

## Contact Information

We welcome your questions and suggestions...

### Officers

President	Phyllis Cotton	(314) 427-3679
Vice President	Janet Draper	(314) 432-3019
Secretary	Dorene Olson	(314) 956-1310
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
Debby Martin	(314) 968-0949
Larry Martin	(314) 968-0949

### Committees

Education/Outreach	Dorene Olson	(314) 569-1310
Hospitality	Pat Seiler	(314) 462-4732
Librarian	Christine Kinkade	(636) 343-8097
Ways & Means	Larry Martin	(314) 968-0949
Website /Newsletter	Trey Shaffer	(314) 432-4317

## Attendance

There was a light turn out of Board members at the September meeting due to a variety of personal conflicts. As a result, without a quorum, there was no official meeting. We did discuss things unofficially, particularly about donating Fair proceeds. One issue is finding an effective way to help birds on the Gulf coast, and how we might support avian medical research.

We did have a turn out for the general meeting, and we were treated to slides of Drapers' trip to Peru, as discussed in the article on page 3.

## Calendar of Events

October 15 – 16	WBS Open House
October 16	GPC Board meeting at WBS
	Regular meeting
November 20	Dr. Van Horn Nominations for office
	Holiday Party
December 18	Elections for office
January 15	Regular meeting
February 19	Regular meeting

## Mission Statement

Gateway Parrot Club

A not-for-profit organization

Established in 1988

***Dedicated to the following goals:***

- Bring people together in a friendly atmosphere in the interest of exchanging information on bird care and breeding.
- Create interest in bird care and responsible breeding through monthly educational programs and annual bird fairs.
- Reduce neglect, cruelty and abuse of captive birds through education and public outreach.
- Educate the public, as well as ourselves, on the ever present danger of extinction in the wild.

## Board Member Quiz

Dorene Olson

Recently we had a Meet and Greet Your Board session where our board members shared a bit about themselves. Here is a contest to see who really paid attention! Please match Board Member with the item that best describes them. Take the letter in front of the name and place it in front of the description. Submit your answers to Dorene Olson at taradorene@chater.net. Just send the answer letter in the correct order. The first winning answer gets a wonderful bird toy!

	Mainframe programmer
	Owned by 3 Eclectus
	Recently had a grand baby
	Plays mountain dulcimer
	Is a wood carver
	Recently adopted a new Tiel
	Had snakes and lizards
	Only member without a cockatoo or cockatiel
	Works in human medical field
	Originally from the Pacific Northwest

<b>A</b>	Nancy Marron
<b>B</b>	Phyllis Cotton
<b>C</b>	Debby Martin
<b>D</b>	Janet Draper
<b>E</b>	Dorene Olson
<b>F</b>	Dave Kinkade
<b>G</b>	Carole Grommet
<b>H</b>	Pat Seiler
<b>J</b>	Trey Shaffer
<b>K</b>	Christine Kinkade

# Squawk 'n Talk

Volume 5, Issue 7

Sept-Oct 2005

## Presidential Perch

Phyllis Cotton, Monthly Update

The 2005 Annual Fair is over & now it is time to begin planning for the 2006 Fair. Our 2005 fair was a success but we didn't reap the profits we should have due to the increased costs of the exhibition hall. Next year we hope to overcome these financial constraints by planning well in advance. The GPC welcomes suggestions as to speakers or formats. Suggestions are also needed in regards to speakers for seminars or workshops.

There will be NO MEETING of the GPC in October! Instead the club will have a table at the World Bird Sanctuary on Sat & Sun for their Open House. Debby Martin is looking for volunteers to man the informational GPC table both days. Please contact Debby if you are interested in volunteering.

There will be a General Meeting for the GPC in November at the HSMO on Macklind in the Training Center on the 3rd Sunday of the month at 2:00 PM. Nominations for election of officers will take place at this time with elections to be held in Dec prior to our Holiday Party. I hope everyone can attend these important meetings. This is your club, too! PLEASE help support it and give us your opinions and expectations for the future.

