason to go beyond that and disparage an organization which has accomplished so much over the years--and which is still providing a tremendous service to bird breeders and hobbyists alike. The AFA Watchbird is an outstanding magazine and has probably done more to educate serious breeders than any other publication available in this country. And the AFA conservation projects (e.g., red siskins and thickbill parrots) have attracted the energy and dedication of some of our best aviculturists.

Yes, it is true that the AFA in Brief, quoted by Brenda, contained a number of errors. And it would have been nice had they recognized the efforts of the NFSS FINCHSAVE Program. One might even raise legitimate questions about the wisdom of the AFA's decision to bail banda, given that many of their affiliated societies rely on band sales for a significant share of their annual income. But frankly, I think it is bit unfair to dismiss the AFA as "this lobbying group" or to write it off as "primarily an arm of the avian pet industry".

Given the number of people allied against birdkeepers of any persuasion, and in light of their growing political power, we can ill afford to waste time and energy pointing fingers at one another.

Having said that, let me hasten to add that these remarks are not directed toward Brenda nor any one person. She and the other "workhorses" in the NFSS have been doing a splendid job--and one that is largely thankless. I

am merely suggesting that we all try a little harder to be more tolerant of those with whom we may disagree .. when push comes to shove, we are going to need each other.

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Editor's note. This is the only letter I received about my remarks and so I am particularly grateful to Don for his thoughtful and kind comments. Many of the "workhorses" in NFSS that Don complements worked very hard for a long time for AFA too. I know that they join me in hoping that AFA will be positive and supportive of its individual members and the many national groups that have supported it. Believe me I do not "write off" or "dismiss" AFA on any counts--but I do stand by my opinions--formed as an AFA member who has watched and participated from its inception to the present. I agree about the value of AFA's publication and support of conservation and have never disparaged either.

Several years ago individual and affiliated club's delegates lost their right to vote on AFA's proposed policy issues. Since that time AFA has accepted over \$10,000 from commercial pet trade interests, something that in the early years the founders vowed never to do. In recent years AFA's spokesman has taken a very confrontational stance against limiting importation and against anyone who favors that position. Very little effort has been spent in any other field and that includes coordinating efforts at captive propagation. Let us lose our focus--those are the faults I find with AFA in the present time.

I think that Don exemplifies what I hope for all of us to be--an independent thinker who is willing to speak his mind to endorse or to critique what he feels strongly about.

Thanks Don.

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SUPPORT
FINCHSAVE

GENETICS 3
Robert E. Cruce

Congratulations! You did so well on our last examples that I know you will want to challenge yourselves even further. In this article we are going to examine multiple dominant/recessive traits. In other words, a bird may possess more than one trait at once.

In the last article we used pied (a recessive trait) and crest (a dominant trait) as our samples. Let's use them again, only this time the bird will be a crested pied. We shall need a set of letters for each characteristic. Remember nn or pp will represent the pied and NN or PP for the normal or non-pied, and CC or Cc for the crest. Cc of course is the best choice since we hope never to be breeding with CC, the double crest factor. Now let's list some possible parents.

1. Ccpp - crested pied
2. CcPp - crested normal/pied
3. CcPP - crested normal
4. ccpp - non-crested pied
5. ccPP - non-crested normal
6. ccPp - non-crested normal/pied

Now for dividing and charting purposes, we must take each letter of each trait and combine it with each of the other possible trait. Using the second example listed above (CcPp), we find that the first C can unite with the first P or the second p to form the combinations of CP or Cp. By the same process, the second c can also combine with the first P or the second p to form cP or cp. Don't panic; take each letter and move through each possible combination slowly and methodically.

Then we list those four combinations across the top of our new square for the first parent.

