

Squawk 'n Talk

Volume 10, Issue 1

November 2010

Greetings from the Presidential Perch!

Happy New Year! I hope everyone had a happy and safe New Years. Our December Holiday Party turned out very well, and everyone had a good time. I would like to thank Christine and everyone who brought food and snacks for the party. It was all so good! I would like to thank Niki Shaffer for organizing, preparing, and conducting the games. And, I would like to thank Dawn Breer for providing her bird toys for the game prizes and holiday gifts, and Lisa Rose for standing in for Dawn who could not be at the party.

The election has taken place, and the results are in. Congratulations go to Nancy Marron and Niki Shaffer as they were re-elected to their offices of Treasurer and Membership Secretary, respectively. Congratulations also go to Jim Berk and Christine Kinkade as they were re-elected to the Board of Directors. New to our Officers and Board of Directors are John O'Grady and Janet Marks who were elected to General Secretary and Board of Directors, respectively.

I would like to thank Cathy Wendler and Dawn Breer for their time and valuable help as General Secretary and Board member, respectively. They have both held their positions for the past two years.

I encourage everyone, that is able, to make the effort to attend the meetings and get involved. Your ideas and knowledge are needed to help move this club forward. We welcome all new members and hope to see you at the meetings as well. Our meetings provide an excellent time for club members to

get to know each other and share their ideas, stories, and knowledge about their birds. Bring a friend! And, as always, birds are welcome to attend any of the meetings!

As we begin the New Year, we also began the planning of our August Bird Fair. This year our Fair will again be at the Dist. 9 Machinists' Hall on St. Charles Rock Rd. off of I-270. The Fair dates are Sat. & Sun., Aug 28 & 29, 2010. Fri., Aug 27 will be the setup day.

Let's all help out where we can. We welcome any suggestions and new ideas. Please, give us your input. The Fair is a great way to promote the GPC Mission to bring together and educate the public about bird care, responsible breeding, and reducing bird neglect and abuse.

And, don't forget - bring you birds and bring a friend!

See you at the meetings! Dave

Tidbits

New Year, New Blood – First... Happy New Year. We hope the new year/decade finds you and your extended family/flock well. As is our custom, the Club is starting the new year with newly elected Board and Officer positions. At the December meeting, Nancy Marron and Niki Shaffer were voted back into their positions as Treasurer and Membership Secretary. Welcome John O'Grady as our new General Secretary. Jim Berk and Christine Kinkade were reelected as Board members. Welcome Janet Marks as a new Board member. Those are all two year positions. So the new management team is in place. Please feel free to make suggestions, or raise concerns, about Club issues, to any of the Board or Officers either at a meeting or individually.

Nagging Escalates – For everything there is a season. A time to be nagged, and a time to pay dues... This is the season of expired memberships. You (should have) noticed your expiration year printed on the cover of the newsletter. If you are not current, please renew. You know the drill. Bring twenty bucks to a meeting mail it to Niki, or go to the website.

Fair Planning Begins – Yes, it seems like it just ended and August is a long way off, but it takes a lot to put the Fair together. We had an initial Fair planning meeting last week. Please start thinking about the 2010 Fair, and how we can improve on last year. We will again be at the Machinists' Hall and the dates are August 28-29, which happens to be the weekend before Labor Day.

Programs – The educational program for the January meeting will cover the Wild Bird Rehabilitation organization, and what they are up to. In February we will have a discussion of Missouri Raptors, a great follow-up for our Eagle watching tours. In March we will have a representative from the St. Louis Zoo. Please thank Cheryl Rowland, our new Education Chairperson, for making these arrangements.

Eagle Watch – You can watch the wintering Bald Eagles any time, just by driving up to the Alton area and hanging out along the river, but as we have done in the past, we will make it a group outing. When we discussed it at a recent meeting, folks were evenly divided on whether to make it a Saturday or Sunday event. Family events, work, etc... So we decided to make two trips; Sunday February 7 and Saturday February 13. See details later...