## Tidbits

Trey Shaffer

We had a Fair! Hope you were there. If not, you missed a lot. No, it's not a rap... Here are some bits and pieces from the Fair.

Describing it is a bit like blind men describing an elephant. There was too much happening for any one person to be aware of it all. If anyone came close, it was Phyllis Cotton. Phyllis did a great job of planning and coordination over many months. Phyllis handled all the vendor relations and contact with Ballwin, the caterers and table rentals. I hesitate to mention anyone in particular, because I am sure to forget someone's significant effort.

It certainly appeared to me that operations of the event went smoothly. Debby Martin handled coordination of our Club volunteers who staffed the various tables and functions throughout the building. Nancy Marron generated donations of money and materials from the community, and many of our members helped throughout the weekend.

So, was it a success? Good question, but how shall we measure success? I think the best way would be by looking at our mission statement ( which is tucked away at the back of every newsletter. ) This year, as in years past, I spent the entire weekend in the seminar room, and can't comment on the larger Fair, out in the hall. I can say that we succeeded in our education goals by presenting an outstanding program of speakers and topics.

The Fair represents nearly all our fund raising for the year. We don't raise money for our own benefit, but to further the goals represented by the mission statement. Financially, we generated slightly more revenue than last year, but our profit was lower, based on significantly higher fees charged by Ballwin for the facilities. We will however be able to make significant donations to programs and organizations that make a difference in the lives of birds. Please come to the November general meeting for a detailed discussion of Fair revenue and expenses and to vote on proposed allocations of proceeds to support various activities.

On the topic of allocating funds, we had informal discussions at the September meeting, but since we did not have a quorum of board members, we took no action. Some money will go to A Refuge For Saving The Wildlife, a rescue organization in the Chicago area. This donation is in lieu of speaker fees for Rich Weiner at our seminar. There is a desire to support avian rescue efforts

3149 Dundee Road, Suite # 229  
Northbrook, IL 60062  
Phone: (847) 509-1026  
[www.rescuethebirds.org](http://www.rescuethebirds.org)  
[Director@RescueTheBirds.org](mailto:Director@RescueTheBirds.org)

I hope that this gives you all new ideas about how to help the rescue birds, and various birds in need.

Respectfully submitted,

Claire Olson

## THANKS TO VOLUNTEERS

We asked for help at the September Fair and the Parrot Club members really came through! We can't thank you enough and hope everybody had a great time! We couldn't have done it without you. Here are our dedicated volunteers.

Mandy Baumgartner	Carole Grommet	Carole Nocito
Anne Booker	Dick Grommet	Dorene Olson
Mike Brown	David Hauschild	Sr. Barbara Payne
Ann Brown	Doris Hauschild	Geneva Pigott
Steven Cann	Gary Helle	Bonnie Palmer
Amy Cann	Ellen Helle	Lynn Ricci
Alison Cantrell	Dannie Herron	Sue Richardson
Jennifer Court	Kelly Hope	Pat Seileer
Cathy Dervalis	Denise Hurt	Niki Shaffer
Suzanne Dohack	Ray Hurt	Trey Shaffer
Janet Draper	Dottie King	Ron Spitter
Leslie Elpers	Christine Kinkade	Priscilla Ward
Pat Flynn	Dave Kinkade	Medora West
Doreen Friedmeyer	Nancy Marron	
Marge Geraci	Debby Martin	
Vince Geraci	Larry Martin	

- grooming supplies
- help at adoption events
- poop off products
- perches
- cleaning supplies
- adding machine tape (for shredding)
- bleach
- cages and playstands
- bowls and cage supplies
- towels
- transportation
- transport carriers
- heat lamps
- printer paper
- cooking of bean/grain/rice/noodle mixtures

**Some rescue groups to consider:**

**The Oasis Sanctuary**

P.O. Box 30502, Phoenix, AZ 85046  
 Phone: (520) 212-4737  
 Business Office: (602) 863-1543  
[www.the-oasis.org/](http://www.the-oasis.org/)

