

More Than A Bird Show

 By Lisa Grimes 

How does one express the appreciation for the hospitality shown at the Montgomery Bird Show? As a Novice Breeder, I was impressed with their red carpet treatment that extended all who attended. Marie and Ted Sexton were instrumental in the planning of this bird show. Thank you to the Central Alabama Avicultural Society for all your hard work and hospitality. Hats off to you for a job well done!

Having only attended three bird shows so far in my exhibiting career, I always feel I have much to learn. I have never been disappointed in the judges or the advance breeders. All are willing to explain and answer questions.

On Saturday, Annette Howard was our judge. From this show I learned that conditioning is very important. She took the time to explain that conditioning starts weeks before, with daily spraying of the birds with water. It also entails proper nutrition and usually has a small window for best condition. While watching her interact with the show birds, I learned how to encourage my birds to stand properly in the show box. She would use her judging stick to touch the bird's tail to get the bird to pose. With great patience she work with one bird, because she felt the bird was very close to the NCS standard. The bird finally did it.

Sunday's show was judged by Phil Feret. I was once again overwhelmed by the degree of patience and knowledge this judge possessed. He talked about possible new mutations and on several occasions had us come up close to the birds to further explain what he was seeing. He discussed working with difficult birds in the show boxes, his suggestion was to put them in a show box and allow them to live there for a couple of weeks if necessary.

Phil also pointed out that a bird's back should be at a 70 degree angle when standing in the show box. He talked about a hinged tail and explained that a hinged tail could mean several things. It could be that the bird is simply too large to support the tail, the bird could simply be tired, or it could be part of the birds genetics in which the muscle is actually weak. Again, I learned not only from listening but watching as Phil worked with the birds. He told us that if a bird tends to slouch in the show box, while training at home hang something (like millet) high in the box to get the birds attention. It causes them to stretch their neck to reach and when they are rewarded they remember for the next time.

Was the Montgomery Show more than a bird show? Absolutely! The hospitality and the fellowship with other exhibitors/breeders was something I will never forget.