

# Squawk 'n Talk

Volume 7, Issue 6

June 2007

## Greetings from the Presidential Perch!

Just a reminder that the next meeting will be June 10th, which is the second Sunday of the month. This is because Father's Day is on the third Sunday of the month.

Our annual fair will be in just two months! Thank you for those who have already stepped up and volunteered to help before and at the Fair. There are still many ways to volunteer at the Fair itself. Volunteers are needed for the setup of the tables and chairs Friday morning before the vendors begin to arrive. Volunteers are also needed on Friday to set up the Admissions table, Raffle table, and the Silent Auction Table. On Saturday and Sunday volunteers are needed to help at the Admissions table and the Raffle table. Volunteers are also needed to assist vendors, seminar speakers, and fair-goers. And, of course, volunteers are needed to help with the Saturday evening vendor/Speakers dinner. And, volunteers are needed on Sunday after the Fair to take down the tables and chairs as the vendors leave.

The Fair can be a lot of work, but we have also found it to be a lot of fun and very rewarding. It is a good opportunity to socialize with each other, as well as with the vendors and the seminar speakers. If you have never participated in the fair, here is an opportunity to do so.

I would like to thank Dawn Breer for the Education Program last month in which she demonstrated the various toys that can be used to entertain parrots in or out of their cages. She also pointed out how some toys are not safe for cage birds and what to look for or not look for in purchasing bird toys.

See you at the meeting.

## Tidbits

Trey Shaffer

**Donations** – As mentioned in last month's newsletter and at the April and May meetings, we will be voting at the June meeting, which by the way will be the second Sunday of this month, June 10, on who receives the Club's financial support this year. Recipients will be selected from nominations received. Nominees have been posted on the website shortly after being received. The same information is presented in this newsletter. Please take time to review nominees and attend the June meeting to vote. There will be further discussion, as needed, at the June meeting, prior to the vote.

**Potential new meeting day** – At the May meeting we discussed the possibility of moving our regular meeting to the second Sunday of each month. This will eliminate a conflict with the Kirkwood Greentree Festival in September, which prevents us from meeting in the Community Center that weekend. There were no strong feelings voiced either for or against the move, so a motion carried to confirm dates with the Kirkwood administration. It may also be possible to secure an alternate room, with kitchen, under the new schedule. No action has been taken, but if the current, or more attractive room is available without conflict, we will proceed with the change effective with the January meeting. Stay tuned...

**Barbara Heidenreich details** – Details are firmed up for Barbara Heidenreich's presentation Sunday July 29. The event will be held in the Humane Society of Missouri's auditorium at 6:00 PM. The topic will be, An Introduction To Positive Reinforcement. Barbara will make a presentation and answer questions. Admission will be \$20. Please plan to attend, and spread the word. This is not really bird-specific, though I believe Barb will use bird examples, so if you know someone interested in training any animal, dogs, horses, cats, pigs, husbands, wives... Let them know. OK, maybe not cats.

**Bylaws updated** – The privacy policy, previously posted on the website, and detailed in last month's newsletter was accepted unanimously at the May meeting. The privacy policy is now Article 12 of the bylaws. You may download the bylaws from the website: [www.gatewayparrotclub.org/Admin/Bylaws.htm](http://www.gatewayparrotclub.org/Admin/Bylaws.htm)

If you do not have Internet access, and would like a copy of the updated bylaws, please contact Dave/Christine Kinkade.

## Grant Nominees

Here are the nominations submitted for a grant from the GPC. We will grant \$500 to each of five nominees based on member votes at the June meeting. Nominations were received by Dave Kinkade by midnight, May 31, 2007. There were no restrictions on who could submit nominations, but only active members will vote on funds distribution.

Each member attending the meeting will receive a ballot and may vote for five recipients. There will be a maximum of one vote per ballot for any single recipient.

Items are presented here, and on the website, in the order received.

### **Feather Distribution Project**

The Project, operated for more than twenty years by Jonathan Reyman, collects feathers from a number of sources and redistributes them to Native Americans in the Southwest for use in religious ceremonies and traditional clothing and artifacts. Dr. Reyman has been our guest several times to explain the positive impact the simple act of saving our birds' feathers can have on Native Americans as well as reducing the incentive to capture wild birds just to harvest their feathers. Feathers are provided free of charge. Our donation will help offset operating expenses such as shipping costs.

