

# Squawk 'n Talk

**Volume 15, Issue 2**

**February 2015**

## Greetings from the Presidential Perch!

February begins my second month on the Board. Looks like we all survived.

Last month Attorney Mike Doyel shared with us how we can properly prepare our paperwork and plans so we can be confident that we have done the best for our companion birds and other pets when we are no longer able to care for them. I hope you all learned as much as I did. I found out that my Living Trust wasn't structured properly to accommodate my wishes and desires for my bird. Talk about well laid plans ..... I know better now. Thanks very much Mr. Doyel.

This month Steve Anderson, a Vet Technician from Bird Medicine and Surgery, will speak to us about home safety for our birds. I hope he will address safe plants, safe trees, toys and other issues that most of us need to know. Whatever his focus, I am confident that we will all learn much and will come prepared to ask questions.

It is nice to think that spring is looming on the Horizon but that thought reminds us that it is time to begin to focus on our Gateway Hookbill Fair scheduled for August 22<sup>nd</sup>. There were several suggestions after last year's fair to cut back to a one day event. Attendance on Saturdays has been consistent and has actually grown in the last two years. Attendance on Sundays has been way down. By reducing our concentration to a one day Fair we hope to reduce our costs, the "wear and tear" on our volunteers and increase the revenue/cost ratio for our vendors. Please contact any Board Member at a meeting or by phone to offer to volunteer in some way at our Fair. We have a dedicated group of repeat volunteers who would be thrilled to accept your offer to help in some way.

We still plan to provide the opportunity for Education. Contacts are being made to schedule speakers.

We are open to your suggestions for potential speakers and topics of interest for the Fair as well as for our Monthly Meetings. The primary directive of the Gateway Parrot Club is education. Let us know where your interests lie.

See you at the Meeting on February 15th,

Georgia

## Tidbits

**January Meeting** –Michael Doyel, an attorney specializing in estate planning talked to us about what we should be planning. See details later...

**February Meeting** – Steve Anderson, from Dr. Kersting's Bird Medicine and Surgery, will be our guest, talking about, establishing a safe home environment for your birds.

**Dues are Due** – This is an escalating nag to get everyone to renew their membership. You can do it on the website, or the old-fashioned way of sending a check to our friendly Membership Secretary, Al Marks. Not sure if you have renewed? Ask Al. If you receive the printed newsletter, and have not renewed, there is a little note on the cover, but you probably already saw that...

**It is Grant season** – We will give away some money. See details below.

## Grants

### Trey Shaffer

Again this year the Membership will guide distribution of Club-generated funds. Each year the Board determines how much money

we need to operate until the next All-American Hookbill Fair. Then we take the rest and turn it over to the membership to give away.

This is a two-step process where Members nominate recipients then Membership votes for their favorites and the most popular receive grants. Right now we have authorized three grants of \$300 each. As the year passes and we have a better idea about expenses, we may be able to offer more.

Nominations officially opened at the January meeting and we will accept nominations until midnight, March 13. The list will be presented for vote at the meeting March 15. To be official, send your nomination to our President. Copy me, since I am maintaining the list. I have no official nominations at this point, so send some...

Nominees should be groups or individuals that support the Club's mission statement. It's at the end of the newsletter (every month). As soon as I have some nominees I will add them to the website. If you are nominating, please include a 25 word description of what the nominee does and how it supports our mission. It would be good if you are present at the March meeting and can answer any questions about the nominee before the vote.

## You Will Die. Then What?

### **Trey Shaffer**

Forget about birds for the moment. Do you have your estate in order? Even if you don't think you have an estate of significance, you should take steps to make sure your assets transfer as efficiently as possible when you die. Yes, I know, it is not a pleasant thought or discussion, but the simple truth is that if you don't take care of this the State will do it after you die. And wouldn't you like to be in control?

So here are the basic take-aways from Michael Doyel's discussion.

*You die with no will* – the State/probate decides where your assets go and it probably takes years to resolve.

*You die with a will* – the will goes through probate and it still takes a long time for resolution.

*You create a Trust* - and when you die, nothing significant happens to your assets, because you have very few *personal* assets and the sig-

nificant assets were in the Trust before you died and they remain there, unchanged.

Creating a Trust is a lot like a will, in that you determine how your assets will be handled after your death, and they are put into a legal context, the Trust, which is separate from your personal ownership. While living you control the assets, as the trustee. When you die, the role of trustee, or primary trustee, transfers to another individual, and all the assets remain in the Trust, unaffected by your death. No probate. No outside interference.

The terms of the Trust can be pretty much anything you want them to be. You want some professional assistance with the process, but the preparer can translate your wishes into legal definitions in the Trust.

So do your homework. You are never too young to die. Make your plans and rest assured your final transition will be smooth.

Now, since we are “Bird” people, we want to provide for our birds after our death. This can all be done within the terms of the Trust. Money can be set aside. Individuals can be identified as caretakers. This would be a relatively small part of the Trust, once established.

