



# IFFCA *Newsletter*

*Never  
be surprised  
by anything  
a Fife can do!*

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## Officer's MESSAGE

It all started with a canary in the kitchen and the day I bought a Fife.

Unlike my paranoid Red Factor or my flighty American Singer, this bird knew me. He recognized my voice; he tried to get my attention when I came into the room. He sang to music and the vacuum cleaner; he answered my whistles. He was fearless; he would look me right in the eye, hop down and sing into my face. When I brought him a new vegetable treat, he checked it out right away. Not only did he eat it but he managed to turn it into all day entertainment for himself, entertaining me in the process.

He was so much more than “a bird in a cage with a song”. I thought I had found a remarkable canary but what I discovered is I had picked a remarkable breed of canary.

“Every Fife is remarkable.”

My Fife numbers grew. I joined IFFCA to buy breed-specific bands for them.

IFFCA has helped me find more Fife and meet more Fife Lovers. We share stories; we go to shows. We encourage each other and we keep learning.

“Every Fife is remarkable.”

What began as a pet has become a passion!

My hope is that anyone looking for a canary will find a Fife, and anyone wanting to know more about Fife will join IFFCA.

Because “Every Fife is remarkable.”

-- Susan Bergel

Susan is IFFCA's Treasurer and Membership/Bands Officer

### On The Cover:

It's ‘a real’; this Fife was not Photoshoped to sit on her finger. Sometimes we just don't remember all the wonderful things Fife can do.



**Affiliate with  
IFFCA and  
Your Club  
will Benefit**

➔ Best Fife In Show award available!

- ➔ Fife Judge Panel and qualification process coming SOON!
- ➔ 4 - 6 IFFCA newsletters sent to your club secretary for use by your members
  - ➔ Your club details will be listed on our website.
  - ➔ Your club shows will be promoted in lists on our website, our newsletter and our Facebook group.

Details and Info on our Website:  
[Affiliated Clubs Page](#)

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[internationalfifefancyclubofamerica.com/affiliatedclubs](http://internationalfifefancyclubofamerica.com/affiliatedclubs)



## The IFFCA Newsletter

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text (406) 949-2579

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**Members are encouraged to submit:  
Photos, Articles, Tips & Techniques ...  
and New Ideas!**

# CLUB NEWS AND VIEWS

## AUCTION Items Are Coming In!

IFFCA will be hosting an online auction open to the public to be held in May. This promises to be an entertaining way to raise funds for our club. We are planning to use *Galabid*, to conduct the secure business transactions of the auction.

We are asking members to donate items in New/Like New condition. Please send a clear photo (jpg format), description of the item, retail price, and suggested opening bid, to [IFFCAauction@gmail.com](mailto:IFFCAauction@gmail.com). You may wish to include an appropriate amount for shipping costs, as you will be shipping your item to the winning bidder. If you have any questions, please contact a Board member.

Please submit items by April 15.



**We Need MORE!**

Do you have an item in New or Like New condition to donate to our auction?

Please send an email including:

- clear photo, as jpg
- retail cost
- suggested opening bid

[IFFCAauction@gmail.com](mailto:IFFCAauction@gmail.com)

You will be responsible for shipping the item to the winning bidder.

If you have questions, please contact a Board member!

**Please submit items by April 15<sup>th</sup>!**



Lotus Plant Energy Drink Package



European Author Canary Books



K-cup Coffee Package



You & Me Gable Playtop Parrot Habitat, 24.75" L X 20.75" W X 32" H

**NEW**  
in unopened Old Box  
You & Me Gable Playtop Parrot Habitat, 24.75" L X 20.75" W X 32" H





## My Lovely Companion

I was stunned today when I realized that I have only had my little friend for two months. It seems as though he has been here much longer than that.

Despite my misgivings about the mailing process, he arrived, delivered to my door, in great shape and ready to tell me about his voyage in happy chirps. He follows two wonderful canaries in my past and therefore has inherited a large cage to jump and fly around in. (It is, however, filling with toys as he seems to delight in each new item and take to it immediately. I added a swing two days ago and he could hardly wait until I got my hand out of the cage before he jumped on it and started swinging away).

