

Squawk 'n' Talk

Volume 4, Issue 7

September/October 2004



Presidential Perch Monthly Update

Phyllis Cotton

The annual fair is now just history and it is time to begin thinking about next year!

This was my fourth year as Fair Coordinator and I have to tell you, I received more compliments as well as thanks this year than I ever did in preceding years from vendors, volunteers & patrons. Everyone remarked about how smoothly everything went! This was due to the awesome volunteers and other officers and board members who contributed to the fair's success. I could NEVER have done it without you! To EVERYONE who helped I want to say

"Thank You"!! I won't even try to list everyone individually and risk the chance of accidentally leaving someone out. You know who you are, and you are wonderful! Thanks again!!

I do want to make mention and personally thank Carol & Guy Field for their generous donation of 50 lbs of chicken, as well as two pineapple upside down cakes, for the hospitality dinner. We had so much chicken that we will be serving some at the September & November meetings as well as the Holiday Party in December. My husband smoked 25 lbs of the chicken for the hospitality dinner and could probably be convinced to do the same for the future meetings and Holiday party! Thanks again, Carol & Guy! Carol, as most people know, was President of the GPC for many years.

Don't forget our October meeting will be scheduled around the Open House at the World Bird Sanctuary. Please check the schedule listed in this newsletter for exact times, etc.

See **President**, on Page 8

October Meeting World Bird Sanctuary

Join us at the World Bird Sanctuary Open House, October 17, at 2:00 PM, in lieu of our regular meeting at the Humane Society.

The third Sunday in October is WBS' annual open house. This year's theme is "October with the Owls." To show our support, we have canceled the regular membership meeting and encourage you to visit WBS. Directions are available on our website or theirs. The Board meeting will occur at the regular time, 1:00 PM, at the Humane Society.

Fair 2004 Is History

Trey Shaffer

Another edition of our annual event is complete. Over the years the event has evolved from the **All American Hookbill Show** to the **All American Hookbill Fair**, to the **All American Hookbill Fair and Seminar**.

As I understand the evolution, the change from Show to Fair indicated a shift of emphasis away from birds, conformation and breeding toward non-professional owner/caretakers. This year's addition of the Seminar moniker reflects an emphasis on our seminars and education. This is in keeping with our Mission Statement, which has three points, each having an educational component:

- 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.

See **Fair**, on Page 4

Wrath of Frances

Trey Shaffer

It seems recently the national news and weather have merged; stories go from tropical storms to hurricanes to storm damage and clean up. From the perspective of the clear, sunny, Midwest we begin to glaze over with wind speed and storm surge statistics, and the media does a good job reporting the human cost of the storms.

There are other inhabitants of these storm ravaged areas, millions of animals, insects, sea life and, of course, birds. I don't have any information about impact on wild birds, though I'm sure it is significant.

Following are two articles forwarded by Georgia Fletcher, from an email distribution list. (Thanks Georgia!) The first segment is really a web page referenced in the first email, discussing storm damage to an aviary in Florida. The second "article" is an update from the aviary owner, Howard Voren.

This, first, article is from the website of the Organization of Professional Aviculturists, Inc., the OPA. I did email them stating intent to use this in our newsletter, but did not receive explicit permission. Again, as I said in my request, it seems broad distribution of this information is implied.

The original content, with photos, is available at:

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

The OPA Disaster Relief Fund

See Photographs (on website)

Photographs taken by and courtesy of Gloria Balaban.

An Update

The pictures in the slide show were taken at Howard Voren's aviaries in the aftermath of Hurricane Frances. His fellow aviculturists are collecting funds to help with repair in order to save the lives of many of the birds.

Almost every tree on the property, including a canopy of jacaranda trees Howard planted 20 years ago, have been uprooted and they have fallen on top of cages. Hundreds of birds are still trapped in damaged cages. Virtually everything has been crushed and is standing in muck.

One of the biggest problems with offering assistance is that the property can't be accessed by big equipment because of the saturation of the soil. A skilled professional crew is needed which can remove these trees from the cages without causing further damage.

See Frances, on Page 5

Wild Bird Rehab

Trey Shaffer

The guest speaker at our September meeting was Bonnie Boime, from the **Wild Bird Rehabilitation Inc.** Founded in 1992, WBR is the only songbird rehabilitation organization in our region. Bonnie is in charge of Volunteer Operations for this not-for-profit group. Someone is actually out there taking care of all the little babies that fall out of trees, and adults that for whatever reason need human assistance.