CP Cp cP cp

As you can see, we usually have more combinations when we deal with more than one factor and thus our square may get

bigger. Next we need to find a mate for our crested normal/pied bird. We want to choose a non-crest (cc) because we don't want to produce any double crested chicks, and I hope you remember that the very best mate for a carrier (Pp) is a full recessive (pp). Therefore for our crested normal/pied, we should chose a non-crest pied (ccpp). Once we start checking for combinations on this second bird, we place the first c with the first p and this produces cp; then the first c with the second p and produce another cp. If we go to the second c and pair it with the first p, it produces cp, and combining the second c with the second p again produces cp. Right away we see only duplications and it's not necessary to repeat these combinations down the side of the square. The only possible combination is c uniting with p.

Okay, back to the square. We already have our possibilities across the top, so we only have to to add the other ones down the side.

	CP	Cp	cP	cp
cp	CcPp	Ccpp	ccPp	ccpp

Table 1: First Sample Pairing

You could write, for example, the first block as CPcp, but that really just leads to confusion. It stands to reason that you need to keep like letters together; the proper expression is CcPp.

Well, what have we produced from this pairing of a crested normal/pied to a non-crested pied? The chick in the first window, CcPp, looks like the parent from across the top; it's a crested normal/pied. The second, Ccpp, is a crested pied; the third, ccPp, is a non-crested normal/pied. The fourth, ccpp, looks like the parent from the side and is a non-crested pied.

This choice is an excellent one for pairing because our chicks are very predictable. We can tell easily which are the crested and we

know that those who look normal are all carrying pied.

Fine. Let's reverse the parents a little now. One will be crested pied (CcPp) and the other will be the non-crest normal/pied (ccPp). From the first parent's letters we can combine C with p, C with p again, then c with p and c with p again. We don't need the repetitions, so we'll use Cp and cp. Now from the second parent, we get cP, cP, cp and cp; disregarding the repetitions again, we are left with cP and cp.

This analysis gives us just two combinations for the top of our square and two for the side; so we will have a four window square this time which looks like that original ones from our first efforts.

	Cp	cp
cP	CcPp	ccPp
cp	Ccpp	ccpp

Table 2: Second Sample Pairing

This is fun, right? Okay, what did we get?

1. CcPp - crested normal/pied
2. Ccpp - crested pied
3. ccPp - non-crest normal/pied
4. ccpp - non-crest pied

These chicks should look very familiar since they are the same chicks produced by the first pair. This result is exactly what we should have expected. It was another very good combination because we got 50% crest and 50% non-crest, and 50% pied and 50% normal/pied. If we keep good breeding records so that we know the genetic makeup of our birds, then those records will work for our benefit. Many breeders of yesterday would not allow any dilutions of any kind in to their birdroom, because they didn't understand the mechanics of simple genetics. They knew that they

couldn't control the genetic outcome, so they were afraid of it.

From the original six combinations which we listed at the beginning of this article, there should be about twelve possible pairings. Certainly some are good, but some are only fair, and so they should be avoided. Some combinations might produce double crests, or normal and normal/pieds in the same nest and we wouldn't know which was which.

If you want some problems with which to testy yourself, here they are.

1. CcPP x ccPp
2. Ccpp x ccPP
3. CcPp x CcPp

Next time, we shall take up the next step in genetic traits: the sex-linked characteristics (and I don't mean R- rated!).

has been widely accepted. (Editors note: I received this article in late May '92, so the bird club is now 2 1/2 years old and the Pytilia chicks are about a year old, I hope!) We have monthly meetings and we have about 40 members. It's called The Alaska Bird Club. I'm one of the few finch people as most people seem to have a yen for those raucous Amazons. After living with 30 pairs of Lories for several years in Seattle I'm pretty much through with THAT realm!

Finches and softbills are my passion and one I hope to keep for the rest of my life. Just three years ago I married a man who never even had a parakeet and now I've had the opportunity to see my husband Scott up at 6:00 a.m. with no prodding, etc. to get the chance to help handfeed a canary chick. It is my biggest wish that I could get everybody into birdkeeping. Without our organization and captive breeding the future would certainly be a lot less beautiful, eh?

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Melissa, please accept my apologies for holding your article so long before publishing it. Please write again and let us know how the Goulds, the Pytilias and the club are doing.

