

Squawk 'n' Talk

Volume 4, Issue 6

August 2004



Presidential Perch Monthly Update

Phyllis Cotton

This is going to be short & sweet. We have a little better than a week until the fair. Things are getting very hectic as we tie up all of the loose ends.

I want to take this opportunity to say "Thank You" to everyone who has come forth and offered to help. We couldn't do it without you. If you have not been called as yet and would like to volunteer your time and talents, PLEASE contact me or anyone else on the board. There is never a shortage of last minute tasks to be done. We need all of the help possible for setup, during the fair and at the close of the fair as well.

Donations for the big cage raffle, raffle table and silent auction are still needed. Please contact Nancy Marron at 314-984-9524 if you have donations and need to know what to do with them.

We have some great speakers this year and some new vendors as well. Now is the time to stock up on all of your supplies or buy new cages for your birds!

I look forward to seeing everyone at the fair!

See You At The Fair

Trey Shaffer

2004, the 100th anniversary of the St. Louis World's Fair. Our Fair isn't that old, but it has lasted longer. I'm not sure when our first All American Hookbill Show was; shame on me, but that will be a good trivia question for dinner Saturday night. This is at least our third year in the lovely Greensfelder Recreation Complex in Queeny Park.

Again this year we have a wide array of birds, products and services represented by vendors from around the country. Come and see what is new, or look for a bargain.

Besides helping yourself at the Fair, you will help the Gateway Parrot Club. The Fair is our major source of funds each year. The Club, in turn, donates to a variety of avian welfare programs and organizations. But if you are receiving this newsletter you are probably a member and should realize this.

So, help the Club. Show up and socialize. Show support for our vendors. Bring friends! You know, that friend that said they were thinking about getting a bird.

For current and prospective bird owners/caretakers, we have great speakers, both days, and a microchip identification clinic Saturday afternoon. Here is the schedule of speakers. Check the website for last minute changes.

Fair Schedule

Saturday, August 28, 2004

9:30 AM	Doors Open To The Public
11:00 AM	Katy McElroy, Cockatoo Breeder from Hornbeam Aviaries
12:30 PM	Liz Wilson, Parrot Behavior Consultant
2:00 PM	Michelle Karras, "The Polite Parrot", Bird Talk Magazine
3:30 PM	Georgia Reger, DVM "Micro Chipping Clinic" for birds
6:00 PM	Doors Close To The Public. Private dinner for vendors, speakers, and volunteers hosted by the Gateway Parrot Club.

See Schedule, on Page 8

Socialization And The Companion Parrot

Liz Wilson, Parrot Behavior Consultant

Major Freak-Out

He is an African grey parrot named Dusty, and he is boarding with me again. Over the two years that he's boarded with me, the reaction has always been the same. When I approach him, he screams and throws himself around his cage. I cannot reach inside for his food bowls without sending him into a paroxysm of terror.

In the case of a recently wild-caught adult parrot or for a bird with a history of terrible abuse, I suppose I would consider this to be somewhat understandable behavior. But Dusty is a three year-old domestic bred, hand-raised young bird who has lived for two and one-half years with the same family. His human caretakers are experienced parrot owners whose other birds are consistently and lovingly controlled, and are delightful companions. Dusty's behavior is not just caused by the approach of a non-flock member such as myself, either -- his owner can't get near him, either. How could a young parrot in a good home end up so horribly maladjusted?

Always the Owner's Fault?

In the past when companion parrots developed behavior problems, the owner was automatically assumed to have been responsible -- and from my experience this has often been the case. Raised in an environment with no training and no controls, a headstrong young parrot will almost always get out of control and turn into a miserable ex-pet, often ending up on consignment in a pet store.

Shared Responsibilities

However, we are now starting to realize that the owner may not be the only responsible party in this sad situation. The accusatory finger now points also at the aviculturists and pet stores that failed to provide these incredibly complex and intelligent creatures with a foundation of socialization long before they reached the pet market.

Socialization = Teaching

So what do I mean by socialization? Simply put, a parrot needs to be TAUGHT as well as fed. Proper socialization entails teaching a parrot such things as how to survive in the environment, how to cope with and enjoy variety and change, and what their position is within the flock.