His coloring is lovely, downy bright white with small touches of black and gray. I wonder if you noticed that he has a mask effect over his left eye. It resembles exactly the “Phantom of the Opera” mask. There was some discussion that this should figure in his name, but I just could not name such a ray of sunshine after a dark character. About two weeks ago the right name came to me when a box of tea fell out of the pantry on my head—Earl Grey. And so he is named.

He was very vocal from the beginning with his expressive fweep sounds and then, suddenly, one evening, burst into beautiful trills of song. He looked quite startled and I dropped a pot in surprise. When we both collected ourselves I realized I have a beautiful and full-throated singer to amaze me. Right now he is living in the kitchen which is the center of the upstairs (no Teflon!!). When he becomes a bit tamer, I’ll be able to move him occasionally to a smaller cage and take him downstairs to my study where I spend quite a lot of time and where he will be able to fly free if he wishes to.

I may or may not have told you that I am a recent widow after a wonderful 38 year marriage to the loveliest man. In our time together we had, as I said, two canaries with very different personalities. We loved them very much, so I knew I was doing the right thing in finding this new little companion. He does give me some very comforting moments and makes me laugh. Thank you.

– HeyRoy

# SIMPLE CANARY CARE

## Every Day:

- ✓ Lighting – keep same as natural daylight hours; cover cage at sundown
- ✓ Fresh water – I recommend distilled, purified or bottled water – keep available, change daily
- ✓ 2 tsp seed – a good canary mix – feed once daily
- ✓ 2 tsp pellet food \* – offered free choice in a separate cup; replace weekly if not completely eaten
  - \* Roudybush is a good brand of supplemental pellet food that helps maintain balanced nutrition and the nibbles sized pellets can be ordered online.

## Weekly:

- ✓ Change cage bottom paper
- ✓ Clean all perches
- ✓ Occasional bath – early in day; small bowl with 1“ of cold, clean water; remove after 10 minutes

## During the Molting Season:

- ✓ 6 – 8 weeks – August to September – for extra energy and protein I recommend:
  - ✓ Hulled sunflower chips – ½ tsp and/or
  - ✓ Dry old-fashioned oatmeal – make small amounts available daily
  - ✓ Spray of millet seed – hang in cage near a perch
  - ✓ ¼ hard-boiled egg – shell and all; twice a week

## Extras and Don'ts:

- ✓ Your bird will enjoy a swing.
- ✓ Keep a piece of cuttle bone in the cage.
- ✓ No sandpaper covered perches.
- ✓ No parakeet gravel.
- ✓ Spraying *Febreze* or burning a Teflon-lined pan can kill your bird.
- ✓ Burning out your gas or electric oven near your bird releases carbon monoxide gas that can kill your bird.

## Daily Treat Possibilities:

(3 inch or small piece or slice)