Rescuing the Birds

Like a lot of animals, wild birds would benefit from a little restraint on the part of their human neighbors. One clear plea, or bit of education, was to keep house cats in the house. Apparently cats disrupting nests accounts for many of their rescues. Similarly, not every bird you might find on the ground may require assistance. While they are at higher risk on the ground, some/ a few/ many may heal themselves and return to their regular routine.

It is apparently a well propagated myth that handling a baby bird will cause rejection by its parents. It *is* beneficial to return a chick to its nest if you find it and know where it came from. It will probably not surprise GPC members, but baby birds do not benefit from milk. Like our birds, they are lactose intolerant, but they will consume dairy products. Apparently well-meaning people attempt to bottle feed displaced babies, which unfortunately aggravates malnutrition.

Rescuing the Rescuers

Like many organizations fighting the good fight, WBR has come on hard times. As of September, they were forced to leave their base of operations in Crestwood. Though they have not ceased operations completely, they are restricted to birds they can process in distributed locations, like their volunteers' homes.

Bonnie seemed remarkably upbeat about the process and optimistic they have located a new facility which they hope to occupy in October. Their telephone number is still active, (314) 984-9116. They also have a website at:

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

They always need volunteers, particularly in the April – October period, and though Bonnie didn't solicit donations, I am sure they are in desperate need of funds to assist their relocation.

There is a link on our website to theirs. Look there, and in future newsletters for more information on their progress. Or, better yet, call them and help...

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 birditude. 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 other than her and includes their recommendations in her column. And now, over to Pauline:

But first, don't forget to read the disclaimer at the end of the article...

Dear Readers:

As some of you may know, this has been a rather difficult month for me as my Mother has been traveling abroad. I had to have a pet sitter and stay in my house much more than I am used to, as my Mother works from home and my pet sitters (WONDERFUL college aged twin girls who share my mom's chores, if anyone ever needs pet sitting referrals I will squawk mine out in favor of them!) work normal hours.

My mom came back from France and shared some of her travel stories with me (I mostly listened, as well as I could while laying on my back in her hand and purring). She seemed really sad about two things. It got me to thinking of some things from a Parrot(let)'s Point of View, and I would like to share them in this month's column.

Firstly, some of you may know that we Olson-Frei Parrots live with three pet, indoor/outdoor ducks. Hearing my Mom talk about forced feeding of domestic ducks and geese for the production of the popular delicacy, Foie de Gras, made me cringe. For those who do not know, this pate is created by the forced insertion of feeding tubes down the throats of restrained waterfowl. Fatty feeds, and far too much of it, causes obesity and discomfort in these animals and produces a fatty liver (which we all know is a DISEASE, especially those of us who live with Amazons, Cockatiels, and Budgies). It is from the enlarged, fatty liver that the human delicacy is made, when these young animals are slaughtered early and released from their short misery here on earth.

You will see an article in this newsletter about this week's new bill, signed into law in California by Governor Schwarzenegger, banning the cruel practice of the creation of this delicacy. This is a very important, historic issue as it is the one of the first times in American history

See Pauline, on Page 8

Book Reviews Ducks and Geese

Dorene Olson

If you have read Pauline's column, you will know that I have been in France for most of the month of September. This has been a return to me of one of my childhood countries where I have not been for 20 years. In that time, I have grown, matured, and developed a family of my own of finned, furred and feathered companions. My earliest experiences overseas with man and animal interactions have never been forgotten, as I decided at the age of five years that I was going to become a veterinarian and only left that course of schooling at the age of 21, not finishing my degree but instead substituting another.

My adult world has dropped into the lap of avian welfare and rescue and management, and my flock of both domestic and wild animals and the many hours spent in the field rescuing, rehabbing, and at home medicating, training and socializing with these magnificent creatures has added to my experience and professional medical and behavioral opinions. The following is a review of three books that I have added to my extensive library, and whether reviewed positively or negatively, are valued additions to my shelf.

Enslaved By Ducks

Written by Bob Tarte, Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, 2003, \$23.95 USA, reviewed by Dorene Olson

It was with HUGE anticipation that I awaited the arrival of this book, as I had been given an email excerpt of it by a friend of mine who is active in feline and Greyhound rescue and knows my involvement in domestic waterfowl rescue. I discovered it by chance (thinking its publishing date was many months away) on a Border's bookshelf, snatched a copy off and whisked it up to the checkout line. I think the big Pekin duck face on the cover would have drawn me from blocks away, even had I not been looking and waiting for the book.

I opened it and devoured it for the first few hours that I had it home, however put it down half way through in disappointment and have not gone back to finish it up.

