

Squawk 'n Talk

Volume 9, Issue 3

April 2009

Greetings From The Presidential Perch!

Spring is here! Even if it did get a snowy start! If you are like me, you are ready for spring. Not only for the warmer weather, but also for the extra light at the end of the day to get some outside work done. The bluebirds and wrens are looking for some prime real estate (bird-houses) in our back yard, so I better get busy and make sure housing is available for them.

Our parrots don't have to worry about real estate. They have the whole house for their own. Of course, they sometimes have to go to their rooms (cages). Longer daylight will sometimes trigger different behavior in parrots. Some good, some not so good. So, watch out and be patient with them!

I hope everyone enjoyed Bonnie's presentation at our February meeting about the Wild Bird Rehabilitation and how injured birds are treated, rehabilitated, and then released back into the wild. And Niki's presentation at last month's meeting on practical ways of setting up a bird cage for a companion parrot was also very informative. I would like to thank both Bonnie and Niki for taking time away from their busy schedules to prepare and present the educational programs for our club.

This year's Fair is just five months away. It may seem like a long time, but time moves quickly. Although the staff of the Machinists' Hall will do most of the set-up and take-down, we will still be busy doing our own concessions this year as well as the raffles and silent auction. We are hoping that concessions will enable us to raise more money at the Fair. So, in addition to the volunteer duties of last year, additional volunteers will also be needed this year to run the concession stand and making sure it is supplied with ample food for fair-goers to purchase.

I encourage everyone to make the effort to attend the meetings and get involved. Your ideas and knowledge are needed to help move your club forward. Visitors are always welcomed. Bring a friend! And, your birds! See you at the meetings! Dave

Tidbits

Trey Shaffer

Membership Renewals – Alert level maximum... If you haven't renewed your membership, you are not reading this (at least not your own postal-delivered copy) We have discontinued mailing to non-renewed members. Send us your twenty bucks...

Gateway Parrot Club
1425 Silverleaf Lane
Saint Louis, MO 63146

Of course you can make the payment on the website using a credit card or PayPal. Both of which, by the way, have a service charge to the Club, so there is an option there to pay \$21, which will get the Club a full \$20. (Actually about \$20.13)

Quaker Lifesaver – In Denver recently, a Quaker parakeet got the Red Cross's Animal Lifesaver Award for alerting his owner, who had left the room that a toddler was choking on her food.

<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/29858577/from/ET/>.

From Cathy Wendler

Cliff is back – We heard from Cliff Patterson. Cliff had some health issues over the past several months. We are glad he is on the mend. We got a thank you card, which Dave read at the last meeting, and now an Illinois legislative alert... In the Illinois legislature, there is a movement to license dog breeders, represented in Senate Bill 53 and House Bill 198. This applies only to dog breeders, but I'm sure Cliff would say it's a slippery slope... You can find more information, including full text and opinions by Googling: HB0198 and/or SB0053 (those are zeroes)

Symposium – Sounds serious, or at least educational. I got an email from JJ Barry, the President and co-founder of the Animal Education Foundation, described as a "non-profit to provide science-based behavior, training, education, and enrichment programs for parrot owners, vets, zoos, rehabilitation programs, etc." They "hold seminars on Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) and positive reinforcement training for pet owners, as well as work with professionals to implement the most positive, least intrusive methods with the animals in their care. One of our main objectives is to help companion parrot owners get ahead of problem behaviors in order to decrease the number of birds being rehomed. Profits go to support animal conservation efforts and animal welfare or-

ganizations." Mr. Barry would like to invite us to attend their 2009 Symposium and Workshop with Susan Friedman, to be held July 18 - 19 in Arlington, VA. Registration for the combined event is \$150, and he mentioned a potential discount for a group of 5. You can get details on their website.

www.animaleducationfoundation.org

If you consider going, let me know and I will hook you up with anyone else that is interested.

Looking for Lovebirds? – Suzanne Dohack is moving and needs to downsize her flock. She would like to find new homes for three adults, including a mated pair, and three youngsters, ten months. Please contact Suzanne for details, at (636) 939-9809.

Dancing 'Too – Donna Mount sent this link to a video of a Cockatoo dancing to a Ray Charles medley. So if you like Cockatoos, Ray Charles or dancing, check it out...

www.maniacworld.com/bird-loves-ray-charles.html

Grants - The following organizations have received \$500 grants, based on membership vote at the February meeting.

