

Squawk 'n Talk

Volume 10, Issue 3

March 2010

Greetings from the Presidential Perch!

March is here and that means that spring is just around the corner. The songbirds, as well as the peepers in the surrounding ponds are announcing the arrival of spring. I hope they are right. We have had our share of the snow for this year. I'm thankful that we didn't get as much snow as our neighboring states to the north of us did. Well, the snow may be over, but the rain has only just begun. Hopefully, there won't be any major flooding in the St. Louis area this year.

During the February meeting, the club voted on the following organizations to receive our remaining available grants from our last Bird Fair. They each received \$300.00.

- 1) St. Louis Avian Rescue (STAR)
- 2) Feather Distribution Project
- 3) Wild Bird Rehabilitation (WBR)

Planning for this year's Fair is moving right along. We have several speakers lined up including Jean Pattison, often known as "The African Queen"; and Michelle Karras (The Polite Parrot), an avian behavior consultant.

Vendors' applications have been sent. If it is anything like last year, we will easily fill all of the booth spaces on the vendor floor.

In conjunction with the Fair, there will also be another Cockatiel Show. Actually, two shows. And also a Parrot Show! Sandy Warren will be organizing these shows. Be sure to attend the club meetings to find out more about these shows, what you can do to help, and how to enter your birds in these shows.

As always, visitors are welcomed. Bring a friend, as well as your birds!

See you at the meetings! Dave

Tidbits

Last Call – Confirmed, this is it. If you have not paid your dues, for 2010, this is your last printed newsletter. See cover to confirm status.

Library – Use it or lose it. As you know, assuming you read the newsletter, we have a library of bird-related resources, and Christine Kinkade is our Librarian. She regularly reviews our holdings to give you a “taste” of what is available, and handles the logistics of schlepping materials to/from each meeting. That’s the good news.

The bad news is that the Library is not being used, and is getting outdated. We discussed this at the February Board meeting, and decided to work toward a resolution... one way or another. There seem to be two options: refresh the library and stimulate interest; or discontinue it. So our initial approach is to solicit your feedback.

Please visit our website and complete the library survey...

<http://gatewayparrotclub.org/Interact/Library/Questionnaire.htm>

Fair Dates – August 28-29 – You will be hearing a lot about the Fair as the year goes on. But for now just put it on your calendar. Vendors, you should have received email notifications, and will be receiving your contract packet very soon. Members, look forward to the event, and plan to join us. We need a little help from a lot of people. Visitors, see you there!

Email Note – Authorized Sender Services Spam sucks. We all know that. We deal with it in a variety of ways. One way used by some of our email recipients is using a list of pre-authorized senders. If you use this, you know who you are. It rejects email from any address not on the user’s “white list” and typically replies with a message asking the sender to complete an enrollment process. Each time I make a group email, there are failures, non-delivery reports, NDRs. You’ve probably seen some yourself. I may ignore these for periods of time, which means the address is not updated and the recipient doesn’t get the mail. Sooo... If you use one of these services, please add the newsletter to your authorized sender list. The address is, DoNotReply@GatewayParrotClub.org. Everyone may want to add that address to their “Safe Senders List” in their spam/junk mail filter as well. Another general comment... Please update your email address, on our website, when it changes.

Earth Day Event – April 30 Please join us for this annual event. This is a fun session, hanging out at Jefferson Middle School, in St. Charles. The event is 5-7:00 PM. There are usually a variety of booths and displays representing environmental and animal interests.

The kids love to see the birds. [Contact Trey](#) to confirm your participation.

Grants Awarded

Trey Shaffer

Following our recent tradition, we will again disburse available funds to organizations supporting our Mission Statement. Following is the list of nominees, collected from our members. At the meeting, Feb 21, we will select three nominees to receive grants. All members are encouraged to attend and vote.

