

When Speling Doesn't Really Matter: In Praise of Larry Gallawa, Triumphant at Last

[Larry Gallawa passed away, quietly, on October 2, 2006. When he died, he was nearly destitute and didn't have a house--in fact, not even a room--which he could call home. What Larry DID have was the admiration and respect of the many whose lives he touched as he steadfastly fought for the animals. He will not be forgotten.]

Let's face it; Larry Gallawa had no use for tact...or a spell checker. He could drive you crazy. He absolutely refused to compromise, or tone down his rhetoric when it came to pursuing his major goal: promoting the welfare of innocent, defenseless animals, especially parrots. He was so passionate about this that he seemed never to take the time to check the spelling of some of the words in his written communications, and occasionally he got some of the minor facts wrong. He once "promoted" me to Director of the World Parrot Trust! Here's a typical example of his written word:

"Hello

As you may know I have been making a major pain in the kneck of myself in Pierce County. Over the past 3 + years I have met with County Council members, Humane Society Officials and have collected 2000 pages of documentation which I have used to spear head a general campaign to make life for animal abusers ... missarable. I have been joined in my efforts by a number of very good and committed people all over the country People from all over the country have taken this cause into their hearts and while I am skeptical I beleive we may have made a major break through.

I was notified yesterday that on February 24, 2004 there will be a meeting to sign into law a new ordinance that will include Bird aviaries into the County animal abuse laws. Additionally the ordinance creates a commission to establish the following standards. These standards will be reviewed and updated annually and will include but not be limited to the following

[some very basic standards for animal care are listed]

The standards will be developed by representatives from the following agencies

*Office of fire prevention and Arson Control
Pierce county building inspection dept.
County land services dept
Humane society
Health dept.*

*and one more person will be on the commission AN AVIAN VET
Thanks once again for all the help from my friends all over the country who have made it more proficiant to act then to keep doing business as usual*

More is on the horizon on these issues and I beleive that these new laws could become either a huge step forward for all animals in Pierce County or another stall tactic by

officials. I choose to give hope one last shot. If improvements to lives of these wonderful creatues isnt the case I will not only continue with my activities but escalate them.

Larry"

OY!

As usual, it's an in-your-face document, with frequent misspellings, and with some minor issues uncertain-- But Larry rarely got a *pivotal* fact wrong. And parenthetically, note the balanced distribution of agencies which he suggests might form a Commission to set standards for bird farms; it stands in marked contrast to the stunning preponderance of breeder and business interests to the complete exclusion of Humane and Animal Welfare Groups in the pending Muri-Bush Proposal¹.

In person, Larry was equally passionate but likewise, sometimes very inflammatory. It could enrage the very person he should have been trying to woo and at times, even his best friends thought he should be "muzzled"! But his words and deeds were big, because what he observed **was** inflammatory by nature²: grotesque abuse and cruelty to animals; political stonewalling and alleged corruption; slanderous innuendo about his motives; and non-stop hypocrisy and obstruction by egregiously vocal members of the very same communities (aviculturists and veterinarians) which *should* have been his staunchest allies.

So out went Larry Quixote Gallawa tilting at windmills--or should I say, parrot mills, almost alone, with a steadfastness and conviction rarely seen nowadays, and he got bloodied. As if a body wracked by diabetes, gout and then cancer (Multiple Myeloma) were not enough, some of his detractors (who are too deep in slime to mention by name) actually expressed at the February 14 (2006) Council meeting a wish that he *were* dead. They got their wish on October 2, and on October 10, they, and fellow breeders, will get their wish to retain the right to abuse breeder birds with virtual impunity in Pierce County.

Thus, there is no doubt that it was **Larry** who sought the high moral ground in his three year odyssey and that he never wavered in this right up to his death: **Larry triumphans. In contrast, his adversaries were, ultimately, only belittled and diminished by their own actions.** Some victory it will be to celebrate for some on the Pierce County Council; for some of those Right-Wing factions of certain local and national breeding groups; and for Scudder Parrot Depot and other substandard bird farms in Pierce County: Together, you managed to outlast a dying man and get the albatross named Larry Gallowa from around your collective necks. Well done! Whose victory, ultimately, was that, Goliath?