- The Feather Distribution
- Monteverde Conservation League
- World Bird Sanctuary
- AAV Research Fund
- STAR - St. Louis Avian Rescue
- Wild Bird Rehabilitation

Great Horned Owl Release

Sue Owens

Editor's note: You will want to check this out on the web. Sue sent me an email suggesting this as an article. What we have here is the text from her web page, and the photo captions (to let you know what you are missing), but you'll need to go to the web site to see the color photos...

I am a volunteer at the World Bird Sanctuary near St Louis, Missouri. On February 21, 2009, we were lucky enough to be able to

release a great horned owl back into the wild. My children and grandchildren came along for the release. February marks the fourth anniversary of my husband's passing to the next realm. Owl is his spirit guide. My coworkers at the WBS granted me the gift of being able to release this little owl in Rich's memory.

The day dawned cold and windy, with spits of snow. I thought: "Oh dear, what an awful day to get out of jail." A couple of hours later, however, the clouds began to break. Eventually the sun came out, although it remained quite blustery.

I picked up the little owl at WBS. We drove him to a state park near our home. It was interesting in our ride to the park that his eyes never strayed from me. I was sitting in the back seat by his carrier. I can only think that he was worried about my intentions. However, once we entered the park, I was forgotten. He could see the bare trees silhouetted against the sky and fastened his unwavering gaze on them. It is tempting to assign human feelings to animals. In this case, I would have to say that his expression was longing -- longing for what he knew was the familiar -- the deep woods of home.

Caption 1 - Here is the owl in the animal carrier, preparing to return to the world.

Caption 2 - I have taken him out of the crate here. The long leather gloves and safety goggles are necessary to protect against his powerful feet and sharp talons. He is capable of crushing the skulls of his prey with these tools of his trade. In our region, great horned owls consume mice, rats, possums, skunks, squirrels, and other birds, particularly nestlings.

Caption 4 - Close up of his handsome face and huge eyes.....

Caption 5 - Close up of his very large feet.... He was banded shortly before release for future identification.

This particular owl was brought to the World Bird Sanctuary with an open wound. He stayed in the rehab hospital for a few days, then was placed in the large flight cage outdoors to become re-acclimated to outside conditions. While there, he was encouraged to fly and exercise. Perches are located up high while their food (killed rats) is placed close to ground level. In addition, staff members visit the flight frequently to observe how the birds are progressing with their flying abilities. It is an awesome experience to be in the flight while the owls swoop silently overhead.

Caption 6 - Here is my granddaughter Maddy and me with the owl. He watched her every movement. What was he thinking? "Is that food?" "Is that thing going to eat me?"

Caption 7 - The owl flies free again, going home, going home.

If you enjoyed these pictures and the little story, I hope you will visit the WBS link posted, and learn more about these beautiful raptors. If you live in the St. Louis, MO area, I hope you will come by in person to visit us.

www.auroraborealispage.net/owl.html

Perch Mounting Hardware

Trey Shaffer

We've all seen perches and things with threaded mounts that extend through cage bars and secure with a washer and wing nut. Here is how to make your own...

First, the piece of hardware goes by at least two different names. The one I am most familiar with is Dowel Screw, the other, on the package I bought recently, Hanger Bolt. This rose, by any name is a combination screw. One end has the thread of a wood screw. This end goes into the perch. The other has the thread of a machine screw and accepts the wing nut on the outside of the cage. In the photo, the dowel screw is the left-middle item. Depending on how well the image is printed, you should at least see that one end is pointed. This is the wood screw end.

All you need to do is screw this into the perch and stick it out through the bars. But wait... How do I screw it into the wood without messing up the threads on the other end? Good question! You need a Driver Thingy. To my knowledge you can't buy a Driver Thingy. So when you see someone selling Driver Thingies and getting rich, think of me; because it wasn't me. I told you how to make one for free...

So here is the scoop. You need three items, so plan a visit to the hardware store. Almost any hardware store should do. I prefer the old-fashioned variety, where the aisles are narrow, and all the nuts and bolts are hidden in little drawers, and only the gray-haired

guy at the service counter knows where they are, but they have everything you need, even the stuff you need but don't know about.