### **World Bird Sanctuary**

Our mission is to preserve earth's biological diversity and secure the future of threatened bird species in their natural environments. We fulfill that mission through education, captive breeding, field studies and rehabilitation. We maintain a parrot population as well as raptors, and have an Adoption Program, where GPC might adopt several parrots, thereby focusing a donation.

### **Association of Avian Veterinarians Research**

[AAV](#) is the American branch of an international organization devoted to, "Advancing and Promoting Avian Medicine and Stewardship." We would donate to their Research Fund. The AAV then allocates funds to individual projects as they see fit. For a list of projects they have funded since 1982, [follow this link](#).

### **Perfectly Precious Rescue & Adoption**

An all volunteer rescue group established in 2002 in the St. Louis area to re-home all avian species, everything from Budgies to Macaws. Foster homes take in surrendered birds until a "forever" home can be located. Many arrivals are long overdue for vet checkups. This cost is often beyond our means. We hope the GPC will consider our group for a grant.

PEAR Tree Sanctuary

PEAR TREE Avian Sanctuary provides placement for unwanted psittacines. We rescue, rehabilitate, and adopt out relinquished parrots. In extreme cases we offer a permanent home. PEAR TREE offers parrot owners education and assistance with basic bird care, nutrition, and behavior issues.

### **HAPPE Parrots**

Helping to adopt and place parrots everywhere (HAPPE) is in the process of becoming a non-profit incorporated parrot rescue. Our mission is to network with existing licensed rescues and foster homes to facilitate re-homing parrots throughout the United States. Our board is comprised of members of existing rescues. Funds would be used for medical, food, and transportation expenses which are currently covered by out of pocket donations from volunteers.

### **Avian Health Network**

Dr. Branson Ritchie, and associates at the University of Georgia, Emerging Diseases Research Group, research the cause and treatment of disease in companion birds, primarily Proventricular Dilation Disease, PDD. [Additional information on their website...](#)

### **Pekin Duck Fund**

The Pekin Duck Fund was established to help aid and rescue domestic ducks, geese and swans, is an all volunteer group of dedicated individuals. Typically rescues occur at area parks and ponds. People buy babies and then release them to "the wild" after they grow out of their baby cuteness. [Additional information...](#)

## AAV

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### **Rearing Environment and Behavioral Development of Psittacine Birds**

Andrew U. Luescher, DVM, PhD, Dipl ACVB,  
Kathryn L. Sheehan, MS

The environment in which animals develop has been shown to have significant effects on the development of young animals. Most studies have focused either on handling or physical or social enrichment of the environment, and have shown that these can reduce emotionality and fear, as well as improve learning ability. Enrichment also promotes species typical behavior, reduces abnormal behavior, and contributes to physiological homeostasis. Enrichment of the early environment also results in enhanced development of the central nervous system.

In order to test the effects of rearing condition on development, emotional reactivity, and learning ability, 48 domestically bred Nanday conure young (*Nandayus nenday*) were hand-raised using different methods in a 2 x 2 factorial design: Enriched environment vs. Restricted, and Handled vs. Non Handled. Enrichment was social (other chick in same tub), physical (soft toys), and sensory (colorful environment, view of the room). Non Enriched babies were kept alone, with brown wrapping paper on the outside of their tubs. Handling referred to 15 minutes of gentle daily handling beyond the routine feeding.

When the young were 3 weeks of age, subjects were randomly divided into 4 treatment groups of 12 birds each and were raised in these treatments for 6 weeks. The baby's physical development was quantitatively monitored (weight, feather length, and weaning age), and they were subjected to various tests to measure emotionality. In the novel object test, performed at different ages between 4 and 9 weeks of age (each bird was only tested once), initial reaction to the object, the time that it took to approach and touch a novel object, and the duration of active exploration of the object were measured. In the novel conspecific test performed about 9 weeks of age, it was observed whether the bird approached the other bird within a minute. In the open field test performed at about 10 weeks of age, the observer counted the numbers of floor squares entered and the numbers of seed (distributed evenly over the open field) eaten. The emergence test measured the delay until a baby emerged from a dark box.

Regarding the birds' physical development, Enriched birds weighed slightly more than Restricted birds at six weeks of age. There was no evidence that rearing condition affected their final weight, feather growth, or age at weaning. This is possibly because the birds were not subjected to treatment conditions at an early enough age.

