

Camping Under the Stars

The Lone Ranger and Tonto went on a camping trip.

After they got their tent all set up, both men fell sound asleep.

Some hours later, Tonto wakes the Lone Ranger and says,

"Kemosebe look to sky."

"What see?"

The Lone Ranger replies, 'I see millions of stars.'

'What that tell you?' asked Tonto.

The Lone Ranger ponders for a minute then says,

'Astronomically speaking, it tells me there are millions of galaxies.

Time wise, it appears to be approximately a quarter past three in the morning.

Theologically, it tells me that we are only insignificant little beings compared to the almighty Lord.

Meteorologically, it means that tomorrow will be a beautiful day.

What does it tell you, Tonto?'

Tonto replied 'It tell me Paleface need Tonto say meaning. '

'When sleep, tent got stole.'

From The Desk of The President

Once again, I am sorry for the late mailing of this issue of the News.

Much last minute activity took place in our Association that resulted in delays.

The last few weeks before publication are very busy, and it's for that reason that I must ask everyone to please consider limiting requests to a minimum during that time.

I hope this issue will reach everyone in time for the show announcements.

For our new subscribers, I welcome you and your support. Because this is your magazine, it can only be as good as you make it. It's all about each one of us and the experiences that we have in the fancy. If you have photos of some bird contraption that you want to send in, please do so. If you want to tell us about yourself or update us on something about your birds, your words are more than welcome. Just drop a line and let me know what you want to share. It's that easy. This year I was surprised to find out just how many people in the fancy are reading our articles. With continued support, I am confident that you will enjoy what you read even more. Any word to others about our shows, the clubs, and the News is something that all in the fancy can benefit from.

As Editor and Producer of the News, I feel very fortunate to have shared thought with so many readers these past few months. By way of telephone calls and email messages I slowly became aware of just how many subscribers actually do read articles in the News. David Bopp, Joe Pietrobon, Marvin Haynes, Peter Jaehrling, Sergio Martin, Paul Scanlyn, Bernard Begley, Justin Agrella and Richard Roloff are only some of the many people who have discussed articles that they enjoyed reading. I am honoured to have received so much

appreciation from such valued songbird fanciers as these.

In the future, I hope to increase my level of participation with other songbird groups. Until now the Roller Canary fancy has been far too isolated and because of this we have become fragmented from the overall picture.

The letter that Sergio Martin (OIRCC) sent us for publication in this issue gives meaning of why this happened and suggests something that we can do in order to curb the current trend of declining interest in our fancy. Upon reading that letter from Sergio, I came to realize how many mistakes we have made by segregating ourselves as a Roller fancy from other valued canary Type songsters. I also learned that our labelling them as "Type" Canaries was not unique to ourselves, in that the Harz fanciers call our Roller Canaries "Type" canaries also. Another nearly forgotten fact that Sergio remembered was one that only the serious North American fancier might recall hearing of. It has to do with Roller Judges grading Colour Canaries in England. Only after reading this, could I vaguely remember that I once heard this little known fact decades ago. I hope everyone that reads this month's issue will take all the time they need to read his article on page twelve. I believe that the direction he suggests is one that holds greater promise and it falls in line with the direction that COM took when European fanciers pulled all Canary groups into one organization. While we were shrinking COM flourished and grew.

Since that letter I wrote to the President of Sergio's club (OIRCC) to suggest mending the fragmentation that took place after Howard Fogg left and the IRCBA split into two clubs. Ever since then nothing was done to bring everyone back into one group, so the entire fancy in North America continued to decline. When Peter resigned from his positions with the DRCA executive at the start of this year, he handed me his Presidency in the DRCA, his position as DRC News Editor and his title of DRCA Secretary Treasurer. In response, I

stepped down from Western Vice president and handed that title to Joe Pietrobon. I still hold the DRC News Producers' position and the position of DRCA Webmaster.

The Eastern Vice President's position remained unchanged with Fulvio Distasio.

I believe that we have now shrunk so small that we won't likely be able to hold national convention.

As of yet, the current DRCA executive has not met to discuss the scheduling of a convention in order to elect new executive. Without change to our constitution, the regulations for holding conventions in order to elect new executive remain the same. This might seem like something that will never happen but I am confident that we can adjust the traditional procedure for holding conventions by making changes to our constitution. Hopefully that will enable us to continue operating. I am optimistic that we can still have the whole process of democracy proceed by allowing everyone the opportunity to vote for who they want. In the coming months I will look at what changes to the constitution are needed and I invite all readers to send me their ideas.