See Social, on Page 4

Chips

Microchip Identification, is it for the birds?

Trey Shaffer

Dr. Reger will conduct a microchip implantation clinic, at our Fair, Saturday, August 28 at 4:30 PM. When I heard this I was interested and curious, but I realized I didn't really know much about the implantation process or the network that supports the identification numbers when they are needed.

Most of the information here was collected from a brief web search. Links are provided for your further investigation.

Most people understand the general concept that a microchip will help identify a lost animal and through some referral process, reunite it with its person. Some of the common questions about the process might include:

- How do I know someone finding my bird will look for a microchip?
- Who can read or find the microchip?
- How does the registration process work?
- What information is registered, or associated with the animal? Will they call me? Will they call the Vet that inserted the microchip?

One Google hit took me to the EasyTrac-ID company site. On their home page they discuss the manufacture of chips that conform to ISO standards. That sounds good. That means there is some standardization in the devices so products from different manufacturers should work together. The International Standards Organization, ISO, is a European-based group that coordinates standards in a variety of areas.

Reading on, the EasyTrac information said the product conformed to the Government's Pet Travel Scheme, and eliminated the need for quarantine, in some cases, when traveling across borders. Then it became clear they were talking about the UK and EU. The company is based in Belgium. Here is a link to their FAQ page:

<http://www.easytrac-id.com/ENG/FAQ.htm>

A 2002 article at *ParrotChronicles.com*, by Carla Thornton, discusses "chipping" in the US.

<http://www.parrotchronicles.com/spring2002/chip.htm>

Here are some highlights from the article. That European

See Chips, on Page 6

On the Perch with Pauline

Pauline the Parrotlet is well known to regular Gateway Parrot Club meeting members as the tiny blue ricochet with a bird-itude.

Pauline is a four year old, parent raised ex-breeder bird who was retired after she chewed off all her own toes. She is adored by the Olson-Frei household, where she rules the roost. Very opinionated by nature, Pauline has volunteered her services to offer birdy advice. Questions to Pauline from your parrots can be sent to the Gateway Parrot club yahoo group, or to Pauline's Personal Assistant at, taradorene@charter.net.

Pauline regularly consults with professionals and includes their recommendations in her column. And now, over to Pauline:

But first:

BEFORE we make ANY behavioral advice to a new parrot, it is IMPERATIVE to rule out any underlying metabolic disease which may be causing or contributing to the behavior problem. At the very least, this should include a complete avian exam (and thereafter an annual exam) by a qualified avian veterinarian; lab work to rule out such conditions as psittacosis, polyoma, or aspergillosis, among others; and an avian chemical profile/CBC. Birds tend to sit very still and quiet when they feel ill so that their flock does not drive them away, as any ill bird draws the attention of predators. Frequently, by the time a bird is actively showing signs of illness, it is too late to treat it.

Dear Pauline:

I was just adopted into a new home. In my old home, I had one tiny little cage in a back, quiet room, my plastic groove perch, and a bowl of seeds. This new home is really scary to me. It has a whole bunch of different perches with different textures and widths, a ton of brightly colored stuff hanging everywhere, and a bowl of little round things that don't even remotely resemble seeds. I am overwhelmed, and getting REALLY hungry!

What should I do?

Typo the Cockatiel

Dear Typo:

You should start by counting your blessings! It sounds like you have been moved to a far more enriching environment, and are being offered a better diet. A bird's cage should be as large as their human caretaker can provide. I am only 20 grams big, but my cage is 4 feet long, 3 feet tall, and two feet wide. I am rarely in it, though, I mostly ride around in my Mom's hair.

Wooden dowel rods are a better substitute for plastic groove perches, but neither is optimal for the health of a bird's feet. Perches should be offered that are made of safe, natural woods. These branches have varying widths that both allow a bird to exercise her or his feet and joints, as well as prevent the causation of pressure sores from the weight never being distributed over the whole foot. Other perches that can (and should) be offered are rope perches, cholla cactus perches, bendable latex perches, thermo and biomagnetic perches, manu or calcium mineral perches, and nail and beak conditioning perches. Not recommended are perches covered in sandpaper, which some think will keep nails trimmed and short. The sandpaper, however, is abrasive and can cause injury to the feet.