Hailed as a "... laugh-out-loud chronicle of what it means to bring animals – a blind turkey, an irascible rabbit, a lovesick dove – into your heart and home and make them a part of the fabric of your life" by Marty Becker, DVM. And "All of us who feel a deep emotional connection with animals will respond to this book. As Bob Tarte realizes, there is no drug or therapy as effective as an animal who love you" Jeffrey Masson. As well as "If you thought one

See Books, on Page 10

Fair from Page 1

Of course the first point just says that we are wild party animals, but a lot of education or knowledge-sharing takes place informally through conversation with members and resources like Pauline.

The second point emphasizes our monthly meetings and presentations (plug for attendance) with an emphasis on husbandry, though wives are welcome. This area of education consistently shows itself the most popular. We had terrific speakers this year, falling in this general category.

Not directly related to the presenters at this Fair/Seminar, the third part of the mission statement broadens our view to include the world, parts of the world most of us never see. We have had interesting speakers in this category such as Walter Crawford of the World Bird Sanctuary, and Jonathan Reyman of the Feather Distribution Project.

So the annual show/fair has evolved over time. I have been associated with the club for three years, the length of time we have been at Queeny Park. My small part of the Fair is managing the presentations in the Community Room. Based on this perspective, this year was a great success. We had excellent speakers and high attendance. What more could you ask for?

Katy McElroy discussed her operation at Hornbeam Aviary, in Northern Ohio, where she, or more precisely the chicks' parents, raise Cockatoos. There are two unusual aspects of her approach. Hornbeam chicks are raised/weaned by their parents, and the birds live outdoors year round.

We saw video from inside nest boxes and details of the aviary construction. The birds aren't unsheltered outdoors, but do live in outdoor temperatures, with the inside of the aviary only heated to only 38 degrees (F) during the winter. They are about as far north as Chicago.

Behavior management is always popular, and we had two terrific speakers in this area. Liz Wilson gave two presentations, one on biting and screaming, and one on the "one-person" bird. Michelle Karras gave a presentation on Saturday and a discussion/demonstration Sunday.

On a more clinical note, Dr. Reger, of Webster Groves Animal Hospital, talked about microchip implantation and recognition and entertained questions on a variety of subjects. Dr. Hilvert, of Bird Medicine and Surgery, presented a variety of unusual cases with an eye toward improving our caretaking skills. Who would have thought a toothbrush could be a harmful, even deadly, toy?

All the presentations were video taped. No promises about technical quality, but they will be edited and make available for viewing by members.

Anecdotal feedback on the Fair was positive. The Fair

has two basic constituencies, attendees and vendors. Attendees seemed pleased with both the educational and commercial content of the Fair. Attendance was up slightly over recent years. We do not collect financial information from vendors, but they were pleased with attendance and management of the show. Again, from conversational feedback, the number of events this size is dwindling nationally, so again, thanks to our team for promoting, and maintaining, these successful events.

The show was also profitable in a financial sense. Over the past several months, the Board has discussed purchasing items to improve the membership experience. Acting on these purchases was deferred until after the Fair in an effort to be fiscally responsible. Final pricing will be presented at the October meeting, and a purchase decision made for three items. (See details on this page)



Fair Memories?

Let us know what you saw at the Fair... Humorous, serious, good, bad, whatever. We did have a four-legged animal interest story. Apparently a lost dog wandered in. Georgia Fletcher kept the dog at her booth for the day. Dr. Kersting took the animal back to his clinic and was able to reunite the family. Thanks to all!



Note on the Fair

This note came, by postal mail, to Carole Grommet

Date: 9/5/2004

Gateway Parrot Club,

Just wanted to write you a note that we really enjoyed your bird shows the past couple years.

We have three large macaws and one umbrella cockatoo - needless to say toys and food are always in great demand!!

We drive down to St. Louis from Omaha and will continue to do so - the vendors you have are wonderful!

Keep up the good work - just wish you were closer to Omaha and/or had two shows a year.

Thanks Again,

Omaha, NE

A two man crew was dispatched from Georgia on September 8, but on September 9, after assessing the work that was needed, they had to refuse to do the job because it is too dangerous for only two skilled men. We are coordinating with Howard to keep these costs as low as possible, using inexpensive local labor when no special skills are required. However, a crew of five or six experienced tree removal specialists is needed for a few days, and as soon as possible. Because of other devastation in the area, such crews are even rarer than usual as the first assistance through FEMA and other rescue groups is being given to people whose homes present a dangerous risk.