-Kent Donnelly

Below is a photo of a seed catcher that the late Marvin Haynes of VRCS designed and fabricated by cutting away a plastic milk container. One wire rod passes through the sides to support the seed container. Two other metal rods on the back hook to the cage wires.





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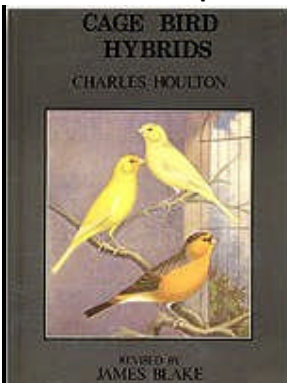
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Correspondence

The following message came from DRC News subscriber Richard Rolloff in response to a recent article in the 65th anniversary edition of the News titled:

“Songbirds on the Net”

I enjoyed the article on internet judging.

For years I have thought it is the future of our hobby. I have to drive 11 hours through the mountains from Oregon to California to attend the WWC show.

Tanks of gas, room rental, meals, and hosting the judge all cost money.

I figure I spent close to \$1500 out of my pocket last year as Show Chair. That does not include the \$1700 air fare and other expenses the club paid.

We have over 60 members and the same 6-8 attend the show. The others pay dues to support the hobby, and get 4 newsletters.

Last year I recorded all the teams as they were judged with my new Sony video camera.

I put them on DVD and sent my birds to a few "judges" I respect. They were impressed and had no problem "judging". I didn't get a signed score sheet, (C.O.M.) but I did get scores and feedback. If you give me your address I will send you a copy?

Yours in the hobby,
Richard Rolloff

In response, I gave Richard my mailing address. Because I had not ever attended a Waterslager show, I wanted to know if my previous experience of listening to them could compare with the show quality examples that he would send.

Not long after that, the DVD had arrived in the mail and I was studying their song.

I wanted to determine what the different tours were(without knowing their names) and to

compare them with tours of the Roller. The following correspondence between he and I follows.

Richard,

Your Waterslager DVD is excellent!

I listened to the first team just as soon as it arrived on Friday.

I am amazed at how similar most of the tours are to those of young Rollers.

Just before it arrived in the mail, I was having a long conversation with David Bopp.

David is an American Roller judge that I sat with at a show in Hamilton Ontario a few years ago.

We discussed a Roller from that show that sang a water tour in Hollow Bell tempo.

For a long time, I had a lot of difficulty trying to classify that tour.

When I finally realized what tour that bird actually sang (AND KNEW THE REASON WHY), I had to share my thought with David.

I called David, wondering if he could recall that bird and hoped to tell him my thoughts on this tour. After giving him only a short description, I was surprised to find how well he remembered the bird in question. Before I could tell him my interpretation of the tour, he had already voiced the very same words that I wanted to use...

Because it sang Blu Blu Blu and not Lu Lu Lu, the BL consonant makes it a water tour. Even though it had a Hollow Bell vowel and that tour was rendered at the same tempo of Hollow Bell, it was not hollow Bell.

Why?

The reason was because of the BL consonant in its tour formation.

Since Roller tours are identified solely by their formation, he was very correct.

The consonant is not the only part of its tour formation, however.

It's "tempo" is the other part.

The tempo will be either a fast connected "rolling" Roll or a slow broken "beating" Tour. Its formation will have only one of those two.

For this reason, we name the faster connected rolling tours "Rolls" and the slower broken or beating tours "Tours".

Since this tour was in the tempo of a Hollow Bell –which is a beating tour; it was not a roll. It was a Tour.

It was a "BL" (for water) tour.

Namely "Water Tour"

If the score sheet has only an entry for Water Roll and no entry for Water Tour, then it must be scored under the Water Roll column.

David told me something else that helped me to understand why a Roller sometimes has a lot of water in his tours.

It was something that many of us are already very familiar with but usually fail to give much thought to.

It has to do with Something that his friend (Judge Billy Richardson) said after he once asked him how his birds were "coming along" in Spring.

Billy-

"Well, I am still getting a lot of "water" in there but there's no telling what it will turn into when things dry up a bit".

What a great explanation!

By the time that late summer and fall have arrived, things have usually dried up indeed. The bubbling watery baby talk that you hear from young Spring time Rollers, will always dry out just as sure as the warm summer weather dries out the ground.

In summary, I feel very fortunate to have that conversation with David.

We both agreed that the bird we heard sing on the show bench in 2007 was likely a young bird that had not yet matured.