Thanks, The Editor.

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THE IDES OF MARCH 1992...

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...were a time of many changes for The National Finch and Softbill Society. The newly elected officers were beginning to take over their jobs. In many cases this meant fitting another time-consuming and detail oriented task into lives which were already jammed full of family commitments, full time jobs, bird-keeping on a large scale and other responsibilities. It's no wonder that some things "fell through the cracks". Indeed, it is a wonder that so many things run so smoothly in this all volunteer organization. NFSS now has nearly 1700 members in the United States, Canada and 9 other countries. Mailing lists grow daily, phone calls increase dramatically and the volunteers time is stretched to handle all of their own responsibilities and the many needs of the members.

The transfer of the former Treasurer's records to the new Treasurer was a complicated task. Their computers could not make the transfer smoothly and the change-over consumed a lot of time. In the process some records were lost. The worst part of this loss is the fact that there has never been a way to track what "fell through the cracks" between the computers. The records that were lost didn't vanish in alphabetical order, numerical order or any kind of pattern. They simply vanished. Unfortunately we were not immediately aware that any were lost and we're still not sure how many are gone. We never will be able to recover them without the help of concerned members.

We are very grateful to you for your patience with this situation. If you had not brought this to our attention we could not have corrected the error. We hope you will ask all of your "finch family and friends" if they are still getting their Bulletins so that we can complete this reinstatement process. If they are not, please share the following information with them as soon as possible.

Pet and Mary Krichten, our new FINCHSHOP Directors, now have all of the back issues of The NFSS Bulletin up to the March/April 1993 issue. If the last issue a member received was the March/April 1992 issue their membership records were probably among those that vanished. In that case, contact Niki Spartzak first to be sure that you are reinstated on the membership list and then contact Pet and Mary to mail the issues you missed. There will be no charge for the back issues that you missed and Niki has the authority to "credit" you with a paid membership up to June 1, 1993. We hope that will be of help in compensating you for your expenses in phone calls, etc.

We're all very sorry that this happened and we're working to fix the problem but we're depending on you to contact people you know were members in early 1992 and check that they are still on the rolls.

Pet and Mary Krichten, FINCHSHOP
412 E. Walnut Street
Hanover, PA 17331
Phone (717) 632-8992

Niki Spartzak, Treasurer
517 916 North Point Road
Baltimore, MD 21224
Phone (410) 282-9233

=====

GOING TO THE NATIONAL-LEVEL SHOWS

=====

Thursday the exhibitors and the birds will come in. Friday the classes, sections and divisions will be judged. Saturday the judging will be done for the over-all best in show. The banquet will be Saturday night.

Packed between those few words are a million experiences. There's nothing like the two national level bird shows, scheduled for Des Moines and Houston this year. The opportunity to spend all the days and every evening of a weekend in the company of the top breeders and exhibitors in the country and to see the top-winning birds is an experience you should not miss.

I know that many people don't feel comfortable traveling with or shipping birds and that many people are extremely concerned about the potential for exposing their birds to the risk of disease too. There is a wealth of advice available about how to ship birds safely, how to transport them comfortably in your car and how to manage them at the show site. At shows of this magnitude only the best birds from all over the country are exhibited by the most competent exhibitors and they're staged and handled by the best stewards available anywhere and these things do minimize (but cannot completely eliminate) the risk of exposure to a sick bird. If you're unwilling to bring your birds - don't stop reading here!

The conversations you could have, the vendors booths you could examine, the fabulous birds you could see, the fun and the fellowship are available too all who attend. If you're not ready to show a bird yet - don't miss the two biggest bird shows in the country this year.

Many national organizations hold annual meetings at these shows, an incredible selection of items are raffled, swaps and sales and purchases are negotiated both in the "sales room" and in private rooms. Many exhibitors will agree to bring birds that you want to buy for you to take home by pre-arrangement, thereby saving you the cost of shipping. New products often are first introduced to the public in the national-level shows.