Over 150 pairs of rare Amazon parrots remain in small emergency cages in interior shelter. The duration of the hurricane itself and the cyclones following it, the continuing hard rains and wind, and the lack of help, have extended the stay in these cages to a week, but the cages were designed only for temporary use of around three days. We must help Howard quickly get these birds into proper cages where they can be adequately cared for.

Other pairs of birds which were previously evacuated to the interior shelter have now been placed in group flights outside where they can be easily accessed to provide food and water. This is also a temporary condition and these birds should be re-paired as quickly as possible for their safety.

Many young birds being handfed are in the nursery, creating an additional strain on labor resources. As you will see from the pictures, a considerable number of new cages - at least 200 initially - must be built in a hurry. The first priority is the removal of the trees from the cages. The more expensive processes of clearing and removing the trees and other debris can be put off to a later date. Kaytee Preferred Birds is donating 15 rolls of wire and delivering it. More wire and other cage building supplies are needed. Please contact one of the people below if you can make a direct contribution of supplies.

OPA members are making donations in amounts up to several thousand dollars per member. This is going to be a costly process. A donation of any amount is appreciated. Please help us by making a contribution to the OPA Disaster Relief Benefit Account. Our Disaster Relief fund will eventually benefit any aviculturists in need of its resources.

Editor's note: Additional details on how to donate, either to the OPA or directly to the Vorens, are available at the website listed above.

Contact for further information or to comment:

Gloria Balaban, Treasurer
(561) 753-8018
(561) 289-1983

The following is self-explanatory. This letter from Howard Voren describes progress with the aftermath of the hurricane and offers insight into the operation of a commercial aviary.

Letter from Howard Voren

To All,

Now that we have both electricity and internet service, I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to all that are helping us through these horrible times. There is still a long road to travel to recovery but your donations, moral support and prayers have given us the needed strength to make the journey. For this, we will be eternally grateful.

Although, until now, I have not had any internet communication, the questions raised, during discussions concerning our tragedy have been regularly relayed to me. One of these in particular, I would like to address at this time.

QUESTION: Why didn't we evacuate all the birds to safety? We had fair warning the hurricane was coming and we knew before we built the aviary, that South Florida was an area that is in the path of many hurricanes.

ANSWER: One of the reasons we chose the area of West Palm Beach, was that due to unusual atmospheric

Continued on next page

Continued from preceding page

and Gulf Stream configurations, hurricanes have historically, either turned south or north of us before making landfall. The last time a major storm actually hit this area was back in 1949. Despite this, we have, over the last 25 years initiated evacuation procedures 4 times. Although none of the previous storms caused any meaningful damage due to their turning away from the area, we did learn a lot about the many effects of evacuation on the birds. First let me say, that at anytime, I can catch up a pair of birds and ship them anywhere in the world with confidence that the action will be uneventful to the overall health and wellbeing of the pair. Unfortunately, when you begin the mammoth task of catching up hundreds of individual pairs both "Murphy's Law" and statistical odds will always cause problems. In other words, when you set out to catch up 1000 birds, all the things that only happen one time out of a thousand, will happen. As the years past by we learned much about how stressful and dangerous evacuation can be to the health and wellbeing of the birds. Previously compatible groups will beat to death, the bird at the bottom of the "pecking order" because the limited space does not allow it to retreat from a challenge. Aggressive male Amazons have beaten and killed their mates on being reintroduced to their flight cages after the danger of the storm has past. Some birds are not permitted to eat because the dominant bird or birds of the pair or of the group will monopolize the area in front of the feed dishes, since there is no "attractive" place to fly off to in the limited space and not permit the other bird or birds to have access.

There are also the surprise learning experiences. Like the year I evacuated hundreds of birds into a hurricane proof windowless building that was air conditioned with a backup generator set to kick in when the electric power failed. Within 15 hours, the quantity of feather dust that was shed by the birds, clogged the AC coils and it froze over. This stopped all cooling and ventilation of the rooms. If we had been hit by the storm, all the birds would have died during the night due to heat exhaustion. Luckily, around midnight when the danger had past, I decided to walk over and bid my flock goodnight. When I opened the door I was nearly knocked over by the rush of heat. I spent the next three hours, rescuing the birds from the shelter that was supposed to be their rescue shelter. Luckily all survived.

The bottom line to all of this is that the lesson learned is that you do not evacuate any birds unless you absolutely must. Inspection of areas where storms have hit, give you an idea what you can expect and where to expect the greatest high wind and cold driving rain effects on your flock. The first thing you look at is natural buffers that will cut down on wind force and damage. Those areas that are buffered by large stands of trees and are also under a thick canopy of natural cover, are usually protected from any major hurricane damage. Those birds that are housed in rows of flights that will have direct high wind and wind driven rain exposure, due to lack of cover and natural buffers, are those that must be evacuated at all cost.