Eagle Trips

Join us on Sunday February 7 or Saturday February 13 (or both) for an outing on the Great River Road to watch the eagles wintering in our area. At the December meeting we had trouble picking a single date. There was an

even division between those preferring, or having conflicts with Saturday and Sunday, so we decided to do it twice!

Donna Mount is coordinating. Everyone is welcome. Spread the word.

Please RSVP. Call Donna (636) 386-5656 or (314) 591-4817, and leave a message with name, number of people attending. This will help with lunch plans.

Where: Meet at the Fisca gas station on Hwy 67. From most of St. Louis county, take I270 north/east to Hwy 67. Here is the address, for your GPS: 14700 US Hwy 67, 63386. [Here is a link to a map.](#)

Meeting Time: 0800 or 8 AM Prompt! Early morning is the best viewing time for feeding.

Dress: Layers. Scarves, hats, gloves, long undies, etc.. It is usually cold.

What to bring: binoculars, bird identification books, cameras.

Itinerary: We will spend approximately 2 1/2 - 3 hours viewing birds here (depending on group, weather, etc.) The colder the better!

We will next visit the Melvin Price Locks and Dam where there are bathrooms, viewing areas, nature center, and gift shop. Then journey past the resident eagle nest to see if there is any activity.

We will then journey up the River Road to the Brussels Ferry (great place to view eagles) and cross over to Calhoun County to eat at the famous Wittmonds Hotel. This is a family style presentation costing \$11.95 per person,

not including drink or desert. Cash/check only - No Credit/Debit cards accepted.

Optional: After our leisurely lunch, we can back track over the Brussels Ferry to Alton and visit the Crocker and Springer Pottery shop and studio. Jan and Jonathan will give us a tour and we will be able to purchase some of their traditional American Folk Pottery. There is a charge of \$5.00 per person for the tour. Please let me know in advance if interested in this tour.

Cracker Comes Home

Tracy Lustick

On October 11th, 2009 I began my process of realizing a dream I've had for over thirty years. To most people, a dream that would take over thirty years would not be seen as attainable—and perhaps outside of one's grasp. But when one's desire in their heart is more than just a wish all things are possible.

It was a warm spring day in northern New Jersey. The trees were fully leaved and the wind rushed through them, making the most pleasant sound. The melody of the birds in the sky and the aroma of the new spring flowers were all around. A sense of peace and tranquility filled the air. Our windows were propped open, our screens were in place. The new season had come for us to enjoy.

Some chose to do gardening, some repair, others sat on their front porches in their chairs. Though these all seem to be wonderful ways of enjoying the day at hand for adults, we as children, if you recall, enjoyed a spring day differently—perhaps more chaotically than our parents had hoped. Instead of pulling the plastic off our tools to repair that broken fence, or finding that one pair of garden gloves that kept our hands safe from the thorns, I went to my garage to unearth my Big Wheel.

So off I went up Delaware Avenue to set myself at the pinnacle of the hill, which was, to me, my mountain. I held the steering wheel with one hand, lugging it upward as best as any seven year old could. The tires made nasty screeching noise, grinding against the pave-

ment, like a never ending raspberry out of the mouth of an obnoxious young child, I was off on my adventure.

After annoying the neighborhood and disturbing the peace I fixed my feet upon the ground and took off speedily down the hill, screaming all the way. In my mind, that is why we have spring. Not to prune a bush or fix a fence, but to fly down a mountain with the wind in my hair. All other ways just seemed like a waste of a day! I repeated that same noisy walk seemed like a thousand times, but that one last time that day, one of my neighbors came out to tell me that I needed to stop—they had had enough. That neighbor wanted to send me a message that I would never forget, and clearly a lifelong impression was made on me that day.