You'll get to meet some of the best known names in aviculture - people whose columns you've read in national publications, the authors of books that helped you learn how to manage your favorite species and the top exhibitors who have birds on the top bench each season will all be there. The top judges in each and every national specialty club will be there - some will be judging and not available for conversation till their task is over and others will be in the chair next to you, ready to meet you and talk with you.

Check the first two listings in the "Affiliates, Delegates and Show Dates" section of this issue for the 1993 dates, places and reservation phone numbers.

**HOPE TO SEE YOU IN DES MOINES
AND/OR HOUSTON THIS FALL!**

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THE EASY APPROACH TO NUTRITION AND RAISING WAXBILLS

By Les Gibson

More G. S. is talked about nutrition at bird club meetings than about any other subject. This is probably because the proponents of the B.S. can grasp the meaning of "food" but give up on really profound subjects, like the scientific names of birds or breeding Spice Finches.

In order to get a basic understanding of nutrition and the food value of B.S. (Bird Seed; what did you think it was?) some simple definitions will be given.

METABOLISM is all of the chemical processes that take place in the body. It includes the digestion of food and the excretion of waste or surplus, as well as the myriad of actions that ceaselessly go on, like the building and repair of body tissues from the various dietary components.

The nutritional portion of food is divided into carbohydrates, fats and proteins, which are burned (oxidized) in the digestive system to produce energy - the driving force of the body. Energy can be measured chemically as the heat produced from digestion. The calorie is a measurement unit of this heat. Water is necessary for all metabolic reactions. This can be obtained from drinking, moisture in food, or from some chemical reactions during digestion. Nestlings and desert birds make good use of the latter two sources.

Other non-nutritional components include vitamins and minerals which, although not supplying energy, are nevertheless essential to the maintenance of the body, and lack of one or the other can cause ill-health or even death. A shortage or excess of any of the above, or even an unbalanced intake can have deleterious results. The commonest result of excess is the deposition of fat which is more obvious in mammals than birds (yes ma'am, you see a mammal). This is re-absorbed during lean times.

CARBOHYDRATE is the scientific term for a substance made up from the elements carbon, hydrogen and oxygen. This will be more familiar as the words 'sugar' or 'starch'. As everyone knows, these are a readily available source of energy. The nearer the product is to basic glucose, the quicker it is assimilated by digestion, hence honey is a quick pick-me-up. All the loud, parrot protein advocates notwithstanding, the adult bird's main need is for carbohydrates, not protein. The finch's main source of this energy is the starch in seed. Captive birds will of course require much less than their wild counterparts.

The term FATS (which should not need a definition) includes oils. Oils are simply fats that are liquid at room temperature, and lipids are fats in scientific jargon. Fats supply certain essential fatty acids

(even acids can be fat!) to the body, but for our purpose it is best to think of them as concentrated carbohydrates. They supply about two-and-a-half times the energy of carbohydrates, hence in winter they are an economical source of heat for the bird body.

PROTEINS are complex substances, which in addition to the carbon, hydrogen and oxygen of the carbohydrate, have nitrogen and often sulfur tacked on too (we were only kidding about this being easy). Plants build up proteins from the basic elements found in the air and soil, whereas birds (and of course other animals) get their proteins by the reverse process. The bird's digestion breaks down these already formed proteins, from plants, insects, etc., and reforms them as needed in the shape of amino acids. although proteins can be converted to energy production if in surplus, their principle use is to build and repair body tissue, in the form of amino acids.

