

NATIONAL FINCH & Volume 35, No. 4 Oct • Nov • Dec 2018

THE JOURNAL OF THE NATIONAL FINCH AND SOFTBILL SOCIETY

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The National Finch and Softbill Society is dedicated to promoting the enjoyment of keeping and breeding Finches and Softbills to all interested parties, enhancing our knowledge of the proper care of these birds, encouraging breeding programs, and working with other organizations for the preservation of aviculture in this country.

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President's Message

Rebecca Mikel

Tooting Our Own Horn a Bit

As you read this, the 2018 National Bird Show is behind us! It's amazing how quickly time flies. The National Bird Show board is already making plans for the 2019 event, working on the schedule for the spring board meeting in which we will finalize the details and all plans for the next event. Thank you to those who supported this event in any way – through financial donations, by exhibiting your birds, or by being "hands-on" during the actual event – it takes a village to pull off an event of this magnitude. Thank you to Armando Lee, our 2018 Finch Division judge, who did an outstanding job over the course of a very long day!

Congratulations to Lauren Ogburn for her accomplishment of winning both the Level A and Level B "National Aviculture Recognition Award" (NARA) – tied to breeding successes with rare and hard-to-breed species (Purple Grenadiers, Violet Ear Waxbills, and Blue Dacnis). We also owe a big thank you to Lauren for her donation of the "Best Bred by Exhibitor" challenge trophy for the Finch and Softbill Division at NBS. This award is offered for the highest placing topbench bird which is NFSS close-banded, bred by, and exhibited by the bird's owner. This award will be a traveling trophy and before it will be retired to any one exhibitor, for permanent possession , the identical owner-breeder-exhibitor must win it three (3) times (need not be consecutive years). Each year's winners will have their name and year engraved on the plate. The first winner, Jose Urrutia, with a lovely Zebra finch. Congratulations Jose! Lauren and the Suncoast Club have enthusiastically hosted, sponsored, and supported a new show the past two (2) years and while I've not had the pleasure of attending one yet, it sounds like the "flock" attending that event grows each year.

And what about Fran Anderson – she had several different Higgins Divisions winners this year (was it 3 or 4???!!) – including the NFSS Division which she won with a Starling that was absolutely beautiful. That Starling went on to win the Scannell - an award given to the bird selected by a vote of judges from ALL divisions for the "Best Bird" of the entire show! What an accomplishment! Finches have seldom been able to garner this award – so her win was a win for ALL of us. Congratulations Fran on several picture perfect entries – but that Starling – my goodness that Starling!!!!

Last, but not least, If you get a moment, please extend a big congratulations to the NFSS Panel Judge selected to judge the Finch and Softbill Division at the 2019 NBS Event – Hiram (Ken) Rampersaud.

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NFSS Journal Advertising Rates

Premium Ad Po	ositions:								
Position/Size			Per Issue	Per Year					
Cover Positions-I	Full (Inside Front, Insid	le Back, Back):	\$130.00	\$425.00					
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Issue	Due Date	Issue	Due	Date					
First Quarter	November 1 st	Third Qua	rter Mag	y 1 st					
Second Quarter	February 1 st	Fourth Qu	arter Aug	gust 1 st					
For more information, contact the Advertising Manager — advertising@nfss.org									

NFSS Board of Directors Meeting – Fourth Quarter 2018

MEMBERS: Single: 260 Dual: 62 Foreign: 11 Junior: 3 TOTAL: 336 TREASURY: Checking: \$4,695 Savings: \$31,467 Total: \$36,162

Meeting of Judge's Panel conducted at 2018 NBS, Hiram Rampersaud announced as NFSS judge for 2019 event

Exhibitors and persons attending shows are reminded to refrain from posting photographs of birds in the competition before or during a show as well as to not post class and section winners until all judging is complete

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Gene Perez approved by NFSS Board as new NFSS Panel judge after having met all other criteria (testing, apprenticeship).

Laura Tinker will discuss with all NFSS Panel judges the requirement to comply with the Migratory Bird Act regulations as it relates to birds allowed on the show bench.