One might have thought that it would have been enough if some of those hypocritical breeders (working in concert with certain unfeeling politicians) denied him his simple dream--an Ordinance in Pierce County to provide some basic protections for breeder

birds against the rank cruelty seen at the killing fields in Roy, Washington. No, two tried to make his life hell by suing him for defamation in a blatant attempt at a quick lottery win of \$600, 000³ to make up for losses of birds which died due to disease, starvation, and neglect. Why do I mention *this* fact here? Because Don Quix...er-r-r Larry won (by Summary Judgment, no less) not once, but twice, and that frivolous, indeed self-serving suit was tossed out. LARRY WON! **Larry triumphans.**

Larry knew that the Ordinance was about to fail for a third time at the final vote of the Pierce County Council on October 10. He would have been disgusted, but not surprised at the [predicted] behavior of a Muri, a Bush, or a Lee. Good that he didn't have to be around for the jubilation of the "parrot-loving" breeders at the Council meeting, or on the websites of NAWAbirds or Organization of Professional Aviculturists. **But Larry will come out as the winner on October 10 too.** Because it was Larry who followed Principle, defending the voiceless, the innocent, the living--while seeing them with avian faces, not the faces of Lincoln, Jefferson and Washington imprinted on paper of green. And by his actions, Larry recruited across the country, a whole new wave of animal lovers, who, sickened by the entire story in Pierce County and Roy, Washington, have now turned to the plight of parrots. Yes, Laurella, Yes Dick: quite the pyrrhic victory you won. Because all you have done by squelching someone with a heart and vision as big as Larry's is re-ignite a movement.

There's a storm brewing on the horizon and thanks to you, it's only picked up hurricane strength... Larry HAS won, 'singing' in the best tradition of Bob Dylan:

*"Come gather 'round people
Wherever you roam
And admit that the waters
Around you have grown
And accept it that soon
You'll be drenched to the bone.
If your time to you
Is worth savin'
Then you better start swimmin'
Or you'll sink like a stone
For the times they are a-changin'.*

*Come senators, congressmen [and Councilmembers]
Please heed the call
Don't stand in the doorway
Don't block up the hall
For he that gets hurt
Will be he who has stalled
There's a battle outside
And it is ragin'.
It'll soon shake your windows*

*And rattle your walls
For the times they are a-changin'." a*

(except of course that Larry would have misspelled some the words and yelled several of the others).

LARRY triumphans

And of course, Larry was triumphant in a more general way that transcends birds or animals. Renee Ward, an angel of a person herself, said it far better than I could ever write:

"Hi there!" That was how the voice on the other end of the phone said hello to me every morning, a lilting voice, full of happiness and the promise of what the new day would bring. 'Hi there'. Then...'how are the birds and other animals'...then 'how are you'? That always made me laugh. He needed his morning dose of bird talk and then we would either talk business, family or just nonsense.

Of course, this is Larry Gallawa I am speaking of. The man who taught me the little bit about birds that I know and with great patience. He was in life, larger than life. A man who divorced but raised his three children because he was patient, he was kind and gentle and he possessed that quality we all want....he was pure of soul.

Larry had a goal in life. That was to help all living creatures...feathered, furry and human ...he did not care. His quest was for laws to acted on, laws to help them be treated with love and care. Not for them to be left in cages to breed endlessly, with no proper food, water, heat, fresh air ...I was honored that he called me friend, that he learned that if he didn't give me a hug, I would embarrass him in front of the world. The best gift he gave me 4 days before he left this earth was when he walked back to the car after we took a trip to see hundreds of his beloved Cockatoos and held out his arms for a hug! I was thrilled!

*I thank you all for the love and gift of compassion you showed Larry Gallawa, my hero, my friend.
God Bless you all
Wing hugs and love"*

Yes, wing hugs and love indeed. That was what Larry Gallawa gave to all who knew him. Like our birds, Larry gave us unconditional love. **Larry, triumphans.** God bless you, Larry.

Stewart Metz
October 6, 2006

¹ available online at <http://www.co.pierce.wa.us/xml/Abtus/ourorg/council/2006-82ord.pdf> ,
item # 2-47-030]

² It is not appropriate to detail these here. The reader is referred instead to
www.ParrotProtection.org and <http://www.washblog.com/story/2006/9/22/114251/734>

³ <http://www.parrotprotection.org/en/Projects/ParrotDepot/Documents/decl-2005-08-05-704DecofVincent1.pdf>

^a Bob Dylan. The Times They Are A-Changin © 1963; renewed 1991 Special Rider Music