

# Squawk 'n Talk

Volume 5, Issue 3

April 2005

## Presidential Perch

### Monthly Update

The weather has been so nice lately. Could it be that spring is here? My birds & I have certainly been enjoying the warmer temperatures.

The GPC has been invited to participate in Earth Day on Friday, April 22<sup>nd</sup> from 6:00 PM until 8:00 PM at Hardin Middle School, 1950 W. Elm St., St. Charles, MO 63301. This is an educational family event. Please join us and bring your birds! For directions you can call Phyllis at 314-427-3679.

Don't miss our next meeting! The education will be Scott Patrick, an artist who will discuss how we can develop our own inner animal artist!

We had another great turn out for our meeting last month. Dr. Sheila Jarasek gave a really interesting lecture. She will be speaking again on Sunday, August 28<sup>th</sup> at our annual fair & seminar as well.

All the plans are in place for our August event and can be seen on our website. Debby Martin is recruiting volunteers for many different duties. Please give Debby a call at 314-968-0949. Anyone who would like to help with donations for the silent auction or raffle table can contact Nancy Marron at 314-965-6536. We are having a catered dinner, with the speakers & vendors, on Saturday

## 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.

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evening at the close of the fair. The public is invited to join us but they **MUST** pre-register for the dinner no later than July 31<sup>st</sup>. The cost is \$20.00 per person. To register for dinner or any of the seminars, please call Phyllis at (314) 427-3679 or register from our website using Pay Pal.

All GPC members get a 50% discount for the seminars.

Our website is: [www.GatewayParrotClub.org](http://www.GatewayParrotClub.org)

Following is a list of avian-related events taking place in and around our community:

**April 16 & 17** St Louis Pet Expo  
Greensfelder Recreation Complex, Queeny Park  
550 Weidman Rd., Ballwin, MO 63021  
10:00 AM – 4:00 PM For Info: 636-391-0900

**June 11 & 12** Bird Fair  
Mehlville High School  
3120 Lemay Ferry Rd, Lemay, MO  
For Info: [www.birdshows.com](http://www.birdshows.com)

**June 11** Gabriel Foundation's Seminar  
Humane Society  
1201 Macklind Ave., St. Louis, MO 63110  
For Info: [www.thegabrielfoundation.org](http://www.thegabrielfoundation.org)

**September 17** Beak 'n Wings Bird Club Fall Pet Bird Fair  
KCI Expo Center,  
11730 N. Ambassador Dr., Kansas City, MO 64153  
For Info: 913-722-2632

**September 25** Missouri Caged Bird Club Fair  
Stratford Inn  
800 S Hwy Dr., Fenton, MO 63026  
For Info: 636-296-4355

I am looking forward to seeing everyone at the next meeting! Please, come join us & bring your bird!



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## Contact Information

### Officers

President	Phyllis Cotton	(314) 427-3679 (H)
		(314) 286-2202 (W)
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
Bob Smallwood	(636) 343-1104

### Committees

Education	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

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## Education/Presentation Schedule

April – Artist

May – Details coming...

June –Bonnie the Bird Lady and her performing parrots (No other birds please)

July – Zoo visit. Date confirmed. Event details to follow

August – Fair

September – Beak, wing and nail trimming

October – World Bird Sanctuary

November – Dr. Van Horn, Advances in Avian Medicine

December – Holiday party.



## Attendance

At the March meeting...

All board members were present, except Carole Grommet and Bob Smallwood.

For the regular meeting, we had a good turnout, 21 members and four guests; Ron Spitler, Dick Horwitz, David Beck and Joe Lawler. Actually Ron and Dick joined the Club, so I guess they are not guests any more. Welcome all!

For those of you that haven't been to a meeting in a while, I think the snacks have been improving. Would that make a difference? Thanks to Pat Seiler, hospitality.

