

Squawk 'n' Talk

Volume 4, Issue 8

November 2004



Presidential Perch

Monthly Update

Phyllis Cotton

Just a note to remind everyone to attend the next meeting on November 21st. We will be nominating officers & board members for the next term. The voting will take place at the December meeting. All members are encouraged to attend both meetings and cast your nominations as well as votes.

We didn't have a general meeting last month due to the World Bird Sanctuary Open House. I hope all who attended the Open House had an enjoyable time. We did have a board meeting, however. I wanted to express our thanks to Dick & Carole Grommet for their hospitality in holding the board meeting at their home.

The holidays are just around the corner! This year has certainly flown by. I hope everyone will make an effort to attend our Holiday Party at our December meeting. It is Potluck, so bring your favorite dish to share. Anyone interested in the gift exchange can bring a wrapped gift (limit of \$10.00). We will have fun & games again this year. Suggestions for games & activities are always welcome as well.

Don't forget about the grooming clinic for birds at the November meeting. Dorene Olson & Cindy Speciale, from Tri City Bird & Animal Clinic, will be on hand to trim your birds' nails, wings & beaks for a small fee. Please, bring your own towels.

I hope to see everyone at the meeting!



Welcome New Author

Those of you familiar with our mailing list,

GatewayParrots@YahooGroups.com

should be familiar with Cliff Patterson, principal of The Baby Bird Farm. You will find two articles from Cliff in this issue, and he has promised more. Thank you, Cliff. If you would like to find out more about Cliff's commercial side, check out his website at:

www.BabyBirdFarm.com

Housekeeping

A couple notes about Club business...

It is November, and that means elections. We got the big one out of the way, now we can focus on the GPC. Please attend the meeting, 11/21, to nominate candidates for available Officer/Board positions. The requirement for nominees is attendance at four events/meetings in the past year. It would also be nice if they are willing to serve. As Phyllis mentioned, the election will then be held at the December meeting.

Also, at the November meeting we will have professional wing, nail and beak trimming available.

As it is also the end of the year, your membership is about to expire. All memberships expire at the end of the year, unless you are a new member signed up this year. You will notice the inside of this month's cover is a membership form. Please complete it, just to confirm all information in our records, and return it to Carole Grommet, at the address on the form, with your annual dues of \$20 per household, or consider a Premium Membership. Details to follow...



Winter Fun With Your Bird

Cliff Patterson

Winter always brings special treats for my birds. Cooked squash is always greedily gobbled up by hungry beaks. Warm and mushy and bright orange; what could be more exciting? Apple and pear slices are always in great abundance, too.

Most popular is something that many folks overlook completely – cranberries! They are a fun color (red), have a tart, distinctive taste, and are usually readily available from Halloween on through the winter. Since fresh cranberries are fairly hard, my birds expect me to cut them in half for them, to help them get a start on them.

Cranberries also make great toys. An old-fashioned Christmas craft involved stringing cranberries onto string to make a garland for the Christmas tree. Shorter lengths are perfect to decorate your bird's cage, and are edible, too!

I use a big old knitting needle and tie a small string or piece of yarn to it, then pierce the cranberries one by one. Longer lengths can be strung around the cage for your little guy to climb on. Shorter lengths make ideal hanging toys. I use a quick-link at one end to fasten it to the cage ceiling, and I tie a bell on the bottom end. Remember to use a liberty bell type or a cowbell type, not a jingle bell type, because little birdy toes can get caught in the small slots in those bells.

There is one more interesting use for cranberries that my birds appreciate. I have one of those dehydrator gadgets that Ron Popiel used to sell on TV, to make your own beef jerky and turkey jerky and such. If you let a bag of cranberries ripen, then put them in the dehydrator, a couple days later you will have the most interesting little red raisin with a tasty tart flavor. I save them in the freezer for months, occasionally thawing a bag and passing out the tasty little treats to a happy aviary. Even the breeders hang on the cage fronts, watching for their turn. It's amazing how they all instantly seem to know that there are treats coming, isn't it?