Those colored things are toys, and they are for you to exercise both your mind and your body. A good assortment of toys will include puzzle toys to hide food in for you to forage, chewing toys for destruction made of a variety of both hard and soft woods, and some permanent acrylic toys that can be rotated for constant variety. Some birds are frightened of toys when first exposed to them. Human caretakers can do two helpful things. They can play with the toy in front of you, showing you that it is something safe and fun, and they can also let it sit at a safe distance across the room so that you can observe it for a few days, gradually moving it closer and then into your house.

My biggest concern, however, is your hunger. Converting birds to a healthy diet can be a frustrating procedure, as birds often will not eat something that they do not recognize. Cockatiels have a reputation as being very stubborn to wean off seeds. Unlike cats and dogs, a bird literally CAN starve to death in front of a full bowl of food, so your human needs to carefully monitor your droppings and weight daily.

Birds in their natural, wild state stay with their parents for up to three years, and learn from them what is safe and what is not in the rainforests and lush habitats where they live. This is an essential life skill, because much of what is found there is poisonous. This is one of the main reasons that birds can be reluctant to try new foods.

A non-fortified seed diet, such as those bought at grocery or pet stores, can be little more nutritious than a diet of French fries for a human. Some manufacturers advertise that these seeds are coated in vitamins, but that does a bird little good when they hull the seed and drop the supposed vitamin covered hull to the cage bottom. A general rule of thumb is that a bird's diet should consist of 20% wholesome seed, and the rest be made up of fresh fruits, vegetables, grains, pastas, some protein like cheese, egg, and low fat non-red meats, and a balanced pellet. There has been recent research which findings suggest that Cockatiels benefit from an even higher seed content than the recommended 20%.

The company, Lafeber's, makes a product called Nutriberries developed by Dr. Lafeber and an avian nutritionist.

See Pauline, on Page 7

Prolonged Learning Period

In the wild, most species of parrots stay with their parents long after they are weaned. During this period, they are learning volumes of information regarding food identification and location and the development of the manual dexterity necessary to procure food (once it is located), as well as predator avoidance and successful interaction with other members of their flock. Therefore, the parenting responsibilities definitely entail a great deal more than simply feeding their young until they are old enough to find their own food.

Little Info Needed to be a Hamster

Most animal experts agree that generally speaking, the more intelligent the animal, the less instinctive information the animal is born with and the more it must be taught by others. For example, a hamster is born knowing pretty much what it needs to know about being a hamster. Consequently, the mother hamster's responsibilities only entail feeding and protecting the babies until they are weaned. Once weaned, the young hamsters are on their own -- the mothering instincts stop and the mother hamster does not even recognize them as kin. On the other hand, more intelligent life-forms like dogs and cats have more extensive parenting responsibilities. In the wild, the offspring of canine and feline species stay with their family units long after they are weaned because they must be taught complex survival skills like hunting.

Wild Behavior Info Lacking

With parrots in the wild, behavior information is woefully incomplete -- but we do know that many species stay together as a family unit for as long as two years after the babies leave the nest. During that time, the parents and other flock members are teaching the young priceless skills. Once these survival skills are learned, the adolescent parrot can safely develop independence from the nurturing protection of its parents and join the remainder of their flock as primarily a member of their peer group. Not long after this stage, they begin to achieve puberty and look within their peer group for a suitable mate.

Behavior Problems Develop

It is unlikely a coincidence that most of the problems we parrot behavior consultants encounter are in adolescent parrots. We theorize that the adolescent parrot, having been taught nothing in its life as a companion animal but reaching an age at which it would begin to be independent of its natural parents, somehow senses that its survival skills are lacking.. And in the wild, a parrot without survival skills is a parrot that does not survive.

