

FROM THE EDITOR



In the late 1970s Colin McDonough, Keith Hocking, other members of the then committee of our Society and I, set out to foster unity amongst the various bird clubs in South Australia with a view to ensuring that any challenges aviculture might face in the State could be met with a united front. Our efforts culminated in the formation of The United Bird Societies of South Australia (UBSSA) in 1978. The UBSSA was, and is not, a bird club in itself, but an affiliation of the South Australian bird clubs. The UBSSA cannot act unilaterally, but can only act on the majority authorisation of the affiliates on matters affecting aviculture within the State.

The UBSSA spent considerable time fostering, cajoling, and lobbying the bird clubs in the other States and Territories to form similar bodies. With the exception of New South Wales all the other States and Territories quickly formed such groups. These groups then resolved, at the urging of the UBSSA, to form a national body to speak on behalf of the bird-keepers of Australia. This organisation was named the Avicultural Federation of Australia (AFA). Unfortunately, AFA has never had enough funds to fully carry out the role for which it was formed, and this has led to strident criticism by some individuals and organisations, none of whom have contributed to an effort to make the concept work.

There are currently moves to fragment avicultural unity by forming rival national groups. If these moves succeed they will only result in strengthening the position of those threatening our hobby as it is today. It is of the utmost importance that the bickering, self promotion and empire building presently threatening aviculture ceases forthwith, and that all parties bury their differences and work together to protect our hobby from outside threats. The old axiom of...*united we stand, divided we fall*, should be heeded by all parties concerned.

If you should hear of any moves to fracture avicultural unity, point out to whoever is espousing them that the vehicle for achieving unity exists, and that there is no need to reinvent the wheel. All that is required is for all concerned to settle their differences for the benefit of aviculture, and for those individuals and organisations who can afford it to contribute funds to AFA, so it has the wherewithal to get on and actually do the job for which it was formed.

If the current situation continues, and Australian aviculture fragments even more, we won't be able to resist those forces opposed to the hobby, be they animal liberationists, government regulators, *etc.*, they will pick us off bit by bit. Such groups are well aware of the equally old axiom of...*divide and conquer*.

But then, what have we got to lose? Nothing I suppose, but our right in the future to pursue our avicultural hobby, as we now know it.

We must get our act together now, as tomorrow, next week or next year may well be too late!

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "R. Chilton".

Richard Chilton