Another Christmas craft that is also enjoyed by my birds is the custom of stringing popcorn into ropes. I use the same big old knitting needle, and use air-popped popcorn to reduce the fat and grease. I make popcorn ropes for my birds that I hang on their playground and from their boing. They have great fun climbing on it and biting pieces off of it. It isn't very stable, and will frequently turn and dump one or more of them unceremoniously on their backs, accompanied by much birdy cussing. I start laughing, and soon the birds are chuckling along with me as they climb back up on the popcorn. Shorter pieces make great toys for hanging in their cages as well.

See *Winter*, on Page 7

THE MYTH OF THE HAPPY BAPPY*: FROM INCUBATOR TO RESCUE

From a talk by Greg Glendell at the Avian Welfare Coalition, Minneapolis, USA. June 2003

Editor's Note: While this article presents a stark view of pet bird ownership, it is based on the reality seen by rescue organizations. This raises a challenge to groups like ours to improve the fate of captive birds, primarily through education, which is the core of our mission statement.

What's **Right** with Aviculture?

I was once asked "What's **wrong** with aviculture?" and as I began to think more about this, it seemed the question should be reversed. What (if anything) is actually **right** about aviculture? Indeed, when you understand birds and the full range of their needs, particularly their behavioural needs and see how they are so often treated; it seems that trying to justify the production of baby birds for the pet trade is utterly untenable. So, this talk is mainly about the lives of the birds whose fate is to be born into the pet trade.

Parrot Factory Farms

Conditions for breeding birds vary immensely. From the so-called hobby-breeders who tend to rear fairly small numbers of birds in a 'quality' environment to the 'factory' production methods used by those who have no care or even interest in the welfare of the birds. Their motivation is simply the money that can be made from selling, mainly to the wholesale pet trade. Big production breeders will house breeding pairs in small cages, so small the birds cannot even fly. These pairs are used as 'production units', more akin to agricultural stock where, as we all know, animals are reduced to machines. Here, pairs of birds will be forced to live their entire lives in inhumane conditions. Eggs are removed successively from the females, and of course this stimulates further egg production as the birds strive to replace a 'lost' clutch as they would in the wild. This of course is the **whole point** of this system, to produce as many eggs for the insatiable appetite of the incubator as is possible. Every egg is potential profit. Eggs are then incubated and on hatching, the hideous process of hand-rearing begins. Time is money, so the aim here is to raise the birds as quickly as possible or of course sell them as **unweaned** chicks to the public, many of whom are gullible enough to be duped into buying a creature they know nothing about.

Hand-rearing

Hand-rearing is probably the best way to get a bird off to a really bad start in life. We know that baby birds begin to communicate with their parents up to three days before

See *Myth*, on Page 4

Perry's Story

Cliff Patterson

Perry is a little green Quaker who was born in a huge aviary and was shipped, with his brothers and sisters, to a PetsMart store in the Chicago area. He was put in a big acrylic cage with air holes in the lid. The floor was covered with pine shavings. There were some ladders and perches to climb on, but no toys. In the morning the nice lady would come and give them fresh food and water, and she would talk to them.

Occasionally a sales clerk would come and take one of them out to show to a customer. Usually they were back in a few minutes, but occasionally they were never seen again. Gradually Perry's siblings disappeared until one day, six months later, Perry's last sister disappeared. He was all alone. He was depressed and lonely.

Perry's friend in the morning disappeared and was replaced by this older woman who wouldn't say a word to him as she changed the food and water. He didn't like people very much anymore. He would bite the clerks when they tried to take him out to show to people. Time passed slowly for him.

One day, there was this nice woman who kept standing by his cage and watching him. Every two or three days he would see her again. One day, when she showed up again, she had a clerk with her who put on thick gloves and grabbed him and stuffed him into this dark cardboard box. He could hear strange sounds outside the box.

Finally, the box was opened and a towel grabbed him and put him into this strange place. The sides were made of wires, not acrylic. He could hear the woman moving around in the house instead of the silence he was used to.