Here is some history as well as our mortality and injury statistics to date for Hurricane Frances. There were 1600 birds housed in outdoor flights. Since our hurricane proof evacuation building was still filled with babies from last season, we stacked up the furniture along the walls of our living-room, family-room and my office and approximately 800 were evacuated into those areas. Cages were stacked 6 high and sheet metal was used between each elevation. Approximately 800 birds were left outside in their flights. The criteria for determining what would be evacuated and what would be left outdoors was determined using the criteria outlined above.

The bulk of the hurricane itself did not cause extreme damage. There were continual lulls in the storm and with each of these, I ran around the aviaries with a flashlight to see if any birds needed emergency aid. At approx 2AM which was supposed to be the end of it all we were hit with sustained heavy winds and tornados that did not subside until about 4AM. The tornado or tornados took down every tree in the aviaries that supplied a high jungle type shade canopy for most of the area. Literally every tree with the exception of a Norfolk Island pine and two palm trees went down. Hundreds of cages were crushed, many with the birds still in them. Entire benches with cages stacked along them, collapsed and many of the cages were half submerged in water by first light. Since the hurricane proof building and my relatively hurricane resistant house were not damaged, none of the evacuated birds or the babies were exposed to the elements. Sounds like a great case for the value of evacuation doesn't it? Well let's look at the most meaningful statistics.

Of the 800 birds left outside, four escaped. Two were immediately captured since their wings were so soaked they could not fly, and another pair have remained on the property and feed daily in a feeding station under their flight cage. Zero birds sustained injuries. No matter how the cages were crushed the birds in them were all sitting in what ever "open area" of the cage that remained. Zero birds died during the storm and two birds died from the situation that existed after the storm. One green-cheek conure drowned when it panicked as its half submerged cage was being pulled

Continued on next page

up out of the muck and it fell into the water. With its feathers soaked, it immediately sunk and drowned. Another green-cheek conure died the following day in emaciated condition.

Of the 800 birds brought into "safety", only one escaped when an employee dropped an evacuation cage. Since this was before the storm, it was "blown away" never to be seen again. Four birds sustained major injuries which ranged from compound fractures of the wing to three chewed off toes. This damage was caused by enraged mates that highly resented the territorial intrusion and being required to share such close quarters with cages of unfamiliar pairs near them. To date 35 birds have died from the evacuated group. Causes of death were one of three. Unknown stress factors, starvation and being beaten to death. Further comments on injury and mortality might serve to enlighten other questions that either have or might arise.

After the second major evacuation it was realized that special evacuation cages needed to be constructed to house any pairs that had a history of "aggressive demonstrations" in order to protect them from the aggressive tendencies of their mates, while in close quarters. A large group of these cages were built and they all had a one inch wide double wire wall in order to physically separate the male from the female. These special cages were used with all aggressive pairs of Amazons. The female blue-fronted Amazon that had her mate bite three toes off her foot was in one of the partitioned cages. Somehow he was able to grab her foot, pull it into his side and do his work. I did hear her screams and did pull her out in time to stop the bleeding and she has now recovered.

There was also a very compatible group of "yearlings" that had been parent raised the year before. They were all birds of similar size, Blue-crown, Cherry-head and White-eyed conures and a few Hahn's Macaws. They were housed for approximately one year in a flight that measured 4 Ft High X 4 Ft Wide X 8 Ft Long. This flight was four feet above the ground and in an unprotected area. An extended period of cold rain, driven by high winds can kill openly exposed birds from hypothermia. That put this group in the "must evacuate" category. They were moved to a 2 Ft High X 3 Ft Wide X 4 Ft long cage and placed in my family room. 24 hours later we found one of the Hahn's Macaws, lying beaten and bloody at the bottom of the cage. It died shortly after. Anything that upsets the "equilibrium" of a flock can cause uncharacteristic and unforeseen reactions.

All in all it must be realized that even though evacuation sounds like what any caring person should do when any danger

presents itself, the statistics show that it usually does much more harm than good in a large scale commercial operation. The birds I chose to leave outside, were left there with the same caring thoughts that caused me to evacuate the others. My years of experience allowed me to realize that I was placing those that were evacuated in much greater jeopardy than those left outside.