Fear Causes Problems

Consequently, in a frantic effort to control an environment to which they sense they are not adapted, many adolescent parrots begin to show a variety of aberrant behaviors. They often become rigid in their patterns, like pulling out all their tail feathers because their cage is moved to the other side of the room. They may get rigid about food choices -- for instance, eating ONLY seed, corn and grapes. Or they may become excessively territorial about their cages, attacking even family (flock) members that dare venture too close.

Eating Dexterity

On the subject of food, Phoebe Linden, well respected aviculturist and parrot behaviorist, feels that a major cause of food rigidities are due to poorly developed eating dexterities. "They only eat a couple of foods because they have 'cracked the manual code' for only a couple of foods." In the wild, these babies would be taught by their parents how to cope with a wide variety of foodstuffs -- like how to open hard nuts and how to find the fruit inside of its protective shell. In captivity we put the food in a bowl, assuming the young parrot can figure it out on its own -- which human babies are not expected to do.

Heartbreaker

But perhaps the most heart rending birds are the ones that become phobic like Dusty, and get hysterical when anyone approaches them. It is as if they anticipate their own demise every time another being comes near. When Dusty's behavior was described to Phoebe and Sally Blanchard, they agreed that he was probably "force-weaned" In other words, hand-feeding was withheld before he was psychologically and physically ready to eat on his own. From our experience, force-weaning often sets the foundation for a variety of fears -- fear of starvation, fear of abandonment, fear of change. Force-weaning can result also in obsessive food-begging behaviors seen in older birds, such as adult macaws exhibiting chronic wing-flicking and repetitive calling.

Aviculture = Big Business

So what does all this mean to the pet parrot owner? To quote internationally renowned aviculturist Rosemary Lowe, "Parrot breeders used to be parrot lovers. Now it seems there are some who care little for the birds they breed." (Psittascene, publication of The World Parrot Trust) Or to quote a breeder I know personally who told me, "Kiddo, you gotta understand that it's a business, it's just a business." (Need I mention I no longer refer possible buyers to this person?)

Assembly Line Production

Nowadays, large numbers of baby parrots found in the pet market are raised in assembly line style in large "puppy farm" styled breeding facilities where profit seems to be the prime motivation. No thought is given to any nurturing or

Continued on next page

psychological development. The chicks are pulled from their aquariums only to be fed, then stuffed back in -- that is the only handling they receive. If the babies are really lucky, they might be kept clean. Some babies don't even get that much handling. There are mass production setups where the feeder simply pokes a ketchup bottle full of formula through the wire of a cage full of parrot chicks and squirts in the direction of begging mouths.

My Short Pet Store Career

In my stunningly brief career of running a baby bird room in a pet store, I was constantly criticized by the store manager for handling and teaching babies when I should be "working." In other words, I was supposed to feed and clean them only, then be out in the store waiting on customers.

Birds that come from these below par conditions can still be good pets, but as Blanchard puts it, "The owner starts out with one foot in a hole." It is possible, in other words, but it often is much harder. It is much better to start with a parrot raised by an aviculturist or pet store that truly cares about their birds, not just their income, and takes the time to socialize their babies properly.

Learning Is Critical

No matter how good or bad the source of your parrot, it needs to be taught vital skills and contrary to apparent belief, parrots are never too old to learn. Going slowly and taking care not to frighten it, start introducing it to a variety of stimuli -- all the time talking to it and reassuring it. Carry the bird from room to room in your home, showing it a variety of settings -- what Blanchard calls "Playing Real Estate Agent." Take it for rides in the car (in a safe and comfortable carrier). Take it to visit your parents and friends. If you have friends you trust with your pet, take it to their home for a slumber party. Teach it that change is interesting and fun, not terrifying and threatening.

Have a variety of toys for your parrot of different colors, shapes and textures. Teach it how to play with a new toy by letting it watch you play with it, then inviting it to join in the game. Rotate the toys in its cage at least weekly, making sure that life doesn't get too boring. "Hand toys" are useful in developing manual dexterity. As parrots learn to play, they often begin to invent new games. My own blue and gold macaw is 40+ years old and after more than twenty years, she is still teaching me new games.

