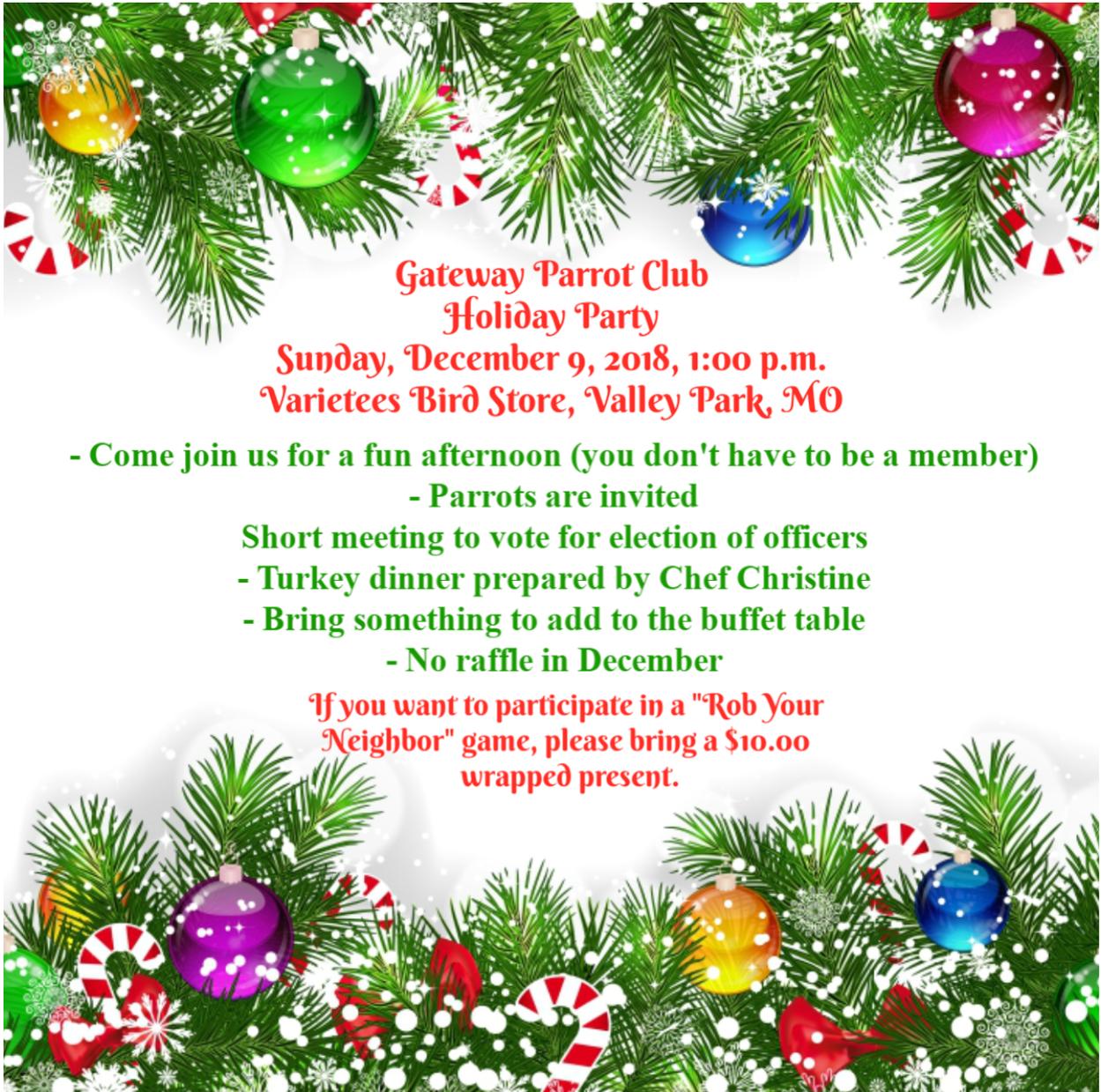


Squawk 'n Talk

December 2018



**Gateway Parrot Club
Holiday Party**
Sunday, December 9, 2018, 1:00 p.m.
Varietees Bird Store, Valley Park, MO

- Come join us for a fun afternoon (you don't have to be a member)
- Parrots are invited

Short meeting to vote for election of officers

- Turkey dinner prepared by Chef Christine
- Bring something to add to the buffet table
- No raffle in December

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

Chirps from the President's Perch

Welcome to December and our Holiday Party on December 9th 1:00pm. at Varietees. We will be celebrating the Season, end of a good year for GPC AND voting in our annual Election.