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The Star Finch – Feeding, Care and Breeding William Parlee



When I first started breeding finches I bred Zebras and Societies at home. When I got my aviary next to my pet shop I wanted to expand into Cockatiels, Parakeets, and more finches.

One day when I was going to an industry pet show in Long Beach, I decided to make a side trip to Siggie Meyr's in El Monti. Once I got there I was first drawn to the flights of Turquoisine and Scarlet Chested Parakeets. Most of his aviaries housed finches and softbills. From Pekin Robins to Gouldian finches and everything in between. I was

there mostly to buy birds for my pet shop, but the selection process was mindboggling. I wished I had had unlimited funds.

I ended up coming home with Gouldians, Parrot finches, Diamond Sparrows and Star finches, both normal and yellow-faced. Oh, and one pair of Scarlet Chested Parakeets. Upon getting home I set up the birds in the aviary to condition them before offering them in the store. When I brought them to the store next door, I ended up keeping the Star finches for myself. I was going to bred them and see if I could produce more. To start I set the normals up in two small breeders, one pair in each and another for the yellow-faced. The cages were bare, with only one hooded wicker nest in each and natural perches. Later additions to the aviary were Gouldians, Owls, Green Singers, Peter's Twinspots, and Shaft tails along with my Zebras, Societies and Stars.

When I first set them up I offered only a standard finch seed mix and hung millet sprays in each cage. Having a store I had access to everything I needed. The birds all settled in quite quickly after checking out the confines of their cages and the nests. As time went by I added Kellogg Petamine to their daily diet. Because it was springtime, I had an abundance of chickweed (Stellaria media) that I used to feed my Cockatiels. I decided I would try some with the Star finches. Well without reluctance they nearly pulled it out of my hands, so it became a staple in their daily offerings. You should know this was back in the mid 70's and long before the internet, so much of bird breeding back then was by trial and error, until you found out what worked. In the following



weeks I added freshly sprouted seed, thistle seed, additional canary seed, and homemade corn bread. Stars are really easy feeders. For some reason the yellow-faced really liked the thistle and corn bread. I also offered baby meal worms, some loved them, some ignored them.

After deciding the birds were fully conditioned, I started to zone in on getting them to bred. I had heard that they were ready breeders and among the easiest of Australian finches to breed. When I purchased them I tried to sex them so I would have pairs. The males mask is much broader and the color more intense than the hen. Also, both cocks and hens have a simple shrill calling noise, although only the cocks sing. My birds showed basically no interest in mating at all. I started adding ripped blue jeans and dried grasses to the cage to see what they would do with it. Within days they started to bring the grass clippings into the nests. I also collected down feathers from several other cages and deposited them on the bottoms of the star finch cages, they used those also to line the nests. I should say one of the normal pairs and the yellow faced pair built nests, the other seemed not to be interested at all, although they did sleep in the nest. With that pair I tried everything including a nest box, canary cup, different nesting materials including coconut fibre, all to no avail. I even put in some branches and fake foliage. I should also mention that I provided 5600 Kelvin florescent bulbs over all my cages.

By this time I had had the birds for just over a month. The first to breed were the yellow faced. I didn't realize it, although I had noticed them going in and out of the nest more frequently. One morning when they were both out of the nest I saw four eggs in the nest. I was elated. Sometimes they would both sit on the eggs, but more usually the female slept in the nest, and male remained out. The male would always return to the nest in the morning as to relieve the hen from roasting duties. The eggs started hatching on the 14th day and continued to hatch each day. They will usually start to hatch on the fourteenth day after the last egg is laid. The new babies stayed in the nest for about twenty days, although I noticed a few heads peaking out a few days before. Even though they had fledged, they still returned to the nest to be fed. I put out seeds in low cups to induce them to eat on their own. The first pair was fully weaned in just over a month. The yellow faced pair was my most successful pair, raising over 23 birds while they continued to breed. Star finches can be long lived, many living over ten years. After four breeding seasons and 23 babies, my yellow faced pair, stopped breeding. Because they were imported and not banded, I had no idea of their actual age. I have since found that their best breeding years are between the third and sixth year.

So after achieving success in a relatively short period of time with my two pairs, I decided that my other normal pair was a dud, as they showed no interest in each other or in nest building, but were happy to sleep at night in the bare nest. I thought my best course of action was to release them to my store to be sold as pets.