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## Tid Bits

Trey Shaffer

### Membership Renewal

Really, its time... I must apologize. You may have noticed that recently the outside cover of the newsletter has indicated the year your membership expires. This was intended to be a not too subtle reminder that dues are due. Last month, through personal negligence and the marvels of technology, I managed to use outdated information for the addressing. So, please pay close attention to the outside cover this month. If it doesn't say that your membership is paid through 2005, this will probably be the last Squawk 'n Talk you receive.

The solution is simple. Send \$20 to Carole Grommet, our Membership Secretary. You may have noticed there is an application on the inside of the cover. It has her address.

In the future, we will make it even easier, for those of you that have made it into the twenty-first century with a web browser and a credit card. We are in the process of preparing the website to accept online payments. The immediate motivation is to allow vendors and visitors to the All-American Hookbill Fair to make payments over the Internet. As far as membership renewal goes, we should be ready to handle those payments for next year's renewals. Stay tuned for more details as things progress.

If you have any question about the accuracy of the information about the expiration of your paid membership, Please call Carole Grommet and clarify things. Her number, and the rest of the board, is listed at the end of the newsletter.



## Five Bad Plants

Trey Shaffer

This information is from the ASPCA electronic newsletter, *News Alert*. You can subscribe to the newsletter at:

[www.aspc.org/site/PageServer?pagename=newsletter](http://www.aspc.org/site/PageServer?pagename=newsletter)

Links from there will take you to the rest of the ASPCA site.

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Anyway, reprinting articles from the newsletter has been difficult in the past, but here is a brief summary of an article we should be aware of for any of our pets.

### The Five Plants Most Hazardous to Your Pet's Health

- Lilies
- Azaleas
- Oleander
- Sago Palm
- Castor Bean

Here is a link to the news release associated with the article:

[www.aspc.org/site/News2?page=NewsArticle&id=19329&autologin=true](http://www.aspc.org/site/News2?page=NewsArticle&id=19329&autologin=true)



## Look Ahead to Fair Rich Weiner

Richard S. Weiner - Executive Director

Refuge for Saving the Wildlife, Inc.

Rich Weiner started his love for birds when he purchased "Prince", his male CAG. Soon after that came "Ninja" his female U2. That was over 18 years ago. He soon became known as the man who will take in your unwanted bird. After realizing what a need there is for companion bird rescue, he started a Refuge for Saving the Wildlife, Inc. In addition to running the Refuge, Rich is a police/fire lieutenant. Rich is also certified as an Avian Specialist by the Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council (PIJAC) and is a certified wildlife rehabilitator/educator for raptors (hawks, eagles, owls, & falcons) and the Refuge is home to one resident red-tailed hawk, Pierce. You can contact Rich at [Director@RescueTheBirds.org](mailto:Director@RescueTheBirds.org).

Look forward to meeting Rich and listen to his stories. He will speak on both Saturday and Sunday.



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### Meetings

- Bring a food donation for the refreshment table
- Take down tables and sweep after the meeting
- Membership: Greet visitors and new members making sure they get a name tag and feel welcome
- Library: Help set out selected books and put library things away. Review a book or video for Squawk N Talk.
- Donate items for the Ways and Means raffle table

### August, All American Hookbill Fair

- Set up on Aug 26<sup>th</sup> or take down on August 28<sup>th</sup>
- Obtain donations for the Silent Auction
- Make signs
- Work at the Gateway Parrot Club Membership Table

We already have some *wonderful* people who have volunteered and Mozart sends them his best chirps!



## MOZART'S FUSS - CLEANING

Spring cleaning is not one of Mozart's favorite activities – it makes him sneeze and get tired just watching his parronts run around Swiffering and heaven only knows what. Sooo, he has a favor to ask of people who donate items for the Ways 'n Means raffle table.

Please clean them before you donate them. Time crunches being what they are it would be very helpful. Mozart sends his thanks.