We will have our Holiday Feast provided by our Sous Chef Christine Kinkade. Hopefully you signed up to bring something to contribute to our feast. If not, bring something that appeals to you or just come to share in our camaraderie, the fun and a fabulous meal.

Expect a fun "Rob Your Neighbor" gift exchange. Bring a wrapped gift (Max value \$10) and enjoy stealing your choice gift from our group. The gift doesn't have to be bird related. Each participant will have a fun and exciting time and go home one gift richer. Membership is not required to become part of the game.

The Board is delighted to have so many great Nominees for our BOD. We all had a discussion and voted (as a Board) to add two additional members to our rank. This year we will be voting on Vice President and Membership Secretary plus 5 Board Members. We all look forward to having our newly elected members join us. Active participation within all club activities is welcomed and needed.

A brief note: Membership renewal is due as of the first of the 2019 year. Keep that in mind as you welcome our elected Membership Secretary.

I wish to encourage each of you join us Sunday December 9th at Varietees to celebrate the end of 2018 and to welcome 2019. Bring your friends and family to share in a great time. Beth and Shawn Poll will have a special gift to all attendees.

Georgia Fletcher

**Another great program in November!
Thank you Adrienne Mock**



Cosmo loves to go to parrot club

Gateway Parrot Club



Meeting Dates 2018:

- December 9, Annual Holiday Party

Meeting Dates 2019:

**January 20, Stephen Johnson, Report on 2018 AAV
(Association of Avian Veterinarians) Conference**

*** Meeting will be on 2nd Sunday**

Check out our new website (gatewayparrotclub.org) Bryan Gilchrist has done a fantastic job and his parrot, Zorro, is the bird featured on the site. This was an actual photo that Bryan took of Zorro in East St. Louis with the arch in the background.

General Meeting Information

Come and enjoy the fun and bring a bird (as long as it is clipped). It's so enjoyable seeing all the different species of parrots and talking to other parrot owners.

You don't have to be a member to attend, but we would love to have you join. Meeting starts at 1:00 and it will be a full afternoon of meeting, socializing, eating, program, and raffle. For members who have not renewed their membership or who would like to join, please see Renee Davis, our membership chair person. She will be at the meeting to sign you up. An annual membership fee of \$20.00 includes your family (two voting members) and brings you our monthly newsletter by email, and helps us to provide special speakers. Thank you for joining and helping support the parrot community in St. Louis.

We meet at Varietees Bird Store, 60 Meramec Valley Plaza, Valley Park, MO. Varietees will be open in the afternoon so you can purchase bird food, supplies, toys, cages, play stands, etc.

We do have a raffle most months so if you would like to donate item(s), they are always welcome. They do not have to be bird related. We sell raffle tickets for \$1.00 each or 6 for \$5.00.

Did you know that the Gateway Parrot Club has a group Facebook page? If you would like to join this group, search for "Gateway Parrot Club" in Facebook and request membership. We have over 500 members!

For our December meeting, Chef Christine is cooking a turkey with dressing, mashed potatoes, gravy, corn, and green beans. A sign-up sheet was circulated at our November meeting for people to sign up to bring a food item. If you were not at the meeting, feel free to bring anything you want to add to our buffet. As always, there will be water and an assortment of soda. Come hungry because usually we have an abundance of food at our holiday party.



Association of Avian Veterinarians

November 2018 AAV Bird Club News Release

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My Bird Is Healthy (So Why Does He Need All These Tests?)

By: Jodi Berls, CVA, LVT

Your pet parrot seems perfectly healthy. He eats and drinks like a champ. His droppings look normal. He's climbing around in his cage, destroying his toys, talking and squawking as usual. He may even fly across the room occasionally to see what mischief he can make.

Your only concern is that his nails are getting a little sharp. When you call his avian veterinarian for an appointment for his nail trim, you're told he also needs an annual wellness check - an examination and a suite of tests that could run to a few hundred dollars. Why?

"Don't eat me!"

With the exception of some poultry species, most birds haven't been kept and bred in captivity long enough to become domesticated animals. No matter how tame your pet parrot appears, he's a wild creature who still retains the instincts his ancestors developed to survive as prey animals in a sometimes-harsh environment.