One day I was bringing some Zebra finches to a friend to put in her aviary. She raised Cockatiels in a long lean to



greenhouse. The greenhouse was set up with the flights up against the house with an aisle in front. On the other side of the aisle was planting benches. As I was leaving with the Zebras, I scooped up my celibate pair of stars to take along. My reason for bringing these finches were twofold. One, to add some free flight activity for my friends aviary and to see how the finches would do in an unheated greenhouse. I must report that the greenhouse, because of it's location seldom went down to freezing, in fact on sunny days it frequently went up above sixty degrees in the depth of winter in my New England location. I provided some branches to lay out on the potting benches and plenty of seed and millet sprays. I dumped some winter cut grasses in piles as well. I even set up a few wicker nests. I had heard that I would have little problem with the Zebras, but should keep a close watch on the Stars as they were not as temperature tolerant.

I would visit a few times a week and check on them. The Zebras had a ball flying all over the place, even into the cockatiel flights, but the Stars seemed okay but seldom came out of a nest that they built for themselves out of grasses and cockatiel feathers at the top corner of one of the cockatiel flights, except to feed and drink.

On my visits I would refresh the seed pans and the egg food cups. Many people are not aware the sun is at it's strongest point late in March. Many of the day time temperatures would reach into the 70's even when it was freezing outside. Shortly before Easter, I had not only Easter eggs, but I was blessed with five Star finch eggs from my celibate pair. The Zebras raised several clutches all winter long. The Stars ended up fledging three of the eggs with two never hatching. As soon as those babies weaned I removed them, from the greenhouse, and brought them back to my aviary. I was afraid they might not make it though any cold snaps.

Early in the summer, I returned my greenhouse pair of Stars to my aviary, where they continued to breed for a few more years. My experience with my Stars was quite satisfying. My yellow-faced pair produced two birds that would go on to compete on the top bench of several shows. One actually won best in show at the Greater New England Cage Bird Show.

If you want to try something more challenging than Zebras, Stars are hardy and a good choice. If you breed any birds, I strongly suggest that you band them. For Star finches use a 2.5mm band or NFSS "C" size. Wait until the 8th day to put the leg bands on, before that the bands may slip off. After the 12th day the band starts to become difficult to put on.

Important reminders: Provide fresh quality seed mix and clean water daily. Provide plenty of perches, at least one being natural. Provide a calcium source, ie Cuttlebone. Greens in some form should be offered. Keep finches out of drafts.

Only use a suitable size cage for the species. Low sided bath is advised. Birds like company, but not too much company, keep in mind that privacy might be necessary in the form of plantings or interwoven cardboard through the cage wires.

Other than clean food and water, a stress free environment is essential for breeding. Nosy cats or other animals will not make for happy finches. Good luck in whatever you breed.



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Beauty and Charm – The Blue Dacnis Lauren Ogburn



Stunning. Charming. Amazing and beautiful. These words may be overused, but they are not an exaggeration when describing the Blue Dacnis (*Dacnis cayana*).

These delightful small softbills are my passion. I started out with wild-caught specimens and over seven years have seen three generations of them grace my home. Most are parent-raised; I have two that I have hand-raised. I have been honored and lucky to spend countless hours observing and fine-tuning the optimal environment, nutrients, and breeding opportunities for them, doing my best to duplicate their native habitat in South America. There are not many official studies of these birds in the wild, especially when it comes to breeding and documenting the progress of chicks into adulthood.

GENDER DETERMINATION

A sexually dimorphic species, the plumage of juveniles resembles that of adult hens, with a blue head and blue-green body feathers, until the birds are 7 to 8 months of age. At this time, the males will start to get bright-blue body feathers mixed in. A few weeks later, the male's distinctive black throat-bib, eye-slash, and shoulder markings become apparent. Full coloration is seen at 10 months. I have a hand-raised chick, "Tiny," whom we all thought was a hen until the bright-blue feathering came in on his chest. I sent in a DNA sample and was pretty much blown away to learn our girl was, in fact, a boy! Of course as soon as I sent the DNA off, this was becoming more apparent by the day. In fact, Tiny was entered (and placed on top bench) at an NFSS show at 3 months of age—as a hen!