## POISONS AND TOXINS

### **Lisa McManus**

Poisons have three routes in which they can travel: ingestion, inhalation and topical. When we think of our birds ingesting poison, it is usually by eating one of our plants in or around our house. Some of the most common house plants that are poisonous are: Amaryllis, Asparagus Fern, Avocado, Cyclamen, Dieffenbachia, Dracaena, Dumb Cane, Easter Lily, Elephant Ear, English Ivy, Kalanchoe, Mother-in-law, Philodendron, Poinsettia, Pothos, Sago Palm, Schefflera, Shamrock, and Marijuana, for those so inclined. This is by no means a complete list. On the RMSA website is a link to the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center and a more complete list, with many links that show photos of the plant in question. That website is:

[www.asPCA.org/search/node?search=poisonous%20plants](http://www.asPCA.org/search/node?search=poisonous%20plants)

Editor's Note: The URL originally contained in this article is no longer valid. The link above is to the ASPCA website, with a search query of "poisonous plants" and lists several articles.

Regardless of whether a plant is listed as safe or toxic, I do not have plants in close proximity to my birds; I am not a huge risk-taker, nor do I want my plants demolished!

Signs that your bird or pet may be poisoned are repeated and sudden regurgitation, diarrhea, coughing, breathing problems, depression. Watch for bloody droppings, redness or burns around the beak/mouth, convulsions, paralysis, and/or shock.

If you suspect poisoning, remove the poison from the area immediately. If there has been eye contact, flush the eye with lukewarm water. If the poison came into contact with the skin, flush with water. If the poison was inhaled, open windows and use a fan and/or an exhaust fan and remove the pet from the area immediately! Next, call your vet – you should have the vet's phone number and emergency number posted on your refrigerator or other prominent location. Be sure to take a sample of the poison and/or container, and a recent feces sample.

Other common household poisons are ammonia, antifreeze, bleach, crayons, dishwashing detergents, drain cleaners, fabric softeners, some glues, hair dyes, markers some mushrooms, iodine, nail polish and remover, oven cleaners, floor or furniture polish or wax, gas or kerosene, paint remover or thinner, perfume, prescription drugs, rubbing alcohol, shaving lotion, shoe polish, spray starch, suntan lotion, window cleaners and toilet cleaners. As you do with children, keep all of these items closed up, out of reach and out of sight.

Lead poisoning is another very common toxin for pet birds. Watch for toys weighted with lead, costume jewelry, caulking in stained glass windows, fishing or curtain weights, some screens and wires, pencils and older house paint. When using branches for toys or perches, inspect them carefully to make sure there are no nails or other forms of metal in them. There is no first aid for lead poisoning. If you suspect lead poisoning, take your pet to the vet as soon as possible.

There are many other toxins and poisons around our homes. The rule of thumb is always, if in doubt be sure it is not anywhere near your pets – or children!

This article comes to us from our association with the AFA, American Federation of Aviculture.

## Avian Healthcare Trust

### Trey Shaffer

In past issues, I floated the idea of creating health care trusts for birds. The basic idea was that funds could be set aside to provide health care for the life of a bird after the owner's death. A caretaker would still be required for the bird, that would be separate and outside the scope of the trust. The caretaker would have no financial burden for healthcare of the bird.

After conversation with Michael Doyel, this doesn't seem as practical as I had hoped it might be. It seems an individual could get this going, but an organization cannot. In other words, the trustee must be an individual. The GPC could not be the trustee. The role of the trustee would be to manage the trust, which would consist of processing claims for healthcare reimbursement.

I'm not sure I've given up on the idea, but it seems less likely than before. Let me know what you think. Would you be interested in creating a healthcare trust for your bird if the cost were \$200-300 per year for the expected life of your bird?

## 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.

## January Attendance

The following attended our last meeting and signed in...

Cindy Burquin	Bianca Conn
Christine Conn	Jim Conn
Joe Crouch	Susan Crouch
Dixie Danzeisen	Renee Davis
Janet Draper	Georgia Fletcher
Carole Grommet	Dick Grommet
Travi Karpilow	Christine Kinkade
David Kinkade	Al Marks
Janet Marks	Nancy Marron
Jane Mueller	Jessica Murray
Penny O'Grady	Rick Ruderer
Beatrice Sansoci	Pat Seiler
Trey Shaffer	Cathy Timma
Hannah Welby	Rosemary Wilson
Deborah Van Der Heide	
Gerry Van Der Heide	

Get our meeting schedule on the website...

## Contact Information

### Officers

President	Georgia Fletcher	(314) 504-5019
Vice President	Dick Grommet	(636) 529-0026
Secretary	Dave Kinkade	(636) 343-8097
Treasurer	Nancy Marron	(314) 984-9524
Membership	Al Marks	(636) 441-0255

### Board Members

Jim Berk	(636) 586-1445
Janet Marks	(636) 441-0255
Christine Kinkade	(636) 343-8097
Carole Grommet	(636) 529-0026
Jane Mueller	(314) 302-2970
Trey Shaffer	(314) 496-8000

### Committees

Education	Lisa Rose	(636) 524-3989
-----------	-----------	----------------

Hospitality	Christine Kinkade	(636) 343-8097
-------------	-------------------	----------------

Ways & Means	Penney O'Grady	(636) 290-4084
	Pat Seiler	(636) 462-4732

Website		
Newsletter	Trey Shaffer	(314) 490-8000
Public Out-reach		