**The Gabriel Foundation**

1025 Acoma St., Denver, CO 80204  
 Phone: (303) 629-5900  
 Toll Free: (877) 923-1009  
[www.thegabrielfoundation.org/Rehab/](http://www.thegabrielfoundation.org/Rehab/)

**Mikaboo Cockatiel Rescue** (they do all birds)

P.O. Box 1631  
 Pacifica, CA 94044  
[www.mickaboo.com](http://www.mickaboo.com)

**Perfectly Precious Parrot Rescue**

(where Pai and Squared Olson came from)  
 St. Louis, MO  
 (314) 427-3679  
[intofish@aol.com](mailto:intofish@aol.com)

**Avalon Parrots**

(where Whimmer and Tove Olson came from)  
 Whitebear Lake, MN  
 (651) 762-1151

**A Refuge for Saving the Wildlife**

(where Claire and Pauline Olson came from)

associated with hurricane Katrina. Please offer clear suggestions as to what organizations merit support. Another likely area for support is avian medical research. Dr. Kersting's presentations highlighted recent developments in this area. We need to decide specifically how to support this effort. The AAV, Association of Avian Veterinarians, seems like a good candidate, but if you know of specific projects of merit, please bring information to the Board meeting or Board members.

Another measure of success is membership. We are excited to report we had 23 new members join the GPC at the Fair. Welcome to all, and we hope to see you at meetings and events in the coming year.

## Draper Travelogue

Janet Draper

In the summer of 2000, my husband and I went to an eco-tourism camp in southeastern Peru. It is in a remote part of the Amazon rainforest in the foot hills of the Andes. You may have heard of this place by its name Tambopata Research Center, or just as the macaw clay licks.

During the 1980's, Dr Charles Munn explored this part of the rainforest in search of macaws. I heard him speak about this period and he said he followed the sound of the birds up in the canopy until he located the tree they were in. He then climbed a nearby tree until he was at the same level as the birds. He sat there and watched the birds, who sat and watched him watching them. When he located a nest site, he climbed up to it. He said the adult birds flew away to a nearby tree. When he reached the nest, the baby screamed, the parents screamed and he said he wanted to scream. I can imagine. Wild macaws have had more practice at being loud. It's incredible how much louder they are than our pet versions. It must have been deafening. He wasn't sure how the adults would react – if they might actually attack him – but they didn't. They only assaulted him verbally.

He and other scientists/conservationists organized a coalition of the native peoples of that region. The native tribes own and operate the camps. This has given them a way to make a living that encourages them to protect their natural resources. Until this occurred, natives would rob babies from the nest to sell to the import/export trade. Not only did this provide them with a more ecol-

ogically sound living, but encouraged the natives to guard their own resources, a win-win situation. I felt very good about supporting such an endeavor with my dollars. An additional bonus was seeing a rainforest and its occupants up close and personal.

At Tambopata, much care went into guarding the ecology. They have a number of trails and we were encouraged not to stray from them. We were also encouraged to leave everything where we had found it – to the point that we were strongly discouraged from even taking a discarded feather as a souvenir.

I first heard of Tambopata when National Geographic did an article about it, but it never occurred to me that I might someday go there myself. I next heard about it when the GPC invited Lynn Dicker to present a seminar at one of our annual fairs. I attended his seminar where he presented slides of his trip to Tambopata. I was mesmerized. I decided then and there that someday I would go there. Then a few years later, I attended a MARE (Midwest Avian Research Expo) and Donald Brightsmith had a booth there. He was soon to graduate and assume the leadership at Tambopata and was trying to organize trips. I expressed interest but unfortunately, he didn't get enough people. I was planning to go by myself when my husband looked at the brochure and expressed interest too.

I looked for a travel agency to set it up. I learned there are only a few agencies that specialize in eco-tourism trips. If you are interested in such a trip, I encourage you to use one of these agencies. They are experienced in setting up international trips. They will arrange for you to be met and escorted through all of the transfer stops (airports, train stations etc). This REALLY makes a difference. Your guides will know the local language and customs, avoiding unpleasant situations.