They are active birds, but not crazy, nor cage-bangers; they are full of personality, and even the wild-caught birds will become accustomed to taking food from your hand. They are always watching and interested in their



surroundings. They are definitely intelligent and inquisitive; I feel strongly that mental stimulation and enrichment activity are vital. A plain, bare cage is not suitable for this species. Tiny is in the kitchen, and hilarity ensues when he sees someone with the dish soap and anticipates, and at times demands, that bubbles must be produced to chase, or at least "talk about."

DIET

Daily fresh fruit is a must; papaya seems to be the hands-down favorite. Live food is critical as well. I feed unlimited amounts of small, live mealworms, and they savor about a half-dozen wax worms each per day. Along with the fruit and live food; they get a commercial softbill mix; greens (just watch them stick their beak and faces into romaine lettuce!); fresh eggfood when breeding; and yes, soaked, chitted seed. Although they are not "supposed" to be seed eaters, I have observed all of them eating the chitted seed, and the seeds are not passed in droppings.

CLEANLINESS

Blue dacnis are extremely meticulous with keeping their feathers clean, slick, shiny, and tight. Bathing is taken as a serious, yet fun daily routine. They go all in—you can see their joy drenching themselves from beak to tail, shake and preen, then go in for another round.

VOCALIZATION

Both male and female have a high twisp-twisp call. This is observed frequently, and especially when courting. The male will also display to the hen, or simply just when excited about something, by flashing his black throat-bib by raising and lowering the beak rapidly. Of significant note, the male is the only one who will vocalize with a lower-pitched, melodic song, or "talking." The male blue dacnis will even mimic the tone, syllables, and intonation of a human voice, though not with the skill of a parrot. Our Tiny will greet you with "You're so pretty!" throughout the day, pressing himself to your hand or finger. It's pretty adorable.

I have not seen these different vocal calls described in any literature; I have come to notice this by careful, close observation of my own birds in my home. I will continue to observe and listen before arriving at a definite conclusion.

In closing, I hope you have enjoyed my sharing this little bird, who is a big part of my life. I love to hear about others' experience with the Blue Dacnis. Drop me an email (sunbay@comcast.net), or find me on Facebook (Lauren Sunbay).

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More information: www.eFinch.com/show

Affiliate/Awards Director affiliations@NFSS.org

CALIFORNIA

Central California Cage Bird Club

Location: Stanislaus County Agricultural Center, 3800 Cornucopia Way #B, Modesto, California 95358-9492 Club webpage: http://www.mycccbc.org/

Finch Society of San Diego County

Meetings: 4th Sunday of each month Location: Poway Elks Lodge, 13219 Poway Road, Poway, CA Website: www.finchsocietyofsandiego.com Email: sdfinchsociety@gmail.com

West Coast Zebra and Society Finch Show – Specialty Club

Meetings: none Website: www.efinch.com/show

CONNECTICUT

East Coast Finch Society

Club Contact: Jose Urrutia, 70 Porter Brook Ave. East Hartford, Ct. 06118 Email: jm_jariel@yahoo.com Phone: 631-875-1544

FLORIDA

First Coast Finch & Softbill Society

Lauren Ogburn 860 Fruit Cove Road, St. Johns, Fl 32259 Meetings: 1st Saturday every 3 months Location: 860 Fruit Cove Road, St. Johns, Fl 32259 Contact: Lauren Ogburn / Van To Phone: 904-923-7431 Visit us on Facebook!

Treasure Coast Exotic Bird Club – Founded in 1989

Meetings: 4940 SE Anchor Ave, Stuart, FI. Social Media: https://www.facebook.com/TCEBC1989/ Contact: President – Maryann May Phone: 772-971-2554

MASSACHUSETTS

Massachusetts Cage Bird Association

Website: http://www.masscagebird.org/

Affiliate/Awards Director affiliations@NFSS.org

MICHIGAN

Society of Canary and Finch Breeders of Michigan

Mary Tarsitano - 53546 Beechwood Dr., Shelby Township, MI 48316 Web page: http://www.scfbmichigan.com Meetings: Meetings 3rd wkend of the month at members' homes. Club Contact: mtarsitano@gmail.com Phone: 586-781-6429

