

# Squawk 'n Talk

Volume 8, Issue 11 December 2008

Greetings from the Presidential Perch!

Now that the national, state, county, and city elections are over, it's time for us to think about our own GPC elections. During our November meeting we received nominations for Club Officers & Board members whose terms will expire at the end of this year. The actual election will take place during our December meeting (Dec 14). Be sure to attend this meeting and vote.

The December meeting will also be our "Christmas Party" meeting where we get together for games, fun, and good fellowship (and good food, too!). I hope you will be able to come and join in on the fun. Bring a friend! Dawn Breer of Sweat Peas will be there with her toys. Please take note that the December meeting is on the second Sunday in December - Dec. 14, 2008.

I would like to thank Niki and Froggie for the First Aid presentation that they gave for the October education program. It was very informative and generated a lot of interest in our members. I hope everyone enjoyed it.

I also want to thank Nancy Marron for bringing her dvd of Barbara Heidenreich on the subject of reading a bird's body language.

See you at the Meeting. ---- Dave

## Tidbits

Trey Shaffer

**Newsletter** – Or not... You may have noticed there was no newsletter in November. Sorry. I have no good excuse; just got busy in several other areas and "spaced" over it. I realized on Friday, before the meeting, I was a week late. So, did you miss it?

**December Meeting** – December 14. Please note, this is the second Sunday of December, not our traditional third Sunday. This will be our traditional election and holiday party. The Board will meet at the regular time 12:30 PM, and the general membership business meeting, featuring the election, will be at the usual, 2:00 PM, followed by the party.

The meal will be "pot luck," so bring a dish to share. The Club will provide beverages, plates, etc. We will have our traditional gift exchange, so bring a gift, maximum value \$10.00, for a round of "rob your neighbor" gift selection. Please see Christine's note about the menu at the end of the newsletter...

**Grants** – We are again disbursing available funds based on membership nominations and voting. We did this last time, and it worked well and seemed very democratic. See the short article below for details.

**Nominations** – We nominated for the offices to be filled this year. See more below...

**Membership Dues** – Dues for the calendar year 2009 should be paid by December 31, 2008. This is your first official reminder. The inside of the cover is a membership application showing the information we currently have on record for you. Please update information, as needed and send us your money.

You can mail payment to the address on the form or make the payment through our website, where you can fill out an electronic version of the form. Or, better yet, bring the form and money to the next meeting...

From now on, reminders will sound like nagging...

## Nominations

Following our annual tradition, and bylaws, we nominated members for available offices at our November meeting. Officers whose terms are expiring include President, Dave Kinkade, and Vice President, Phyllis Cotton. Both were nominated for the same posts, and will be unopposed, there being no other nominations.

Three Board member positions are expiring; those currently held by Janet Draper, Suzanne Dohack and Trey Shaffer. Each was nominated to serve another term, and Jennifer Moore was also nominated for a Board Member position.

It seems likely Dave and Phyllis will be reelected. The three Board positions will be filled by the three candidates, out of four, receiving the most votes.

The election will be held at the December meeting.

## Grants

Trey Shaffer

We will again spread our wealth based on member nominations and voting. We did this last time, for the first time, and it worked well, so here's how it will work...

The Board allocated a total of \$3,000 to fund six grants of \$500. Nominations are open, until January 31, 2009, so think about people, programs and/or organizations we should support financially. We have not established strict criteria for nominees, but they should be bird-related and within the focus of our mission statement.

Send your nomination to our President, Dave Kinkade. Dave's email address and phone number are listed in the contact information toward the end of the newsletter. You can also use postal mail, to the address listed in the librarian's article. Please give us the name of the organization and contact information for the organization, and yourself. Also, please include a short description of the nominee and their activities. You may also have the nominee submit a description of their activities.

I will post the information on our website as we receive it. I will include information available at the time in the January newsletter. As mentioned, nominations close January 31. I will have the final list in the February newsletter. We will vote for recipients at the February meeting. Each active member, present at the February meeting can vote for six recipients. At this moment, we have four nominees:

- The Feather Distribution Project
- Monteverde Conservation League
- World Bird Sanctuary
- AAV Research Fund

I can think of some others... so get those nominations in. I will list nominees in the order received, so there might be a small benefit of nominating early...

## Pet Safe Holiday

### How to Pet Proof Your Home for the Holidays

PETCO Online

Niki found this and got permission to reprint. It focuses on four-legged pets more than winged ones, but applies generally...

The bright colors and intoxicating scents of the holiday season are enough to transform any moping mutt or cranky cat from melancholy to downright jolly. Unfortunately, many of the delights and decorations of the holidays pose significant risks to companion animals.

PETCO offers the following safety tips on keeping pets safe and healthy for many holidays to come.

**Christmas Trees.** Pine needles can lodge in an animal's esophagus, making it difficult or impossible for your pet to swallow. Even drinking water from the Christmas tree base is enough to cause diarrhea, mouth sores, vomiting and loss of appetite. Cover your tree stand tightly with skirting and distract your companion animal from temptations with holiday toys and treats.

