**A Beginners Perspective**

We have heard from many different sources about the problems of some of our new members lack of longevity. Having just been elevated from the Beginner Section to Intermediate I will try and explain what I found some of the problems to be.

**Lack of Funds**
It was not that when I started I did not have any money, it is that there was always something more pressing to spend it on. Being the only breadwinner with a wife and two children, it has been a difficult task to convince the other half that showcages, breeding cages, flights and birds are a justified purchase. I had to rely on birthdays, Christmas etc. to get birds and I made flights and breeding cages out of whatever materials I could find. On visiting other breeders I would often marvel at their set-ups, getting frustrated that they would be out of my reach. I came to accept that husbandry and breeding skills were more important than a you beautiful breeding room, and resigned myself to breeding birds in old speaker boxes and crates.
I have found and still find that showcases are the hardest thing to skimp on and have borrowed show cages to enter teams in shows. I made them from the kits, I made them myself, which I will not try again, and then I managed to buy a few of the old style which I have converted.
Buying reasonable birds at a good price is a very challenging exercise. We have heard from many experienced campaigners on the subject and until I start to get some success on the show bench I don't feel I should flout my views on the subject. I am beginning to breed some decent birds and I hope to see some wins forthcoming. All I can say is that the best birds I have bred have come from inexpensive birds. Most of the birds I have bought have been from $20 - $50 birds. I have developed a good relationship with a few experienced breeders and as such I trust them and have no problem buying older birds, particularly cock birds. I have bought about five (5) three or four year old cock birds and not one of them has missed. My favourite one of these is a 1993 normal grey cock bird who gave me five chicks in November. He has been responsible for most of the good birds I have got.
He has recently gone to a first year beginner's place on loan and has three chicks and counting. Some of these older cock birds would have been multiple hundred dollar birds as young birds so this is an inexpensive way of getting quality into your birds. There will come a time when a two or three hundred dollar purchase might happen. It is not upon me yet but when it happens I hope that divorce proceedings can be avoided.

**Lack of Breeding Success**
I believe this is only something that comes with experience. In the first season, breeding condition, the health of birds and the development of chicks are things that you learn a lot about. I believe it is up to beginner members to develop relationships with more experienced members. I used to get on the phone when I had a problem that I could not solve. It is therefore important that the experienced members are accessible in our fancy. I have had very good guidance in this regard and have not had too many problems (yet).

**Lack of Show success.**
Up until recently I have not worried too much about showing birds as I believe that I needed to concentrate more on breeding. My concern was more with breeding quality birds than show birds. The frustrating factor with trying to breed quality was that there was so much wastage, so the problem lies in trying to breed a higher percentage of good birds. This is something I am working on. It is frustrating to see some of the best breeders in our State seemingly pumping out top budgies. I think that many would be disconcerted by this seeing the amount of years of hard work, dedication, skill and energy to achieve these results. The pot of gold might just be too far away.
I am determined and passionate about the fancy and seeing some of our State's big achievers, simply acts as a spur.
So an inability to produce quality birds can be disheartening. I really don't know what the fancy as a whole can do about the problem. It is really something that the individual fancier needs to deal with. Perhaps just words of encouragement and interest taken will help these fanciers retain interest and look at the bigger picture. We all know that budgies are a project of many seasons and not just one or two. Personally all I have been looking for in DFI birds is an **improvement**on their parents. At least I know I am on the way up.

**Conflicting Ideas**
If I believed everything I have read or heard about these birds I would have had a breakdown long ago. Don't buy Opaline or Cinnamon cocks, buy Cinnamon cocks, use this soft food, don't feed greens, feed heaps of greens, soak seed. Don’t soak seed and I could probably go on for a couple of pages. I am a great believer in the **KISS**method (keep it simple stupid).
Buy the best birds that are on offer for the money you can afford, don't buy birds with major faults and breed pairs together that might breed good birds, regardless of variety. Beware though this is just **my**opinion.
All I can suggest is that you mirror those breeders who are the most successful. For instance, those breeders who*consistently*breed the numbers, hang off every word they say about their breeding and feeding regime.
Those who are *consistently*successful on the bench, study what bird they pair to what, and copy their show preparation methods. Again it depends on having a network of fanciers who a beginner can ask several hundred questions. I know that I am a persistent asker of questions and have become an expert at picking the particular moment when my subject is about to become violent.
My advice again can only be taken with a grain of salt due to my lack of success on the bench, but in my own defence I am yet to have a breeding season which has not been interrupted by a move of house and work has made time scarce.
In my first year I rung 30 birds, in my second 50 and last year I rung 80. This year I am getting fair dinkum and I hope to ring about 150.
I have been to several shows and studied my subject birds but I have rarely shown birds. I have also only this season become comfortable with the idea of trying to breed the lesser varieties. This year I am having a crack at greywings and lutinos.
I know I am fairly anonymous amongst the fancy and haven't the credentials of other contributors, but as I stated I've offered my own perspective for other beginners.

Daniel Ford, Swan Hill,Victoria