As I reached the top of the hill one last time and fixed my feet upon the ground, anticipating the speed that was in front of me, I was shocked and terrified by a sharp pain at the top of my head. I had no idea what had just happened, but I had never gone down that hill faster than that last time. As I recklessly flew down that hill, I turned my head backwards to see, was it that old man at the top of the hill? He never did like me. Or that nasty old lady with the plastic covered furniture? Lo and behold, it was neither. Instead the source of the sharp pain I felt was a giant black and blue eagle-like monstrosity, swinging back down for another peck. At the sight of this raptor, I pedaled faster than ever before because I never wanted to feel that pain ever again!

Ironically it was on that very spring day that my love for birds became realized. I ran into my house telling my whole family what had happened. How it swiped at my brow for disturbing its peace and its own spring day. You see, that blue jay had a different idea on how to enjoy it, and apparently he wasn't enjoying my method at all. Some people might have been turned off to birds in that situation, but it was the opposite for me. I was troubled by how I had disturbed it. Every day after that, I took it into account and was never that noisy again.

When I was nine years old, I was given the chance to love a bird of my very own. He was an albino parakeet named Snowball. I guess technically he was the whole family's bird, but he and I knew different. He would sing just for me, and spin around when I asked him to do his exercises every morning. He was a great little bird. As I grew older, however, my esteem for larger birds would become apparent and one species in particular caught my eye—it was the cockatoo. The greater Sulfur-crested cockatoo, to be specific. At first I thought I would buy a baby. I would save all my money and get one of my own, so it would only know me. We could build a bond that no one else would have ever had with that one bird, but in time and research

my eyes were opened to a sad truth. So many other people before me had thought the same thing but they had never experienced my blue jay at the top of my mountain.

On that spring day, a respect and a love for the avian species as a whole was born in me. I would not just want this bird to be a piece of furniture or a beautiful vase full of flowers that others would enjoy and be visually pleased by, but a part of Creation to be valued and admired. Birds, like our children, have feelings and personalities along with quirks and bad habits...and big mouths. Unfortunately many people forget this, and it leads to health issues for the bird, stemmed from emotional distress and general neglect—and worse yet, abandonment. It became clear to me that I would not be buying a baby cockatoo, but instead taking on the risky endeavor of adopting a rescue, or what some people say is a “mistake.” With that rescue would come challenges and disappointments, all of which I was prepared for, thankfully, because they came.

Her name is Cracker, she is an eight year old umbrella cockatoo and she has been re-homed six times before me. She is a beautiful bird, however stress and neglect have caused her to be a bit of a plucker and it has become her outlet to make me understand when she is not happy with me, or a toy, or placement of said toy, or the material of which said toy contains. Any way you slice it, she is always good to let me know when I have done something wrong by pulling out her beautiful plumage defiantly, and dropping it to the cage floor below. Be that as it may, through patience and perseverance it has become very clear to Cracker that we will be during this her way for a change (contrary to the six homes before,) and not my own.

I have no intention of there being an eighth home. It is my heartfelt desire to satisfy the needs and fulfill the responsibilities required to heal Cracker of the past mistakes and harm caused by the others before. It might not be going as quickly as I would like, she might not be as affectionate as I had thought, but it doesn't change my motivation to improve the quality of Cracker's life. I will smile when she screams, be patient when she prefers my children to me (even though I do all the work,) and continue to learn from her body language through trial and error to be the best home for her.

In the months to come I will be doing a series of articles chronicling the good and the bad, the solid and the runny, the sweet kisses as well as the screams that shatter both eardrum and glass. I hope you enjoy my new experiences as Cracker's mommy, and look forward to sharing with you the sweet victories and the humiliation of defeat.

Tracy (i.e. Cracker's Pet Human)

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).

The Grey Parrot by Wolfgang de Grahl

A comprehensive book describing Greys in the wild and in captivity. Detailed accounts of taming, talking, feeding, housing, and care. Eighty black-and-white and color photos. (256 pages).