AMINO-ACIDS are breakdown fractions of proteins, from the action of digestion, i.e. proteins are made up of various amino acids. They are essential to life and some are required in greater quantities during growth and also during laying. Because proteins are found in greater quantity and variety in animal matter compared to plants (there are a few exceptions like peanuts), many finches switch to mealworms, etc. to raise young. One can tell when a hen is about to lay by the sudden huge increase in food consumption and, in the case of finches, she may suddenly begin eating mealworms. Probably all, or most wild finches use insects in the above circumstances, the habit being lost in captivity because of the lack of opportunity. Lack of lysine can be a problem. This is an amino acid that is notably in short supply in seed. As this is growth-limiting, no matter how much of everything else is present, lysine has to be added. It is found in dairy products and in the bread-and-milk slup that is traditional with canary breeders. Birds do not like sloppy food and a better way is to give scrambled egg, the texture of which is palatable to most birds. Egg is used as a comparison standard for the evaluation of amino-acids in foods. The difference between animal and plant proteins explains why small softbills have chicks that leave the nest in 9 to 12 days, whereas finch chicks, fed mostly or entirely, on seed, take longer. However, the different groups are attuned to this and giving finch chicks surplus protein will not shorten the fledging time from normal, though a deficiency may prolong it.

A common and visible deficiency of certain amino-acids shows up as thin, defective feathering, with 'fault-bars' (streaks-marks) across the larger wing and tail feathers. The cure for this is not to step up the total protein intake, but to supply small amounts of the deficient amino-acid(s). The quality of protein and the volume supplied is what matters, not the actual percentage in any given food. For the record, the average insect is about 18% protein, while cereal seeds average 12-13% and oil seeds plus or minus 21%, the latter two of more amino-acids than insect protein.

VITAMINS are compounds which are required in tiny quantities for the growth and maintenance of life. Some of these may be synthesized in the body,

but most are of dietary origin. The vitamins that are most difficult to supply to seed-eaters are the ones found dissolved in animal fats, that is vitamins A and D. The other water-soluble ones are usually readily available from the normal diet. Vitamin A precursors are found in yellow, red and green vegetables (leaves and roots) but are lacking in seed. These precursors are converted to vitamin A in the body. Vitamin D is more of a problem. Lack of this is a cause of failed chicks with rickets, showing up as rubbery, deformed or broken limbs, and distorted rib-cages with attendant breathing problems. A shortage of this vitamin also causes deficient egg-shells. Vitamin D is found in milk and butter and, conveniently, is added to margarine or "spreads" as they are now called, but only if it says so on the label. Manufacturers are getting chintzy nowadays and the only one that fills the bill in these parts is "Blue Bonnet". The traditional source of Vitamin D (and A also) was cod liver oil, which is unpalatable, messy, smells awful and goes rancid quickly, but it is of great dietary value if you keep birds that will eat it like penguins. Surplus water-soluble vitamins, like the B group, are excreted immediately after the food is digested, but excess of the fat-soluble A and D are stored in the liver and can supply the body for months after dietary intake has stopped. Vitamins are commonly added to drinking water, often permanently and this is grossly in excess of needs. Often these additives do not contain the fat-soluble ones that are needed. In theory, an excess of vitamins and minerals as well as a shortage, can cause problems.

MINERALS. Well, everybody knows what minerals are. The main problem one is calcium, again for seed-eaters. But often an apparent calcium deficiency, as in the above mentioned rickets and fragile or soft eggshells, is due to lack of vitamin D, so make sure the birds are getting both. Vitamin D monitors the intake and use of calcium and phosphorus which are the two main minerals in bone and shell. Apart from these two, all other minerals are required only in very small or trace quantities and are only a problem under exceptional circumstances.

Now from the very little we have learned in a few minutes, we can discuss the subject of nutrition with confidence - rather like the average politician.

Seeds can be divided into cereals and oil seeds. One type of seed in a group is much the same as another type in the same group, nutritionally speaking. Oilseeds provide more than twice the energy of cereals. Of course, birds have preferences due to the different shapes and sizes of seeds, but they can learn to eat non-preferred kinds. As an experiment canaries were kept here and bred successfully, first on a canaryseed-free diet, then on a completely seed-free diet. If one batch of, say, sorghum millet is composed of rather skimmy seeds, while another batch has large plump ones, the bird will simply eat two of the first to one of the second until it is satisfied, so don't pay too much more for fat seeds, as any apparent advantage will be only in the eye of the beholder.

