

Squawk 'n Talk

Volume 8, Issue 5

May 2008

Greetings from the Presidential Perch!

As far as the weather goes, there is a light at the end of the tunnel. It's called 'sunshine' and it's beginning to peek through the clouds! Not only has there been bad weather in other parts of the world, but also here close to home. I hope none of you were affected by the bad weather.

The 2008 Bird Fair is now just three months away. We are all excited as we begin to finalize the fair. Be sure to tell your friends, family, and relatives about the fair. Not only would they enjoy the speakers, but also learn more about keeping and caring for companion birds. To get more up-to-date information about the fair, be sure to attend the meetings.

I would like to thank John & Pep Tomasovic for their presentation on their trip to the Antarctic. It was very interesting and informative. I hope you enjoyed it as much as I did.

See you at the Meeting. --- Dave

Tidbits

Chill Out! - John and Pep Tomasovic shared their trip to the South Pole with us at the April meeting. Ok, maybe not quite the pole, but definitely Antarctica, and Penguins!

Parrot Toy Angels – Later in this newsletter is an announcement about the Parrot Toy Angels spring toy auction. Thanks to Cliff Patterson who sent the info to the GatewayParrots YahooGroup. It came just as I was putting this issue together (always at the last minute.) I took a quick look at the [PTA website](#), and they seem like a legitimate organization whose mission complements the GPC. If you are familiar with the group, please send me some comments about the group and your experience with them.

Saving Stanley

Sue Owens

Here is the story of a dear little guy, a group of awesome people, and a sucker for a hard luck story.



A couple of weekends ago, I went into a small local pet store in search of something or the other. They carry a few small birds such as 'tiels and finches. I always visit the little dudes and say hi. On this particular trip, there was a small Quaker-sized cage with a towel over it, back in the dark corner. I lifted the towel to peek. Inside, a terrified little white bird gazed up on me, crouched on his perch, his beak open as if to silently plead: "Please don't kill and eat me, please."

My heart broke. All he had for a toy was a metal chain with a bell on it. I bought him a chewable, destroyable toy and put it in his cage. His ransom fee was \$1,000. The sign said his name was Stanley, that he was an umbrella cockatoo, and that he was eight years old. On further conversation with the store lady, she told me that he had belonged to an elderly lady who had to go in a nursing home. I held it together till I got out in the car, then I cried for Stanley.

When we got home, I signed into my parrot Yahoo group, AllParrots, and told the story of Stanley. Several people commiserated and said I should buy him. We couldn't though – after several other hard luck stories, there is no more room in the inn. A few hours later, I received an invitation to join a small private group, an offshoot of the larger one. They are a group of people scattered across North America who pool their resources to help birds in need.

Help they did! I had called the pet store and got them to reduce the ransom price to \$500. The list folk quickly raised that much, and more. One Colorado member lost her beloved little cockatoo last year and volunteered to give him a forever home. We found a local person to provide transportation to another local person, and a loaner cage, so that he would have a safe place to stay while awaiting the arrival of his new mom. Another list member shipped an airline-approved bird carrier to the local helper here in the St. Louis area. My man took the day off work Friday to stay home with him so he wouldn't be as afraid. We could tell that Stanley has a gentle soul – he slowly took food from our fingers, showed no signs of aggression, sometimes made quiet sad sounds in his throat.

On Saturday, we took him to Dr. Kersting for a check up and to get a health certificate so he can fly home with Bonnie, his new mom. Dr. Kersting noted that he is in good health, and has an open band on one leg indicating that he is an import – and probably a wild caught bird. This makes Stanley far older than the eight years we were told – more likely he is closer to 20, or even older. The pet store staff said that no more information is available on Stanley from the owner who gave him up. He was brought to the store in a towel with no toys, no cage, no word on diet, behavior, likes/dislikes.

This Mother's Day, Stanley will meet his new mom Bonnie, thanks to the efforts of dozens of people across the continent, a few kind-hearted local people here, and that sucker we mentioned earlier. Happy Mother's Day, Stanley! May you live long and prosper.

HIDE AND SEEK

Debbie Martin

While Mozart searched for the treats he knew Beta Bird, aka Debby, must have hidden for him, Ginger noted some tips on how you

can help your flock have more fun foraging for food and hopefully treats. She got her ideas from www.theperchstore.net

Split up the daily ration of food between multiple small bowls situated around the cage. Spread the daily treat among all the bowls – its hide and seek time for the treat! Plus good exercise scurrying from bowl to bowl.

Small paper cups with a bit of treat, cereal, pellet or ALMOND inside and then wadded up and placed in the cage or tied with raffia to a branch – “Mozart you have to chew thru if you want that almond!!!”

Or stuff those wadded paper cups thru plastic chain links and hang from the cage. Or don't wad the cups but string them on a piece of raffia or safe leather separated by some beads. Put a seed or 2, a pellet or 2, a veggie sliver in each cup and hang the whole thing from the cage top.

A ceramic treat bowl with a paper towel over it and something special hidden inside!