But the old-fashioned hardware store is on the verge of extinction. As bird people many of us participate in bird rescue. Maybe we should start an old-fashioned hardware store rescue organization... I digress. You can also find this stuff in the big box home centers, where all the hardware is hermetically sealed in little bags and clearly displayed for the casual observer, and the only thing hidden from view is someone who can answer a question.

The dowel screws may be with the wood screws, or they may be with the machine screws. I would put them right in between the two. Just ask, and suffer the blank stare that comes back at you. Show them the photo. As a last resort, you can usually find these things in the department that handles plant, or swag chandelier hanging hardware. There the dowel screw will be packaged with a decorative hook, and the wood screw end goes into your ceiling, hopefully into a rafter/joist, and the decorative hook threads on to the machine screw.

Like other screws, dowel screws come in different sizes. Without getting into a lengthy discussion of screw and thread designations, 1/4" is suitable for the largest, Macaw-sized perches. These are always labeled as 1/4" or 1/4"-20. The 1/4" refers to the diameter of the shaft. The 20 refers to the number of threads per inch. If you care to count them, there should be 20 little ridges over the distance of one inch along the bolt.

You will probably see at least one size smaller than the 1/4" version, and these will be better for smaller perches and items. Here is where the arcane syntax of screw lingo may get confusing. The smaller size(s) may be designated by their diameter only, like 3/16", or 1/8" or a combination of diameter and thread pitch, like 3/16" - 24. They may also be labeled based on American National Standards Institute, ANSI, designations, in which case the 3/16" size would be 10-24. Even though I am trying to fill the newsletter, I will spare you a discussion of metric sizing, so if you're in "the rest of the world," substitute your own dimensions.

The short version... Take your perch to the store with you and pick the size that looks right. If in doubt, go smaller. You will be less likely to split your work piece.

Once you select the dowel screw, you will know what size parts to get for the Driver Thingy. The Driver Thingy will match the machine thread end of the dowel screw. For simplicity, I will refer to it

as ¼-20 from here on, because the computer does the cool shrink thing when I type 1 / 4, ¼ but doesn't do it for 3/16.

Looking at the picture, you see the completed Driver Thingy at the top. At the bottom is a machine screw, with its head cut off. This is the same ¼-20 as the dowel screw. Take the head off any way you like; big cutters, hack saw, grinder, or just rub it on the concrete for a while. Protect the other end of the screw. We need those threads intact. This screw should be 1 ½ to 2" long.

In the photo, the item center-right is a garden variety hex nut, ¼-20. This may come with the ¼-20 machine screw, if packaged.

In the photo, the center-middle item is a little bit special. It is a Coupling Nut, or a Rod Coupler. It is just like the plain hex nut, but much longer/deeper. If you are shopping in the big box home center, these will probably be stocked near the threaded rods, rather than with the nuts and bolts; probably different areas in the same big aisle.

Reality check - Compare the sizes of available coupling nuts and dowel screws. This may limit your options for size selection, since you must have a matching set.

Drill bit – To make things easy, and avoid splitting your perch, drill a hole in the perch before driving the dowel screw. So if you don't have the right drill bit at home, pick one up at the hardware store. The diameter of the drill bit should be a little smaller than the core of the wood screw end of the dowel screw.

Glue – An optional, but nice, touch will be to add a drop of thread locking fluid, or super-glue to the Driver Thingy during assembly. You could also buy a fancy nylon insert locking hex nut instead of the plain hex nut. That way you are assured of driving hundreds of perch screws without interruption.

Assembly – Now it's time to put it all together. Put the hex nut on the machine screw and run it up an inch or so. Now thread the Coupling Nut onto the machine screw. The machine screw should go into the Coupling Nut about 1/3 the depth of the nut; definitely less than half way. (The dowel screw will go in the other, open end, during driving.) If you opted for the thread lock/glue, put it on the machine screw, at the top of the Coupling Nut.

Without turning the machine screw in the Coupling Nut, run the hex nut down to the Coupling Nut. Use your two favorite tools to tighten the hex nut against the Coupling Nut. They will be the same size. If you don't have two wrenches the same size, put the Coupling Nut in a pair of ViceGrips or a vice. If you have trouble

tightening these, be sure to use the glue, then finger tight will probably be good enough.

The Driver Thingy is done! Congratulations! Now it's time for a cold beverage and to reflect on your perch construction plans. Perch design/selection is a whole separate discussion. Once you have it, you are now ready to install it.

