

BUCK-WHEAT BYTES



Guinea Fowl International
www.guineafowlinternational.org

GFIA Loses Patriarch

Dan MacNeice, known to many of us as “Danj” (his screen name, a combination of his name and state abbreviation), passed away on Feb. 2. He was 74.

Dan was one of our charter members. Many of us “met” him online through the GFIA message board; others met him in person at one of the Guinea Fowl Conferences he attended or at Northeast-area small gatherings of guinea keepers.

Without Dan, there may not have been a Guinea Fowl International Association; or the organization may not have been as “organized” as it is today. There may not have been a newsletter; our yearly conferences very likely would have been narrower in scope and less ambitious. Dan was a behind-the-scenes commentator, advisor, and in his words, a “pot-stirrer.” He had many years of experience with guinea fowl and with trying to organize a widely scattered group with such a specialized interest. His experience and advice had much to do with bringing this organization to where it is today.



Dan at his compost bin, where he inadvertently hatched a pair of keets, whom we came to know as Reepi and Binny.

Dan died peacefully at home in Cologne, NJ, with Irish music playing, a fire in the fireplace, and family at his side. He had the opportunity to sort through many of his writings, some of which will likely be published in book form. His wife Charlotte is now the keeper of their 8 guineas; she stays in touch with us, posting on the message board from time to time.

A memorial service will be held on or around Dan’s birthday, May 15.

GFIA’s 4th Annual Guinea Fowl Conference April 3–5

Probably our most informative Guinea Fowl Conference yet is set for April 3–5 in Georgetown, Delaware, USA.

A cooperative effort of the University of Delaware College of Agriculture & Natural Resources and Delaware State University, this conference focuses on Small-Scale Poultry Health and Small-Scale Poultry Management.

Researchers, professors, and staff at both schools

have put together a program which includes results of two studies (one recently completed, the other ongoing) applicable to our backyard flocks. One study has been started, inspired by this upcoming conference, looking at the efficacies of natural vs. conventional treatments for parasites affecting guinea fowl. The study will be ongoing, even after the conference, but interim data will be reported out as one of the presentations.

Discounted rooms are available at the Comfort Inn,

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GFIA Conference April 3–5

Just five minutes away from the conference site, in Georgetown, DE. To reserve a room, call 302–854–9400 and tell them you’re with GFIA.

Conference registration is only \$45 (\$35 for GFIA members), and includes lunch on Friday and Saturday. Breakfast is included at the hotel.

To register for the conference, call Cindy at 979–773–9100, go online at www.guineafowlinternational.org, or write to GFIA, 2812 FM 987, Kaufman, TX 75142.

A Date With Spring

By Dan MacNeice

Even though this article was printed in our newsletter only a year ago, we are reprinting it in honor of the author, Dan MacNeice, writing as The Incorrect Gardener, as he reflected on the coming of Spring in the northern hemisphere.

Miss Primavera, also known as Spring -- but decidedly “Miss” by any name -- is scheduled to look in on us today. Never known to set much store by dates, she may yet favor us with a timely appearance, showing up perhaps with frost in her hair, before shaking it out and bewitching us with a smile that thaws our wintry hearts.

She has been reminded of her appointment for quite some time now. Choruses of winter-aconite and early crocus have entreated her not to forget it and have retired exhausted from singing. The insistence of cardinals has intensified for weeks, and lawns spell out



For anyone flying to the conference, BWI airport is the closest major airport. Salisbury, MD is the closest secondary airport.

Plenty of people are available to pick up from either airport (save money on a rental car!)

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their version of her name in tentative green.

But there’s no guarantee that having made it here on time she will stick around for more than a few hours. She is quite capable of storming off in a tantrum before the day is out, with a scarf of snow trailing from her heaving shoulders. Tomorrow, on the other hand, may see her back again as though she had never left.

Spring is the teenage daughter of the sun, whom she follows about through the year, hoping he will lead her to the easy life in a permanent home. There are places where she almost finds it and

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## A Date With Spring

moves in, she believes permanently, only to grow bored after a ten-month stay and leave without notice to hitch a ride with the venturous winds from other regions.

Her visits here are brief and all the more treasured for that reason. Much of what passes for "spring" in these latitudes should more properly be called early summer: the onrush of heat and drought in late April or May destroys what the tears of spring have quickened, in some cases before we've even noticed what it was.

Any gardener can readily remember years in which she gave us a miss altogether, when the interval between winter and summer was merely a slapstick entr'acte in which daffodils, for instance, had to emerge from their frozen beds to bloom with their chins still on the ground, before being cooked to dry husks a few days later. But in every year she leaves a token of her passing, a different one to each of us perhaps, but a definite signal



that she was here. We realize at that moment she has left to change; the coy and moody Primavera is about to reappear as the sultry prima donna of summer.

Her farewell to me is always the same: a scent of ink, high in the chilly air and probably from the insignificant blossom of an unidentified tree, is a bittersweet indication that the daughter of the sun has grown. And that is so cool.

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## New Logo for Guinea Fowl International



At its last general meeting, GFIA saw the need for a more versatile logo - one that could be printed in black-and-white, screen-printed, or embroidered. We contacted Andrea Feathers, an artist well-known for her humorous take on poultry ([www.andreafeathers.com](http://www.andreafeathers.com)), and she happily took on the challenge. After many dozens of photos, several hours observing guinea fowl, and more dozens of sketches, these are the final drawings.

Tell us what you think!



**GFIA memberships expired** at the end of 2008. If you forgot to renew, please renew today! If you're not currently a member, please join. Benefits include a Welcome Packet, thrice-yearly newsletters, educational materials, plus you'll be supporting our work:

- ♦ Supporting the responsible keeping and breeding of guinea fowl;
- ♦ Educating on the care and habits of guinea fowl;
- ♦ Assisting those interested in incubating, hatching, and keeping guinea fowl.

Write us at the address below; visit our website, or call 979-773-9100 for membership information.

**2009 Membership Rates:**

(all prices in U.S. dollars)

Check One:

- Single Membership ..... \$20.00
- Family Membership ....\$28.00
- Junior Membership  
(Age 15 & under) ..... \$5.00
- Breeders List (no charge)

Make checks payable to **GFIA**  
and mail with this form to:

**Guinea Fowl International Association**  
**2812 FM 987**  
**Kaufman, TX 75142**  
**USA**

Please include your name, address, phone number(s), email address. Also, we'd like to know how you want to be listed in our membership directory (full or partial listing or name only), how many and what color guinea fowl you have, and whether you'd be interested in serving on a committee or contributing to our thrice yearly newsletter.

Guinea Fowl International  
2812 FM 987  
Kaufman, TX 75142

**Customer Name**  
**Street Address**  
**City, ST ZIP Code**