**Deck the Halls.** A bunch of fresh mistletoe may be a symbol of love, but to your curious cat or canine, tempting red berries look more like a sweet treat. Eating the leaves and berries could cause a drop in blood pressure. Ivy can cause diarrhea, convulsions and in some cases even death when eaten in large quantities. Holly, poinsettias and other plants are best kept away from inquisitive companion animals.

**Tinsel and Lights.** A flickering flame and shiny decorations intrigue companion animals. When lighting and once lit, the Menorah, Advent wreath or decorative candles, keep pets in another room where paws and claws can't reach them. With electrical lights, remember to tape exposed electrical cords to walls or the floor to ensure no chewing or tripping. Also use Bitter Apple, a product that imparts a bitter taste to an object to discourage your pet from chewing on dangerous cords. Tinsel and gift-wrap may look like fun toys but they can cause choking, upset stomach or even more serious problems.

**Visions of Sugar Plums.** Dogs may love to sniff your holiday goodies but theobromine, an ingredient found in chocolate, is toxic. Don't ever offer dogs chocolate as a treat. If your dog develops a sweet tooth and discovers an improperly stored stash, it could lead to tragedy. Keep dogs' jaws busy with holiday rawhide candy canes and oversized bones. If he or she shows signs of illness such as vomiting, loss of appetite, or excessive water intake, contact your veterinarian immediately. Proper nutrition and plenty of fresh water are essential to your companion animal's winter health.

**Let it Snow.** Pets, especially very young and older animals, can suffer stress, frostbite and hypothermia when their body temperature drops just a few degrees below normal. The tips of the ears, feet and tail are commonly affected areas. Watch for the formation of ice balls between your companion animal's toes and regularly trim the long hair between the footpads to avoid frostbitten feet. If you suspect frostbite, do not rub the area but simply apply warm moist cloth packs and contact your veterinarian.

**Antifreeze Alert.** Automotive antifreeze contains ethylene glycol, which causes rapid and permanent kidney damage to your companion animal if it ingests even a very small amount. It takes only 6 milliliters or less than 1/4 ounce of antifreeze to kill an average-sized cat. A cat can walk through an antifreeze puddle and ingest it while cleaning its paws. For a dog, it takes only 60 milliliters or about 2 ounces of antifreeze to kill a 30-pound pup. A dog could

ingest this much with a few laps out of an open container or from a puddle on the garage floor.

**Home for the Holidays.** If your pet cannot be in the house with you, a proper shelter can be a lifesaver for a chilly dog or feline. When selecting a doghouse or shelter for your cat, the space should be only as large as necessary for the animal to maneuver comfortably, since the animal's own body heat will serve as a heater. You will have one chilled Chihuahua if he or she is hanging out of a Doberman-sized doghouse. Nitrogen plastic insulated pet house work well to keep the heat inside the house with the animal. Some houses even have an offset door that provides additional protection of your companion animals from winter drafts.

Remember, the best present you can give your pets this holiday season is good health and some extra love and attention.

Following is a link to the article. If you are reading this electronically, you can click to visit the PETCO site. If you are reading the print version of the newsletter, just squint and type it...

[www.petco.com/Content/Article.aspx?nav=153&id=3437&cm\\_ite=article\\_3437&cm\\_ven=email&cm\\_cat=post&cm\\_pla=110208Post&CMReferringUrl=](http://www.petco.com/Content/Article.aspx?nav=153&id=3437&cm_ite=article_3437&cm_ven=email&cm_cat=post&cm_pla=110208Post&CMReferringUrl=)

## From the AAV Magnifications as a Diagnostic Tool for Feather Disorders

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Julie Hebert, DVM; Corina Lupu, DVM, Dipl ABVP

Feather disorders are frequently encountered in avian veterinary practice. If no obvious signs are found on physical examination, diagnostic tests may be recommended to rule out physical disease.

Although patterns of feather damage and lesions have been studied, no description of feather disorders based on microscopic examination appears to exist. The purpose of this work was to evaluate the value of feather magnification as a diagnostic tool. Only psittacine pennaceous feathers were used in this study.

Feather damage may occur during morphogenesis, resulting from poor nutrition, compromised digestion, or trauma to epithelial and vascular components.

Understanding how color is produced is important in understanding color changes. The array of color in feathers is produced by structure or by pigments. Blue, violet, ultraviolet, turquoise, and aquamarine are the result of the scattering of visible light within the barb medulla. Iridescence is the product of light dispersion by melanin granules suspended in the web created by opposing barbules.

Buff, grey, brown, black, and chestnut are produced by the pigment melanin bound particularly on the cortex of barbules.

Binding of psittacofulvins to this keratin cortex produces, in combination with structural blues, most of the green we see in feathers. Psittacofulvins on bare keratin produce yellow, orange, and red.

The common aberrations noted in feathers are: blue feathers turn pink, green feathers turn rust or yellow; blue and green feathers develop black patches; feathers lose color and intensity, grey feathers become red. Magnification allows us to observe the lesions underlying these changes.