There are several travel agencies that do a good job. We used Journeys International and were very pleased with them. Here is their contact information:

107 April Drive Suite 3  
Ann Arbor MI 48103-1903  
(800) 255-8735  
[info@journeys-intl.com](mailto:info@journeys-intl.com)  
[www.journeys-intl.com](http://www.journeys-intl.com)

We flew from St Louis to Dallas, then on to Lima, Peru. We were met and transferred to a hotel for the night. As our guide left us, he said he would return to pick us up at 7 am. I was a little alarmed because our printed tickets showed that the flight would

ample, might not be best advised to start with a cockatoo but encouraged instead to look at a cockatiel. Followup calls after the adoption should be expected and encouraged, so that any problems with adjustment are dealt with immediately and either a solution to the problem or reference to a qualified individual who can provide a solution are reached. This is again essential for the long term health of that bird remaining in its newly adopted home. The rescue group should be seen as an educator and friend who can assist both bird and new human.

#### **How can you find a reputable rescue group:**

Some veterinarians and some bird clubs will know of rescue groups in your area. One of the best sources of referral can be from a person who has an adopted bird and who can happily refer their group to you. Of the eight parrots in my household, 7 of us are from rescue groups from St. Louis, Chicago, Minnesota, and Montana and one my mom rescued all by herself. (Claire, ed). Ask specific questions based on the above information to the person referring you, and ask specific questions to the group; remember this is a give and take process for the benefit of the bird. The Humane Society and animal shelters may also occasionally have birds available, especially after such huge disasters like Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, and they have their own screening policies, but you will often not get the quality of pre-adoption care and information that a bird coming from a private rescue group may come with.

#### **How can you help?**

Financial donations are always appreciated, but there are many other ways that one can help rescue parrots in need. The biggest need for many groups is often for foster homes, so if you are able to foster a rescue parrot that can be one of the biggest donations of aid possible. Other ways that you can help can include transportation to the vet, helping with cage cleanings and medications, sponsoring a bird, or donations of supplies. Supplies and other ways of helping are listed below:

- newspaper
- phone card for long distance calls
- full spectrum lighting
- bird books
- bird toys
- printer cartridges (ask printer type first)
- fresh fruits and veggies
- brushes for cleaning perches and cages
- food

these veterinary records should be part of the adoption package, as well as any other information known about the bird's history and background. A veterinarian reference should be requested of the potential adopter and should be followed up on by the rescue group. A qualified avian veterinarian should be recommended to the potential adopter if they do not have one already.

#### **Housing for the parrot in adoption:**

It is not unusual for birds to be in foster care. Some rescue groups are large enough that they have shelter facilities. Other are run out homes of the members of the rescue group, who have limited capacities for all incoming birds. Foster homes are often used to house birds that have special needs, to differential size or species, or simply to accommodate all the birds in the program. Foster homes should be chosen as carefully as the adoptive homes, and should provide for their foster birds in the same quality manner as they provide for their own. In addition to any veterinary care that they may have participated in, foster homes should have a good deal of information about the daily habits of the bird in their care, their personality and traits, and should be a source of information about their past history, as much of it as is known. The foster home should be clean, have copies of veterinary records or knowledge of any medications that have been given to the bird, and show a level of care to the foster parrot that is on par with the care shown to the resident parrots.

#### **The Screening Process:**

One often hears the comment that it is easier to adopt a human baby than adopt from a reputable rescue group. A reputable rescue group will have a thorough screening process in place for the sake of you and for the bird. They should want to make sure that you are aware of the special needs of the animal and understand what is going to be required of you to live with that animal. They should request several references, including those of your veterinarian, and follow up on screening those references. They will have a contract for you to adopt the animal, which frequently requires that the animal be returned to them should you no longer be able to care for it. This helps ensure that the bird is again helped and not placed in an endless spiral of homes that do not work out.