The cage was full of strange looking things made of rope and wood and leather and brightly colored plastic. He had no idea what they were, and they made him nervous. The woman would sit by his cage and talk to him. Perry decided that she was pretty nice, except when she would put her hand inside his cage. Then he would bite her as hard as he could!

After a few weeks of living with the woman, one day she grabbed him with a towel and put him in this small enclosure with a perch in it. He could watch her through the holes in the sides and the wire top. She picked up the carrier and took him outside the house with her. Then she got into this big metal thing with windows all around it. It was kind of like his carrier only bigger. It must be a people carrier!

The big carrier began to move, and Perry watched the scenery moving by outside the windows. Finally they stopped and the woman picked up his carrier and walked up and knocked on a door to a different house than the one she lived in.

The door was opened by this older man and suddenly he heard it. The sounds of dozens of other Quakers all chattering and calling! Just like where he was born! Maybe he was back there again?

Perry was put in a big cage right next to another one filled with baby Quakers climbing around and playing. He loved it here!

Perry spent the next two weeks there. Every afternoon, the man would

See Perry, on Page 7

Natural Perches

Trey Shaffer

This is a follow up to an earlier discussion on the YahooGroups mailing list. Someone asked a question about perches. There was discussion about the type, size and number.

From my experience many birds are on perches too small for their feet, or at least don't have a large perch if they wanted it. It seems to me there should be at least one perch of a diameter that the bird's foot can only cover half the circumference. It also seems to me that if I were a bird, I would like some variety in the surface is stood on 24 hours a day.

So, bigger is usually better, and machined dowels and rods are boring. That led to the discussion of tree branches as perches, and the possibility that some trees might present a hazard to the bird.

Dorene offered the following list from information gleaned at TriCity Animal Clinic. It looks like you can use almost anything in this area except oak and maple.

Safe Trees

Apple, ash, almond, apricot, peach, plum, prune, nectarine, any citrus, dogwood, thurLOW, elm, guava, papaya, pear, madrona, magnolia, nut (but not horse chestnut and oak), maple, goat and pussy willow.

Dangerous Trees

Avocado, boxwood, cherry, chinaberry tree, holly, Kentucky coffee tree, Locusts (black and honey) mountain laurel, oak, wood oleander, rain tree, red maple, white cedar, spurge (pencil tree, snow on the mountain, crown of thorns), eucalyptus (dried, dyed or treated).

List of trees taken from Birds USA 1990.



they hatch; you can hear them calling from inside the egg. From this point on, *communication between parents and young is crucial to the normal development of those chicks*. Parrots, like all sentient creatures have an 'open' learning system. While they do have instinctive behaviours, as we do, they rely largely on *learning how to behave* in order to survive, whether this is in the wild or in captivity. By being denied the normal parental interactions right from the start, you have sown the seeds for serious behavioural problems a few months or a few years down the road. How would you feel if you had been raised by some alien creature, only to discover, as you grew up, that you were not actually a cow, or a dog, or a macaw yourself?

Wild Parrots and Captive Parrots; the Behavioural Conflicts

Over millions of years, parrots have evolved to be **social creatures**. Living as a flock is a vital component of their behavioural needs. And they may fly hundreds of miles every week of their lives. But captivity requires them to do the exact opposite of this: to be **solitary birds locked up for hours (or even years) in a wire box we euphemistically call a 'cage'**. Indeed practically every aspect of so-called 'parrot care' requires the birds to adopt utterly alien behaviours which are completely at odds with their basic biological needs, and this grim process starts as soon as they hatch out. All parrot chicks have evolved to be raised in the very dim conditions of their nesting hole. But what do we see here? Chicks kept in brightly-lit brooders, even **before** their eyes have opened. Parrots have never done this since there were parrots first on this Earth 75 million years ago, yet we think nothing of it; it's the 'normal' practice of breeders.

Next, the delights of meal times. You can expect many birds to be gavage-fed by having a tube forced down into their crops to receive some processed food that will ensure they develop fast into saleable babies. This hand-feeding will be rapid -a few seconds only for each bird. In production breeding, there isn't even time to allow a bird to swallow its own food, that's why they are crop fed. There will not even be any pretence by the hand-rearer to emulate the slightest hint of any parental care. No preening or head scratching of the young bird, no reassurance as given by the delicate contact calls between the parent and its chick. Here, the chick is a mere object whose function is profit for its 'owner'.

