From the Prez

I love it when Bonnie Kenk comes and gives us a dose of reality. Birds are a very big expense and consume a great deal of our time; and if you don’t agree, you need to take her classes.

Remember that next month is our Christmas Party Potluck. Bring anything that you want to eat. The club will supply the turkey. We will also be having a Birdie Bazaar made up of our end-of-year sale of the items that we use to raise funds for the club at events throughout Southern California. We will also have our outstanding raffle.

Last month our wonderful companion dog was laid to rest. Guy was a Doberman/Great Dane mix and the true definition of a gentle giant. He greeted our customers at their cars and carried in their packages.

Everyone who met him mourns with us. I have never been without a dog, so I adopted a Shepherd mix from the local shelter. I forgot that my birds may not accept a newcomer into the flock. They all loved our Guy, and he never gave us any reason to worry about him around the birds. Sadie is another story. She is curious and not aggressive at all, but Gus (Bare-eyed Cockatoo) is convinced that he will be her next dinner! We have given him Rescue Remedy, and it has helped. He would not eat if Sadie was in the room. He would climb into the top corner of his cage and shake. Now he is much calmer, eats, and hasn’t plucked a feather (so far). No one else seems to mind, although Diego (Moluccan Cockatoo) will have her nose for a snack if she gets too close.

I forgot to consider my companion birds when adding a new member to the family. We often forget to consider the effects that an addition will have on their lifestyle. With Sadie in the house, nobody gets to climb around their cage unless she is in her kennel. This is probably a good thing for their safety, but George (Eclectus - pictured above) is NOT happy. I just need to think before doing anything that is animal related. I wonder how Sadie is going to deal with all the rehab animals that I take in? That will be a story for next year.

Linda

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

Do you have a photo for the newsletter? Please send it to voltrot@aol.com. Your bird can have a picture on the front page! How about a little story about your bird? This is your newsletter. Everyone always enjoys talking about their birds at the meetings. How about writing some of those stories so everyone can enjoy them?

Mark your calendars to attend the Holiday Party and Potluck. The food is always delicious. If you do not have time to make something, just stop by your favorite deli and pick something up. The club will provide the turkey, and the members will bring the rest. This year we will have a Birdie Bazaar so you can purchase some special things for your birdie family. We will, of course, also have our fabulous raffle table.
Mango Pet Products has donated their Traveler Stand pictured to the left for our Special Christmas Raffle. The stand is perfect for small to medium-sized birds. My Amazons use these stands every day.

This is a lightweight stand which weighs only 15 pounds. You can remove the top portion and just set it on a table if you do not need the entire stand. It is an easy and simple way to keep your bird with you. This stand retails for over $100. Tickets will be $5. Stop by the Raffle Table at the December meeting and get your tickets.

Mango makes that wonderful Pet Focus which is on our Raffle Table every month. I know it was new to some of you but hopefully many of you have had a chance to try it and see what a great job it does in cleaning your bird cages!

We thank Mango again for their generous donations to our club.

Ruth Kain, Editor
WEST VALLEY BIRD SOCIETY MEETING

Friday, December 19, 2008

Holiday Potluck Party

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Linda Lindsay Volunteers in Alaska

This article has been very slow to get in the newsletter. I have to apologize to Linda Lindsay for the delay. It seemed to be one thing after another which caused the delay.

This past summer Linda went to Alaska to visit her daughter in Anchorage. Her daughter is married to a fire fighter who is an Alaskan native. While visiting, Linda thought maybe she could help out at the local wildlife rehab center and that was how she found The Bird Treatment Learning Center. They interviewed Linda extensively and found she would be a great asset to them during her visit. She was kept very busy taking care of Owls, Osprey, and several Eagles. Normally Linda takes care of Hummingbirds. Many times we have seen her little charges at the club meetings since they need feeding so often. Looks like the birds she cared for in Alaska were a bit bigger! The following photos are of two of the eagles she cared for. Linda hopes to go back to visit her daughter and the Center next month.