MISSOURI

Gateway Parrot Club

Meetings: 3rd Sunday of each month Location: Varietees Bird Store, 60 Meramec Valley Plaza, Valley Park, MO 63088 Website: http://www.gatewayparrotclub.org Contact: Georgia Fletcher Email: president@gatewayparrot.org

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Birds of a Feather Avicultural Society

Meetings: 7:30 pm – 2nd Monday each month Location: Villa Crest Retirement Ctr, 276 Hanover Street, Manchester, NH 03103 Email: Prismsdad@aol.com Website: www.BOAF.com

NEW JERSEY

Garden State Bird Association

Email: GardenStateBirdAssociation@gmail.com Club Meeting: First Friday of every month in meeting hall Location: 417 US-1, Grove Street, Elizabeth NJ 07202 Social media: www.facebook.com/GardenStateBirdAssociation

NEW YORK

Colorbred Canary Club of New York

Meetings: 2nd Sunday of the month (Except July, August & Holidays) Location: Averill Blvd. Park, Elmont, (Long Island), NY 11001 Email: nycolorbredcanaryclub@gmail.com

Astoria Bird Club of New York

Social Media: https://www.facebook.com/AstoriaBirdClub/

New York Colorbred Canary Club

Jose Zelada - 20 N. Goodwin Ave., Elmsford, NY 10523

Affiliate/Awards Director affiliations@NFSS.org

OREGON

Columbia Canary Club

Location: Firstenburg Community Ctr, 700 NE 136th Ave., Vancouver, WA Meetings: 2nd Sunday of most months, Milwaukie Grange Website: https://www.columbiacanaryclub.org/ Facebook: Columbia Canary Club Location: Milwaukie Granger Hall, 12015 S.E. 22nd Avenue, Milwaukie, OR Contact: Sandra Foot-Gregory Email: sfoote@xpressdata.net Phone: 503-310-3133

TEXAS

Fort Worth Bird Club

Website: http://forworthbirdclub.com Club Email: fwbc@fortworthbirdclub.com Contact: Cheryl Burns Phone: 817-455-2016 Email: cheryl@newworldranch.com Meetings: Visit us on Facebook

Texas Bird Breeders and Fanciers Association

Barbara Irwin - 4211 Kelly Elliott Rd., Arlington, TX 76016 Club Email: texasbirdbreeders.org Contact: Barbara Irwin Phone: 817-572-6262 Email: royceandbarbirwin1973@netzero.com

Fort Worth Bird Club

Club Meeting: Fort Worth Botanical Gardens, Second Sunday of the Month, 2 p.m. Schedule changes in summer months. Webpage: www.fortworthbirdclub.com Social Media: www.facebook.com/Fort-Worth-Bird-Club-262935933816613/ Email: fwbc@fortworthbirdclub.com Phone: 682-231-3099

Canary and Finch Society of Houston

Location: 15700 John F Kennedy Blvd, Houston, TX 77032 Website:https://www.canaryandfinchsociety.com/ Meetings: Second Sunday of the Month

Canary and Finch Society

Nasrolah Espari - 23207 Willow Pond Drive, Katy, TX 77494

Affiliate/Awards Director affiliations@NFSS.org

WASHINGTON

Lory League

No meetings. We are a paper club Social Media: yahoo group and a facebook page Website: www.loryleague.org Contact: Julie Corwin 206-501-7428

PUERTO RICO

Asociacion de Criadores de Finches del Estec, Inc.

Meetings: Wednesdays 7 to 9pm Location: Lus Catalina Mall, Food Court, Caguas P.R. Website: Asociacion Criadores de Finches (Facebook) Email: uanalicea@yahoo.com

PRZFC – Puerto Rico Zebra Finch Club

Meeting Dates and Location: Arecibo Contact Officer: Gene Perez Email: genecuba1@yahoo.com Phone: 787-385-2972 Club Website/Social Media: www.facebook.com/groups/przfc/

THE NFSS 2018 CENSUS IS NOW OPEN!