Pig-Out Parties

Teach your parrot how to eat a wide variety of foodstuffs by having Pig-Out Parties. Phoebe suggests putting it on a table with lots of different bowls of foods -- i.e., different kinds of nuts in one, multicolored pasta (cooked and raw) in another, cooked and raw veggies cut in different shapes in another, etc... Get creative!

Parrots often learn by example, so show your bird what to do by letting it watch you eat something. (It'll improve your diet, too!) Learning by watching another bird is also very useful, so if you know someone with an older healthy parrot (one who has been thoroughly checked by a good avian veterinarian, like your bird has been) who can show your parrot the ropes as to food handling, then invite them to the party, too. Needless to say, expect a mess!

Climb The Ladder!"

Teach your parrot vital survival skills. Whenever possible, Phoebe tries to replicate the mother bird's behavior with her babies, so if one of her young parrots falls on the floor, she will not pick it up. After all, the mother bird can't do that!

Instead, she teaches her babies the very real skill of climbing a ladder, and there are ladders leading to different perches all over her house. When she says "Climb the ladder!" all her babies scurry for them. This decreases anxiety levels by reassuring a young bird that it can reach safety without assistance.

Critical Skills

By helping your parrot learn the skills it needs as well as teaching it the controls I have discussed in previous articles, you will go a long way towards having a happy, well adjusted pet that you can enjoy for both of your lifetimes.

This article was first printed in CAGED BIRD HOBBYIST

Liz Wilson, Certified Veterinary Technician, has been assisting pet bird owners with parrot behavior problems for over a decade through lectures, phone consultations, and house calls in the Greater Philadelphia area

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Don't forget, you can hear Liz speak at our upcoming Fair!

See the schedule, starting on page 1.

standards thing sounds good. American capitalism seems to complicate things. We apparently have two incompatible chips produced by different companies. Not to worry, in practice they seem to coexist pretty well. American Veterinary Identification Devices, AVID, makes one popular chip, and Schering-Plough Animal Health markets another under the *Home Again* name in conjunction with the American Kennel Club Companion Animal Recovery, AKC-CAR, registration service. Over time, there have been other players in this market, but these two remain.

AVID maintains their own database, while the Home Again program database is maintained by the AKC. While the chips are different and have their own reader/scanning devices, since 1996, combination scanners capable of reading both chips are common. You may do further research to distinguish the two registrars, but your choice of Vet will probably determine which one you use, as most Vets will work with one or the other.

A few of the Pros and Cons...

Pros

They are permanent. They are guaranteed for 25 years. While that is not enough to cover a long-lived bird, there is no reason to believe the device shouldn't last longer, they just haven't been around more than that time, and that is much more than the life span of their main market, domestic mammals. They are virtually unremovable by thieves, since surgery would be required.

They are safe. Good clinical procedure must be used for implantation, but the wound is small with little likelihood of infection. The injection spot has not been a problem even with feather-plucking birds. The chip is usually put in the chest area.

They are inexpensive. Reported prices range from \$25 - \$40. There are actually two parts to the transaction. The clinical portion covers the chip itself and professional fees for implantation. The second part is a registration fee with the managing organization. This optional component is \$12 - \$15. Chips are automatically registered, in bulk, to the buyer, usually a Vet. There is usually no fee associated with this registration. If you would like to update the central database with your personal information, the extra fee applies.

Cons

They are permanent. Though there is probably no reason to, you can't change your mind and have it removed. Or at least that wouldn't be rec-

ommended. Chips are designed to promote scar tissue growth around them so they stay in the original location.

They are not prevalent... in birds. There are not a lot of birds with chips. So, shelters might be less likely to scan a bird than a dog or cat. Anecdotal evidence indicates it is good procedure to scan birds though.

Registration updates. You must keep your registration information updated or the registrar won't find you after someone finds your bird. Both registrars charge a small fee for registration updates unless you register several chips.

Size does matter. The chips are not recommended for birds under 100 grams, so Cockatiels and Budgies are too small.