A home visit to your abode should be in the cards, as that can be a way to further screen potential adopters for suitability. Sometimes an adoption may be refused, if the animal requested is not deemed to be a proper fit. This is not meant to denigrate the potential adopter, but rather to safeguard the animal from being placed into an inappropriate home. A first time bird owner, for ex-

leave at 6. Our guide assured us that he had checked and it would leave at 9. Apparently, in Peru the planes are only scheduled for a day, not for a time. You have to call the day before to get the time. (This is an example of why you need someone who understands the local customs) The next day, we were picked up and driven to the airport to catch a flight. We flew from Lima to Cusco and then on to Peorto Maldenado.

When we arrived in Peorto Maldenado, the farmers were striking and picketing the airport. We were never quite sure what that was about, but it was certainly unnerving. Then the people from Tambopata who came to the airport didn't have us on their list of people who were supposed to arrive. I had the confirmation notices, but they kept saying "no" they weren't supposed to pick us up. After several calls, they finally figured out that they had us on the list to pick up the day before (the day we left St Louis). We were relieved. Peorto Maldenado isn't the kind of place I wanted to be stuck in. It was described as a frontier town that you HAD to experience.

We were transported to the river in a truck modified to have seats and a thatched roof. The truck parked close to some trees and we walked to the river from there. As we emerged from the trees, I was dismayed. The river bank was steep, muddy, uneven and had no handrails. At this point, I was convinced I was crazy to think that I could do this. But it was too late. The plane had taken off, and I didn't want to be stuck in Peorto Maldenado. So I reluctantly started down the bank – very carefully.

At the river, we boarded canoes that also had thatched roofs. We had to board in a single line and sit before the next one got on. The canoe probably sat around 20 or so and was like any canoe – easy to tip. Since the river contained all sorts of animals (including caiman – the South American equivalent of an alligator), that could be very dangerous. So if you did too much squirming, someone was sure to scold you.

At one point, we were required to disembark and scramble up the mud bank to register at the Agricultural Station. The only advantage here was that there was a bathroom (actually an outhouse).

The river was in fairly good condition. We only had to disembark and walk along the rocky (large boulders) bank once. The canoes couldn't make it up the shallow rapids with all the people in them. I understand there are times everyone has to carry the canoes since the river is so shallow. I felt very lucky.

In late afternoon, we arrived at the first camp – Posada Amazona. All of the buildings are built on stilts because of the routine flooding. The walls of the structures were bamboo. They were covered with a high thatched roof. Cut outs in the walls housed hurricane lamps for lighting at night. Each room had its own private bathroom, complete with shower. The only thing missing was hot water and electricity. They were spacious and one side was completely open to the forest with only a railing for safety. Of course the beds were equipped with mosquito nets.

Sometime during that night a storm came in. The wind blew the hurricane lamp out of its shelf and it shattered just at the base of my bed. I came straight up out of a deep sleep. Fortunately it wasn't lit at the time. They also had wool blankets on them which seemed silly during the day. It was quite warm. However, when the sun went down, it got very chilly. That's when we understood why they had put wool blankets on the beds.

Early the next morning, they woke us and we went to breakfast. There we met Vico for the first time. Normally your assigned guide meets us at Puerto Maldonado. But he had come the day before and returned when we didn't show up.

The guides were marvelous. They all spoke several languages. They all had a college degree. In Peru, there aren't as many opportunities for talented young people. The job as a guide for a place like Tambopata is very highly prized. It shows in the quality. They did everything they could to insure that we got to do what we wanted to. I have very poor eyesight. When Vico realized this, he even started carrying a telescope and its tripod on his back. Then when he located birds, he would set it up and even focus it so I could see.

The next leg of the trip took us into Tambopata. It was another full day in the canoes. I was definitely getting TB (tired butt). When we neared Tambopata, the guides pointed excitedly and said that we were here. I looked the direction they were pointing but could see nothing through the trees. But after a short walk, we broke out into a clearing. There was the camp.

Each building was interconnected by covered walkways. There was a dining room with another hall leading to the kitchen. The main building housed the guests. Another hall led to a juncture. One side led to the bathing/toilet area. The other direction led to the workers/scientists quarters. This is not only an eco-tourism site, but it is also an active research center.

Please always remember that parrots are prey animals, and susceptible to death or injury by even the most benign of other family pet members. Please take no chances with their precious lives; love your parrots and keep them safe.