In a bowl with pebbles small enough to move but TOO BIG to swallow, sprinkle seed and then shake the bowl to settle the seed to the bottom. “Mozart would really have to work,” mutters Ginger! (Beta Bird has been too afraid to try this one, but Bird Talk recommended it.)

Tamale (corn husk) wrappers with snippets of broccoli inside tied to the cage.

Parrot Toy Angels Auction

Editor's note: As mentioned earlier, this came in from the GatewayParrots mailing list. If you are familiar with the organization, please share your experiences. It appears Parrot Toy Angels supports rescue organizations, and this is one of their fund raising projects. Please note, the auction closes Sunday, 5/18. You will probably receive the printed newsletter on the 15th or 16th so hopefully you won't miss out. The following information is supplied by Parrot Toy Angels.



www.ParrotToyAngels.com

Parrot Toy Angels is a 501(c)3 licensed charitable all-volunteer organization committed to providing toys, food and other avian supplies to companion birds in difficult situations. Life-altering changes, natural disasters or an organization's lack of funding all can have a negative emotional and physical impact on both birds and companion caregivers alike. Our Angel Projects help ease the burden for the generous individuals & organizations that provide safe havens for birds in need.

The Parrot Toy Angels - Spring 2008 Auction

The good news is... Spring has arrived!!!

The better news is... The PTA Spring Auction is ready to begin!!!

We owe a huge "Thank You" to all of this year's donors. To those of you who won items in our October 2007 Auction, this one is even better. Click on the graphic above and see for yourself how many terrific items we have for you.

Whether you're planning a Hawaiian luau in your back yard, looking for new toys for your birds, have an empty spot on the wall that needs a lovely print, or want to bake something easy and yummy for your parrots, you can find it all here! We have gift baskets, jewelry, toy making supplies, beautiful parrot prints and many other special items.

So check out our auction and bid often. All proceeds from the auction go to the best cause there is:

Making a difference... one bird at a time

Book Picks of the Month

Christine Kinkade

Mattie Sue Athan will be one of our featured speakers at the August 23-24, 2008 Bird Fair at Queeny Park. Mattie Sue has written several parrot-related books. We have two of her publications in our GPC Library. I encourage you to familiarize yourself with Mattie Sue's books, as she is quite an accomplished author and speaker.

Here are this month's picks:

Parrots of the World by Joseph M. Forshaw

A large, hardcover identification book that was first published in 1973 will help you identify parrots of the world. It contains detailed description of parrots and where they can be found in the world. Lots of color and B&W illustrations by William T. Cooper. (584 pages).

The Bird Care Book by Sheldon L. Gerstenfeld

All you need to know to keep your bird happy and healthy. Contains charts to diagnose and treat ailments, step-by-step first aid, and nutrition and exercise training. (229 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).

Training Your Parrot by Kevin Murphy

This book is for people who want to make sure that their parrot becomes truly a pet and companion instead of just an avian boarder in the home. This book contains exactly the type of sensible, practical, experience-proved advice that all parrot owners can put to good use. Several full-color photos. (189 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).

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. 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, 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!... Christine

SURPRISE SURPRISE

Debbie Martin

"Life can be SO boring!" moaned Mozart our cockatiel. Our playgym has been the same for weeks! Maybe I'll start flying and walking to the computer room for wires to chew and Beta Bird will get the hint to make our playgym more festive so we'll stay put—want to come Ginger? Ginger, who never does anything wrong, looked disgusted and turned her back. But the strategy worked. Beta Bird, aka Debby, expanded the playgym by setting up an older smaller cage linking it to the playgym with boings and ladders. Mozart enjoys scuttling up and down, in and out shredding and exploring because all sorts of things appear and disappear in that little cage. Even the ever conservative Ginger ventures into the new cage when Mozart isn't looking!

Coffee filters with a treat inside twisted and tied to the side of the cage.

Several branches with a peanut tied with raffia to the branch and lots of paper tied to it to shred.

Hidden among those paper strips, little paper party baskets with a broccoli piece in it.

Drinking straws still in the paper sleeve – just right to chew on.

"Aren't you going on your walk-about to the computer room looking for wires to chew," Ginger asked? Mozart looked disgusted, "Nope, I know that almond is here somewhere – I've got to find it!"

Amazon Recovery Puerto Rico

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February 2005 Release

The Critically Endangered Puerto Rican Amazon Parrot: A Veterinary Overview

Antonio Rivera, DVM, Fernando Nunez-Garcia, MS; Ja-fet Velez, MS; Wilfredo Abreu, FT; Pablo Torres, MS; Ricardo Valentin, MS; Sandra Viscal, DVM

The Puerto Rican Amazon (*Amazona vittata*), a 30-33 cm, 250-300 gram red-fronted, green parrot with white eye rings, is the last endemic psittacine that inhabits the Caribbean National Forest (CNF) known as El Yunque on the island of Puerto Rico. There were an estimated 2,000 individuals in 1930. By 1967 only 24 birds remained in the wild. In 1975, only 13 birds were in the Luquillo Mountains. Extinction was eminent, and a captive breeding program was instituted. The first captive bird was raised in 1979.