In listening to the tapes of your Waterslager teams Richard, I was able to once again hear that same tour being rendered.

I now believe that there is merely a very fine line that separates the Waterslager from the

Roller.

I am very grateful for your sending me the DVD and I will encourage all Roller fanciers to watch it.

I feel lucky to have heard these exceptional songsters.

Thanks Richard,
In Rollerdom,
-Kent

Richard's latest reply was also enlightening. He gave a description of training technique that I was completely unaware of. This is something that everyone in the hobby should think about when they cabinet train young Rollers too early. It goes...

Right on!

We fight the opposite battle.

As breeding season approaches, our birds go from Klok to dry flute sound.

We darken to keep them in the watery stage until the song is fixed.

I then keep my tutor away from hens until the following Fall.

I have heard Waterslagers sing Roller, and I have been told that Rollers can be tutored into learning Water.

Enjoy our hobby,

Richard



DRC News Announcement

Oakland International Roller Canary Club (Established in 1923)

This article is sponsored by the DRC News. May the information provided assist our readers in learning more of their Glorious past. May it also provide the avenue to contact members of the OIRCC and discover what this club has to offer in the fancy. The contest information and names of their members follow this message. We thank Sergio Martin for sending this information in response to email inquiries I made of his club.

...Regarding leg bands; we don't have band numbers that are assigned to each member. We just have the year, the band # of the bird, and our club initials. We use the plain aluminum "silver" color leg band.

Our initials are NA = North America. For some reason we kept all the embodiment of the old International Roller Canary Breeders Association founded back in 1920-1.

The IRCBA has been gone for a long time now. They used to keep pedigrees from all members and had a large membership worldwide. They published the Canary Journal Magazine and had many great writers of the day. One of their biggest and best was a Canadian by the name of Moulistin.

(I apologise if I may have misspelt his name).

The IRCBA sold leg bands to all the members under the initials NA, which is what we still use today.

The "NA" insignia has been in use since our club joined the I R C B A. Their membership spanned throughout all of North America, from Mexico to Canada. I find it interesting how we ended with so much from this old

organization.

I know that when Mr. Fogg left, the control he once had to manage the IRCBA was lost and the organization became fragmented. Afterwards the IRCBA split into two Associations. One is called the ARCA (American Roller Canary Association) and the other is IRCA (International Roller Canary Association).

From the time of the "split" onward, there hasn't been much discussion between the two Associations.

Canada has the only Roller Canary Magazine left in North America. The Center States have the Roller Judges. The rest, well we still have our pride but seldom does anyone go out of their way to let the others know what we are up to.

I think that everyone is losing out by not sharing. The time has come for us to get back with each other and start working together. If we take some of that pride out of our socks and use our energy to reach each other instead of shutting the door on each others' face, the whole fancy would benefit.

We need to keep what we still have before it is gone forever.

We need to keep the DRCA magazine alive. We need to help and not criticize those that unselfishly give their time to the hobby we all love; lest this magazine will be destroyed just like the old Canary Journal was.

Let us learn from all our past mistakes and make our hobby better than it is. I know that it might never be the way it was back on the 50's or 20's, but at least we don't have to lie down and be happy with the way it was in the 90's or the beginning of this new century.

Let us find a way to put all these links together to make a strong chain. I'm up for it. There is work to be done but I'm willing to help in any way I can. Just let me know and you can count with me. In my club I'm

trying to get our members to learn as much of the Roller song as possible so they can be judges.

Once I make it to Master Breeder I too will work to be a Judge. I would like to work with the Center States and establish a direct link with them.

I will assist in any way I can to encourage our breeders to become Judges. I will send the information about all our club activities to DRC News. I want everyone to be updated on everything about our club and its members.

I guess the IRCBA was like the old Soviet Union when it was under Mr. Fogg's control. Once the Soviet Union was taken apart each region kept to itself. Now there are some that have more than others; discarding the rule of having people share.

In closing I just want you to know that I hope to improve the hobby that I so much enjoy. I hope I can help by keeping things under careful watch. We need to work with each other and to help each other in order to make this happen. In this way, we can all benefit from each others' efforts. You can contact me anytime.

Thanks Kent for all your hard work.

Sergio



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In Memory of Merle Feia

Good Morning,
 I just learned of the death of one of our Roller canary judges. To those of you who knew Merle Feia it is sad that he didn't get to enjoy the last years of his life listening to the birds that he traveled over the country to judge. Merle was a fine judge and a good friend to many roller breeders. I am sure you who knew him remember some instance at some show where he was judging. We in the fancy will surely miss him.
 Hope everyone had a great breeding season.