Breeding Conures by Robbie Harris

This book has lots of advice on effective methods for breeding conures. The author tells how to proceed from selecting conures to hand-rearing chicks, detailing practical measures and discussing commonly encountered problems. (111 pages with color photos on almost every page).

Cockatiels by Annette Wolter

A complete pet owners manual. Experts answer all your questions about pet care, feeding, behavior, health, breeding, and much more. Informative, yet clear enough for young pet owners. More than 50 color photos and drawings. (64 pages).

Parrot Behavior & Training-Part 2 by Barbara Heidenreich

This DVD, "Training Your Parrot for the Veterinary Exam," shows how to train your bird to step up onto new people, enter and exit a carrier, allow restraint in a towel, tactile exam, nail and feather trimming, and more.

Captive Foraging by M. Scott Echols

“The Next Best Thing to Being Free.” This DVD will help you to understand the natural instinct of all animals to forage, how to redirect this energy in a captive bird to prevent unwanted behaviors, how to build a foraging tree for a bird in a home, and how to create foraging toys to keep your birds occupied and happy.

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

Recipe

Chocolate Peppermint Bars

Janet Marks

Editor's Note: Recipes are a regular item for the newsletter. They are ostensibly "bird" recipes, intended to be eaten by our birds. This is a "people" recipe, definitely **NOT** intended for birds. Janet brought these to the Holiday Party, and several people wanted to know how to make them... So here you go.

Layer 1

- 2 oz. Unsweetened (or Semi-sweet) chocolate
- ½ cup butter
- 2 eggs
- 1 cup sugar
- ½ cup flour, sifted
- ½ cup chopped nuts

Melt chocolate and butter. Cream eggs and sugar. Add flour and chocolate mixture and mix well. Bake in 8 x 8 inch pan at 350 degrees for 20 minutes. Turn oven off and allow to bake five more minutes.

Layer 2

- 1 ½ cups powdered sugar
- 3 Tbsp butter/margarine
- 2-3 Tbsp cream
- 1 tsp peppermint extract

Cream sugar and butter. Blend in cream and peppermint. Spread on cooled first layer. Refrigerate until chilled.

Layer 3

- 3 oz. Unsweetened (or Semi-sweet) chocolate
- 3 Tbsp butter

Melt chocolate and butter together and pour over peppermint layer. Chill. Cut into small squares. Should make 24-30 pieces.

Tint the mint cream red or green for holidays.

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.

2010 Schedule

Here is the year ahead. Mark the dates.

January 17 - Wild Bird Rehabilitation

February 7 (Sunday) - Eagle watching

February 13 (Saturday) - Eagle watching

February 21 - Missouri Raptors

March 21 – St. Louis Zoo

April 18

May 23 (Fourth Sunday)

June 13 (Second Sunday)

July 18

August – No regular meeting, Bird Fair

September 12 (Second Sunday)

October 17

November 21

December 12 (Second Sunday)

Contact Information

We welcome your comments and suggestions...

Officers

President	Dave Kinkade	(636) 343-8097
Vice President	Phyllis Cotton	(314) 537-6175
Secretary	John O'Grady	(636) 384-6657
Treasurer	Nancy Marron	(314) 984-9524
Membership	Niki Shaffer	(314) 853-5323

Board Members

Jim Berk	(636) 586-1445
Janet Marks	(636) 441-0255
Christine Kinkade	(636) 343-8097
Penny O'Grady	(636) 384-6656
Pat Seiler	(636) 462-4732
Trey Shaffer	(314) 432-4317

Committees

Education	Cheryl Rowland	(636) 577-1240
Hospitality	Christine Kinkade	(636) 343-8097
Librarian	Christine Kinkade	(636) 343-8097
Ways & Means	Suzanne Mullaney	(314) 645-8888
Website		
Newsletter	Trey Shaffer	(314) 432-4317
Public Relations		