Thanks to an aggressive protective program, there has been a decline in habitat loss, nest robbing, hunting.

Currently, in the Luquillo Mountains within the Caribbean National Forest only one wild flock of approximately 40 individuals exists. Two captive populations are held in two separate aviaries, one group at the CNF managed by the USFWS and the other at Rio Abajo State Forest in Utuado. A second flock of captive-raised Puerto Rican Amazons is to be released in 2006 in the Karst region in the mountains of Utuado at Rio Abajo.

During the last 36 years, these efforts have concentrated on gaining a better understanding of the breeding biology and requirements of this species as well as on the management of the habitat, the wild population, and the establishment and management of a

captive population. Routine veterinary input at both facilities was achieved through frequent aviary visits to both aviaries. Improvements to the aviary hospital are constantly done, with the purpose of providing the birds better medical care. Time is spent with aviary personnel, aviculturist and field biologist.

The next News Release will cover the program of egg-related problems and disease control as well as notes from the field.

March 2005 News Release

The Critically Endangered Puerto Rican Amazon Parrot: A Veterinary Overview, Part II

Continuing the report on the breeding and re-establishment projects for the Puerto Rican Parrot as reported in the February AAV News Release, egg contamination, infertility, and infant mortality had been a major problem in the Luquillo aviary. High environmental humidity was associated with fungal and bacterial overgrowth of the nest material, and with subsequent contamination of eggs and young. To lower mortality of the young, the nest materials were autoclaved. By using autoclaved nest material during egg laying, prior to hatching and during development of the young, and with thorough disinfection of the nests, fungal and bacterial growth was controlled. The measures yielded increased survival of the young.

Periodically, bird aggression can result in cannibalization of baby birds. Egg abandonment, and infertility can also be a serious problem. Male aggression can result of psychological caponization of a neighboring male. Therefore, cages of aggressive pairs were alternated with Hispaniolan Amazon pairs, and cages of docile pairs were placed next to each other. Visual barriers were also put in place to minimize disturbance from neighboring birds. Closed-circuit cameras located on all of the flocking and breeding cages were used at the Luquillo aviary. This is essential in helping to identify aggressive birds and in targeting potential problems.

Wild bird nestlings were blood-tested in the field for disease, including Salmonella, polyomavirus, psittacine beak and feather disease, Chlamydophila psittaci, and Pacheco's disease, as well as bacteriological and fungal cultures, and choanal and cloacal Gram's stains. As a result of this testing, two babies were treated in the nest. One bird was subsequently selected to be removed, treated at the Luquillo facility, and later returned to the nest. Both

young fledged from the nest which was maintained as an active nest site.

DNA samples from each wild baby are recorded for genetic composition. Based on these tests, wild birds may be interchanged with captive-raised birds in order to increase genetic diversity of the population.

All active nests are visited by the veterinarian and all nestlings are examined several times prior to fledging as a part of a routine management plan. Also, 5% Sevin dust has been used in the nests to help prevent infestation by warble flies. This treatment also deters fire ants, termites, soldier fly larvae, etc. This may also treat the parent birds for external parasites commonly found on wild birds. Ivermectin has also been used successfully to treat birds infested with larval warble flies.

The work performed by the avian veterinarians is fundamental in the process involved in any recovery program. Veterinarians play an extremely important role in the recovery of any threatened species. It is by understanding the biological, medical, and ecological aspects that helps a species and its reintegration into the wild.

Recipe of the Month

Beakers Best Birdie Pizza

Posted by: Beakers Best Birdie Recipes

beakers@probe.net - May 8, 1996

- 1 ready made pizza crust or use your own recipe
- 1 jar baby food mixed garden vegetables
- 1/4 cup chopped green bell pepper
- 1/4 cup shredded carrot
- 1/4 cup chopped broccoli
- 2 tbs wheat germ
- 2 tbs wheatgrass powder
- 1/2 cup shredded mozzarella

Spread baby food on the crust. Sprinkle carrot, broccoli and bell peppers. Sprinkle cheese, wheat germ and wheatgrass powder over all and bake according to directions for your crust.

Recipes from the Birds n Ways website, www.birdsnways.com

2008 Schedule

April 20 – Tomasovic Travelogue
May 18
June 8 (second Sunday)
July 20
August – Fair
September 21
October 19
November 16
December 14

Our Mission

The Gateway Parrot Club, Inc. is a not for profit organization established in 1988 to:

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.

Contact Information

We welcome your comments and suggestions...

Officers

President	Dave Kinkade	(636) 343-8097
Vice President	Phyllis Cotton	(314) 427-3679
Secretary	Cathy Wendler	(636) 586-0604
Treasurer	Nancy Marron	(314) 984-9524
Membership	Niki Shaffer	(314) 853-5323

Board Members

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Suzanne Dohack	(636) 734-4527
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Committees

Education	???	
Hospitality	Pat Seiler	(636) 462-4732
Librarian	Christine Kinkade	(636) 343-8097
Ways & Means	Suzanne Dohack	(636) 734-4527
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