This process will go on, often with different people feeding it in a range of inappropriate ways perhaps with several changes of foods, particularly if the bird is sold before weaning. And of course there is always the risk of the usual problems associated with hand-rearing. Crop burn, over feeding, birds kept at the wrong temperature etc. Weeks or months later, around fledging time, there's more gross cruelty in store for the bird as it is wing-clipped, usually just before it is sold. One 'quality breeder' writes, of her fledging birds:

"I let them have their wings (sic) until I can stand it no longer, then I clip them"

When you realise that birds have spent around 130 million years perfecting their abilities to fly; that they are the most well-adapted flying creatures ever to grace our planet and that their entire 'design', life style, and biology are utterly dedicated to flight, you see how grossly cruel flight deprivation is to them. During the first few weeks of fledging, birds have a strong innate urge to fly. This is their first strategy for self defence. It's the equivalent of the antelope born on the African plains which can run within a few minutes of birth; if you can do it, you have a better chance of survival. While the urge to fly is innate, the skills needed to fly well are learnt behaviours. So, they learn how to turn, hover, and hold their body position in the air; this amazing three-dimensional world of flight. Even the techniques of taking off and landing have to be learnt by the bird. And to be effective, they have to be learnt during a bird's first few months of life. Where young birds are clipped and denied this window of learning flight skills, they are often incapable of proper flight for the rest of their long lives. So, crippling a bird at such a tender age by wing-clipping is about the worse time in its life you could ever do such a thing to it. Yet it is the routine default action of countless 'experts' who earn a living from these birds.

Let's look at why flight deprivation is so dreadful for a bird. If something scares a parrot, it has an instinctive reflex response: jump up into the air, take flight and put some distance between you and the problem. If you cannot do this; **you're dead**. So, the behavioural effects of crippling a baby bird and **forcibly denying flight** are as predictable as they are tragic. With its first line of 'self defence' gone you can expect maladaptive behaviours to manifest eventually in the bird. These maladaptive behaviours may include excessive screaming, self-plucking, self-mutilation, so-called 'phobic' behaviours (sheer terror) or aggression.

Selling birds requires an investment in ignorance.

The quality of information given to potential buyers of these birds is **at best** often at the level of some dubious second hand car salesman. At worst, it involves a standard and **deliberate set of lies** about how to care for the bird. There will be a cage, in which the bird will be kept; a cage where it may not even be able to spread its wings. There will be nothing

Continued on next page

stated about the birds' likely developmental changes as it becomes an adult and is no longer a cuddle-tame baby. And nothing will be said about how to communicate **effectively** with the bird. And you will be told to keep its wings 'trimmed'. This is a perfect recipe for utter disaster a few months or years down the line; an ignorant retailer selling to an ignorant and gullible buyer.

So now our baby goes to its new home. In most cases, perhaps with well-meaning owners but owners all the same who probably have about as much knowledge of this disabled bird's **real needs** as you and I have of intergalactic travel and the space-time continuum.

The birds are sold at a very young age for a very good reason. At this stage, like most animals, they show **submissive behaviours** (the so-called 'cuddle-tame' cockatoos). This submissive behaviour is an innate survival adaptation. Its purpose is to tell others of its own kind that the bird is harmless, and it induces others to treat it gently. We do this when we see baby animals of all kinds including our own human babies. But a 3-month-old Moluccan cockatoo, or macaw or Amazon grows into a very different creature at 3 years old, and by this time, you can expect 'problems'. The cuddle-tame baby, hand-reared by an alien, deprived of all normal interactions and guidance from its own species is just waiting to explode with a whole range of maladaptive behaviours. This is likely to include one or more of the behaviours I mentioned earlier; desperate contact calls (what humans call screaming) self-plucking, self-mutilation, aggression, or nervousness to the point of 'phobic' behaviours etc. Indeed, knowing what these birds have gone through in their first few months of life, what is actually surprising is that some actually do NOT show maladaptive behaviours. With such individuals this is testament to their incredible adaptive (learning) abilities. That, despite the catalogue of horrors forced on them by breeders, dealers, pet shop staff and their first owners, some do NOT show these traits.