STAR

St. Louis Avian Rescue - formerly Perfectly Precious. STAR's mission is to provide public education about avian care and accept relinquished birds, then provide veterinary screening, foster homes for rehabilitation and eventually permanent rehoming. STAR has a standards-based screening process for potential adopters.

Feather Distribution Project

The Project, operated for more than twenty years by Jonathan Reyman, collects feathers from a number of sources and distributes them to Native Americans in the Southwest for use in religious ceremonies, 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.

Wild Bird Rehabilitation

WBR helps over 2,500 birds a year, representing 100 different migratory bird species. WBR receives referrals from St. Louis city, county and state animal agencies as well as many veterinarians and other animal welfare organizations.

African Parrot Overview

Part Two

Editor's Note: This is the second of two parts for this article. The first appeared last month.

Jean Pattison, 1997

The Smaller Poicephalus

The smaller of the Genus consists of the Brown-headed, *P. cryptoxanthus*; Meyer's, *P. meyeri*; Niam-Niam, *P. crassus*; Red-bellied, *P. rufiventris*; Ruppell's, *P. ruepellii*; Senegal, *P. senegalus*.

The Brown-headed

The blind date: not much on looks but what a great personality.

Genus: *Poicephalus*

Species: *cryptoxanthus*

The range of this parrot is southern, central Africa in a strip near the eastern coast. The Brown-Headed Parrot is exactly that.....a green bird with a brown head. Most people upon seeing them for the first time, ask "What is wrong with that Senegal?"

Brown-heads are very close to the Meyer's in personality. If you are happy with a plain looking bird, and don't have to have all the flash and color, you can't go wrong with a Brown-Headed parrot. I have heard reports they can be similar to the Senegal in their possessiveness, but I have not found this to be the case. Their talking ability is somewhere between a Meyer's and a Senegal. I recommend them for young adults, families with small children, and a healthy dose of common sense. The diet for Brown-headed parrots in the wild consist of a high car-bohydrate diet for much of the year, switching to a higher protein and fat in breeding season. It is reasonable to assume this should be followed in captivity, due to the fact Brown-heads can fall victim to fatty liver disease. You may want to monitor seed intake to avoid too much.

Prices of the Brown head are in the vicinity of \$500.00 to \$600.00.

The Meyer's

They love loving you.

Genus: *Poicephalus*

Species: meyeri

The range of the Meyer's parrot is groupings all over central Africa. This is the smallest of the *Poicephalus* with weights as low as 80 grams. The Meyer's can be very petite, to stocky more robust birds, depending on the subspecies. Their overall color is a soft grey, with bellies of blue to turquoise to green. They may have large bright yellow bands on their crown to none at all, and the same hold true for the lead edge of the wings, depending once again, on the subspecies.

The Meyer's parrot is the second most available of the little ones. Meyer's have been described as a shy bird. I don't think they are shy, I believe they are a softer bird. They do not seem to be as athletic as some of the others, they are more of the easy going, roll-with-the-flow type of bird. Toys should be puzzle type toys, and things to work with and study. Meyer's seem to enjoy working on knots in rawhide for endless amounts of time, or trying to see why the little bell stays in the plastic cage. Meyer's are not the best talkers of the bunch, although some have been known to be outstanding. They seem better at sharing their person than the Senegals. Meyer's radiate love, they are the happiest when they can be loving you. Meyer's parrots are sexually dimorphic, which means they can be visually sexed. Even as just feathered youngsters, the difference in coloration is obvious. Males will have black bars on their chests, and hens will be an even solid color. Of course if you are planning to breed, DNA or surgical sexing is a must. I recommend Meyer's for young adults, about 10 years old and up, and also for families with small children, and again, that healthy dose of common sense.

The average price of a Meyer's parrot is about \$500.00.

The Red-bellied

The clowns of the group.