Pauline was my heart bird. She traveled with me 4 times to MN, twice to Chicago, once to Seattle, and went to 3 out of state conferences with me. She lived on my shoulder and went everywhere with me. As such, she attended every Gateway Parrot Club meeting that I attended, and had many friends. If anyone wants to make a donation in her name, please donate to a bird rescue group, as Pauline came to me at the age of three as a rescue bird through Michelle Karras from Rich Weiner's group in Chicago. Pauline was a breeder bird who did not like her life and chewed her own toes off, so she had special needs as a little crippled bird. But she was great of heart and great of spirit, and I still suffer every day with grief at her loss.

### **Claire's Corner**

I am Claire the Eclectus, and I own board member Dorene Olson. My sister Pauline the Parrotlet was recently stepped on and bitten by our newest working dog, who thought that she was a toy on the floor. I am no muse like Pauline was, but I am going to attempt to take over her column and write on parrot issues.

My first column is about Parrot Rescue. There are many birds, like Pauline and myself, who were not purchased as babies but were instead adult birds in need of second homes who found our way into rescue. Pauline and I are from a rescue group in Chicago. There are closer rescue groups and like all groups, there are good groups and bad groups. I will discuss the attributes that make a rescue group reputable and one worth supporting, and how you can support a rescue group even if you do not intend to adopt a parrot.

Reputable rescue groups share a variety of characteristics, and one should check out the rescue group as carefully as they should check you out.

### **Veterinary Care:**

Each bird in rescue should have received a complete avian exam and be checked for communicable diseases before being offered up for adoption. This is important not only for the sake of the individual bird but also for the health of the other birds in the rescue group as well as any birds in the new adoptive home. Copies of

## "Helloooooooooo"

Debby Martin

Mozart and Ginger advised me they see a shortcoming in our Gateway Parrot Club flock communication. In fact, members have pointed out this problem. Sometimes we have club emergencies which cause a change of meeting location or even cancellation. To contact everyone on short notice by phone simply can't always occur – even though we try our best. To those who have been inconvenienced by our failure to communicate we all extend our sincere apologies.

One of our faithful members made the following suggestion – create a distribution list of members with E-Mail addresses. When emergencies occur we can send a quick message. Ginger and Mozart have offered to help call those who have not provided an E-Mail address or who have no computer. Trey our technical expert has offered to put this E-Mail list together.

If you have not provided the Club your E-Mail address or current telephone number, please do so. That way we can let you know if there is a problem. Please send that information to:

Debby Martin  
(314) 968-0949  
[debbymartin@charter.net](mailto:debbymartin@charter.net)

Ginger and Mozart will make sure she gets the information to our club secretary who is currently having a computer problem. Many thanks to Sr. Barbara for the suggestion.

## On the Perch with Pauline

Dorene Olson

It is with the deepest sadness and regret that I must report that Pauline was recently killed by a family dog. The death was accidental and tragic. There will be no more articles for the column On the Perch with Pauline. Her sister Claire, the Eclectus, will run another column, Claire's Corner, which will attempt to answer any questions on parrot behavior or other issues that may come up in the future.

That evening, we went on our first walk. We left late afternoon. As we walked, Vico stopped to explain many of the plants, insects and animals that we saw. I think I learned more about rainforests during these few short days than I had learned in all of my previous years. I had never truly understood how complex and interdependent things were in a rainforest. It's a very fragile environment.

I also had not realized how quickly the light faded when the sun went down. Since I have poor vision, this very quickly posed a problem for me. We had flashlights, but that wasn't enough for me in this environment where nothing is predictable. Vico and my husband Mike both came through as heroes though. Vico led holding my one hand. My husband followed me, holding my other hand. Theoretically, this should have been ok. I tried to follow precisely in Vico's footsteps. At least I thought I was. We had gone close to an armadillo hole. Vico deftly walked on the edge. Unfortunately, I'm not as coordinated. I started to slip down the edge of the hole. Vico tried valiantly to pull me back up. But instead, I pulled him in on top of me. Well, this hole was about 2 feet deep. All my husband could do was laugh. He thought it was funny. The only good thing about this was that the armadillo wasn't at home at the time. To make matters worse, I had worn white pants. There was no hiding them when we returned. Boy was I embarrassed. Needless to say, both Vico and I made sure we were back safely in camp before dark after that.