Yes, seeing all those birds in crushed cages and hearing how we had to crawl through the mud on our hands and knees,

bruised and bleeding while being eaten alive by fire ants, just so we could get to all the outside birds to feed them; does pull on the heart strings. The majority of you have felt our pain and for that I am grateful. It must be realized however that those that suffered the least were the birds that were left outside. They never felt our pain and they never cared about the painful and difficult time we had feeding them. They never suffered for days on end, the indignity of being confined to an evacuation cage in an overheated humid house that maintained a feather dust content that was so high that we humans had trouble breathing. There has always been a hard fast rule on my farm, where all my employees also live. **NOBODY EATS TILL ALL THE BIRDS HAVE BEEN FED!!!** The hurricane didn't change that, it just caused us human servants to go very hungry.

I'm not a very religious man and I myself am kind of amazed when I look back at my initial reaction. At first light, when the storm was over, as I walked amidst the horrible destruction, in extreme shock and with tears streaming down my face, I did manage to speak three words out loud. They were "THANK YOU GOD". Looking back I realized that despite the shock and pain, there was still an observant part of me that saw past the destruction and noticed the most important thing of all. Those birds that were left outside were still alive and healthy. I wish I could say the same for those that were evacuated.

Sincerely,

Howard Voren



President from Page 1

I also wanted to remind everyone that nominations for Officers & Board Members for the next term will take place in November, due to the Open House at WBS in October. Elections will be held at the Holiday Party in December. Any member in good standing, that has attended the required number of meetings in the past year, can be nominated.

Our educational seminars at the annual fair this year were quite successful. I received an unbelievable amount of positive feedback. Who would you like to see or hear at the 2005 annual fair? All comments or suggestions are welcome.

Thanks again to everyone! I hope to see you at the next meeting.



Pauline from Page 3

that an aspect of the huge factory farming industry has been legislated against. This saves 20,000 of my Duck Brothers' brethren from this life and death in one California factory, alone.

My mother secretly admitted a Bad Thing to me: when she was a child and young woman and traveling in France, she loved Foie de gras. She is even not a vegetarian (all us animals are working on that!) but she made sure that she did not ever order any duck or goose or eat her old favorite meal while there this month. As a fellow avian creature, I have to admire her for that: I shudder to think that she would enjoy Parrotlet Pate! So kudos to Governor Schwarzenegger and those concerned with animal welfare!

The second issue that weighed heavily on my Mother's mind when she returned to us was some of the parrots that she saw in France. She was filling her car with diesel at a tiny town outside of Auxerre when she discovered a Blue Front Amazon. Later travels led her to two Timneh African Greys, one at the medieval village of Rocamadour in a tiny villa, and the other in the town of Bescencon. All three of these birds shared these commonalities:

- Each had green water, floating with feces
- Each had a small cage, the size of a bird's sleeping cage, where full wing expansion or flapping was impossible
- Each had overturned feed bowls, but wet seed, molds, fungus and wet feed were abundant on

- the cage bottoms along with prolific feces
- There was not a SINGLE toy on any cage
- And finally, the only perch was a single dowel rod.

I have seen similar situations with my Mother here in the States on many, many occasions. I see this in florist shops, nurseries, pet stores, small businesses, and the private homes of the clients my mother sees for pet behavior problems. It is always heart wrenching to interact with birds in these living conditions. I have watched my Mother and her peers, and this is what they do; sometimes it works, sometimes it does not, but at least they are trying to improve bird's lives.

Engage in a friendly dialog with the bird's caretaker. Avoid accusatory or negative, confrontational approach. Compliment the owner on the beautiful bird. Find other things to be positive about, as well, such as the wonderful condition of the house hold dog, the beautiful room the bird is in, or the wares in the store.

Let the caretaker know that you are also a Parrot caretaker. Share some very brief details, including an acknowledgement of how difficult a task it can be to care for a bird properly.

Ask an open ended question, such as "Do you like your avian veterinarian?" "What difficulties do you have getting your bird to accept a proper diet?" "How do you budget costs for the very expensive cages, toys, feeds, care, etc of your bird?" This allows you to connect by sharing your own bird stories (which keeps the uninformed bird owner from becoming defensive) and **more importantly** allows you the opportunity to open up a guilt-free conversation on educating the other parrot caretaker on how to better his or her care of his feathered companion.

If you do not have written literature with you on hand, or have a memorized link to a helpful website that you can write down for them, offer to mail them some information (or email) at a later date and take their contact information.