Genus: *Poicephalus***Species: *rufiventris***

Range of the Red-bellied, is the horn of Africa in Somalia, and Ethiopia. The nine inch, 150 gram *Poicephalus* is sexually dimorphic with the adult males having a bright orange belly, while the hens have drab orange to sometimes greenish bellies. Overall appearance is a fawn color with sherbet accents on the rump, and lower belly. Juvenile Redbellieds, before they have their first molt, more often resemble the male, but there are clutches that may resemble hens, and sometimes may even be dimorphic.

The Redbellieds are the third most common of the Poicephalus. They are happiest playing and acting silly. Redbellieds are showoffs, and that includes in front of company. They are one of the only parrots that don't just clam up, and will talk (even jabber) in front of strangers. Of the Poicephalus I think they are one of the best talkers.

Redbellieds can play with anything. In a cage with no toys, I believe they would make them up. I have seen them playing and attacking something in their flights and walk over to investigate and find nothing there. They play sometimes just to get your attention, and playing dead is one of their favorite attention getters, as well as standing on their heads. They will do just about anything to get in on the activity. I recommend them for adult families, not small children.

Average price of the Red-bellied is about \$700.00 to \$900.00.

The Senegal

Love you loving them.

Genus: *Poicephalus*

Species: *senegalus*

The Senegal ranges from Senegal, on the far west coast of central Africa, and goes easterly through Africa, ending in Camaroon and Chad. The Senegal is a green parrot with a grey head and sports a yellow to orange "V"-shirt.

Senegals are the most common of the little Poicephalus. Senegals as pets are very charming, endearing birds. Some can learn large vocabularies and be willing to be handled by anyone. Others will, even if coaxed, learn only a few words. They are very playful, needing a variety of toys and entertainment (swings are one of their favorite toys). By the same token, they are not demanding. Senegals are self-entertaining and are quite comfortable in a working mom situation. Intense is a word a lot of people use in describing them. They find mischievous ways of getting into things, almost as if to get your attention. Senegals are very loyal, and they expect the same in return. If a Senegal is allowed to bond to a certain person, he may perceive anyone else as a threat to his "intended." They can at this time become possessive and may bite their owner trying to drive them to security, or may bite the intruder, trying to drive them away. The sex of adult Senegals can often be determined by the coloration of the under tail coverts, not to be confused with the term "vent feathers." Males will be all yellow, while hens will have from small patches of green to almost solid green feathers mixed in with the yellow. I recommend them as a great first bird. I do not recommend them for young children.

The price range of the most available *Poicephalus*, the Senegal, is anywhere from \$500.00 to \$800.00.

Lovebirds

Genus: *Agapornis*

The Lovebirds are probably the most recognized of the African parrots. The range of the Lovebird in the wild is groupings throughout central and South Africa. Due to the prolific nature of some species, in captivity, they are known the world over. Many people often choose the Lovebird as the "first bird," and rightfully so. They are hardy, and don't require a terribly large cage. Lovebirds should not be housed with other small species of birds, which may seem like a very practical idea. Of the nine species of Lovebirds only three are commonly kept as pets.

Peach-faced Lovebird

The smallest BIG parrot there is.

Genus: *Agapornis*

Species: *roseicollis*

Because Peach-faced Lovebirds are so prolific, they are very common in the United States, and there are more color mutations established than any other parrot except the budgie. The Peach-faced Lovebird originates in South-West Africa, including southern Angola and Namibia south to Northern Cape Province in South Africa and Botswana. All the different colored peachies available are the result of mutations, and therefore, they are all members of the same genus and species, *Agapornis roseicollis*, and so may be freely bred together.

Peachies breed readily and babies are usually available year round. A hand-fed weaned baby will make a wonderful pet for the family interested in a small, colorful, friendly bird.

They rarely talk or mimic sounds, but they have many other endearing qualities to make up for the lack of talking. They are little clowns that will play with their cage toys and amuse themselves for hours. A hand-fed bird will stay very tame and enjoy interacting with family members, cuddling and playing. The peachie should be allowed out of the cage daily to exercise. The wings should be clipped to prevent injury in the house, or worse, inadvertent escape.