Washers – If you went to the hardware store before reading this far, you'll be irritated at making another trip, but you need nuts and washers to secure your perch. If the diameter of the perch is greater than the distance between the bars of your cage, you won't need washers on the inside of the cage. Regardless, you will need a washer(s) on the outside. The diameter of the washer must overlap two bars on your cage by a comfortable margin. You may use more than one washer, stacking for strength or to cover openings in larger washers. Standard washers are only a little larger than the hex nut for a given bolt size. Oversized washers, frequently called Fender Washers, are much larger. A fender washer for a ¼ bolt will be 1 ¼ to 1 ½" in diameter. If this doesn't cover the bars on your cage, you will need additional washers, for larger bolt sizes. These will have bigger holes in them, so you will stack incrementally larger washers until you cover your cage bars.

Wing Nut – You need a nut to secure the perch with the dowel screw extending through the cage and washers. You can use plain hex nut, which will look clean, but require a wrench to install/remove. You can get wing nuts to match your dowel screw, then hand-tighten for installation/removal. You can also find some fancy knob-like nuts, with the nut encased in a plastic knob. Macaws will love to chew on these.

Drill – First, figure out how much of the dowel screw should extend through the cage bars and washers. An easy way to do this is to put your hand flat against the inside of the cage. Put the wing nut and washers over the drill bit and put the tip of the bit against the palm of your hand on the inside of the cage. Mark this distance by holding the shaft of the drill bit. This is the amount of thread you want extending from the end of the perch. Hold this along the dowel screw. The length of the dowel screw left over is the depth of the hole to drill in the perch. Calculate this distance and mark it on the drill bit by wrapping a piece of masking tape around the bit. Then drill the perch to the depth of the mark on the drill bit.

Screw it –It is, finally, time to use the Driver Thingy. The unstated assumption so far is that you have a drill; preferably one with a low/variable speed. If you don't have drill, I don't know how you drilled the hole in the perch, but you can still use the Driver Thingy

with a wrench/pliers. Place the shaft of the Driver Thingy in the drill, and thread the machine thread end of the dowel screw into the open end of the Driver Thingy. Place the pointed end of the dowel screw in the hole in the perch and gently drive the screw into the perch. Drive it to the depth of the hole, leaving the appropriate length of thread exposed from the end of the perch.

The Driver Thingy only drives the dowel screw IN to the perch. Backing it out requires clamping pliers, which will probably damage the machine threads. So be sure not to drive it too far. Test it, and if necessary, it is easy to drive it further into the perch.

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).

Eclectus Parrots by Katy McElroy

This is my absolute pick if you have an Eclectus. A must read for the Eclectus owner or if you are considering an Eclectus as a companion parrot. This book has a section on first aid emergencies, a first aid kit list, and a section on making your home safe for your bird. There is also a list of safe plants and trees for your bird. Lots of full color photos and illustrations. (95 pages).

African Gray Parrots by Annette Wolter

Answers to all your questions about raising African Gray Parrots: feeding, behavior, health, and breeding. Informative and clear enough for young pet owners. Eight pages of full-color photos plus drawings. (61 pages).

Training Cockatiels by Elaine Radford

Cockatiels are among the most popular of all cage birds due to their looks, personality, and above all, trainability. Elaine Radford's amusing and easy to read text makes this little volume a joy to use and follow when creating a training program for your pet. Every

aspect of taming and training is covered, and emphasis is placed upon training as a life-long learning experience for both the pet cockatiel and the proud owner. Many color photos. (64 pages).

Tender Loving Care for Pet Birds by T. J. Lafeber

This book looks at bird keeping from a little different perspective. There are chapters on nutrition; Cage and furnishings; socializing; environment; beak, nail, ear, & eye care; and dangers in the home. A few illustrations. (113 pages).

Simon & Schuster's Guide to Pet Birds by Matthew M. Vriends

A field guide to identifying various birds kept as pets. Contains 206 of the most popular and the most unusual pet birds. The entries provide information on size, origin, eggs and nest, breeding and hatching, and behavior. Over 300 color photos. (320 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!

2009 Schedule

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

Jim Berk	(636) 586-1445
Dawn Breer	(636) 464-8085
Christine Kinkade	(636) 343-8097
Jenn Moore	(636) 795-4384
Pat Seiler	(636) 462-4732
Trey Shaffer	(314) 432-4317

Committees

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