- Permanently identify birds by microchip or leg bands. Record its breed, sex, age (if known) and color. Keep copies, along with a current photo of each bird, with important papers.
- Keep a record of vaccinations and treatment along with dates and the types of medications/health products the birds have received. Record dosing instructions. If the bird is on medication, keep a one to two week supply on hand and store this information with the Disaster Plan and other papers.
- Compile an Emergency Disaster Kit and make sure it's always ready
  - Transportable cage
  - Two week supply of food
  - Newspaper
  - Cage cover/blanket
  - Two week supply of water
  - Nonspill food and water bowl dispensers
  - Paper towels and plastic bags for cleanup
  - Toys
  - First aid kit



## SPRING ENERGY VOLUNTEERS

Debby Martin

Now that the weather seems to be turning a little warmer, Mozart certainly is full of energy, scurrying around and announcing his charms to the world! Since the days seem longer and energy levels higher, Mozart and I are hoping you will find some time to volunteer for the Gateway Parrot Club.

How can you help, you ask? We need help for tasks at the meetings and, of course, for the Fair in August. There will be a volunteer sign-up table at our meetings to make it easy to volunteer for a small or large task. At this point we don't know all the tasks, but more information will come on that later. Please sign up at the meeting or give Debby Martin a call at (314) 968-0949, or email to [debbymartin@charter.net](mailto:debbymartin@charter.net).

## You're a Bird Person If...

Debby Martin

Mozart and I found some interesting indicators that I am a bird person! Do any of these fit you?

- You can hardly type at the computer or write because your bird is dancing around on the keyboard or trying to grab your pen.
- You spend more time cleaning your bird cages than your house.
- You kiss the birds goodnight, but not your spouse.
- You go on the vacation of a lifetime and can only tell your friends what cool bird stuff you found.
- You hear an "echo" each time you push the microwave button.
- You don't care if people see bird poop stains on your shirt
- Your birdie sneezes and you drive two hours to the avian vet

But, seriously, if you are thinking of getting a bird or even adding another one to your current flock, think carefully:

- If you are away from home a lot, is there someone else who is willing to pay attention to your bird?
- Will you be able to accept it if the bird becomes more attached to another member of the family than you?
- Can you keep your equanimity if your parrot leaves droppings on the floor or furniture or shreds paper?
- Do you have room for the largest cage you can afford?
- Can you spend time making toys for your parrot, changing out the toys frequently?
- Do you have a bird sitter for vacations?
- Can you give your bird one-on-one, out-of-cage time each day?
- Have you considered the cost of food, toys, play stands, cage and vet care?
- Do you have other pets and are you prepared to keep close supervision. Cats are always problematical and cat saliva is toxic to birds. A dog's undisciplined barking or

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lunging can so frighten a parrot that its trust in you is destroyed.

- Many parrots can live a very long time – are they in your estate plan? – What will happen to them when you are gone?
- Are you ready to have your vacuum cleaner permanently attached?



## Bird Talk Article

Debby Martin

BirdTalk, for May, has a great article about using a bird's natural activities to control behavior, by Liz Wilson. Her bird is naturally very noisy in the morning, loving to scream and yell - but this bothers her husband. Sooo, she points out her bird is naturally quiet while foraging. So, first thing she lets the bird see is her putting nuts and tasty stuff in a treat holder that's hard to open and in other foraging places in the cage. The bird immediately starts foraging and is quiet until her husband leaves. THEN she gets the bird out and deliberately does noisy activities; singing loudly, laughing loudly, exercises for the day, etc. so he gets to satisfy that need to be loud. I just thought that sounded like a neat idea. I just need to work on how to adjust my schedule to do something like that with Mozart. It's so hard when you work.

**Editor's note:** Thanks Debby for this summary. We can use material like this, even without the author's permission. Liz, who you may remember was one of our featured speakers at the Fair last year, has given us permission to reprint articles from her website.



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## Where Will You Go In An Emergency?

Debby Martin

Well, here I sit alone. Mozart is not hopping around on the keyboard, or nibbling on my mouse or chewing on cords or pooping on me or the chair – he is staying elsewhere for several days while we have things done to the house. I miss him dreadfully and he's only been gone a couple of hours.