It is a fallacy that lovebirds need to be kept in pairs. To keep it tame and sweet, it should be kept without a partner. However, if the lovebird is not tame, keeping two together is a fine idea, to provide com-

pany. Lovebirds can become very aggressive towards other species of birds, larger or smaller, so it is very important to supervise their playtime out of the cage around other birds, as they may nip toes, even through cage bars. However, keep in mind that they don't call these birds Lovebirds for nothing. They can become sexually mature as early as 4-5 months of age, and two of the opposite sex will usually breed if housed together. Single birds may begin regurgitating on a toy or they may masturbate on objects or people, once sexually mature.

A pelleted diet should be provided, along with fresh fruits, vegetables and appropriate table foods. A cage suitable for a Cockatiel is a good size for a lovebird. Small toys are recommended, as lovebirds love to play. The average size is 6 inches in length, and the average weight is 50-55 grams.

Peach-faced Lovebirds may vary in price from \$25 to hundreds of dollars depending on the color mutation and how rare or coveted it is.

White eye-ring Lovebirds

Fisher's Lovebird, Masked Lovebird

Genus: *Agapornis*

Species: *Fisher's: fischeri*, *Masked: personata*

These little Lovebirds are native to central Africa. They are slightly smaller than the peachies (about 5-1/2 inches in length). They too, are not noted for their talking abilities, but hand-feds can be excellent pet birds for a family with children. Several color mutations are available. White eye-ring lovebirds should not be bred to Lovebirds in the Peach-faced group, as sterile mule hybrids will result. Caging and dietary requirements are the same as for the Peach-faced Lovebirds. Fischer's and Masked Lovebirds may cost a bit more than the peachies, and the rare color mutations can become quite pricey.

In closing, I would like to stress the importance of researching your first bird, and what you expect from a companion bird. Many people view our parrots as domesticated animals. Of the larger parrots, some are only one generation from the wild, and these are still wild animals, and should be thought of as such. You do not "train" a bird to "not chew" your antique wooden furniture or electrical cords, they are chewing animals, this is what they do in nature. Make sure you understand their natural habits, and be prepared to adjust your life style to their needs. Above all, seek out good reputable pet shops and breeders when you finally decide on the species of parrot you are going to buy. These good, reputable establishments love the animals they care for, and over the years have studied them in depth. Hand-

feeding a baby bird is NOT necessary for the bird to bond to you. A bird will bond to the caretaker, and when buying a baby, always buy a weaned bird, unless you have in depth experience, or the pet shop/breeder is willing to work with you for many days teaching you the skills required to do so. Run the other way when someone says, "It's easy, here's the food, and a syringe, all you have to do is squirt some food in its mouth, three times a day."

Get Ready To Show

Annette Howard

Hello to all Gateway Parrot Club members and exhibition enthusiasts. My name is Annette Howard and I will be your judge for the North American Parrot Society (NAPS) show in August. Sandy Warren has asked me to help get you and your parrots ready for this big event. I have already heard that I will be meeting some terrific people and wonderful birds. I am really excited about this show and I have heard that you are all excited as well.

Let's begin with the basics. Of course your bird's health and nutrition come first. A healthy bird is going to be in good feather condition, be bright eyed and look and perform the best. If you are not sure your bird is getting the nutrition he/she needs, now is the time to address that with your veterinarian and let's get on the right track.

Many of you have birds that travel with you and for their safety have their wings clipped. I am sending a diagram of the NAPS approved wing clip. This will be the best clip for the show but if it is not the wing clip your bird has-do not worry. We will not be turning back any bird for a wing clip.