We know that seeds are deficient in calcium, lysine and vitamins A



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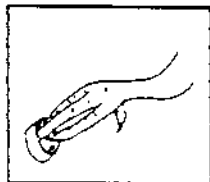
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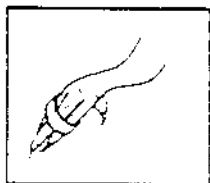
Leg banding Procedure

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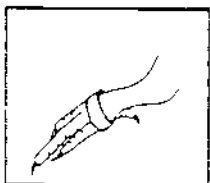
NATIONAL FINCH SOCIETY



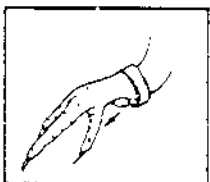
The most important thing to remember when banding chicks is to do it over a counter or table so if the chick is dropped it doesn't fall to the floor. The age to band varies between species but is generally between 5 and 10 days. You can tell by looking at the ankle joint (the joint where the toes come together) and the size of the band.



Have the bands, a toothpick (or other small blunt instrument) and some lubricant ready. Be sure you have the bands "right side up" for easier reading.



The band is generally placed on the birds' right leg. Banding just before the parents go to roost in the evening will prevent them from picking at the band. By the next morning they will have forgotten about it.



Hold the chick firmly but in such a way as to not cut off its' breathing and so that you don't harm it. Remember, their bodies cannot tolerate compression. Put a little bit of lubricant on the chicks' foot and slide the band over the three front toes and finally over the ankle joint. The back toe will probably have to be gently pried out from under the band with a toothpick. The band now should be in the proper location between the ankle and the elbow joints.



Check on the chick the next few days to be sure that the band has not slipped off and that there are no scrapes or irritations on the foot or leg.

GUIDE TO ORDERING 1991 NATIONAL FINCH AND SOFTBILL SOCIETY CLOSED LEG BANDS

Thanks to the work done by the Band Size Committee we are able to offer an expanded list of suggested sizes for more species of finches and softbills. We're hoping to get more updates from societies overseas in 1991. We also welcome members suggestions for the list.

SIZE TO FIT LEGS OF:

-
- A Small Waxbills, Owls, Strawberry, Orange-cheeks, Red-ears, Gold-breasted, Quail Finch.
-
- B Cordon Bleu, Black-cheeked Waxbills, Fire, Cuban Melodious, Olive, Lavenders, Rufous-backed Mannikin and others.
-
- C Blue Caps, Green Singers, Silverbills, Stars, Shafttails, Cherry, Red-headed Parrot, Painted, Heck's, Pileated, Grey Singers, Pytilias, Bronze-wing and Black and White Mannikin.
-
- D Zebras, Gouldians, Pictorellas, Yellow-rumps, Chestnut-breasted, Blue-faced Parrot, Pintail Nonpareil, most other Parrot finches, most smaller Mannikins and most Twin Spots.
-
- E Society, Spice, Siskins, Golden Song Sparrows, Diamond Sparrows, Nuns, Peter's Twin Spots and Black Crested Finches.
-
- G Magpie Mannikins, and other large Mannikins, European Goldfinch and small Tanagers.
-
- J Pekin Robin, Silver-eared Mesias and other small softbills.
-
- K Java Rice, Shama Thrush, Saffron and Red-crested Cardinal.
-
- L Diamond Doves, other small doves, Quail and other softbills.
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See expanded list of sizes recommended for particular species

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THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING THE NATIONAL FINCH AND SOFTBILL SOCIETY.

THE NATIONAL FINCH AND SOFTBILL SOCIETY

1993 AFFILIATION AGREEMENT

There are only two requirements that your club will have to meet.