Numbers

There are an estimated 80 million cats, 70 million dogs and 19 million birds in the US. AVID's international database has a total of 2.5 million registrations, about 600,000, almost 25%, are birds. The AKC, United States, database has 1.1 million registrations with 1259 birds, or less than 1%. I believe the article with these stats is from spring 2002. The numbers by themselves don't have any practical impact on a decision to use a chip, but might influence the choice of chip brand and associated registrar.

Here is a link to another article, on chipping, from the Winged Wisdom portion of the BirdsNWays website.

<http://www.birdsnways.com/wisdom/ww7eiii.htm>

This article, *Microchips: An Idea Whose Time Has Come*, by Carol Highfill is from 1997. It has much of the same information as the Parrot Chronicles article, with a little more discussion about the various chips and scanners. As mentioned in the 2002 Parrot Chronicles article, the InfoPET Systems chip became tied up in patent/copyright issues and is no longer viable. This article also indicates that birds are more likely to be tagged with AVID chips, which the statistics above seem to support. This article also discusses the registries and gives their contact information.

So why do it?

- It will make you feel better, and won't hurt your bird... much.
- It doesn't cost much
- It gets rid of leg bands, which have their own set of problems.

From a detection perspective, leg bands are easily removed and once gone are of no use in proving ownership.

Continued on next page

They would be helpful if the bird was found by a well intentioned person though. Who knows about the numbers on the leg bands and where they are registered? That is a topic for a later search. Leg bands have caused injuries by snagging on things and disfigurement by being too small and restricting growth to the point of becoming embedded in the leg. My Macaw has a band that is not tight, but still has "smoothed" his leg where it rubs.

For some additional resources, go right to the horse's (vendor's) mouth.

Here is a link to the AVID website. (This must be a good product because they have a picture of a Greenwing on their page.)

<http://www.avidmicrochip.com/answer.htm#37>

The American Kennel Club, AKC, maintains the Companion Animal Recovery, CAR, database and referral service. They are, according to their website, "Dedicated to providing 24-hour recovery services for microchipped and tattooed pets in our state-of-the-art database." As the quote indicates, the registry is not hardware dependent, including tattoo numbers. But the AKC does indicate a preference for the Home Again hardware system, if a microchip is used.

You can read what they have to say at:

<http://www.akccar.org/>

Microchip Clinic at the Fair

The upcoming clinic at the Fair will be hosted by Dr. Reger, of Webster Groves Animal Hospital. There will be a fee for services, but details are not available as this "goes to press." Look on the website for details as the Fair approaches.

Important Notes!

Pet birds will not be allowed in the exhibit hall or common areas at the Fair. This is prudent for reasons of health and liability.

We also ask that you only bring healthy birds to the clinic.

We encourage you to participate in the clinic with your bird. Other basic services, like feather and nail clipping will be available as well. However, please make arrangements to bring your bird to the clinic, between 4:30 and 5:45 PM, and remove them after their care. It will probably be warm/hot out, so observe common precautions about leaving pets and children in the car.

<http://www.wctropicalbird.com/fooditems/pellets/lafeber's.htm>

or

<http://www.lafeber.com/>

Nutriberries were designed to provide a bird with a round ball that does not allow them to pick out some seed and leave others, providing more of a balance in nutrition, as well as quality beak exercise. Nutriberries come in various sizes and formulations for birds ranging in size from Budgies to Macaws. Lafeber's also makes a product called Avi-Cakes. This product has seeds and pellets held together with molasses, and is designed to be given both as a treat and as a tool for accustoming a bird to the taste and feel of pellets. Our mom gives us Avi-Cakes as treats when we are really good birds (which means I get them a lot!). They come in small and large bird sizes. My sister, Clare the Eclectus, likes to eat a lot, and she eats both sizes.

There are now many excellent brand names in addition to Lafeber's that make quality pellets for birds. Harrison's bird foods is an all-organic company which offers large and small pellets, as well as power treats, which my Cockatoo brothers get to help keep weight on them (<http://www.harrisonsbirdfoods.com/>). Exact, Zupreem, Kaytee, Roudybush, and Pretty Bird are all other well known pellets. Caution should be taken with Cockatoos and Cockatiels, however, when giving pellets prettily colored in dyes. The dyes can contribute to yeast overgrowth in these two breeds. Many large retail companies, such as Foster and Smith, offer these foods as well as their own formulations, and this catalog also offers helpful insights into health and behavior issues with birds (DrsFosterSmith.com).