Now is also a good time to be looking for a show box or cage to show your bird. All birds must be caged. This is for their safety and for the safety of the other birds. If you have access to show boxes by all means try to borrow or purchase one. If you do not have access to a show box or you have a large Macaw or Cockatoo a cage that we can wheel into the elevator and into the show hall will be fine. Remove all toys and food dishes from the cage. A water dish may be left in. Place one perch in the back center of the cage. Make sure your bird has enough head room and tail room-we don't want those beautiful tails messed up. Practice some with your bird in this cage so that fear

of the unknown does not set in during the show. We know how they are!

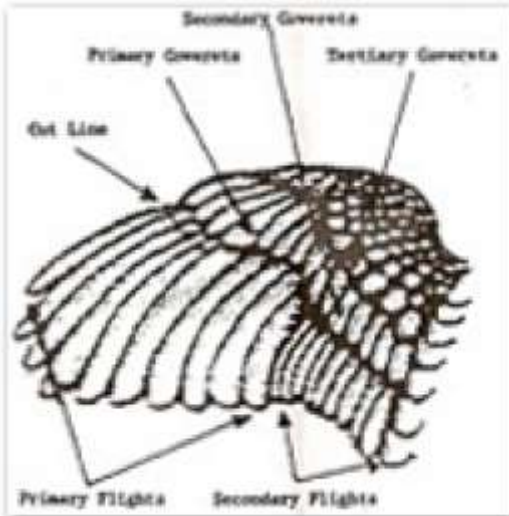
Your homework for March is to take care of health and nutrition, have your veterinarian or Posse member help you with the NAPS approved wing clip and begin looking for a cage or show box for the show.

Sandy will have cockatiel sized show boxes for the smaller birds and cockatiels available so contact her soon to reserve yours. And yes, even though we are also having two cockatiel shows on Saturday, there is a NAPS cockatiel division too.

Sincerely,

Annette Howard

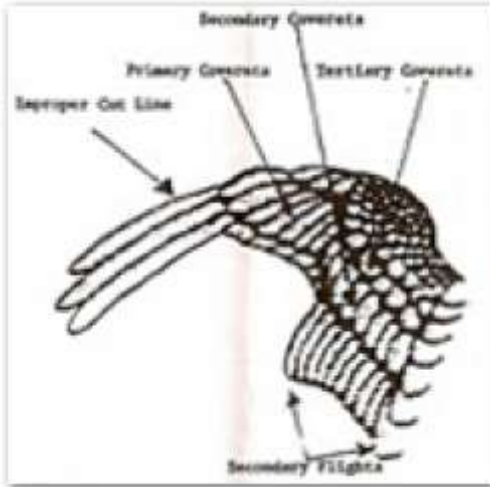
Editor's Note: The images for the wing trim aren't clear, so I'll add some explanation...



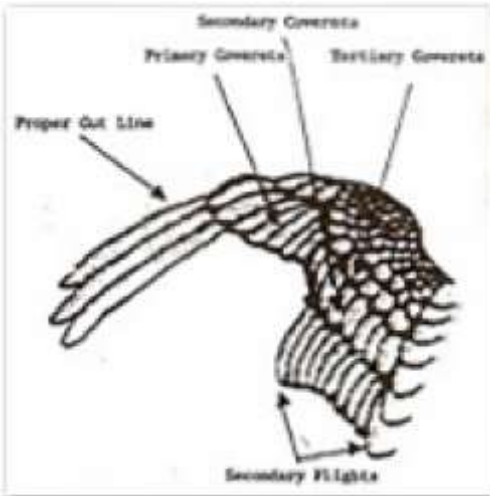
The first image is a complete, untrimmed wing. The important thing here is to notice the primary flight feathers; the ten large feathers at the outside of the wing. These are the feathers to be cut. The feathers over/above the primaries are the Primary Coverts.

The next two images show the wing with seven of the ten primary flight feathers

trimmed, leaving the outer three. This way, when the bird closes the wings across the back, it looks like the flight feathers are still there. The trick is apparently to cut the primary feather so the stub does not extend beyond the Primary Coverts.