Maybe because I'm a trifle sad, I noticed an article on Disaster Preparedness on the web prepared by the Indiana State Board of Animal Health. I thought they had some good points to consider. They point out that as a bird owner, you understand domesticated birds are completely reliant on you for their survival and well being. Early planning and preparation for their care is especially important in times of disaster. Floods, fires, tornadoes and man-made disasters can make caring for your pet difficult, if not impossible.

What are some things you can do to be prepared – here are some of their suggestions:

- Familiarize yourself with the types of disasters that could occur in your area. Develop a written plan of action for each. Include a list of resources (suppliers, safe shelters, etc.), and evacuation sites, emergency phone numbers and people who can help during an emergency. Keep the plan with important papers. Review the disaster plan with everyone involved.
- Because animals are not allowed in emergency shelters for people, survey your home for the best location to leave your bird in the event you cannot take it with you. Birds should be housed off the floor, in their cages, away from drafts and other animal species. Bathrooms or areas with doors but no windows are best.
- Decide where to take your birds if evacuation is necessary. Contact veterinarians, animal shelters and humane societies ahead of time about their policies and ability to take pets in emergencies. Have several sites in mind, in case your first choice is unavailable. The home of a friend or relative outside the disaster area is best. Move the pet early if possible.
- Familiarize yourself with several evacuation routes to your destination. Avoid routes likely to be heavily traveled by people.

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The above items are considered "treats" and are served when they are out of their cages. In the cages, the dishes contain only their pellets.

### Toys:

We purchase quite a few toys from Varietees bird shop, save the hardware after they are destroyed, and remake using toy parts purchased from the bird store, the internet, dollar stores, Michael's, Schaefer's Hobby Store, Wal-Mart, etc. I have found that the smaller birds love balsa wood. Of course, they destroy it rather quickly, but they have fun in the process!

I have a toy making area in our basement and in the evenings I will go down and put together 5 or 6 toys. I have accumulated quite a few parts, so my workshop is growing!

I check the toys in the cages and play stands weekly. If they have not been played with or destroyed, they get rotated into another cage. That is an advantage to having several birds -- what one doesn't like, the other one does!

Check out this site: [www.petproductsbynature.com](http://www.petproductsbynature.com). They have lots of natural wood products. Our birds love the cottonwood "coins" because it is a very soft wood. I have also purchased the cholla pieces (especially the smaller pieces for the small to medium birds), plus other stuff from them.

Other sites you may want to check out:

[www.birdsjustwannahavefun.com](http://www.birdsjustwannahavefun.com) They have lots of foraging toys

[www.chopperstoys.com/CatalogFootToys.html](http://www.chopperstoys.com/CatalogFootToys.html)

[www.busybeaks.com/toys.htm](http://www.busybeaks.com/toys.htm)

[www.thefrugalparrot.com](http://www.thefrugalparrot.com)

I have learned that parrot keeping is very time consuming, but rewarding. They are worth every minute spent in their care. Wish we would have discovered these wonderful pets earlier in our lives!

**Carole**

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## Pick of the Month Eclectus Parrots

Review by Christine Kinkade

### **The Handsome, Intelligent, and Sometimes Fickle Eclectus.**

Whether you have an emerald green male Eclectus with an orange and yellow beak or a ruby red and blue female Eclectus with a black beak, you will need to know how to care for this extremely beautiful bird. Most people, on seeing the Eclectus for the first time become enchanted by its beauty.

If you are like me and own, or wish to own, an Eclectus parrot, you will want to do your homework and read as much as you can about caring for your bird. One of the best books I have read about keeping and caring for Eclectus parrots is the Barron's book "Eclectus Parrots" by Katy McElroy. This book is now in the Gateway Parrot Club Library. (Check it out!)

This book, in my opinion, gives the most comprehensive information on keeping and caring for Eclectus parrots. It begins with the question, "Do You Really Want A Parrot?" (This is a question you should ask yourself whether you are buying a parakeet or a macaw.) If the answer to the question is still "yes", then you will want to know how to choose a suitable bird. The book has a good section on helping you choose a bird, whether it is a baby bird or an older bird in need of a good home.