- * Select a delegate to represent your club in dealing with NFS. That delegate must be an individual member of NFS who is willing to keep in touch with the Home Office and supply information on your show date, etc.
- * Send the appropriate fee, the Delegate Information Form, and this form to the address at the bottom by June 30, 1993

____ Service/Breeder Award Plaque - \$25.00

This is designed for clubs that do not have shows. Your benefits include all the educational publications of the society. Also, in October of your affiliation year, you will receive a beautiful 7" x 9" plaque for your club. This plaque can be a service or breeder award for one of your members. (Need not be an NFS Member.) Requests for the wording on the plaque must be received by NFS no later than June 30, 1993.

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A 7" x 9" plaque that is given to the Best Finch or Softbill in Division at your show.

____ Second Best In Show Plaque - \$25.00

A 6" x 8" plaque that is given to the Second Best Finch or Softbill in Division at your show.

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Please place a check mark with the award(s) your club wants to order and send this application, along with a check for the proper amount made payable to NFS, to: The National Finch and Softbill Society, Affiliation Director, c/o Russell A. Armitage, Jr., 345 Boston Road, Middletown, CT 06457.

CLUB NAME: _____

DELEGATE'S NAME: _____

1992 Championship Exhibitors

	'92 Points	Total Points
<u>EXHIBITORS OF EXCELLENCE</u>		
Alvin and Dixie Lea	165	296
Pat & Mary Krichten	124	268
Patrick Vance	77	226

CHAMPIONSHIP EXHIBITORS

Virginia Patrick	117	135
Stephen Hoppin	105	393
Gene Miller	85	552
Rick Szlachta	76	159
Marvin Yoder	65	266
Brad and Deb Clark	56	126

and D. Mealworms, which are easily kept and commonly used, are deficient in calcium and vitamin D, although the presence of these and other elements are, to a certain extent, affected by what the mealworms are fed upon.

To counteract these deficiencies, people use all sorts of methods, which is part of the fun of bird keeping. Egg supplies all of the above. Scrambled is easiest but washed boiled egg or whatever takes your fancy, will do. Egg, however spoils quickly in hot weather, or even just dries up. Never feed raw eggs to birds. Heat it in the microwave first to destroy dangerous organisms, e.g. salmonella, that may be present.

Another way is to sprinkle on food a multi-element additive, one in which the list of ingredients goes off the label onto the floor. It may be uneconomical or difficult to give this way because it falls off, and it is totally useless to sprinkle it on seed (you can figure out why yourself or you shouldn't be keeping birds!). Dark green vegetables supply vitamin A (precursors), B group vitamins and C, but not D, and are a good source of minerals. Brassicas (the cabbage family) are good for calcium. Note that when Popeye was touting spinach, it was not then realized that the relatively large amounts of calcium in the vegetable were in an insoluble, indigestible, and therefore totally useless form. Also note that lettuce supplies moisture and some boredom relief and little else, although the latter is not to be denied. Fruit, in general, is a useful source of vitamins and minerals for birds that will eat it.

The system used by the author is to feed margarine and peanut butter, spread liberally on bread (one on each side) and chopped. Seed-eaters eat this readily and will feed it to chicks. Softbills like it too, and for feeding chicks, mealworms can be smeared with margarine then sprinkled with a multi-powder. The only disadvantage to the "sandwich" is that it dries up in hot weather but as the elements contain preservatives, it does not spoil. Apparently lysine is present somewhere in the above, although it is not listed on "spread" or peanut-butter labels, because one can raise fine chicks on it. In the spread, vitamin A is plentiful - birds need a lot - and vitamin D is present in some brands. Bread is enriched with calcium in the bakery and peanut butter supplies protein and fats for energy, as does the margarine. Because of the huge food intake relative to body weight, birds make good use of the small amounts of calcium in the margarine, as well as the many vitamins and minerals present in the mixture. If desired, additive powder can conveniently be incorporated in the sandwich mixture when birds are laying, feeding chicks, or moulting.

Here it should be stressed that laying hens must get large quantities of the best food, along with crushed eggshell, to lay easily and produce healthy hatchlings. Failure to appreciate this leads to egg-binding, unexploded dead-in-shell, or chicks dying upon hatching. A lot of Bird Seed has been talked about varying humidity etc. as the cause of dead-in-shell, but the proper feeding of the hen has barely been mentioned. If this has been neglected before and is now attended to, look for dramatic improvement, no

matter what the weather!