—
 -Billy B Richardson

In Memory Of Marvin Haynes April 20, 1930 - July 18, 2009

With much sadness I wish to announce that long time VRCS member Marvin Haynes passed away at his home in Penticton BC on July 18 of 2009. Marvin was 79 years old and was survived by his wife Marjorie and children from his previous marriage.

—
 -Kent Donnelly

Our Farewell to Marvin



Marvin was a member of the VRCS since the early 1980's. He was a friend to many of us. During his years in the fancy, he would often visit Ken Swann of Westbank BC, and Fred Walcot who also lived in Penticton. During his first years with rollers, Marvin acquired some of the famous "Singing Hens" from Leanne Rutley of Vernon BC before she went out of birds. Carefully maintained records in his stock book show the degree of care he took to accurately maintain his pedigrees. Marvin used only one large red binder from "day one" onward. Rollers he obtained from Walcot, Swann, Rutley, Pietrobon, Schlott, Saxton, Grygar, and German breeders were all of exceptional quality. Last winter he imported one pair of DKB German Rollers from Otto Englemeier and Georg Rottenback that gave him five hens and four cocks. They have the quality of song that Germans are famous for.

Less Gluck and very clear bells and rolls. Marvin was very proud of his birds. He sat with them several hours a day.

His Aviary was modern, nicely furnished, well equipped and spotless. It had air-conditioning, adjustable air vents, temperature controls, light timers, a vacuum cleaner and a deep wash basin with running water. The portable Pine flight cages that he proudly told me about last fall were a design of his own invention. They create a greater length for path for flight than the actual length of the cage. Another useful thing that he designed was a very effective seed catcher. It was constructed from a used plastic milk container that was cut away on three sides and strung with wire to hang on the wire wall of the flight cage. They prevented all the shelled seed husks from ever reaching his flight cage floor. Marjorie told me that each morning her job was to go in the Aviary and remove the shelled husks from them. She said it was only a two minute job to change them and to put down new paper on the bottom of the cages.

Marvin wouldn't stand for any nuisance. He kept only his finest singers for breeding. Any bird that did not please him was immediately sold to "Total Pets" in Penticton. When I went through his red book, I was surprised to find records from birds that he paid higher prices to have shipped to him that were later sold to the pet store for pennies on the dollar. I suppose this is one reason why he won so many ribbons during the years he showed them. All his winning ribbons still hung high on the wall when I visited. They spanned the entire length of the Aviary. It was a sad task to take down and dismantle the entire contents of his Aviary with his widow Marjorie.

The one thousand dollars I gave to Marjorie in order to become the new owner of his flock was a small price to pay for such a fine bunch of birds. I hope that I am able to care for them the way he would have wanted. All twenty five of them are now housed in the two flight cages he had built. They are all in excellent health and appear to be happy in their new home.

-Kent

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SPROUTING SUPPLEMENT

MARCH 2009

Sprouts are regarded as one of the
BEST foods to feed your birds
because of their nutritional value
however the growing and
management of sprouts can differ
quite significantly in the different
climatic zones.

This is why I decided to compile the
supplement to go through the
process of growing sprouts and so
everyone is aware of the differences
from what can be done in South
Australia, [a dry climate] to what
further precautions to take in New
South Wales, [a more humid
climate] and should be done to
“sprout safely” in Queensland, [a
tropical climate] so we all gain from
good management of better
nutritious food, if we choose.



SPROUTS

Beneficial nutrient content.

When any nut, seed, legume, or grain is sprouted the chemical makeup alters. The sprout has two unique qualities. First, it is the

only food that is fresh up until the moment it is eaten. And secondly, because it is a living food it contains life force energy. Sproutable foods have between seven and forty per cent protein. Sprouts are a rich source of vitamins A, C, E, B, and anti-oxidants. In oats vitamin C increases 600 per cent after sprouting. Dry seeds, grains, and legumes are rich in protein and complex carbohydrates – they completely lack vitamin C. However after sprouting their vitamin C levels escalate to approximately 20 milligrams per 3.5 ounces. During the sprouting process enzyme levels rise. These food enzymes readily digest proteins and carbohydrates making the protein in sprouts more easily digested and assimilated by the body. Enzymes play an active role in virtually all of the body’s biochemical processes.

Proteins are the primary building blocks for muscles, blood, skin, feathers, nails, and vital internal organs. Proteins are responsible for every life sustaining biochemical process in the body.