Collard Greens

Swiss Chard

Kale

Broccoli

Spinach

Romaine Lettuce

Dandelion leaves

Winter Squash – 1 inch

Zucchini

Apple

Orange

Cucumber

Green pepper – white core  
with seeds

Baby carrot – raw

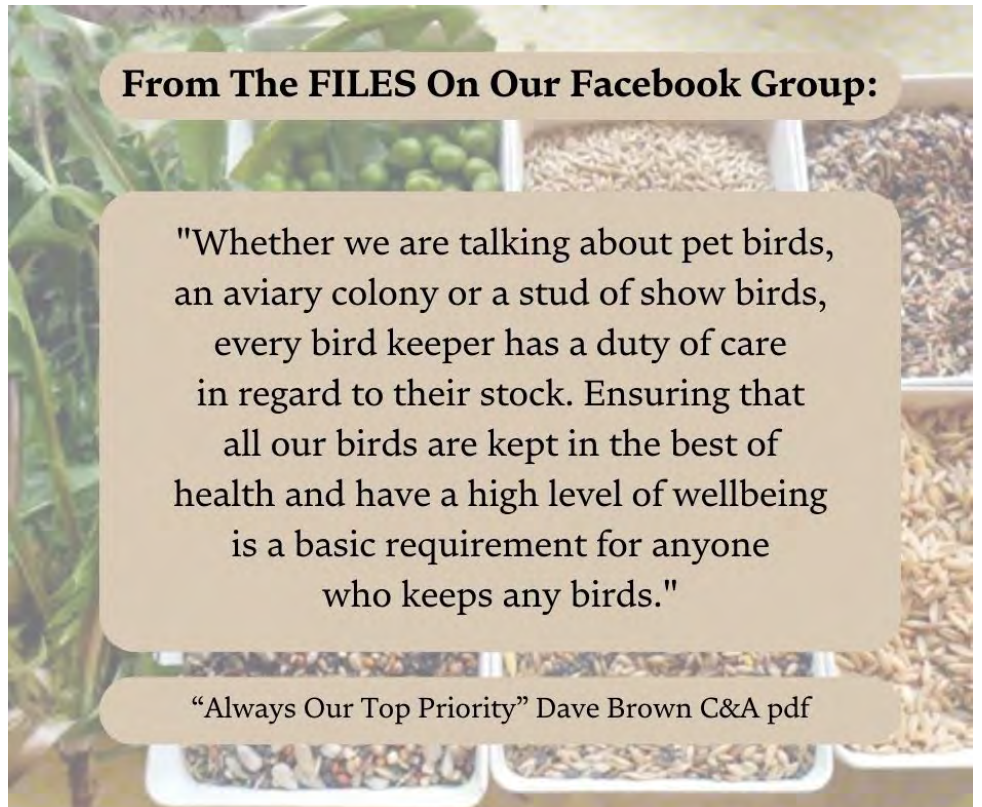
Corn on the cob – raw

**NEVER – chocolate  
or avocado**

## From The FILES On Our Facebook Group:

"Whether we are talking about pet birds, an aviary colony or a stud of show birds, every bird keeper has a duty of care in regard to their stock. Ensuring that all our birds are kept in the best of health and have a high level of wellbeing is a basic requirement for anyone who keeps any birds."

"Always Our Top Priority" Dave Brown C&A pdf



## IFFCA Member In Focus

**Name: Deborah (Deb) Whidden**

City/State: Dover, Delaware, U.S.A.

Occupation: Community Relations Coordinator, Public Relations Division for State Agency.

“I’ve always been about creatures and canaries were a part of my life years ago. Fast forward to now, different husband, different life, it was time to do something for myself that I enjoyed. I think it’s important for everyone to have something other than work to balance things out and I have a passion for these Fifes. When I grow up (retirement in the near future), I’m looking forward enjoying more time in the bird room and being able to help the IFFCA any way I can.”

**When did you begin keeping Fifes:** This is only my second year with the fifes. I blame Susan Bergel for this addiction. I was actually looking for two girls to pair with my two American Singers. My husband and I drove 3.5 hours from Dover to WV and met Susan. She introduced me to the Fifes and I fell in love that instant and left Susan with four! I was blown away by Susan’s bird room and within two weeks, I had cleared out the Granddaughters “toy” room and established my own bird room.

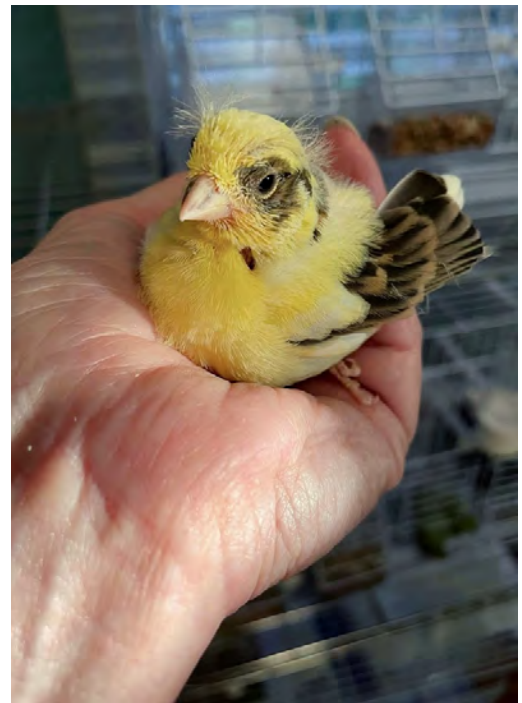


**Deb is IFFCA’s new Affiliated Clubs Liaison and the friendly voice welcoming new members.**

“If anyone is interested, my teapot is always on and I’m available for a chat any time!”



**Egg cartons filled with soft food waiting in freezer**



**Is there something you wish you would have known when you began:** I actually had no idea how much joy they would provide and how much time I would spend trying to learn.