For example: magnification of blue feathers turned pink reveals that the surface integrity of the feather is maintained. The disappearance of blue signifies a loss of structural integrity of the barb medulla, involving keratin, air vacuoles, and melanin vacuoles.

Black discoloration on green or blue feathers is most commonly attributed to liver damage, however, the connection between the feather and the liver has not been determined. Through magnification we can see different types of lesions. Although similar in appearance, different etiologies must be considered for these lesions, including external parasites, mycosis, and organopathy.

The sources of feather discolors are often determined by putting together the pieces of the puzzle. Feather magnification is designed to give us one more piece of that puzzle, especially if it is done routinely enough to allow us to make deductions from what we see. We found that feather magnification was a practical tool in that it was neither time consuming, cost prohibitive, nor a risk to the patient.

Release #2, February, 2006. 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.

## Book Picks of the Month

Christine Kinkade

Here are the library picks for this month. Please feel free to contact me at any time if you have a book request, and I will bring the book to the next GPC meeting. A complete listing of books and videos can be found on the GPC website ([www.GatewayParrotClub.org](http://www.GatewayParrotClub.org)).

### **First Aid for Birds by Julie Rach with Gary A. Gallerstein**

This book is for pet owners that focus on administering first aid to birds. You will learn step-by-step information on emergency situations, how to quickly save your bird's life by taking actions, and how to prevent emergencies by feeding your bird a balanced diet, regularly trimming his wings and nails, and bird-proofing your home. Several color photos. (126 pages).

### **Cockatiels, A Complete Introduction by Elaine Radford**

Easy to read book with lots of practical advice on keeping cockatiels. Colorful book covers every topic of importance to anyone, especially a beginner interested in keeping cockatiels. Color photos on every page. (128 pages).

### **Macaws as a Hobby by Horst Schmidt**

Practical advice on buying a macaw. Housing, feeding, caring for, breeding, and how to teach a macaw to talk are all discussed in this book. Many color pictures. (98 pages).

### **Your Pet's Perspective by Jane Hallander**

A VHS tape by Jan Hallander, an internationally known animal communicator. The tape is designed to help you learn to communicate telepathically with your animals, including companion birds. (Color, 45 mins).

## Parrot Behavior & Training-Part 1 by Barbara Heidenreich

This DVD, "Introduction to Training," teaches behavior basics and tools for training your bird through positive reinforcement. Barbara Heidenreich has been an animal trainer and behavior consultant since 1990 and has trained birds and their handlers around the world.

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!

## Sexual Behaviors of Companion Parrots

### The Downside of the Good Life: Problem Sexual Behaviors of Companion Parrots

Fern Van Sant, DVM, San Jose, CA

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Psittacines are popular because they demonstrate social behavior that humans find appealing. They are beautiful, intelligent and can mimic many of our sounds. Understanding how these behaviors

can be triggered by specific actions or conditions will lead to better and healthier lives for captive psittacines.

Experience and observation tells us that environmental triggers are capable of inciting reproductive behaviors. Reproductive behaviors observed in the wild, such as pair-bonding, cavity seeking, regurgitation, nest building, territoriality, and copulation are often displayed in the human home setting. Females of some species will lay large numbers of eggs over extended periods of time, leading to complete physical collapse and failure. The reproductive drive can also render the bird impossible to live with. These behaviors include screaming, sudden aggression, destructive attempts to excavate nests in closets and furniture.

Bird owners often indulge their birds, providing them with a nutrient-rich diet, provide a nest (cage), nesting materials (newspaper) and often provide themselves as a perceived mate. Pair-bonding is encouraged by preening (petting)

By carefully examining the many complicated interactions between psittacine birds and their various natural environments, we will be better able to interpret social and sexual behaviors of captive companion psittacines. The improved understanding will lead to more effective intervention when necessary and hopefully, improved preventative care.

Release #6, June, 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.

## Christmas Party Menu

The December 14th meeting is the GPC Christmas Party. The GPC will provide the ham, sliced cheese, bread, condiments, and soda. Please fill free to bring a side dish or a desert to accompany the ham. Now is the time for you to be creative and try that new recipe! I'm sure we will have a lot of good food, fun, and games! If you have a guest that you would like to invite, please bring them along.

Christine Kinkade – Hospitality

## 2008-9 Schedule

December 14 – Elections and party
January 18
February 15
March 15
April 19
May 17
June 14 ( Second Sunday )
July 19
August – All-American Hookbill Fair
September 13 ( Second Sunday )
October 18
November 15 – Nominations for office
December 13 ( Second Sunday ) Elections and Party

### 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

Christine Kinkade	(636) 343-8097
Dawn Breer	(636) 464-8085
Suzanne Dohack	(636) 734-4527
Trey Shaffer	(314) 432-4317
Janet Draper	(314) 432-3019
Jim Berk	(636) 586-1445

### Committees

Education	???	
Hospitality	Christine Kinkade	(636) 343-8097
Librarian	Christine Kinkade	(636) 343-8097
Ways & Means	Suzanne Dohack	(636) 734-4527
Website		
Newsletter	Trey Shaffer	(314) 432-4317
Public Relations		