Behaviorally, this study found that both enrichment and handling resulted in a significant decrease in the birds' fear levels in a variety of situations. When presented with a novel object, Handled birds touched it sooner, and both handling and enrichment had a significant effect prolonging the duration of exploration. The age at which the test was performed did not influence treatment effect. However, older birds (except the Enriched, Non Handled group) showed increased initial fear of the object with increased age.

Additionally, Restricted Non Handled birds were less likely to approach a novel item than any of the others. Handled birds entered more squares in an Open Field, although the measurements of latency and the numbers of seeds eaten did not differ. There was

no difference in the delay to emerge from a dark box. Fully grown (4 weeks after weaning, about 16 weeks of age) Handled birds, following infrequent handling for the previous 9 weeks, took a hand-held treat sooner, and were more likely to allow the experimenter to restrain them, suggesting long-lasting consequences of early experience. Handling appeared to have differential effects on Enriched versus Restricted birds concerning the likelihood that they started biting after weaning. Handled Restricted birds were less likely to bite while Handled Enriched birds were more likely. This is probably because Restricted birds were housed alone and so bonded more strongly to the handler than Enriched birds, who were housed with a conspecific.

This study found no evidence that enrichment or handling affected the conures' learning ability in a Color Discrimination test 6 weeks post weaning. It is probable that the test was not difficult enough to detect any differences, so a more challenging test at a later age when birds are keener to get solid food should be devised for future studies.

It is concluded that enhancing the rearing environment of psittacine birds through enrichment and handling will improve their psychological and physical well-being and should be incorporated into the rearing practices of facilities breeding for the pet trade. It is predicted that such rearing methods will improve the ability of a parrot to adjust to captive life, and that the incidence of stress-related problems might be reduced. These results support criticism of factory-like mass-production of birds with minimal handling, no social contact, using opaque tubs without enrichment.

Release #4, April 2005. The Association of Avian Veterinarians welcomes membership from veterinarians with an interest in avian medicine. Annual meetings and a quarterly journal provide a format for the latest in avian medical information. Is your veterinarian a member? Individuals wishing to subscribe to the Journal of Avian Medicine and Surgery may write to: AAV - P.O. Box 811720 Boca Raton, FL 33481.

## JUST TRY AND TOUCH THAT!

Debby Martin

A bird's home is her castle – at least that's Ginger's theory. She is very annoyed when Mozart, our other cockatiel tries to sneak in and steal her food! Ginger's little white cage used to belong to Mozart and his theory is what is mine is mine and what is yours is mine also – so that includes the little white cage. But while they will hiss and display to each other over "castle rights", they have not minded alpha or beta bird cleaning or rearranging things. But according to Dec. 2004 Bird Talk this isn't always the case. Sometimes parrots can be very territorial about their cage. But the article had several useful tips for dealing with this situation. Here they are.

This "nesting site territorial aggression" is a normal reaction. If your parrot previously followed "Step Up and Step Down" commands, then reinforce them with daily lessons in neutral territory - a part of the house out of sight of areas he considers his. Short lessons – 5 to 10 minutes are best. Make it fun, sing, cuddle, play games and make him feel the center of attention.

Try taking your bird out of the cage before cleaning and feeding and move him to a play gym where something yummy waits. Avoid eye contact with a territorial bird as this may be viewed as a sign of aggression.

Teach your bird to step onto a preferred perch when it wants to come out of the cage. Raise the far end of the stick slightly, and he will work the higher attitude. This keeps him safely out of the biting range of your hand or arm. Make sure that it's steady – don't let it drop at all or he may be frightened. Hold it so it backs up along the inside of your wrist and that makes it steady and as strong as your arm. Perch training is advantageous as you now have an easy way to avoid territorial behaviors in and around the cage.

## Recipe of the Month Apple-Cheese Muffins

Posted by: Barry - [barry@newwave.net](mailto:barry@newwave.net)

<b>2 Cups</b>	<b>Whole wheat flour</b>
<b>1 ½ tsp</b>	<b>Baking</b>
<b>½ tsp</b>	<b>Baking soda</b>
<b>1 tsp</b>	<b>Salt</b>
<b>½ cup</b>	<b>Shredded cheddar cheese</b>
<b>½ cup</b>	<b>Butter, softened</b>
<b>1/3 cup</b>	<b>Sugar</b>
<b>½ cup</b>	<b>Chopped apple</b>
<b>½ cup</b>	<b>Shredded carrot</b>

Mix the first five ingredients together. Wash the eggs, and then blenderize the eggs with the shell included. Add butter, sugar, apple, and carrot to the eggs and blenderize briefly to mix. Stir together with the dry ingredients until just combined. Spoon into greased muffin tins and bake at 350 degrees for 20 to 25 minutes, or until springy to the touch.