Ask how they like their bird? What sorts of daily problems or issues do they have with the creature? Share some of your woes, because we do all have our trials and tribulations of living with these complex and intelligent and NEEDY beings. See if you can help to address any behavioral issues that are impacting the relationship – if you are comfortable, handle the bird yourself. This sets a good example of proper handling, as well as giving the owner of that bird a sense of pride

Continued on next page

Continued from preceding page

that you admire his or her creature so much and that it is well behaved. Have the bird interact with the caretaker. If there are issues, such as hesitancy or fear, addressing the bird rather than the owner. Statements such as: "You silly bird, where are you going? Let's go back to Daddy, who loves you so much/or where it is safe/ or who was talking to you" are better than: "Why did you drop that bird – did you think it was going to bite you?"

Drop by with a plate of home made cookies for the human and a pretty basket of toys, perches, a spray bottle, some food samples, and a pretty bird present for the human (such as a mug with his or her breed on it). Offer to set the new toys and food into the bird's cage. Bring pictures of your birds. These should include their LOADED houses, full of toys and perches. Also bring any pictures you might have of the troubles you have had with house hold destruction, feather picking, or other behavior problems. Sharing problems gives you an avenue to share solutions.

And lastly, be the pet caretaker's friend. You will not help the bird by alienating its caretaker; at worst, the animal might be whisked away from you preventing any further intervention and help whatsoever. Let the caretaker know that you realize how difficult these guys can be. Be sympathetic that they are expensive, time consuming, demanding, wild animals. Let them know that you are interested in THAT bird, and if they need someone to turn to, that you can help them. Mention your avian veterinarian, your bird club, and any rescue agencies that might be in their area, and offer to be a liaison if they feel that is the best avenue of action for them.

5b cbc (sorry, that is from Claire, the Eclectus, who ran across the keyboard, I think she wants her own column!)

Above all, always keep to the forefront your love for birds, your appreciation of those who care for them, and how you can HELP everyone: you, the bird, and the bird companion. Next month we will list some great online resources, as well as local, national and international resources. Hug all your humans today, and don't scream, pluck, or throw food this month!

Best,

Pauline the Pacific Blue Parrotlet

The Disclaimer...

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.

New Gear

As mentioned in the article about the Fair, we are considering purchase of new/upgraded equipment for club communications. These items have been discussed at previous Board meetings and acquisition deferred until the Fair financial results gave us a better feeling for the upcoming year's budget.

A laser printer will replace our current duplicating machine. This should improve the quality of the newsletter and allow inclusion of graphics, even photographs. The requirement is for a 16-20 page per minute laser printer with duplexing capability, at least comparable to the HP LaserJet 2300D. If you have an excellent source, or even a donation, please contact Trey Shaffer.

A computer data/video projector is another proposed acquisition. We rent these devices each year for the Fair and have additional opportunities for use at monthly meetings. Here we are looking for a unit at the relatively low end of the spectrum, similar to the unit we used at the Fair this year. The basic requirements include; at least 1200 lumen output, minimum 800 x 600 resolution, 1024 x 768 preferred, standard computer and composite (RCA) video inputs. Again, let Trey know if you have a connection.

Back to the hard copy world, we are looking for a folding machine. The Kinkade's do a lot of work each month printing, folding, labeling, stamping and mailing the newsletter. And, they do it quickly because I usually get the content to them "just in time" to get it out before a meeting. The device we are looking for will do half and tri-folds of stapled documents. Dave Kinkade is doing this search. Contact him if you have a particularly good source



The Activist Corner

Not that activists should be confined to a corner... There are still people out there with a conscience and the will to act on it through practical and even political means. Occasionally word of their activity comes to the editor. Here are a couple recent items.

Continued on next page

Continued from preceding page

Foie Gras

I think that is fwah grah. Ever had any? I understand it is a pate of goose liver marinated in cognac, perhaps mixed with truffles. I think that sounds questionable at best, but apparently it is quite the delicacy, probably more in demand by people interested in being seen eating foie gras than those that actually like it. It is costly. A quick web search shows it to be \$10 - \$20 per ounce. It is also costly to the geese, or ducks, bred for its commercial production. You can do your own research for the details. Suffice it to say the animals are force fed to "optimize" their liver production.

Clearly this sounds like something duck and geese people dislike. There is hope. The California legislature recently passed, and Governor Arnold signed into law, a prohibition of the feeding process and the sale of foie gras in California. Clearly a moral victory for Californians, it remains to be seen what other changes may come from this first step. Want to read more? Google "California foie gras law."

Unweaned Babies

An issue or two ago discussed a ban on unweaned babies in the commercial environment. It seemed positive, particularly in light of the Club's stand on unweaned babies, but under the heading of be careful what you ask for, there are concerns, even within the bird community, over this type of legislation. Apparently this is making progress, but may require more thought. Wording in the proposed Avian Welfare Act may have unintended consequences. A prohibition of unweaned bird transportation may interfere with many activities such as conservation.