The practice of sprouting is more than twice as old as the Great Wall of China.

When selecting foods for sprouting, seek out and use the highest quality ingredients possible. Avoid using chemically treated or preserved foods. *Ensure they are being sold for human consumption*, as many commercial seeds for gardening and farming have been coated with fungicides, herbicides, fertilizers, or growth hormones. Seeds treated with these chemicals can be poisonous if eaten.

When ordering seeds be sure to specify you want untreated seeds suitable for growing sprouts for human consumption.

Unhulled sunflower seeds are naturally a soft grey colour. If you see any that are yellowish, they have become old, and may even be rancid. *Foods become rancid because the oils they contain have become old and have gone BAD.* Rancid foods have a stale odour, like cooking oil that has spoiled. Businesses who sell organic foods understand that freshness is an important quality and their organic sprouting ingredients will be free from

pesticides and harmful chemicals. Organic foods possess more nutrients than their commercially grown counterparts.

WHAT CAN BE SPROUTED?

[for canaries]

Foods that can be sprouted essentially fall into four categories: seeds, grains, legumes, and nuts.

SEEDS: Fenugreek, flax, millet, pumpkin (also called pepitas), radish, sesame, safflower and sunflower (sprout alone).

GRAINS: Amaranth, quinoa, unhulled barley, (pearled barley will not sprout), buckwheat groats, brown rice, wheat berries, rye, and whole oats.

MEDIUM SIZED LEGUMES: Adzuki beans, mung beans, garbanzo beans, and French lentils.

When creating your own sprouting blends, be sure to provide a fairly equal ratio of seed or grain to the legumes. This helps to provide complimentary proteins in balanced proportions.

NUTS are not included in the "canary list."

THE IMPORTANCE OF PURE WATER

Regardless of the source, our water is subject to contamination from a variety of impurities. Contaminated water can be one of the primary reasons that a person's early attempts at sprouting can fail. The water that comes from the mains into our taps has been chemically treated in some manner. A range of chemicals, including chlorine, carbon, lime, phosphates, soda ash and aluminum sulphate may have been added to kill bacteria, adjust Ph, or eliminate cloudiness. The local water company should be able to provide you with a copy of their water test report.

For sprouting use the purest water possible. Many have been successful by filtering the chlorine out of their city's water supply and following the proper sprouting guidelines. However, if your sprouting attempts begin growing mould or have a bad odour, you may need to use purer water for your sprouting needs.

For hot humid climates water purity tops the list for successful sprouting and distilled water is recommended.

A POWERFUL ALLY TO STOP ANY BACTERIA

One product that can stop any bacteria or mould from growing on your sprouting mixtures is Grapefruit seed extract (GSE) is a completely natural antibacterial, antiviral, antifungal and antiparasitic product. It is effective against approximately 800 bacteria and virus strains, 100 strains of fungus, and a large number of single cell parasites. It can be bought in Health food shops – "Traveller's Friend" Citrus seed extract [30ml for approx \$20.00] (3-5 drops in a 250ml glass of water or 10 drops in a litre of water.) Due to its natural antibacterial and antifungal properties, using GSE during the soaking process when sprouting for birds as a preventative measure will stop bacteria and mould before it can even get started.

Apple cider vinegar is an alternative to GSE. [10ml to 1 litre of water rinsed and flushed regularly.]

One can buy plastic sprouting towers but utilising some clean wide mouthed jars, from the kitchen, some nylon net or bridal veil netting, and rubber bands can be the simplest. For draining and growing sprouts in jars, slope them in a typical dish rack, set inside a square or oblong plastic tub works very efficiently.

Air circulation is an important component to successful sprouting. A double layer thickness of the regular sized nylon net OR a single thickness of the bridal veil netting allows for good air flow in and out of the sprouting jar. Your best guide will be to try what is suggested and to learn what works best for you. The number of birds you are sprouting for will help you determine the size jars you need. Any jars/containers you use make sure that they were originally used for the storage of human grade products.

HOW MUCH TO SPROUT

When first beginning to sprout for your birds, it may take a few trials to determine how

much of a sprouting mixture to sprout, how long it needs to soak, the length of time to germinate, and the number of days the sprouts must grow before they are at their optimal length. Much of this data will be determined by the temperatures and humidity present where you live.