**I would tell novices:** Read, study, do your research, don't stop learning about the breed and about birds in general. Find a mentor/ club that you feel comfortable reaching out to with even the simplest question. IFFCA has club members with years and years of experience and are always happy to share their knowledge and expertise. Plus, nothing beats a bird chat with your friends! (Deb Stout & Susan Bergel).

**Do you have a helpful TIP or Trick you think all bird keepers should know:** Take the time to know your birds. I think each one has its own personality and quirks. I find I can catch trouble earlier and address the problem when I see something off. (That may not be useful for big breeders but I think you can still be observant). Clean, clean, clean!

**Do you have a favorite food, tool or piece of equipment that you think is important in the care of your birds:** My birds are pretty spoiled with the best quality seed I can afford and a variety of fresh greens and foods. I use whatever I can find seasonally outside, such as chickweed, dandelions, herbs, plus the normal kale and store bought items. I like a variety because, if you were a bird, would it not be pretty boring eating the same thing every day? When I started someone suggested a sack cloth tea towel in the bird room for clean ups or escapes! Organic Apple Cider Vinegar in bird baths, I also use food grade diatomaceous earth as a food additive and pest control tool. All are valuable tools.



“I’m looking forward to passing along my love for the birds with my granddaughters who are already learning about the facts of life (wink, wink) and are always excited to help Nana in the birds room.”

## Line-breeding with longevity

*Developing your own line is the way to consistency, says **BRIAN KEENAN** – and longer-lived birds than you might expect can contribute to your programme, so think before you discard!*

I have always believed in line-breeding, as it offers the most practical way of controlling the gene pool, and thereby producing more consistent results, regardless of which animals you are working with.

Once when I discussed this with John O'Connor from Dublin, he suggested that our birds generally did not live long enough for our studs to fully benefit from linebreeding. I am not so sure.

Several years ago I visited one old Liverpool breeder, who showed me five generations of clear yellow cocks. They were all very similar, but showing a progressive improvement, which I remarked on. "They're all off your cock bird from six years ago," he told me. "There he is in the bottom cage. I bred with him in the first year and, ever since, I have paired him back to one of his daughters, each from the next generation. They come out like peas in a pod now!"

How many canary breeders keep birds for more than a couple of years? YCC secretary Keith Williams tells me he is remarkably patient with any new birds he brings in. He had worked with one bird for five years before it produced anything, but that bird in the end had been key to his current stud. I know I would have lost patience with any non-productive bird long before five years had passed, as I am sure many other people would also, but as Keith said, you've bought that bird in good faith, and you've bought it for yourself. Why give it to someone else if it doesn't work straight away?

Today, bird keepers tend to be far more impatient of their stock, and change lines, introduce fresh stock from multitudes of different breeders, and even change varieties, if things are not going as they would like, either in the breeding room or on the showbench.

Breeding livestock is never about instant gratification, it is much more about gradual and consistent improvement. Line-breeding is a way towards achieving this, but only if you work at it. Yes, you need to start off with good-quality stock, and yes, from time to time you need to introduce new blood into the line, but certainly not every year, and not after every bad show result.

*continued*>

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BRIAN KEENAN  
AUTHOR



With care, canaries do live long enough to produce consistent breeding lines, particularly the cock birds. Our current YCC president, Gary Eaton, summed birdkeeping up when he wrote in our club handbook that it wasn't the judges' opinions that mattered so much, as it was how you thought about your own birds. He reasoned that you saw your birds every day, and if they were pleasing to you, then that was all that really mattered.

And it follows, of course, that if your own birds are pleasing to you, then all you need to do is to produce more similar-looking birds, based on a line-breeding programme.

All it needs is time, patience and understanding. ◀ March 6 2019 • Cage & Aviary Birds



### More to learn from: BRIAN KEENAN

- [Laying Down A New Line, Parts 1 and 2](#) by Brian Keenan in our Facebook Group Files section and our website
- **Brain's VERY extensive website:** <http://www.yccuk.com/briankeenan/homepage.html>

# SOFT FOOD RECIPES on our website!



- Mario's Italian Softfood
- Susan Bergel's GREEN BREAD
- Anthony Celano's Softfood
- Debbie's Dry Mix

Rosario Gambino



Brian Cabral



Vicki M.



Cynthia Nelson



Vicki Mihelich



Marcia Bevington