Cooked diets are a very well loved part of our pet aviary routine. Crazy Corn, Kitchen Creations, Mike's Mash, and Beak Appetit are all given to us for our breakfast when we wake up. Our mom bakes up batches and then freezes them in snack size baggies, so she always has a variety on hand. For aviaries with just one or two small pet birds, freezing them in ice cube trays is very handy, as one can pop out and thaw just one small cube at a time. These foods must be removed when we are done eating them, as they are prone to quick bacterial spoilage. We love them warmed in the microwave, and our cheery morning songs quickly get replaced by happy munching sounds. Some birdy businesses, like the Bird Cage Warehouse in St. Charles, also make their own cooked diets and sell them in bulk, an excellent way to get quality food for somewhat less of a cost. There is an excellent article in an old back issue of The Pet Bird Report (now the Companion Parrot Quarterly) that I will try to find while I chew on – I mean play on – my Mom's bookshelves. She recently went to Wild Oats and Whole Foods with a recipe list from this wonderful arti-

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cle and made her own cooked mash for us.

Sometimes when we get picky about eating our fresh fruits and veggies, our Mom will mix them in with these cooked diets and we like them again. She also cooks wild rice, basmati rice, and brown and long grain rice to mix in with our fresh foods.

Two months ago, we were graced with Helen Porter, a pet nutritionist from Porter Pet Pals, (636-394-2632) and Tom Becherer of El-Mel, Inc (314-741-2117 or 636-946-9049) who discussed diet and nutrition with us. They are both also excellent resources for the discussion of and procurement of these mentioned products, as well as others.

When offering new foods, several things can be tried. Since we birds are flock creatures and eating is a group activity, being put on or near the table and offered the same healthy foods that our human is eating can help entice us to try new things. Persistence over time will always pay off, so never give up trying. When adding new pellets or food to our cages, sprinkling in the new food over the top of the old seed will serve two purposes. It can accustom us to the sight of the new food and begin to make it familiar. It can also force us to use our beaks to push it aside while rooting past it to get to the old seed, and eventually we get curious and try the new food. At this point more and more of the new, healthy foods can be added and less and less of the unhealthy food be given. Again, it is imperative to monitor weight and droppings while we are

changing our habits. Newspaper is an excellent cage liner for this purpose, as shavings, paper towels, or other absorbent beddings can wick away any excessive urine content in our droppings which may indicate illness.

Typo, best of luck with you! It sounds like you have a wonderful new lease on life!

Sincerely,
Pauline

Fair Schedule

Sunday, August 29, 2004

9:30 AM	Doors Open To The Public
11:00 AM	Liz Wilson, Parrot Behavior Consultant
2:00 PM	Heather Hilvert, DVM
3:15 PM	Silent Auction
3:45 PM	Big Cage Raffle
4:00 PM	Raffle Table
5:00 PM	Doors Close To The Public

In addition to the great lineup of speakers in the seminar room, our own parrot expert, Pauline (the Pacific Blue Parrotlet) of the "Ask Pauline" column in our newsletter will have a booth in the vendor room! Pauline will be available to answer questions or speak on specific topics at scheduled times of the day. She is still deciding what she wants to do.

Mission Statement

Gateway Parrot Club
A not-for-profit organization
Established in 1988

Dedicated to the following goals:

- To bring people together in a friendly atmosphere in the interest of exchanging information on bird care and breeding.
- To create an interest in bird care and breeding through monthly educational programs and annual bird fairs.
- To educate ourselves, and the general public, on the ever-present danger of extinction in the wild.

Queeny Park Directions

**Queeny Park is on Weidman Road, 1.5 miles North of Manchester Road.
Weidman Road is 2.5 miles West of I-270, on Manchester Road**

