

Squawk 'n' Talk

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Presidential Perch

Monthly Update

Phyllis Cotton

Now that our annual fair is over, please let me take this opportunity to thank each and every person who volunteered his or her talents, muscles and time to make the fair a success! We could not have done it without you! A very, very big "THANK YOU" to all!

Even though the attendance this year was about half of the previous year, I have been told most of the vendors still did very well. I have also been informed that due to the economy, fairs all across the US have experienced the same drop in attendance. Hopefully, this too will pass.

Now is the time to begin planning our 2004 fair. What topics would you like to see discussed at next year's fair? Please forward your ideas to me. I was very pleased at the number of people who came to see our wonderful speakers this year. Dr. Pepperberg was also very pleased to have sold everything she brought and could have sold even more!

Heidi Bohn is still collecting recipes for a CD & book to be sold at the fair next year. She received a few recipes from members but not enough to publish a CD this year. Let's all try really hard to come up with as many "bird" recipes as we can & send them to Heidi! All of the proceeds from this effort will benefit the GPC even though Heidi has bought all of the materials herself.

Is anyone interested in an Eagle Watch this year? If so, please contact Dorene so she can begin coordinating a trip.

Yvonne Patterson from Kansas City, MO is returning to St Louis this weekend with her

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To The Rescue

Trey Shaffer

Without a doubt, human beings do some stupid things. I guess we could blame it on Adam and Eve for eating the apple or Pandora for opening the box, but the fact remains we exhibit any number of self-destructive behaviors from those that affect us individually to those with global impact. From the narrow perspective of the Gateway Parrot Club, we are particularly interested in our impact on the world as it affects birds.

For those that attended the presentations by Walter Crawford and Jonathan Reyman at our recent Fair, you heard first-hand accounts of the horrors of the commercial trade in exotic birds from Central and South America. I was impressed by two things. First, on the negative side, the utter disregard for animals and habitat by people all through the supply chain of the pet trade. On the positive side was the fact that people of the caliber of Crawford and Reyman are dedicated to improving the situation.

By mentioning these two individuals I do not want to exclude many, many others. Within recent activities of our club, we have fine examples like our speakers from MAARS, and the activities of our own members, Phyllis Cotton, Janet Draper and Dorene Olson. Again, the more names I think of the more that should go on the list.

This issue of Squawk n' Talk has articles related to animal rights and welfare, including the profile of Dorene Olson. There is a range of attitudes among those concerned for the well being of animals in general and birds in particular. On the conservative end of the spectrum concern is the keyword and education the tool. Moving toward the other end of the spectrum we come to evangelism and activism. I think the GPC leans toward the conservative pole. We have seen, in some of our recent guests, excellent examples of evangelists. I don't think I know any activists. The sixties are so far away... But the transition from evangelist to activist may start with the distribution of mailings like some of this month's articles. Dorene has forwarded them, and they come from various bird-related mailing lists, including MAARS. Clearly the activist role is represented by our article about picketing a large pet store

Pet Protest

Tami Meyers

Saturday, July 12 2003

Editor's Note: The following article appeared as a posting on AWC-Shelters@yahoo.com, a mailing list similar to our own GatewayParrots@YahooGroups.com. I have modified it slightly, with Ms. Meyer's permission. The name of the national chain pet store has been replaced with "Pet Store," and individual names have been replaced. The content of the article does seem to be substantiated by the newspaper articles it references. And the situations discussed, though perhaps not typical, are hard to except.

Exactly one year and one day after Hobbit (the Senegal parrot who was mutilated and left for dead on the floor of their bird room) arrived here from Pet Store, mutilated and weak, we held yet another protest outside of a Pet Store store. PETA's PetNO campaign, which has been active for nearly two years, has successfully widened the public's awareness of the plight of animals sold as mere "merchandise" at Pet Store stores nationwide. PETA, People for the Ethical Treatment for Animals, is well known for being vocal, tenacious and has been very successful in their fight against animal abuse.

A campaign launched by the Animal Protection Institute along with the Avian Welfare Coalition urged protesters to get out and show their concerns. On January 5, 2003, National Bird Day, we staged our first protest in the freezing New England winter and have since protested on a monthly basis at various Pet Store locations.

With seven protests under our belt, we headed to South Attleboro, and for the first time the weather cooperated. No bitter cold, driving rain or blistering heat. There were only four of us, but the public did indeed take notice, and stopped to speak to us.

A reporter from a local paper arrived with a photographer. They spent time interviewing all four of us, snapping pictures the whole time. They truly seemed to grasp why it was that we were out protesting on such a beautiful summer's day, and not out picnicking with our families. While the journalists were with us, five Pet Store officials approached our group. The photographer grabbed his camera and snapped quite a few pictures of the group of us, now numbering eleven.

Pet Store's puppets were at a loss for words when they walked around the corner and saw the protesters with two people who were very obviously the media.

Mr. Pet Store Executive, the East Coast Regional

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Profile

Dorene Olson

Editor's Note: This is another in a series of member profiles. Here, in Q&A form, are responses to a group of questions. Please forward suggestions for questions for future interviews.

