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Monthly newsletter from the Gateway Parrot Club!

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December 2016

Calling all Bird Lovers!
You are invited to the
Gateway Parrot Club
Christmas/Holiday Party
Varieties Bird Store, Valley Park, MO
Sunday, December 11, 2016, 2:00 p.m.



- Come join us for a fun afternoon
- Parrots are welcome
 - Short meeting to vote for election of officers
 - Turkey dinner prepared by Chef Christine will be served
 - Please feel free to bring food items to add to the buffet table
 - There will not be a raffle this month

If you wish to participate in a "Rob Your Neighbor" game,
please bring a \$10.00 wrapped present.

Membership Reminder:

It's time to renew your membership for 2017. You can do it online, at the meeting, or via snail mail. If you renewed at the August bird fair, then your membership will run through 2017. Members who have not paid their dues by January 31 will no longer be in good standing and will not be able to vote on club matters.

Election Information For The December Meeting:

We will have a very short business meeting to vote on our new officers and board members. The following people have been nominated:

President (only candidate): *Georgia Fletcher*

Vice President: *Dick Grommet*

Board Positions (top three will be elected):

Megan Augustin

Bryan Gilchrist

Carole Grommet

Tracy Schwarztrauber

Pat Seiler

Greetings from the Perch!

- Thanks to Steve Johnson for his informative presentation at our November meeting
- In January (27-29) the annual Parrot Festival will be held in Houston, TX with great speakers and vendors and lots of fun people. It's usually a lot warmer in Houston in late January, so the warmer weather will be appreciated. Their website is:
www.parrotfestival.org
- Sunday, December 11, we will be having our annual Christmas party. The only business conducted will be voting on our new officers and board members. Other than that, we will have a delicious turkey dinner prepared by Chef Christine. We would like members to bring something to add to the banquet table whether it is a vegetable, appetizer, dessert, salad, etc.. We always play "Rob Your Neighbor". It is optional whether you want to participate, but if you do, bring a wrapped present valued at \$10.00.
- Special thanks to Bryan Gilchrist who has been assisting Jessica Murray updating the website and assisting with the newsletter. Jessica is very busy in her new job so I'm sure she appreciates the help. We are fortunate to have these two talented people helping the club.

- The following is a list of the 2017 parrot club meeting dates. Please mark your calendars as a reminder:

January 15

February 19

March 19

April 9 (second Sunday)

May 21

June 11 (second Sunday)

July 16

Aug 26 Gateway Parrot Club Fair (no meeting this month)

September 10 (second Sunday)

October 15

November 19

December 10 (second Sunday)



August 2016 AAV Bird Club News Release

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Behavior: Normal and Abnormal

Adapted from AAV's Client Education Brochure Series

Juvenile Feeding Behavior and Defensive Behavior

Baby altricial (hatched naked and fed by the parents) birds have normal behaviors designed to either obtain food or protect themselves from danger. The first is the begging/chirping that prompts the parents to regurgitate food. When the parents begin to feed, the young bird begins head-

bobbing to keep the flow of food coming from the parent. Another normal behavior of baby psittacines is “swaying and growling” when the nest is disturbed. This behavior is self defense designed to frighten away predators and gradually ceases as the bird weans.

Sleeping Habits

In the wild, psittacines are active during daylight hours and sleep during the evening and nighttime hours. Caging for sleeping should be provided to attempt to mimic these patterns as close as possible. It may be best to have a sleeping cage in a dark, quiet place – away from evening and nighttime family activity – in order for the bird to get adequate sleeping time.

Biting

Birds bite, some more than others. This can be a complex problem and one that can be discussed in detail with your avian veterinarian. Birds also bite to hold on to lift themselves up, like using a third hand. This is “grasping” rather than aggression biting.

Birds bite in self-defense. Until a bird is accustomed to handling by humans, it may try to bite. Avoidance of the bite until the bird is conditioned to handling through positive reinforcement is the best response. If biting becomes a problem, consult your veterinarian for the name of a reputable trainer.