Where it all goes wrong

So, now the route to rescue is marked out for our bird. As its behaviours, fuelled by frustrations over several years manifest, they become unbearable for either its owner, or the owner's neighbours with regard to noise and the bird becomes 'a problem'. The owner may seek help from some 'experts' who, if not familiar with behavioural science may well suggest a range of actions which will simply serve to exacerbate the situation. We are all familiar with so-called 'behaviourists' practices such as 'dominance', being the 'flock-leader' and various methods used to **impose** behaviour change, rather than communicate with the bird as another sentient creature **which has its own desperate needs** and ensure it has the **choice** to accept requests from us. If our bird has actually learnt to fly, some 'experts' will be advocating yet more disabling by clipping; a practice about as subtle as chaining a dog up for life. See this from the *Psittacine Behaviour Handbook* by Kenneth Welle DVM regarding his 'behaviour classes' where parrot owners bring their birds to be trained in group sessions:

"To minimise risks, all birds are required to have trimmed wings".

And, on 'dominance'

"An owner can only guide a bird if the bird recognises the owner's authority."

Working with a wing-clipped bird is little better than 'training' a fish out of water.

These methods use force instead of co-operation for interacting with your bird. So the bird merely becomes an object to be 'dominated'. And of course you also deny any opportunity to teach some flight requests. So all you end up with is a vet teaching a group of folks how to maintain disabled birds to live with their imposed and utterly unnecessary disability. Again, this no better than teaching a chained-up dog how to be chained up. Cue more problems...

So despite error being compounded upon error, the owner might still have some feeling for the bird and, if its luck is in, it might end up in a rescue. But many never make it even to there and the fate of unwanted parrots is very varied. They may be sold on from one unenlightened owner to another **for decades**, or released to risk survival in an alien world, or banished to a garage until someone gets round to 'solving' the problem, or perhaps even be killed as the final solution. But, increasingly, many are ending up in a rescue. And it seems whatever the size of the rescue's facilities, it soon gets filled up. Whether you can take on 5 birds or 500, all too soon, you get to the point where you can take no more in.

Why do we do this with birds?

Let's review the situation from the birds' perspective. Birds have spent around **130 million years** evolving into the most perfect flying creatures, whizzing about the rainforest or the Australian outback etc. Almost every cell in their body is

adapted in some way to help with a flying lifestyle. Look at the paper-thin skin, the air-filled bones, the sheer strength of every feather on a bird and the streamlining passed down through countless generations to make their skills at defying gravity seem as easy as a party trick. Birds also have a super-efficient breathing system and a heart that can beat at a thousand beats a minute with no strain on it (avian metabolism is about 60% faster than ours). All these qualities make even state-of-the-art technology look like some clumsy Heath-Robinson attempt at a bad DIY job. As Tony Soper and John Sparks say in their book *Parrots; A Natural History*, birds are “ace aeronauts” and that is their role on Earth; to fly like the wind with their peers, into a future we can barely imagine and might not even be here to share with them.

Yet what do we do with our birds? The **exact** opposite. Confine them to a cage, usually without contact of their own kind from the moment they are born. And then deny flight to these flying dynamos. We use cliché phrases like “parrots are not domesticated creatures” but we don’t take on board the **implications** of these facts. We sell parrots as though we were selling cakes or trinkets. We claim to recognise their intelligence, as “being like that of a 5 year old child” and then put them in cages! With this logic you could keep your kids in cages without any criticism at all!

The truth is, while some birds seem to cope with captivity better than others, most species **find captivity so incompatible with their basic behavioural needs** that they are likely to lead lives of chronic suffering **for decades**. So, the advantages of a parrot’s longevity and highly developed intelligence becomes a horrible curse, with birds eking out a miserable existence for decades at the hands of unenlightened owners. We have to come to the conclusion that it is **not the function of birds to be captive**. The more birds which are bred for the pet trade, the more suffering we will see and the more rescue and sanctuary groups we will need.

