

# Wasatch Avian Education Society Newsletter

June 2021

## President's Message

### *Upcoming Dates:*

*Board Meeting:*  
1:00 pm June 6<sup>th</sup>

Meet at Ann Greig's  
1730 South Nevada  
Street (2320 East) in  
Salt Lake City. All  
are invited.

*Monthly Meeting:*  
7:00 pm July 10<sup>th</sup>  
Salt Lake County  
Complex (North  
Bldg), 2001 S State  
St in Salt Lake City

Free and open to  
the public. Come  
meet other parrot  
enthusiasts and  
check out our raffle  
table!

*AFA Convention:*  
August 12<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup>  
Hilton Minneapolis-  
St. Paul Airport

Dear All:

I received a note from the county in mid-April that our June meeting would not be taking place at the county complex, but here it is May 31st (at this writing), and no such message about July has been received yet. I am daring to hope that we will finally be done with this Twilight Zone stuff in time for our July meeting. But no promises.

In the meantime, we had a great little barbecue at Kay Woolsey's home in Sandy on May 8th, lots of people brought their birds, and socializing with club members and playing with their birds was such an amazing treat for me. And Pitmaster Kay showed us that the passage of time has not dimmed his bratwurst skills! Soon seeing club members and sometimes their birds it will be a regular part of my social life again, and not a moment too soon. Everything else remains the same, rescue is running like a well-oiled machine, we are continuing to place birds, and everyone can be justly proud of what we have been accomplishing even without meetings. Keep in mind that August is typically our yearly picnic, so even if we get skunked again in July, we can all meet at some park and have more fun in August. See you all very soon, I think.

Chase Kimball

# ABOUT THOSE PESKY FRUIT FLIES . . . AND THE ULTIMATE WEAPON

By Madeleine Franco

Just about the time the fruit flies start to annoy me in Las Vegas, I know it's time to migrate to Salt Lake City. Apparently, the ideal breeding temperatures are 94+ degrees F, which coincides with the time I start to anticipate the Las Vegas summer in all its glory.

The summer of 2009, I didn't time things quite right, and--due to circumstances beyond my control--the fruit fly invasion was well underway before I made my annual trek. "Know thine enemy" has always been good advice, especially during all-out war. So, here are a few useful facts about fruit flies that will help you appreciate why it is so important to nip these little critters in the bud.

- (1) Their lifespan may be several weeks;
- (2) Fruit flies are hunters with a sense of smell! They are small enough to pass through the mesh in your screens and will likely do so if what's on the other side is a picnic;
- (3) The adults have red, compound eyes, which make them more than cat-quick in predator avoidance;
- (4) Females are fertile for all but 12 hours of their adult life, and they can store viable sperm after a single insemination;
- (5) Fruit flies are capable of hatching multiple generations during their lifetime--which is why scientists use them for genetic studies. With a short breeding cycle, it is entirely possible for your bird room to become a fruit fly luxury resort within a very short time;
- (6) Fruit flies breed very well in moist, dark places at temperatures above 90 degrees F;
- (7) They love fruit and vegetable matter--fresh, fermenting and downright rotten--bananas and apples being particular favorites, and apple fermentation being a major attractant;
- (8) They gravitate toward mirrors;

- (9) Not unlike wasps, they rather like the color yellow;
- (10) Even though the method of eradication was recommended to me, one looks extremely foolish trying to vacuum fruit flies up with a vacuum hose;
- (11) The aforementioned method is largely unsuccessful, but it can be great exercise if you don't mind looking foolish. See again (5) and (8).
- (12) A fruit fly infestation doesn't make you a bad person;
- (13) Fruit flies are insidious and relentless;
- (14) To defeat them, you must be more of both (insidious and relentless), which in the case of fruit flies, still doesn't make you a bad person;
- (15) Armed with the above factoids and your victory against fruit flies, you will be a fascinating cocktail guest.

So, what to do about these pesky critters? I spent a long time lamenting that they were so small. I really wanted them to be large enough so I could beat them up one by one. In that way, I could have unleashed my frustration that, despite sound bird husbandry, and my diligently having eliminated as many ideal conditions as I possibly could, they had chosen to camp in my bird room. I even washed all the refuse containers and cleaned all the drains in the house and the garbage disposal, as these are typically favorite fruit-fly hangouts.

I did notice that many of them would fly toward and cling to a mirror in my bird room and in the bathrooms. And, one day I walked into the room and noticed a yellow toy on the water cooler by the mirror completely covered with them. Clearly, they were attracted to that. But, that merely entertained them and still didn't kill them. A motion-sensor laser gun pointed at the mirror seemed like overkill to me, not to mention the engineering problem and the expense.

Ah, but the wonders of the internet . . . enter the University of Kentucky Entomology Department <https://entomology.ca.uky.edu/ef621> . There you will find directions for an absolutely superior (and nearly free) fruit fly trap known to man. EXCEPT--unlike the proverbial mousetrap--it can be improved by using a few drops of dish-washing detergent, which changes the surface tension of the liquid, and using a cone made of yellow paper instead of notebook paper. Set one of these units up, and the fruit flies are gathering round even before you take your hands off the jar. Placed by a mirror, the trap is nothing short of

amazing. I have actually seen over 100 fruit flies waiting to get into the cone within less than a minute of placement of the trap.

I use a pint jar--like the ones you find packed with pickles or relish, or even a canning jar--and I fill the jar about two-thirds up to the cone with a mixture of about two parts cider vinegar to one part water, with a drop or two of dish detergent. You'll catch hundreds, if not thousands, of fruit flies a day; the more traps placed in strategic locations, the more fruit flies you'll catch. At that rate, you'll want to change the liquid every other day, perhaps even daily. Try not to be too fascinated and gladdened by how well this thing works, or too emotionally depleted when the war rages no longer after about a week or so. They say the adrenalin can be addictive, but we bird people already have a reputation for being just a bit odd!

Since constructing my first working prototype, I have learned that the cone on the fruit-fly trap does not have to be quite so tall. However, a taller cone can accommodate a greater number of fruit flies, and I like to be accommodating. Once the fruit flies enter the cone, because of the concentration of aroma from the attractant, it's almost as though they're intoxicated, and they rarely leave alive.

*Madeleine Franco is an award-winning business writer/presenter and founding president of the Southern Nevada Parrot Education, Rescue & Rehoming Society (SNPERRS). She is an avicultural hobbyist who tends a flock of approximately 30 non-breeding, highly platonic and interactive pet parrots. Madeleine is the owner/operator of Premium Pine Cones, LLC ([www.premiumpinecones.net](http://www.premiumpinecones.net)), specializing in remedies, toys and diversions for parrots that pluck but would like to kick the habit.*

# The American Federation of Aviculture

## 47th Educational Conference & Avian Expo

*Working Towards a Rosie Future for Aviculture*

**August 12-14, 2021**  
**Hilton Minneapolis-St. Paul Airport**



The hotel is less than three miles from Minneapolis-Saint Paul Airport via free shuttle. Enjoy neighboring Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge and the Mall of America. Convenient on-site dining, 24 hour fitness center, heated indoor pool and pet friendly rooms round out the amenities.

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