Social Noise

In the wild, many species of birds congregate in the morning and at dusk for social interaction. These activities include vocalizing, eating, and grooming. A common complaint in the pet home is that pet psittacines “scream” morning and evening. This is normal vocalizing behavior of the bird and it may be unrealistic to expect it to change. The bird will consider the humans in its home as its social contact, and want to maintain the “communication” it would normally have with other birds. Try using this time to interact with the bird. Social activity is an important part of the bird’s day, and may help build a proper social flock relationship between you and the bird. The best attitude is to let the bird have its social noise and accept it as part of keeping a bird as a pet. If the bird(s) are outdoors, try to prevent neighbor complaints; create a sound buffer between the birds and neighbors.

Inappropriate Copulating Behavior

Birds that are not paired with suitable mates or that are bonded with their owners may attempt unnatural copulation. The targets of this misplaced behavior are often cage fixtures, toys, human hands, or cage mates. Such behavior should not be encouraged. Removing the inappropriate objects of the bird’s affection, is the most common response to this problem. Sexual behaviors can be curbed by a number of measures including controlling caloric intake, encouraging foraging, cessation of inappropriate petting behavior, removing real or perceived nesting sites, light cycle control, and certain medications. If reproduction is desired, birds ideally should be paired with a mate of the same species. If two species are paired that may produce hybrid offspring, it is best they be separated and properly paired. If the birds are compatible cage mates and where reproduction cannot possibly occur, such as a cockatiel and a budgie, the birds are of similar size,

and one is not injuring the other or exhibiting mating behavior, no harm is done by permitting them to remain together.

Stereotypical Behavior

If the bird develops a pattern of behavior that is nonsensical, incessant, or habitual, such as pacing, head bobbing, rocking, swinging the head or body, or spinning, it should be examined by a veterinarian. Causes could range from disease to boredom. Disease should first be ruled out as a cause, but boredom is a frequent cause of obsessive behavior. Every attempt should be made to provide the bird with environmental enhancements such as toys or interesting foods. Nontoxic, non-injurious items that the bird can destroy or take apart are one choice.

Talking Birds

Some parrots and softbills talk, most do not. If you want to teach the bird a few words, it is best to separate them from other birds as early as possible, and teach them by repetition. The model-rival method has been shown to be the best method of teaching birds to talk, and even use language appropriately. Investigate which species are likely to talk before purchase if talking ability is important in your choice of a pet bird.

Feather/Skin Picking

Birds that have underlying disease problems or psychological problems may pull feathers or tear at their own or another bird's skin. The bird should be seen by an avian veterinarian at the first sign of feather picking in order to rule out a potentially serious medical problem. Watch for an unusual number of feathers or pieces of feathers on the bottom of the cage.

Some feather destructive behaviors, especially those that involve simply cutting or shredding feathers may be linked to boredom, poor socialization or anxiety. Proper housing, provision of toys and teaching to "forage" for food is important for any bird. A consultation with a qualified avian behaviorist may be beneficial.

Actual feather plucking may have behavioral origins as well. However, as pulling feathers out is actually painful to birds, this represents a serious behavioral abnormality. All attempts must be made to rule out underlying medical disorders before diagnosing any bird with a strictly "behavioral" feather disorder.

If one bird is pulling feathers from a cage mate, the birds should be separated as this behavior can sometimes lead to injury if the feather pulling becomes too aggressive. Normal molt is a semiannual event not related to behavior but does not usually expose the underlying down or bare skin.

Observation

Observation is the best tool for helping your veterinarian with a diagnosis. If the bird exhibits behavior problems, make a video or take notes about what is happening before, during, and after the behavior occurs to take to your avian veterinarian for evaluation. Birds will often continue to eat and drink when they are sick. This common behavior helps sick birds avoid attracting the

attention of predators. Ask your veterinarian for the AAV brochure "Signs of Illness in Birds" to help you evaluate your bird's general health.

Not a member yet?

[Download a membership application](#) and bring it to our next meeting, or email it to Renee Davis, our membership secretary, at membership@gatewayparrotclub.org.

Our PayPal email address is payments@gatewayparrotclub.org

You can also now join and pay dues securely from our site: <http://gatewayparrotclub.org/join-now/>

Our Officers and Board members: <http://gatewayparrotclub.org/about-us/>

The Gateway Parrot Club, Inc. is a 501c3 not for profit organization based in St. Louis Missouri and 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.

[Become a Member Now](#)

Join our FaceBook group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/GateWayParrotClub/>

Email Jessica at kmurray@kmurraycreative.com if you want to submit an article, send cute pics to post on the website or future newsletters, have a suggestion, etc!

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