The above remarks are mostly directed at finch-keepers but for both our softbill readers, they apply equally well. If you want to raise difficult softbills, use the 'compleat softbill food'; - grasshoppers. Note that crickets are not a substitute. If you want to get into the 'world-first' class, try breeding Oxpeckers, which live exclusively on ticks and blood from the hides of large African grazing animals. First you buy a Zebra.....

Oh, and Waxbills? That was a misprint for WaxWINGS. They are the easiest of all birds to raise. Just give them bowlfuls of hard berries. You don't even need a variety; holly is just fine. Obviously all the elements we discussed are found in hard berries, for a clutch of six Waxwings was raised exclusively on hollyberries from a handy tree in the garden. Here is our chance to launch a soon-to-be-classical saying: "The bird can live by (holly)berries alone".

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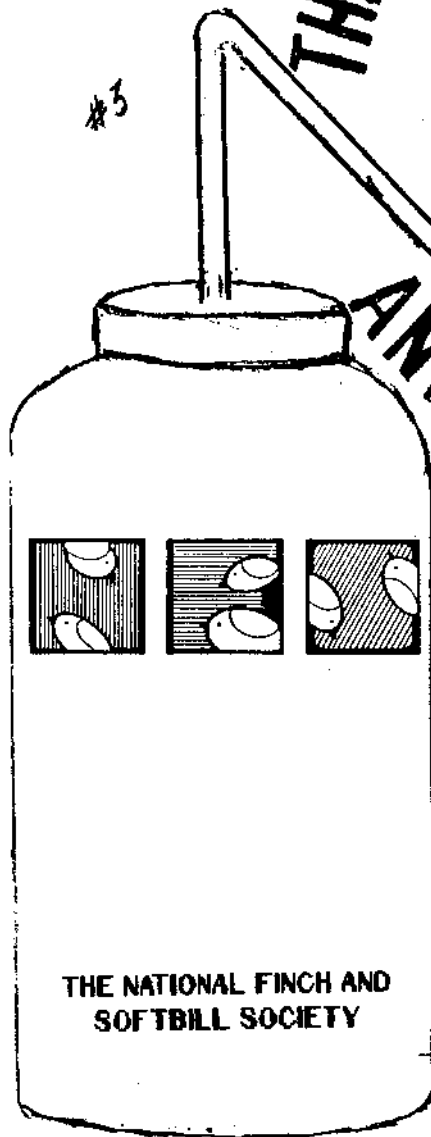
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AND SOFTBILL SOCIETY



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#2. This is the design that is approximately 10" wide on the new T-shirts. The Shafttail is white, outlined in black, red beak and legs and the lettering is blue. Sharp! The shirts are 100% cotton. Sizes M, L, XL a few XXL. \$15.00.

#3. Handy water bottle. Makes it easy to refill those show cage water cups. Keeps water from home fresh while you travel. Holds 18 oz. NFS logo on both sides. Clear plastic. \$6.00

AND...Bruce, the cut and paste master, got them all on one page! Hooray! The Editor.

=====

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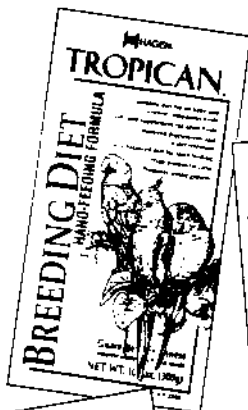
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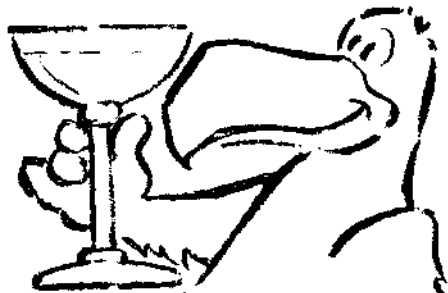
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