After the soaking process, your sprouting mixture can double in size. To prevent overflow, only fill your sprouting jars half full. This important fact can help you determine the size of jar to use, the amount of mixture to sprout, and will help to ensure that this mixture has been covered with a sufficient amount of water during the soaking process. As an initial guide you can soak one quarter to one half a cup of their seed mixture. [Be aware that using small seeds of approximately three tablespoons will yield about four cups of sprouts] After three days of growing, this amount could last between four to six days. Halfway through feeding these sprouts then begin to soak another batch of seeds.

SOAKING WATER TEMPERATURE

When soaking your sprouting blend, try using warm water. This has a way of jump-starting the germination process. The moisture and the warmth are two key factors that encourage and promote a good germination response.

LENGTH OF SOAKING TIMES

The length of time to soak your sprouting mixture will vary depending upon the temperatures and level of humidity where you are. In drier climates that are less humid, such as here in South Australia, sprouting mixtures can be soaked overnight for approximately 10 - 12 hours. However, in top of New South Wales/Queensland when there are times of the highest temperatures and body drenching humidity, one could soak the sprouting mixture as little as 6 – 8 hours. Deciding on the correct length of time to soak your sprouting mixture in your area will take a little assessing. Compare the two climate extremes described above to where you live and make an estimate and review your results to either lengthen or shorten the soaking time.

After rinsing the sprouts, sniff them. If you detect a questionable odour, add a few drops of GSE and water to the jar, let them soak for a few minutes, and then rinse. Repeat this rinsing process as many times as it takes until the water being poured off looks clean and clear.

In general, for the seeds to grow properly, they must be kept warm, rinsed daily, have good air circulation, and have light. [Do not put jars in direct sunlight – heat will burn the shoots.] When you have high humidity, your sprouts need lots of good air circulation, which can be achieved by fluffing them. That is, turn and flip the jars every time you walk by. Refrigerate the unused sprouts until used.

Latsouthroller.

My Thoughts on the Roller Canary

~by Sergio Martin

Looking back, I still remember when I started with Rollers. It was back in the late 1980's. I didn't show my birds until a few years later in the early 1990's. Every year, I would always hear the same rumblings from the same fanciers, like "the hobby is dying" and "every magazine on Rollers has the same thing in it".

I didn't follow the crowd when it came to being negative. I enjoy my hobby. I prefer to look past all the complaining by concentrating more on all of the positive things that we share. We all know the reason why Roller Canaries came to be. All throughout their history, they were bred for a song that everyone could enjoy. They gained popularity neither for their looks nor their shape. They became famous for one thing alone- just their glorious song.

Well let's take it from there. Although their song was one that everyone enjoyed, it wasn't long before certain breeders involved themselves in trying to make it even more perfect. In doing so, they catalogued all their sounds. The sounds they did not like were called "faults". The next thing they did was work towards eliminating all of the faults. The more they broke down all the sounds into different categories, the more complicated it became for the layman to understand. From that point we had fanciers who remained as mere hobbyists as well as others who became more serious. Eventually the more serious fancier would gather amongst others in a group in order to discuss all the different parts of the song. After much discussion, they formed a consensus on what the most common parts of the song were. They also came to agreement on what the most desirable parts of the song were. This led them to develop a system that could define the roller song. They found the best way they could do this was to use a verbal description that could describe each tour by naming sounds of things that they were all familiar with. A system to grade the quality of those tours followed. They decided that they would award each tour with points in order to grade the quality of each tour on a numeric scale. This eventually became the most popular method used to determine the quality of song. Overall, the most popular and the highest valued tours were allotted the highest number of points while the least valued tours were allotted a lesser number of points. The next step they took was to ensure that an accurate appraisal of song was made. They wanted their birds' song to be graded by a person in the fancy that they knew they could trust. He would need to have a clear understanding of each tour. Choosing someone for the task was as difficult back then as it is today but once they had made their decision, they were on their way towards holding their first show. The show has perhaps always been the best way to grade the song. This is due to the fact that you

only need one person to evaluate many birds in one location. Travel was more difficult and much slower in the early years than it is today. Back then, they had to go by foot, hoof or rail. This is one reason why fewer shows were held in the beginning than there were in later years. Eventually methods of travel improved and that is when the shows became more popular. All the prizes and recognition that one received for their wins became an addictive force to reckon with. They soon learned that the more wins one had under his belt, the more demand there was for his birds. A lot of money was paid to those selling the highest scoring stock. It was mostly for this reason that competition became fierce. This was the way of the cult for many years. It would likely still be that way today if it weren't for the rivals that came forth to challenge us. I suppose it had to come eventually though.