In the movie series *Pirates of the Caribbean*, there's a parrot that repeatedly appears and says, "Don't eat me!" It's cute and funny, but it also illustrates a very real truth: Wild birds are low on the food chain, and any sign of weakness quickly makes them targets for hungry predators. This means one of their most important instincts is to mask any symptoms of illness or injury. They've become so good at it over the centuries that by the time your parrot shows you signs of a health problem, he probably has been sick for a while and may actually be ill enough to require hospitalization.

Testing your bird while he still appears healthy can help catch a disease process before it becomes more serious. It also can help your avian veterinarian know what is and isn't normal for your specific bird, which can avoid testing or treatments that may not be needed. It's important to remember that these annual wellness checks are most valuable to you if they're done every year to establish trends.

What is "normal," anyway?

Did you know that 98.6 degrees Fahrenheit actually is only an average for a normal human's body temperature? In reality, some individuals normally run a little hotter and some may be perfectly healthy at a slightly lower temperature. Test results for your bird are similar. Research developed by testing a large number of birds has established what's called a normal range. The range may differ considerably from one species to another, too. For example, packed cell volume, which is an indicator of red blood cell count, ranges from 41.1% to 53.5% in African grey parrots, but in macaws the range is 44.6% to 55.3%.

When your bird tests within that normal range, it means he probably doesn't have a major disease process ongoing. But what if he normally tests slightly out of that range or right at the upper or lower limit of it? You and your avian veterinarian won't know that's normal for your bird unless he has been tested while he's healthy.

Here's an example. Roger is a 21-year-old male Senegal parrot who, on a recent annual wellness check, tested with liver enzymes within the normal range, but on the high end of it. Because his previous annual checkups had showed liver enzymes in the middle of the normal range, it appeared something had changed, even though he wasn't showing any symptoms. If he hadn't been tested previously, the slight increase wouldn't have been apparent. High liver enzymes can be a sign of liver disease, including hepatic lipidosis ("fatty liver disease"), about which the owner was concerned because Roger has been on the chubby side ever since she adopted him.

Roger was treated with antibiotics, and the owner made some changes to his diet in an effort to prevent a worsening of his condition. He returned for another check a few weeks later, and the test results came back in the middle of the range again.

If he hadn't been tested, a potentially serious condition could have been left to progress and become much worse.

What's involved in a complete annual wellness check?

The slate of tests recommended may vary somewhat from one avian veterinarian to another, based on local conditions and your own vet's personal experience. The list below is typical, however.

- **Complete physical examination** - Your avian veterinarian will check the entire bird, from beak to toes, listen to his heart and lungs, and check range of motion on legs and wings. He and/or his staff will collect information on your bird's diet and environment, as well as answering any questions you may have. Feathers can cover a lot of problems, so just having a professional look at and lay hands on your bird can uncover issues that may be hidden underneath.
- **CBC (Complete Blood Count)** - The CBC is a blood test and includes the red blood cell count. It tests for infection, anemia and dehydration, as well as total plasma protein levels. It also involves looking at your bird's blood cells under a microscope, which can provide additional information about the health of physiologic processes inside his body.
- **Diagnostic profile** - The profile is also a blood test. It checks the levels of bile acids and liver and kidney enzymes, which can indicate how well the liver and kidneys are functioning. It also shows the levels of electrolytes such as sodium and calcium in the blood, and checks glucose levels.
- **Intestinal parasite test** - This requires a fecal sample and involves searching for worm eggs and protozoans that may infect the gastrointestinal tract. These parasites are more

common in birds that have access to the ground, but they can show up in any bird, including pets that don't go outside.

- **Fecal Gram's stain** - This tests for normal and abnormal bacteria or yeasts/fungus in the gastrointestinal tract. It can uncover important hints of conditions affecting digestion and absorption of nutrients.
- **For new birds** - If your bird is new to you, your avian veterinarian also may recommend tests for specific diseases that may not have become apparent yet, such as psittacosis. It's also a good idea to have a DNA test done to determine gender, so you know what reproductive behaviors and issues may lie in your bird's future.

Oh, and they'll do that nail trim, too.

Overview

A complete wellness check that includes annual testing may come with some "sticker shock," but it's almost always less expensive to prevent disease than to treat it. Getting your bird's checkup every year will give him the best possible chance at a long, healthy life.

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