The book goes on to tell you about choosing a cage of the proper size and the location of the cage in your home. It tells of how to set up the cage with feeding cups, perches, and toys.

Proper nutrition is a necessity for the Eclectus parrot. There is a very good chapter on how and what to feed your parrot. This is a very important chapter because I feel Eclectus parrots need a good diet to stay healthy and happy.

Other chapters tell you about good bathing and grooming (wing and nail trimming) habits and techniques; preventing illnesses, recognizing illnesses, finding an avian veterinarian, and making your home safe for your Eclectus. There is also a short chapter on Eclectus behavior. It does not go into great detail on behavioral issues, but gives enough guidance to understand your Eclectus' behavior.

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All in all, Barron's "Eclectus Parrots" book is my favorite; a most informative book in understanding and caring for the Eclectus parrot. By the way, I almost forgot to mention that it is filled with colorful photographs.



## On the Perch with Pauline

By Pauline and Dorene Olson

### *Behavioral questions answered by the GPC's resident Parrotlet*

Pauline the Parrotlet is well known to regular Gateway Parrot Club meeting members as the tiny blue ricochet with a bird-itude. Pauline is a four year old, parent raised ex-breeder bird who was retired after she chewed off all her own toes. She is adored by the Olson-Frei household, where she rules the roost. Very opinionated by nature, Pauline has volunteered 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 herself and includes their recommendations in her column. And now, Pauline:

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

### **Dear Pauline:**

I am a single budgerigar and have lived alone for five years. My parents like me so much that they want another parrot. I am not sure if I should be jealous or not. I am also afraid that the new bird might hurt me or make me sick. What if they get a kind of bird that is not another budgie? Please advise.

Boris the Budgie

### **Dear Boris:**

Your plight is common to many of our bird guardians. We are so wonderful that they can't stick to just one of us! There are many

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peppers, celery and carrots. Each day I add a couple fruits, frozen corn and peas, kale or dandelion greens, sprouted seeds (I do the sprouting), a parrot "porridge" that I make or soaked/cooked grains. On top of all of this I add sesame seeds (high in calcium), a couple of raisins, and a few shelled pumpkin and sunflower seeds. As I stated above, I will prepare each individual dish the day before and store in the refrigerator overnight. The dishes are served at room temperature on their play stands in the morning.

There is a great layered salad for parrots that I have used that has veggies, fruits, legumes, pasta, etc. in it that will stay fresh for a week. You can find the recipe at this site:

<http://parrothouse.com/pamelaclark/feedingcompanion.html>

The recipe is at the bottom of the page.

I make my own "porridge" which contains: brown rice, buckwheat, oat groats, wheat, corn, carrots, split peas, dehydrated carrots, garbanzo beans, and macaroni or noodles. I cook it using fruit (pineapple) or vegetable (tomato) juice instead of water. This adds an added flavor the birds enjoy. I purchase the ingredients at Whole Food market or Wild Oats.

Another nutritious and easy-to-prepare dish for the birds is made by Kashi and it's called "The Breakfast Pilaf". You can buy it at most health food stores plus maybe Dierberg's. The ingredients include seven whole grains (oats, brown rice, rye, wheat, triticale, buckwheat, barley) and sesame. This mix can be kept in the refrigerator for three days or it can be frozen into individual servings.

Kashi also makes another product called "Puffed" Kashi -- it's a seven whole grain and sesame ready-to-eat cereal. I serve it dry and all the birds love it

I also buy the following ingredients from Whole Foods and combine for a special healthy dry treat to mix with a few nuts, seeds, and dehydrated fruits: millet, rye, oat groats, kamut, spelt, quinoa, buckwheat, flax seed, pumpkin seeds, and sunflower seeds (shelled). I mix equal amounts of the first 8 ingredients, and half the amount of the sunflower seeds and pumpkin seeds. You can add a little safflower seed, budgie mix, small Hookbill mix, and/or canary seed to this also. Pellets contain grains so I decided that the above mix would not hurt them.