What does your weekday life consist of?

I have three small businesses, so I am very busy. I own WyndSong Border Collies and Canada Goose Management. I use my trained Border Collie to work with resident Canada geese. I am an animal trainer and behavior consultant, do private consultations and teach classes. I am also a distributor of a raw food diet for dogs and cats.

Where are you from? Are you a St. Louis native?

I am from the Pacific Northwest and a native of Seattle. I spent time growing up in the Middle East and went to a boarding school in Greece for high school (which makes answering that St. Louis "where did you go to school?" question confusing for people!). I came to St. Louis via Colorado where I went to pre-vet school after moving back to the US.

What is the first bird you remember?

A HUGE red and green and purple and yellow bird, about 7 ½ feet tall, with a chain saw of a beak about 4 ½ feet wide, that a vet asked me to hold. I still survive.

What about the first bird you cared for?

A little White Capped Pionus who was handed to me on the fly at the Home Show booth where he was an exhibit. He looked at me and at the crazy public and at the rafters and he CHOSE to remain on me, a stranger, and trust me to keep him safe. He was amazing.

A brief history of bird ownership...

I was lucky enough to have The World's Most Perfect Bird, Cinnamon, the Cockatiel that I just lost this Feb at age 14. She was a second hand bird and taught me everything that she knew. She was free to roam the house and would meet me at the door when I got home, follow me around like a puppy, garden with me outside, traveled with me to conferences and on vacation, and basically was the world's best soul mate and ambassador for birds.

Tell us about your current birds.

I have Bea (aka Caesar, Bumpy, and Bingo) my 12 year old Male U2 (Umbrella Cockatoo) rescue from Montana. I was his 5th owner in 9 years. One of them kept him locked in a dark closet for 2 ½ years. I just adopted Whimmer, a hysterically funny 6 year old U2 in liver

See Olson on Page 5

Thank Heaven, Or MAARS

Trey Shaffer

After their visit to our July meeting, MAARS shared with us quite a bit of material in the form of their *Informational Handbook*. I will use parts of it in the newsletter, starting with this issue. The "10 Things To Know..." article was also forwarded from MAARS, though not part of the handbook. I don't remember where I heard/read the slogan, "Don't buy, don't breed, adopt!" but I think MAARS would support it wholeheartedly. That could be a difficult position for some of us to get to, but those that see the result of bad caretaking are behind it.

I want to thank MAARS for their materials, and hope sharing them will further the mission of both our organizations.

Free Listing

Trey Shaffer

At the July board meeting it was agreed that any club member that wanted one, could have a free listing on the GPC website for their pet-related business. We have listed members/breeders and veterinarians for some time. It seemed reasonable to extend that privilege to other commercial entities.

The requirement to qualify is to be a member in good standing, which, according to the bylaws, means having paid dues for the current year. There was discussion about what type of businesses should qualify and what type of review should take place before approving the listing. Rather than get mired in an approval process it was decided not to have one and simply include a disclaimer, on behalf of the Club, not endorsing the businesses other than having verified their principal's current membership.

It is up to the business to request the listing and provide information in a particular format. The details are on the website with a link labeled, Businesses, on the left side of the home page. A short article, similar to this one, appeared in the August newsletter. To date, I have not received any requests for listing. Please forward the information requested on the website, if you would like your business listed.

Fair Results

Aren't you just dying to know how the Annual Hookbill Fair turned out? Me too!

Sorry, can't tell you... I can tell you we had some interesting presentations in the seminar area. The presentations were recorded, but with more than a few technical problems. Whatever is usable will be added to the Club's video library. More details on that as they are available.

As for the rest of the fair activities and the financial outcomes, our fair reporter hasn't checked in with the story. I'm sure that will be a topic of discussion at the upcoming meeting. Find out there, or check back here next issue, or on the web site after the meeting.

10 Things You Need to Know Before Adopting a Bird

Monica Engebretson Grassroots Coordinator Animal Protection Institute

Please copy, distribute and utilize this article in its entirety for the benefit of all companion birds in your care.

- 1. Birds are not domesticated animals.** Domestic animals are animals that have been bred for hundreds of years to live in the care of humans and are distinct from their wild ancestors. Birds commonly kept as pets are no different than their wild relatives — they are the native species of other countries.
- 2. Chlamydiosis** (psittacosis) and avian tuberculosis can be transmitted through the air from birds to humans. These diseases can cause significant illness, especially for people with compromised immune systems. Birds also continually shed "feather dust" — particles of feathers, which may aggravate asthma in some people. Many homes with pet birds have HEPA-type air filters in rooms with birds to control allergies from bird dander.
- 3. Parrots, including lovebirds, parakeets, and cockatiels, are noisy and messy, and can be destructive.** Vocalizing (squawking, chirping, talking) is an important part of any parrot's social communication. Birds eat continually throughout the day, dropping and discarding bits of food everywhere. Birds are instinctively programmed to chew and shred wood, whether it is a perch, toy, picture frame, or furniture. Birds will also chew electrical cords, paper, and curtains.

See **10 Things** on Page 7