This is an example of a bad trim. The ends of the trimmed primary flight feathers are visible.



In this third image, there are no primary feathers seen below the Primary Coverts.

You have plenty of time to work on this because, I assume, the final trim is done just before the show. We will try to have someone do an article on the actual cutting of the feather, the tool to use, how to restrain the bird if necessary, etc...

Thank You For Feathers

Editor's Note: Following is content from an email received by Jonathan Reyman, of The Feather Distribution Project. He forwarded it so we could get a better sense of what our birds' feathers mean to the people who receive them.

Dear Sir,

I just wanted to send you a thank you. You sent my son, here in Cochiti, a box of feathers. I have never seen that boy smile so big. He has used them and is using them quite often. He has made some headdresses for some of the boys to use for feast and for the holidays. So please know that your feathers are in the community and are being put to good use. I feel that it has made my son stronger and he understands the importance of giving. So thank you again and may you be blessed for the help you have sent to Cochiti.

I just wanted to let you know that one of my co-workers knows you. We work together at the Library.

Well, if you happen to come across some more feathers that my family could use, please send them our way. My husband has been a war chief 3 times and I have four boys. So please know that they will be very grateful for any feathers that you could send.

Thank you so much again

Cochiti Pueblo, NM 87072

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).

Parrakeets of the World by Dr. Matthew M. Vriends

A reference book detailing a large number of birds in the parakeet family, including the Conures. Everything from buying, care, feeding, breeding, and health. Many color photographs. (384 pages)

Guide To The Quaker Parrot by Mattie Sue Athan

Here is everything you need to know about caring for and training your Quaker parrot. Although this book is primarily about the Quaker parrot, the first aid and medical care section can be related to any parrot. The book also lists the things you will need for a home emergency kit. Dozens of full-color photos and illustrations. (122 pages).

Guide To A Well-Behaved Parrot by Mattie Sue Athan

If you own a parrot or plan to get one, this book will give you practical solutions to the pet behavior problems that sometimes trouble owners of these birds. You will also get helpful information on bathing, grooming, communications, selection of accessories and toys for your parrot, and advice on maintaining safe interactions between you and your parrot. Dozens of full-color photos and detailed drawings. (144 pages).

The New Parrot Handbook by Werner Lantermann

A comprehensive book about parrot husbandry, purchasing, housing, care, diet, diseases, breeding, and more. Includes data on 35 species, 30 drawings by Fritz Kohler, 50 full-color photos, and 35 maps indicating distribution of parrots. (144 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

Recipe

Talus' Crunch Cookie

Posted by: Ursula Ross

uross@conceptseti.com - May 28, 1999

Ingredients

- Nuts, shelled and ground (recommend walnuts and pecans)
- Whole wheat flour
- White flour
- Water
- (optional: food coloring, fruit juice)

Our African Grey, Talus, loves crunchy junk foods like chips and cookies, but won't eat his nuts. The answer? Talus' Crunchy Cookie!

Preparation

- Grind the nuts very fine, and mix with $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of whole wheat flour.
- Stir in a few tablespoons of white flour.
- Add enough water to make a very dry, stiff dough (it doesn't take much!)
- Knead for a minute or two.
- Break off tablespoon-sized pieces and roll each out flat and thin on a floured surface.
- Bake on a hot, unoled, cast-iron skillet, flipping occasionally. DO NOT cook on a non-stick pan.
- The cookie is done when it begins to turn gold-brown with some black spots.
- Cool and serve-- a crunchy, healthy treat!

Options: Add a few drops of red or blue food coloring to tint the cookie. Replace some of the water with fruit juice to sweeten, and cook on a lower heat.

From the Birds n Ways website, www.BirdsnWays.com

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.

March 21 – Highlights from AFA

April 18 - St. Louis Zoo

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 Public Relations	Trey Shaffer	(314) 432-4317