Grains (millet, rye, oat groats, kamut, spelt, quinoa, oat groats, and wheat) can be soaked overnight and served or cooked (with fruit or vegetable juices). The cooked grains can be frozen for short periods of time.

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noon siesta. Around 3:00 p.m., I usually prepare their veggie/fruit/pasta/grain mix for the next morning. I put in their individual bowls and refrigerate overnight.

4:00 - 4:30 p.m. Lights come back on and the birds are usually very noisy.

4:30 - 7:30 p.m. Out of cage time! During this period, they are either on their play stands or on one of us. This is the time for the one-on-one bonding with each bird. During this time, they each get a special treat of seeds, nuts, grains, etc. on their play stands. I don't usually serve fresh foods in the afternoon unless we can share some of our dinner with them (bird friendly food).

7:30 p.m. Bedtime! Water dishes on play stands are washed, floors are swept, and treat dishes are emptied and cleaned. We do close the door so they can have a good night's sleep. We do have a couple night lights in the room in case of night frights, especially with the tiels.

We do have an air cleaner and small heater in the bird room to cut down on dust and to keep the babies warm in the cold of winter.

Of course, we cannot follow the above schedule every day. If we are going out late in the day, the birds are out of their cages earlier in the afternoon. If we have to be somewhere early in the morning, we may skip baths that day and wake the birds up an hour earlier to give them their out-of-cage time.

As far as safety measures with the flock, we keep all wings clipped. Most of the birds stay on their stands. We have three tiels who think they own the house and we have to watch them because they love to wander anywhere and everywhere. They seem to be more adventuresome. It seems like the tiels grow flight feathers overnight--the other day one of them was doing loops all over the great room! We always have a scissors handy! We make sure one of us is in the general vicinity of the birds--they are never left unsupervised especially since they are all out at the same time and we know where they all are when they are out. We have an open floor plan, so it makes it easier to keep an eye on them. There have been times when one will end up on another play stand -- we have been lucky in that we have been able to separate them without injuries.

#### **Grommet Flock Diet:**

I try to save time with food preparation by cutting up veggies to last 3-4 days and storing in a sealed container. Lately I've been cutting up: brocolli, cauliflower, snap peas, red cabbage, okra, hot

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things for your guardian to consider when thinking of acquiring a second bird.

There are several sources to procure a new bird. One of the most well known is the pet store. While there are lots of varieties of birds available at pet stores, many of them are staffed by employees who have little or no education as to the needs of the birds and who are unable to provide proper advice on the care and needs of bird purchases. Additionally, most, but not all, birds in pet stores are mass produced, force weaned or not weaned at all, and ill from the stress of transport and life on the show floor and many arrive sick (exposing you to illness) and die soon after purchase. If your guardian buys from a pet store, the first stop before home should be to a qualified avian veterinarian.

Another source of new birds is through a bird breeder. These people can vary tremendously in the quality of birds offered for sale. Make sure the breeder has a clean facility, lots of different sized perches and toys for environmental and social enrichment for his captive breeders, has had the parents and the babies checked clear of communicable diseases from a qualified avian veterinarian, and hopefully provides pre-sale and on going advice for the purchase of your new avian companion.

The third source is adopting a bird through a rescue agency. This is a noble way of providing a throw away bird with a second lease on life. The agency may screen your guardian heavily before placing the bird, as their concern is to make sure that the bird does not end up in another situation necessitating its rescue.

Regardless of place of procurement, all new birds should go first to your avian vet and be examined for a clean bill of health. After all, you already live in this house and it would be tragic if a disease was brought into you, making you ill or at worst, killing you.

New birds should be kept in quarantine for the first 45 days after arrival at your humble abode. After again checking clear by your avian vet, then new introductions can begin. Letting you two meet on neutral territory, in a neutral room, where you can view one another from across the room, is an ideal way to start. Make sure you save up all your favorite treats and toys for just this occasion so you can have a birdy party in the presence of the new bird -- that will make you both think happy thoughts about one another. Gradually you can be moved closer and closer, and if no signs of aggression occur, can try playing on a play stand together.