The census will remain open until March 31, 2019, and will be available online only, at **http://nfss.org/fss/8257-2/**. This link will take you to the 2018 Census on the NFSS website, where you will find directions on how to fill out the forms.

The new format is very easy to use, so it won't take long for anyone to enter their information. What we want is the count of your birds as of December 31, 2018. You will be able to enter species without having to specify mutations. You do not have to be a member of NFSS in order to participate, but membership will help you locate other breeders working with your same species.

Take a few minutes and participate! Let's see how many different species are represented, how many are in peril, and how many are well established! Your information will remain anonymous if you prefer that no one knows what species and how many birds you have.

NFSS JUDGES PANEL

4th Vice President - Judges Panel/Standards/Research Laura Tinker - 31 Grape Hollow Road, Holmes, NY 12531 Phone 845-518-5406 • Email: Judgespanel@nfss.org

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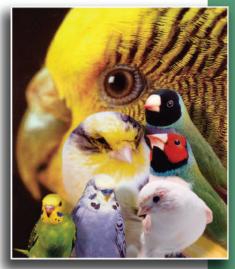
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		C BANDS	— \$3.00 ре			 Indicate q 	uantity / col		
XB (4.1mr	n):			X3 (4.	5)			TOTAL:	
Check our website for updated availability, sizes, colors and new products. All size recommendations found on-line http://nfss.org/band-size-charts/									
► E-Z KIT SMALL — (2.0mm): 24 bands per kit /8 colors — \$6.50 ea.									
		L — Indicat					- 50 /\$6.50		
Red	Blue	Orange	Green	Purple	Yellow	Black	White		
► E-7 KI		(3.0mm);	24 hands ne	r kit/8 cold	vrs \$6 50	each			
 E-Z KIT MEDIUM — (3.0mm): 24 bands per kit/8 colors — \$6.50 each E-Z KIT LARGE — (4.5mm): 20 bands per kit/5 colors — \$6.50 each 									
		R — Size 7							
► BAND	CUTTER -	- \$30.00 eac	h						
		IZES MEMB					SUBTOTAL	.:	
Size A (2		old-breasted		nge-cheeke	d Waxbill, O	wl Finch, Re	d-eared and		
Size B (2		trawberry Wa ack-cheeked		don Bleu, C	uban Melod	ious Finch, F	ire Finch, Oli	ve Finch,	
	Ŕ	ufus-backed	Mannikin and	I Timor Zeb	ra Finch.				
Size C (2		utthroat, Heck herry Finch, I						pped Waxbills,	
		rey Singing F							
	С	rimson Seed	Cracker, Red	d Siskin, Cu	itthroat Finch	n and Lemon	Breasted Ca	inary.	
Size D (2	,	ociety (Ameri hestnut- brea	<i>, , , , , , , , , ,</i>			,	,	ouldian Finch,	
		merican Zebr			s, Finalieu i	Nonparen, m		s anu	
Size E (2		m): Society (Euro), Black-crested Finch, Diamond Sparrow, European Greenfinch, Golden Song							
					e finch, Euro	pean Goldfir	ich, Europea	n Zebra Finch	
Size G (3	and Canary (Gloster, Pfife). Size G (3.2mm): Magpie Mannikins, Siberian Goldfinch, small Tanagers and Canary (Border, Roller, Red								
		actor and Lize	,						
Size J (3.	Size J (3.3mm): Pekin Robin, Silver-eared Mesias, small Softbills and Canary (Yorkshire, Norwich, Crested and Frill).								
	. 5mm) : Ja	iva Rice birds				h and Sham	a Thrush.		
		amond Dove				orh Ctarling			
		af Birds, Pag						of 10 bands	
A			E E	e quantity G		w. 35.0 K L	M M	TOTAL:	
	_	-	_	•					
*HANDLIN	NG FEE: M	UST be inclu	ded in all or	ders. ** C	Outside US	A orders	add \$ 5.00		
Under \$2		\$6.00		- \$60.00	\$10.00	TOP S	UBTOTAL		
\$21.00 —		\$8.00		- \$ 100.00	\$12.00	BAND S	UBTOTAL		
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φ 00.01	φ 100.00	ψ2.10	φ 200.01	φ 000.00	γ Ψ.00		TOTAL		
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