### The Main Event

Each of the 4 mornings at Tambopata, we woke up early – way before dawn. We took the canoes to the island opposite the river bank where the birds would eat the clay. We had to be in position before the birds started to arrive. Otherwise we would spook them. The guides set up telescopes on tripods for viewing. Then we waited. Gradually, birds started to arrive. They came in small groups of 2, 3, 4 or so at a time. They would congregate in the trees surrounding us. As the avian population grew, so did the noise level. It was astounding how loud it got.

At some point, birds would start flying over to land on the river's clay bank. They would eat for awhile and then return to the safety of the trees and others would replace them on the clay licks. Sometimes this continued for several hours. One morning, I think it was the second; an abrupt visit from a hawk caused an immediate panic. Birds scattered all directions and did not return that morning.

The avian species represented varied somewhat, but usually included:

- Macaws – scarlet, blue and green wing
- Amazons – mealy
- Conures – ducky
- An assortment of smaller parakeets

The antics they displayed on the clay licks were fascinating. I could have stayed to watch all day – if only the birds didn't leave. It was wonderful to see these magnificent creatures in their native habitat, cavorting and interacting with each other. It was their social hour. Something like our own happy hour (minus the drinks).

### **Conservation Project**

In the late 1980's and early 1990's, our understanding of these birds was very limited. When the scientists found babies in peril they brought them back to the camp to hand feed. At that point, they didn't know how long the babies stayed with their parents or how much had to be learned in order for the baby to be able to survive in this environment. They really thought they were helping the babies. Sadly, they found out how much the parents taught the babies that we humans had no way of replicating. The first year's babies were sent out by themselves. Most of these perished. They had no idea how to survive and were easy prey for predators. Only a couple have survived till now.

These days, they know better than to remove a baby from the nest. Now, during breeding season, a worker free-climbs up 50 feet to the nest each day. He lowers the baby to others waiting on the ground. They weigh and assess the baby. If they feel he/she needs medicine, it is administered to the baby before he is lifted back up to be replaced in the nest. This is the first way the scientists help more babies to survive.

The parent birds will often produce more than one egg at a time. Since so much effort goes into raising a baby, the parents will often push a smaller, weaker baby out of the nest. This will allow them to concentrate on only one baby. That increases the chances that their one baby will survive. This seems cruel to us, but actually is Mother Nature in action. The scientists know this, and when it becomes apparent that a baby will be pushed out of the nest, they will remove it. It is placed in the nest of a couple who either didn't have eggs or whose eggs didn't hatch. Many times, this surrogate pair will accept the baby and raise it as their own. This is another way they have found to increase the number of babies surviving.

time it's done correctly. But be alert to signs of stress and stop before that happens. Always end the session on a happy note.

Second skill - Come to your hand or arm from the top of the cage on command. Remember; do not let the parrot perch above you as it is a "dominant" position. Place a small stool in front of the cage. Using the "Up" command practice the First skill several times. Then place the parrot on the cage top. Now using the stool to make yourself higher than the parrot, offer your hand or arm with the "Up" command. Remember LAVISH praise when the bird responds correctly. Repeat the step for five or ten minutes. After a couple of days, remove the stool and continue daily. Remember laugh and praise at success – your bird wants to have fun and please you!

Be sure and have all family members participate and their relationship with your new bird will begin to deepen. Mozart would like to point out how easy it is to let the training routine slip away. I've thought about his comment and he's right. Working "parronts" have to try extra hard to make special time for the basic skills and learning new tricks and how to play. Mozart – I promise to do better STARTING TODAY!