Cages can begin to be placed in the same room and moved side by side gradually. Unless you become terribly bonded very quickly

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to your new buddy, for a while you each should have your own sleeping cage. Afterwards, if you are species compatible, it is very nice to snuggle shoulder to shoulder, have a nice mutual preening (especially getting help in those hard to reach places), and fall asleep snuggled together.

A *huge* word of caution: while it may look adorable to have different species and different sized birds become buddies, it can be a life threatening situation if the larger bird should lash out or attack the smaller bird, resulting in serious injury or death. If you do end up with a different breed buddy, have your guardian carefully supervise you at all times and do not ever trust that you will remain safe. Err on the side of caution!

Good luck in your adjustment and search for a new housemate! You will find, as a flock creature, you will love having a companion around your house.

Best,  
Pauline.

## Multi-bird Caretakers Thread

Carole Grommet

**Editor's Note:** For those of you on the Gateway Parrots, Yahoo mailing list, this will be a review. The discussion began with a query from Dorene about how others with many birds manage their flocks...

I hope this is not going to be too long, but here goes...

Being retired, we do have more time to devote to our flock. Even in retirement, there doesn't seem to be enough time for everything. I'm always trying to come up with an easier solution to many of the chores associated with parrot ownership.

We have a total of 13 parrots in seven cages. Six of the cages are in a spare bedroom; one cage is in our study. Six tiels are in one cage, a Nanday and Sun Conure caged together, the rest in individual cages: Hahn's Macaw, White-Fronted Amazon, Green Cheek Conure, Yellow-Sided Conure, and a Hyacinth Macaw. The cages are cleaned at least once a week with some daily cleanups. We also have seven play stands (6 manzanita and one plastic) spread out in the breakfast room and kitchen, that have to be cleaned once a week. When the weather is nice, we will take what we can outside and either hose down or power wash every-

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thing that we can. We provide all the birds with natural baskets that are hung on their play stands and are full of foot toys. Of course, most of the toys end up on the floor and have to be picked up at least once a day. I also clean every basket and the contents once a week. We usually clean cages, play stands, and toy baskets on Thursday or Friday.

Our daily schedule is as follows:

6:00 - 6:45 a.m. We get up and wash and fill the food dishes on the play stands (water dishes are washed and filled the night before after the birds are in bed). We eat our breakfast and read the newspaper for a few minutes.

6:45 a.m. The lights go on in the bird room and the entire flock comes out on their play stands.

6:45 - 7:15 a.m. The birds are served their veggie/fruit/pasta/grain mix on their play stands. We proceed to clean and fill food and water bowls in their cages.

7:15 - 7:45 a.m. I take the 6 tiels, the Nanday and Sun conures, and the yellow-sided conure to the bathroom for their daily baths (we use a mister to bathe the birds). We have perches in the bathroom to accommodate the group (some perches are hanging from the ceiling, others are on cabinet tops or on the bathtub (baskets). Dick has made a double tier shower perch which enables me to mist all six tiels at one time. After they are showered, I shower and get dressed. While I'm dressing, the birds are usually preening.

7:45 - 8:15 a.m. The first group goes back to their play stands and the second group (4 birds) is taken into the bathroom for their showers and Dick showers and dresses.

8:15 - 9:30 a.m. Second group return to their stands to play, eat, and vocalize (you notice I didn't say scream). We usually have a bird on our shoulder during this time.

9:30 - 11:30 a.m. Parrots are returned to their cages to watch Channel 9. They all go very willingly because they have a treat waiting for them. During this time, I usually clean floors, get their afternoon treat dishes ready and placed on stands.

11:30 - 1:00 p.m. TV is off and the birds usually play. If the weather is nice, we may take a few the birds outside (in cages) to catch some rays (usually between 10 and 2.)

1:00 - 4:00 p.m. Lights in bird room are off (they are on a timer). They are usually very quiet during this period, taking their after-