Additional recipes are available from the Birds n Ways website at [www.BirdsnWays.com](http://www.BirdsnWays.com). Select the Recipe Xchange link in the middle of the page. You will also find a variety of bird-related information and discussion areas on the site...

## Book Picks of the Month

Christine Kinkade

May's meeting generated quite a bit of interest in the Library. Thank you all for returning your books promptly.

Here are this month's picks:

***African Grey Parrots*** by Paul R. Paradise

Easy to read book on all aspects of caring for African Grey Parrots. Almost 100 pictures with 51 in full color. (96 pages).

***A Complete Introduction to Parrots*** by Duke of Bedford

A beginner's book on caring for parrots with practical, easy-to-apply information and sensible advice. Fully illustrated. (128 pages).

### **Bird Diseases** by Heinz-Sigurd Raethel

This book, illustrated with 38 full-color pictures and 13 black & white pictures, presents sensible, easy-to-follow recommendations about identifying and caring for sick birds. (93 pages).

### **Training Parrots** by Thiem, Van Sant, and Hopkins

Everything the beginner needs to know about taming and training their pet parrot. Written with a sense of humor. Full-color photos. (64 pages).

### **Parrots** by Petra Deimer

The handy pet owner's manual that answers questions about purchase, care, feeding, illness, and behavior. Color photos. (80 pages).

### **Parrots of the Word** by Joseph Forshaw

A large encyclopedia-type book that recognizes all parrots of the word and where they come from. Includes many full-color illustrations plus black & white illustrations. (583 pages).

GPC members can check out any of these featured picks at this month's meeting. Please note that some books are quite old and some of the information may be a little outdated. Please keep this in mind when reading the books.

A complete listing of the GPC library is available on the GPC website [www.GatewayParrotClub.org](http://www.GatewayParrotClub.org). If you wish to check out any of these, or any of our books, please contact me prior to the next GPC meeting by phone (636) 343-8097, or email at [Librarian@GatewayParrotClub.org](mailto:Librarian@GatewayParrotClub.org), and I will bring them to the next meeting.

All books checked out should be returned at the following GPC meeting. If that is not possible, please return the books by mail to Christine Kinkade, 2412 Angela Dr., High Ridge, MO. 63049-2848.

Happy reading!

## My Sign

Debby Martin

Mozart has been following the horoscope posted by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds in Great Britain (<http://www.rspb.org.uk/birds/whatbirdareyou.asp>) since he noticed Beta Bird sometimes checks her Virgo sign. He thought you might like to know what the sign is for March and April hatch days. Do these remind you of any of your flock!

March is the goldfinch!!! Birdies with March hatch days tend to be colorful characters who have a very sensitive and alert nature. They are gregarious by nature and love a group. They do need to find an outlet for their inquisitive nature or they will get nervous and irritable.

April is the hawk!!! Mozart feels this is his true description - a powerful individual displaying courage and a sometimes ruthless determination. Avoids problematical obstacles with skill, although must be fully targeted so as not to waste energy in fruitless chases for the impossible.

## Attendance

Attending our May meeting...

Ruth Anderson, Visitor  
Mandy Baumgartner  
Jim Berk  
Cindy Burquin  
Phyllis Cotton  
Janet Draper  
Carole Grommet  
Ellen Helle  
Judy Kandlbinder  
Christine Kinkade  
Dave Kinkade  
Nancy Marron

Dorene Olson  
Sr Barbara Payne  
Debra Worsham Petit  
Michael Petit  
Bernie Seiler  
Pat Seiler  
Niki Shaffer  
Trey Shaffer  
Ron Spitler  
Pam Walsh  
Cathy Wendler

## Contact Information

We welcome your comments and suggestions...

## 2007 Meeting Schedule

Dorene Olson is our Education and Program chair. She is looking for our input on suggestions for topics and speakers. Please let Dorene, or any Board member what interests you and what you think will make the meetings more interesting.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>
June 10	Toy making party. Note, this is the <i>Second</i> Sunday
July 15	Feather Distribution Project, Avian folktales
July 29	Barbara Heidenreich – Special Event
August 25-26	Annual Fair
September 16	Special program at WBS!
October 21	TBA
November 18	TBA – Nominations for offices
December 16	Elections – Holiday party

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