You might ask what my position is on having birds as ‘pets’ so let me clarify this and try to explain it. Many species commonly kept as pets are held in such appalling conditions and have so much of their behavioural repertoire denied them, that I cannot condone such a thing. The reasons why we do not routinely keep some other creatures in captivity are often obvious from the animals’ form and function. We do not keep whales as pets, or albatrosses, or polar bears. From a **behavioural needs** perspective, the reasons why cockatoos and the large macaws and probably most of the medium-sized parrots should not be kept as ‘pets’ **are equally obvious**. Captivity (particularly confinement and caging) are simply utterly **incompatible with most of their basic daily behavioural needs**.

That said, some birds do seem to cope much better in captivity than others. I offer the following as a speculative view only: nomadic species cope better in captivity than sedentary species. Nomadic species include cockatiels, budgies, poicephalus parrots and grass parakeets. I suspect they fair better because these species have an innate behavioural trait whereby they are **neophilic**. And neophilia is an adaptation required to be a successful **nomadic** species. As ‘wanderers’ nomadic species need to be adapted to investigate new opportunities for nesting, food sources and roosting sites very quickly, so a neophilic approach to life results in a nomadic species being the most successful.

With **sedentary** species the reverse is true. Species like African Greys and cockatoos (and perhaps Amazons and macaws) tend to be sedentary birds. They may cover vast tracts of their habitat in daily foraging journeys; but **they remain within defined areas, making repeat visits to the same food sources and roosting sites each day** or at least each few days. So these species tend have the reverse behavioural trait, being **neophobic** and this is allied to their innate conservatism. If they return to their normal roosting site and some minor detail has changed since last night, perhaps a small branch has blown off their tree, this can throw the whole flock into temporary confusion due to their disposition. Perhaps, by being very cautious about any changes in a very **familiar** habitat improves a bird’s chances of survival.

In my view, if parrots are to be kept in captivity this should be limited to a few adaptable species only. It should be recognised that such a ‘hobby’ should be seen as requiring a very deep understanding of what the birds need. And this must be based on **objective scientific information** about the species: not the kind of useless folksy ‘advice’ you tend to get from pet shop staff, or the popular bird press, whose main function is simply to be a vehicle to carry revenue-gathering adverts for the pet bird trade anyway.

The Behavioural advice on offer

Currently, the quality of much behavioural advice given out in the popular bird keeping press and the more whacky websites for a pet bird problem has no more value than astrology or reading the tea leaves. You will still see techniques offered which include telepathic ‘mind-reading’ of parrots and their owners over the phone. Also, useless articles advocating various ‘therapies’ which have no proven record to help birds. I’m just waiting for reflexology, iridology and ‘throwing the proverbial entrails’ to come up now. I have no problem with these techniques being used on people, if that’s your thing.

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But assuming one can transfer these practices to birds without any scientific support is a big mistake. Proper behavioural work on parrots (or any other creatures for that matter, including humans) which is not based on proven scientific principles risks causing more harm than doing any good.

Keepers of parrots need to know about the science of behaviour and behaviour change before having them. This is not rocket science. The **principles** behind why any creature, including ourselves perform any behaviour has been understood since Skinner and his colleagues first started to explain behaviour by developing Applied Behaviour Analysis. I can only touch on this subject today. But behaviour by all creatures can be explained using the principles of Applied Behaviour Analysis. The essence of why any creature does anything at all is down to **motivation**. A behaviour is performed simply because the bird is aware that **it will benefit from doing the behaviour**. In working with captive birds we should use **positive reinforcement** in asking them to accept our requests, and the birds should always be empowered to **make the choice themselves** as to whether they want to take a request from us. Positive reinforcement is the provision of a 'reward' for the bird, whether this be verbal praise, having its head scratched, having a favourite toy or a food treat. **Negative** reinforcement should be avoided. NR is **anything that the bird may dislike** which occurs as a result of some behaviour. It is similar to punishment. This could be being told "No" or any shouting; and obviously any threatening behaviour towards it, such as wagging your finger at it or handling it roughly or intimidating it in any way.