By the time that the 1930's rolled around, many people had already experimented with crossing the Roller to other species of birds. Until then, all the crossings seemed to be of little threat to the fancy due to the fact that any babies produced were infertile for reproduction. For this reason, they were called "Mules". Well, after many years of crossing, the Mule breeders finally found one bird that could be bred to a Roller and still have fertile offspring. It was the Red Hooded Siskin from South America. Early literature suggests that this bird was crossed with Roller Canaries at a blood ratio of 25% to 75%. The resulting offspring from these crossings were named "Red Factor".

This new breed signalled a change of things to come. Now fanciers had more options. They could either breed for different colors or continue breeding only for song. Breeding for colour would mean that they would not have to concern themselves with any strict rules in the song catalogue of faults. In the beginning, Colour canary breeders had no rule of thumb to use. They would just experiment with different pairings. The complicated breeding systems used for Roller song did not yet apply to any genetic scheme

for breeding coloured canaries... just put different color birds together and wait and see. Colour canary competitions had far more categories and there were far more ways of taking home a rosette than at the Roller shows. It was as easy to win a prize as it was to get a lollipop from the dentist. Everyone walked away a winner. Since we all know how much everyone likes to win, many people felt quite happy owning a Red Factor. At that time the Roller Canary fancy lost a large number of followers due to increased popularity with all the pretty feathers found in Coloured Canaries.

Then in the late 1940's early 1950's, a completely different little green bird took its place again. People everywhere were being enticed by its charm and it wasn't long before many homes had a bird known as the Parakeet inside them. During this time a group of 8 ladies from the Boston area decided to develop a breed of these that required little work for them to reproduce. Their aim was to have free singers that would come from one large community of birds. They would just put all their stock together in one big bunch, let them breed, then scoop out all the babies and take them all to the show bench afterwards. This community style of breeding did away with all the complicated methods and procedures that the other more disciplined systems had. They produced so many of these birds that they actually flooded the bird market with them. This had a major influence on the canary fancy as a whole and was a major reason why the number of Roller and Colour Canary fanciers everywhere, continued their decline.

The trend continued with the introduction of Cockatiels during the late 1960's to early 1970's. Their presence helped to further discourage a large number of canary breeders. It did not stop there though. In the 1980's the exotic bird industry was on a real upswing. We saw all kinds of Parrot species like the famous Lovebird appear on the scene. Few would disagree on what they liked best about the Parrot. It was the sheer size of

the thing. This was no different than what people wanted in a Cadillac of the same era. The larger it was, the better it was. Macaws, Quakers, Amazons and the African Grey suddenly appeared all over the place and just as the storm seemed to end; we began to realize that there were still others we hadn't noticed earlier, like the Australian Cockatoos. One by one, all of the super colourful birds from around the world eventually made their North American debut. It was a time for Parrots to rule and that they did.

Unfortunately, all the trouble caused by their becoming Rulers of Roosts did not end there. Every bird fancier of Chickens, Pigeons, or anything else with feathers began to pay yet another tax to these new Rulers. They paid their suffering from all the new strains of disease and new epidemics, brought in by these birds. We later discovered that it wasn't just the avian world that was affected. We have now learned that people everywhere are at risk of being contaminated from this. Much of the problem could have been prevented with the enforcement of strict import controls but saying this and doing this are two completely different things. The authorities have learned too late that this is an unrealistic task to succeed at. The high demand for parrots coupled with prices in the thousands of dollar range, made illegal bird smuggling nearly as lucrative as the illegal drug trade. There are far too many inconsiderate desperados who would rather make a buck in order to buy today's lunch than those who care about dying from disease the day after. The numbers of smuggling incidents have already overwhelmed our border patrol and customs guard beyond their capacity. This problem has less to do with changing the laws than it does with having laws enforced. Once disease has entered your country, changing import laws can do nothing to prevent contamination. Law change was useless towards controlling this problem by the time the late 1990's and early 2000's had arrived. By then America already had numerous hosts of exotic bird diseases flying free in the wild. One

such example is the Lovebird Parrot. Flocks of wild lovebirds have plagued many a farmer in the warm climate of California. Because conditions in this region are very favourable to breeding, their numbers have steadily increased.

The shift towards exotic birds changed the landscape forever. No longer do Canaries dominate the scene with magazines, store displays, shows and bird clubs. The magnificent Exotic has moved in and put us on the second shelf. He is now the one who will demand your full attention. He has decided that he is the only one good enough for you and only he will take the place of all other companions. Because Parrots are very social and very intelligent, they will easily train a human the way they want. Because they need to be paid a lot of attention, they will scream at you if you deny them this. Some have the same intelligence and temperament as a five year old child. Because of this, there is a whole new market for specialty items such as toys. The very nature of their different attitudes has opened the door to publishers to supply the growing demand for more information about them. Their market is still growing.