This information came through the National Avian Welfare Alliance. You can find their website at:

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

If after thinking about it you would like to comment to the USDA, you can do so at:

<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/ppd/rad/webrepor.html>

Then click, Animal Care

Then choose Animal Welfare; Regulations and Standards for Birds, Rats, and Mice, Docket Number 98-106-4 Advance notice of proposed rulemaking and request for comments.



Books from page 3

backyard duck was much like another, wait till you meet the tine, indomitable Peggy, who laid down her life to save her fellow ducks. What May Sarton did for cats in *The Fur Person*, Bob Tarte does for ducks...."

I think that much of my distress of this book comes from too many years' experience in the rescue, veterinary, and fostering fields. There are anecdotes of parrots biting outside family members and paying the price for lack of human caretaker supervision, of ducks "escaping" into the jaws of death, of animals sick and dying due to competent veterinary care or owner recognition, and TONS of erroneous information on care, breed issues, husbandry and handling.

If I had read this book 20 years ago, before becoming involved in the highly specialized and professional world that my animals take me for medical care and information, I would have been spell bound and enamored. As it is, I am shocked and horrified that people might look to this book in guidance of proper husbandry practices, and feel that its inadequacies and downfalls are acceptable practice.

The Geese of Beaver Bog

Brend Heinrich, best selling author of Winter World, Raven's World, One Man's Owl, Mind of the Rave, and a Year in Maine Woods, among other titles, HarperCollins, 2004

"Bernd Heinrich is one of the finest living examples of that strange hybrid: the science writer," The Los Angeles Times Book Review

"He richly deserves comparisons to Thoreau." Washington Post Book World.

Continued on next page

Continued from preceding page

Although I am only familiar with Brend Heinrich from my two books of his on ravens (which I have not fully read) when I found out about him and his book on Canada geese I was thrilled to the core, and instantly bought a hard cover off the shelf rather than waiting for a soft cover, eBay, or used bookstore find. For those of you who know me, and those that don't, my interest in this author and his studies is multi-fold:

I own a business devoted to the conservation of Canada geese, and devoted to the peaceful solution of conflict between these magnificent (and now resident) wild creatures and the habitat that they share in conflict with human beings. I also am very active in our local domestic waterfowl rescue group, as a foster, medical rehabber, behavioral rehabber, and in-field rescue agent (means I use kayak, canoe, employee, long-suffering Frei, trained Border Collie, and vet tech skill to catch these sick and wounded guys out of the "wilds" of our city and county park lakes).

This flawless account of the author's raising of an orphan wild Canada goose, and his subsequent generous release of her to her wild home, is both a novel to be savored and a scientific text to be studied from many different angles. A gifted scientist and trained professor of biology, Heinrich manages a detachment that I find impossible in letting his gosling, Peep, join her own world and return to him and bring him lessons from the wild on her own wild life's timeline. Discussion and insight into not only Canada geese and their family raising and interactivities abound. We also learn of the rich bog life of the beaver, mice, weasel, song birds, and birds of prey that all comprise a hauntingly beautiful ecosystem, This is a must read, even if you have no interests in the singular or shared species of wild life described therein; if you have a love of the world and its marvels, this book will move you, both in the scientific majesty of nature herself and in Heinrich's rich appreciation for the winged and footed creators that move here.

DUCK! There's a Goose in the House , how to learn to share your life, your heart, and your HOME with this beautiful creatures

, by Nancy Townsend, self published, 2001.

This HIGHLY unusual and THOROUGHLY DELIGHTFUL book was an impulse buy online from some now forgotten internet search which turned up duck and goose clothing. Nancy Townsend works across the country with the Renaissance festivals, an event that if you have never attended you MUST find and attend. The closest that I have been in Wisconsin, just North of the Chicago area; the other events I attended when I live in Colorado. Townsend dresses herself and her ducks and geese in Renaissance garb and educates the public about waterfowl care, championing their cause as excellent, clean, quiet, non-destructive, intelligent pets. Add to that a diaper.... These are after all waterfowl, and you

have the un-arguable recipe for a perfect pet.

This 251 page tome is loaded with heart warming and thought provoking color pictures, as well as an unprecedented index of resources. For those of us in pstitticines, this is a great side line; for any of us interested in anseriforms, this has GOT to be tops on your Christmas list.

Very shortly after I ordered this book, and before it came, Mrs. Townsend called me to ask me some questions about my work with the geese and ducks, and if I could help her with some banding issues. I look forward to more conversations with this engaging and generous woman!

Respectfully submitted,

Dorene Olson



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.