Sadly, at present, much of the behavioural advice is at the level of quack alchemy. Until people are taught that there are simple scientific principles behind our behaviours and that these apply universally, the situation will not improve for the birds.

In looking to the future for parrots, the way forward on all these matters is to address the causes of the problems and challenge the myths put out by the 'pet' bird industry by using hard scientific information wherever this is available. Remember, the onus is not on us to prove that something is harmful to a captive bird (like clipping its wings or caging it or indeed keeping that species captive etc.). Where essentially wild creatures are being kept captive, the onus is on those housing the birds to prove their case for producing birds who will remain captive for all their lives.

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*The word 'bappy' refers to baby parrots and was first used in the US. It refers to hand-reared baby parrots which are produced for the pet trade and sold as ideal, cuddle tame 'pets' while barely of the age where they would have fledged.



Winter from page 2

Leftover small boxes from Christmas presents can become exciting play places for your birds. Remember, though, that mistletoe is toxic to them, and many kinds of pine needles aren't good for them. Tinsel and other sparkly holiday decorations are very tempting, but will make them sick.

Winter means colder, darker days for our part of the country, but with a little imagination it can still be a fun time for our birds

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Email – Cliff@BabyBirdFarm.com
Phone – (815) 968-4320



Perry from page 3

reach into the cage with a small towel and pick him up, then bring him to his chest and begin to rub his head and his cheeks and stroke his back. It felt so good! He would talk softly to Perry and sing to him. He loved those times and sometimes would fall asleep in the man's hand.

The man began placing Perry on his finger and saying "Step up!" When he put his other finger in front of Perry, he would bite it. But it didn't do any good. The man didn't jump and yell like those other people did.

Soon he figured out that when the man said that he wanted him to step onto his other finger. That wasn't so hard. The man began placing Perry on a big table and bringing out some of those things like were hanging in his cage. He watched the man play with them. That looked like fun, so he went over and began chewing on a piece of leather. The man pulled on it, but Perry hung on tightly. This was lots of fun! There was even a ball that had a bell inside it. He would throw it with his beak, and chase after it as it made those fun sounds. He liked the ball the best!

The man began eating strange foods in front of Perry. He would even give him a taste of the foods. Some of them were really good, even better than what was in his food dish.

Then one day, the nice lady that rescued him from

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the pet store showed up again. The man took Perry out and showed the woman all the new things that Perry had learned. He even stepped up for the woman, and she held him to her chest and began scratching his head just like the man had. Oh, that felt so good! She felt just as good as the man had. Perry settled down in the palm of her hand and closed his eyes and enjoyed her attentions. She even sang to him too!

The woman put Perry back into the small carrier. They went outside and got back into that big people carrier and drove home. He was so glad to see his own cage again. Hey, he now recognized most of those things hanging in his cage. They were toys!

His days were different now. The nice woman took him out of the cage and petted him and sang to him. Perry decided that she must be his momma! He was even allowed to sit on momma's shoulder and nibble on her ear and play in her long hair. Life was very good for Perry and his momma!

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 Email – Cliff@BabyBirdFarm.com
 Phone – (815) 968-4320

Officers		
President	Phyllis Cotton	(314) 427-3679 (H) (314) 286-2202 (W)
Vice President	Janet Draper	(314) 432-3019
Secretary	Dorene Olson	(314) 956-1210
Treasurer	Dave Kinkade	(636) 343-8097
Membership	Carole Grommet	(636) 529-0026
Board Members		
	Christine Kinkade	(636) 343-8097
	Nancy Marron	(314) 984-9524
	Pat Seiler	(636) 462-4732
	Trey Shaffer	(314) 432-4317
	Beverly Smallwood	(636) 343-1104
	Bob Smallwood	(636) 343-1104
Committees		
Education	Dorene Olson	(314) 569-1310
Hospitality	Pat Seiler	(314) 462-4732
Librarian	Christine Kinkade	(636) 343-8097

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.