Unfortunately, the quality of content found in today's bird magazines will not come close to meeting the needs of most readers. Instead of finding the information they seek from reading informative articles, they flip through pages of advertisements. Things have now gotten to the point where their ads are more exciting than their articles.

But we still have The Dominion Roller Canary News!

This is the only one left with any quality content, so we should do all we can to keep it. Come on Everyone! Help become a part of its history by sending in something about yourselves and renewing your subscription. Let's keep it going for many years to come.

Our hobby is not dead yet. It's true that many have left us but it's just as true that many more can fill that void. It just takes one more

member, then another. Once they start coming back, others will follow. Start by telling people about your hobby. Invite them to a show or your living room where they will hear the song. They will probably become interested just by hearing. After all, that's where the ball started rolling in the first place isn't it? Imagine yourself for a minute as the first traveler to those islands, before it all started many years ago. Think what it would have been like to just sit by a tree with a flock of wild canaries, and listen to them sing. You would wonder about this remarkable bird and how it came to sing like that. We have come a long way from those first olive coloured canaries. It has been many years since man first heard their song. In all the years that have passed since then, the only thing that has changed is their ability to charm us with a more refined song. Today, we are still vulnerable of being charmed this way.

Although there hasn't been much change in the Roller Canary since our glory years, there certainly have been numerous changes in our own species. Take club meetings for example. How many of us go to club meetings anymore? Rather than socialize with our fellow fanciers most of us would rather sit in front of the computer, pretending that we are in touch with the rest of the world; when in reality we are lonelier than ever.

Many fanciers that used to keep exotic Parrots for companionship have gotten rid of them. You just have to pick up the newspaper and read the ads in the pet section to see what is happening. Birds that were once valued at thousands of dollars now are being given away for free or close to nothing. In fact some Rollers Canaries are sold for more than some of the African Grey Parrots or the Indian Ring necks. There was a time not long ago when the sky was the limit for prices. Another discouraging factor for some Parrot owners is that many Parrots at the show bench will win year after year. This could go on until you die considering the fact that many Parrots live

more than 70 years. I prefer having a chance at success every year. With the Roller there is always another chance of winning with better young birds than you had last year.

We need to make ourselves more visible and we need to solicit other bird fanciers. The year is 2009 and things are there for the ones that go out to take them. We have in just one little Roller Canary more reason for competition than you will find in any other show bird. We all know the Roller is bred for the song, but do you know that back in the early days, even the English Canary breeders had a color class? I am not talking about just a white class either; -no, not at all. From what I have read, they had a class for all colors i.e. Red Factor too! From those birds, all the other colours eventually emerged. Breeding for colour was as important to them as breeding for song is to us. The only thing different was that the colour canary had to have a good song as well as colour in order to compete in the shows. Before they could compete in the Colour Canary shows, they first had to be entered in the Roller song contest and earn a score of at least 35 points from a qualified Roller Canary Judge. And did you know that we also can also show our Rollers as Type birds in the Hartz class? I'm planning to show some of my hens as Hartz. I will let you know how I do. My point is that the Roller is more diverse than any other Canary out there. We should exploit these qualities to the fullest by taking advantage of all of our opportunities. In doing so, we will broaden our horizon and meet many new friends. Perhaps we can bring back some of the popularity that we lost to the Colour Canaries in earlier years. If we could just tear ourselves away from the computer a little more often, we would have more time to mingle. I'm planning to make a proposition at my club in order to increase the level of participation we have with the colour breeders. Most probably it will pass, since many of them are already breeding for color. We could have the same thing as the English color breeders of long ago. In order to

accomplish this we only have to create one more separate class of birds for competition. Our score sheet remains the same. This would allow everyone to experience the colour canary as it sings in its own class. I believe that this would also inspire some colour canary breeders to improve the quality of song found in these very beautiful birds.

If you or anyone in your club have done this or perhaps have an interest in doing something along this line, I would like to hear from you. I also want to learn about any experience that you may have had in this respect. I think that we have reached the point in time when we have to experiment with change. A little innovation would not make things worse. It could only make things more interesting.

In the hobby

Sergio Martin
One Die Hard Roller Breeder

Western Waterslager Club Annual Show

Visit us online at:
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