## PARROT FESTIVAL 2006

HOUSTON, TEXAS

7<sup>th</sup> Annual Educational Conference

Hosted by The National Parrot Rescue & Preservation Foundation

FEATURED SPEAKERS: Dr. Natalie Antinoff, Mark Bittner, EB Cravens, Dr. Scott Echols, Dr. Bill McGehee, Linda Morrow, Dr. Susan Orosz, Dr. Branson Ritchie, Dr. Fern Van Sant, & Liz Wilson.

CONFERENCE DATES: January 20, 21, & 22, 2006

[www.parrotfestival.org](http://www.parrotfestival.org)

Kiwi flew back to the safety of his cage and scurried inside as quickly as his wings and his little pink feet would go. He sat there, chuckling softly to himself, and thought, "That will teach her to leave Kiwi out of all the fun family activities!"

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## A GOOD START!

Debby Martin

Mozart, Ginger and I were reading the Audubon "Feathers" and saw a letter about hummingbirds from a couple who have fed them for years. They noticed in late June youngsters and adults feed madly at the feeder and then in August something odd happens. During the day an adult male will position himself on a branch by the feeder and aggressively chase the young hummers away to prevent them from using the feeder. This continues until mid September when the youngsters are allowed back for several weeks. They all start migrating about two weeks later. The couple believes the mature male is restricting the youngster's access in order to teach them to rely on other food sources, allowing a final feeding frenzy in Sept. to build an energy reserve for the long migration south.

Well, I don't know if that's really what's in the male's mind but it made me think about what basic skills "parronts" should teach their new flock member. Mozart pointed out the book "Parrot Training" by Bonnie Doane has some basic obedience skills it's important for your new bird to learn. Establish a daily routine for training - this will help bonding. Help your parrot learn to play. Mozart has never instinctively played with a toy – we always have to learn how to do it together and then he'll play on his own.

Here are the two basic skills:

First skill - Come to your hand or arm from a T-stand. Place your hand or arm in front of the bird and give the "Up" command. You may have to push gently underneath their belly. When the parrot complies, praise lavishly and return to the stand giving the "Up" command. Drill continuously trying for five to ten minutes if possible. You cannot be too lavish with your praise each and every

In the wild, it takes about 200 square miles, on average, to produce one suitable nest site. The scientists first tried to produce nests out of natural materials and nail them to trees. Unfortunately, these rotted before the next breeding season. They also weighed over 1500 pounds which made them very difficult to raise into place. When someone donated some PVC pipe to them, they made a nest out of this. It is much lighter – and it doesn't rot. So these nests are working much better. By manufacturing nests, the scientists have increased the number of mating pairs who can raise a baby. They have also been experimenting with different sizes of nests, nailing them to different trees and raising them to different heights. They are now beginning to get a better idea of what each species needs. All of these things have helped to maximize the breeding potential. Since rainforests are being deforested at alarming rates, they hope that these measures will allow the species to continue to survive in the wild.

### Chicos

The birds helped by humans are referred to as chicos. The more they were handled as babies, the more they have lost their fear of humans. Some of the chicos will even let you hold them and eat bananas out of your hand. The camp keeps a feeding table (made out of native trees) near the center of the clearing. They try to discourage the birds from visiting us in the dining room. In spite of this, several birds come into the dining room and snatch food off of plates. At one point, several chicos came into camp, and we went out to the feeding table to give them bananas. While I was out there, another chico snatched my lunch. I wasn't upset. I probably would have given it to him, except the workers tried to chase them out of the dining room. I guess I can see how they'd be something of a nuisance. But since I was only there for a short time, I didn't mind it at all.

After the morning's main event at the clay licks, we went back to eat breakfast. Then we broke up into smaller groups for walks or small trips to other sites. Since they didn't want us all running into each other out in the rainforest, they staggered the groups leaving. We were just lying around waiting for our turn to go, so I lay down on my bed to rest my eyes. I became aware of a strange clicking sound coming from above me. When I opened my eyes, I was greeted by a green wing macaw standing on the roof's support beams, looking down at me. As soon as he realized that I didn't have any food to give me, he moved on down to other rooms. I sprang up to run get a banana to feed him. By the time I got back to my room, he was walking along the hand railing that went all the way along the rooms. As he returned to our room, we got a close