The story in the next column tells a little about the treatment center. This organization was instrumental in helping rehabilitate 29 of the eagles that dived into an uncovered load of fish guts last January. Many of the eagles drowned or were crushed to death. There were 29 that were saved by wildlife workers in Kodiak and then send to Anchorage to the Bird Treatment and Learning Center. This was the largest bird cleanup effort the area has faced since the Exxon Valdez oil spill in 1989.

Speaking of the Valdez spill, please read the story of One Wing on page 7. This bird saved many other bird lives by donating blood after the spill and was the mascot of the center for almost 20 years. He passed away recently due to a tumor on his heart.

We hope Linda will bring us more beautiful Eagle photos after her next trip to Alaska.

Bird Treatment Learning Center

Hundreds of birds come through our clinic doors every year, representing many species. Permits from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game allow us to treat all types of birds covered under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act. Our patient may be a tiny chickadee nesting or a majestic Bald Eagle. We have even treated surprise visitors like a Red- footed Booby from Hawaii!

The primary goal of rehabilitation is to allow the sick or injured bird to recover and return to its normal life in the wild. We are successful in releasing roughly 50% of the birds that arrive. Because a bird must function at 100% to compete for a living in the wild, some remain not releasable even though in stable condition. Those birds can be placed in licensed educational programs and sanctuaries throughout the country or can become part of our own education program, becoming ambassadors for their species to the general public.

Every day, seven days a week, a trained crew provides basic medical care, prepares food and cleans mews for the birds in the clinic. We are fortunate in being allowed to use the warehouse furnished by the International Bird Rescue Research Center for treatment of oiled wildlife, which also allows us to provide swim tanks for sea birds.

Cindy Palmatier is the Director of Avian Care. Among many duties, she ensures that the proper medical care is provided by our volunteers. Dr. Todd Palmatier, visits on a regular basis to evaluate the patients, along with local veterinarians such as Dr. Mike Riddle and Dr. Riley Wilson. Dr. Palmatier treats the serious cases that require surgery or special medications. We would like to thank The Pet Stop Veterinary Clinic for the use of the x-ray machine and surgical facilities when needed.

In the spring of each year, a Baby Bird Class is held to train interested volunteers to meet the special needs of baby birds. They learn proper nutrition, handling, and housing techniques, as well as the importance of avoiding orienting the orphans to humans rather than their own species. Feeding formulas differ from species to species, and as many birds reach fledging size in a month's time, literally every calorie must count. Very young nestlings may require feeding every 15 minutes. When older, young birds must get practice in foraging and recognizing natural foods.

(Continued on page 7)
One Wing, the one-winged Bald Eagle who survived the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill, died in Early May at the Bird Treatment and Learning Center in Anchorage, Alaska. Many in Alaska's Native Eyak community call One Wing a special Eagle brother because of his strong spirit. "We had to amputate his entire wing from his shoulder down when we rescued him, because he tore it fighting so hard to fly away free," said veterinarian Cindy Palmatier.

After surviving surgery, One wing served as a blood donor to hundreds of birds suffering from anemia and blood disorders caused by Exxon's spills. Despite the huge amounts of blood One Wing was transfusing, he continued to grow stronger each day. "That bird gave and gave and gave way beyond what any bird should be able to accommodate, and we really utilized him heavily to help other birds," Palmatier said.

One Wing had a large following thanks to poems written by retired veterinarian, Dr. Jim Scott. Another author, Joan Harris, also wrote a popular children's book: "One Wing's Gift: Rescuing Alaska's Wild Birds." This past September a special memorial ceremony released One Wing's ashes back to the Eyak Nation and into the Prince William Sound. "People came from all over the country to check up on One Wing, so it's only right that we finally release him in such a special way," Palmatier said.

(Continued from page 6)

Each year brings us new knowledge and insight into the way birds learn and adapt. We find birds to be as distinct in their personalities as people are, with some more inventive and resourceful than others, able to teach us in their own way.

If you cannot bring a dish to the meeting, you can always bring drinks. We can use soft drinks, juice, etc.

Lost Parrot Rang Owner

A missing parrot has been reunited with its owner after chirping its own name on the phone from the home of its rescuer. The woman who found two-year-old Cockatiel Smokey wanted to be sure she was speaking to the rightful owners. So she passed the phone to the bird, and it immediately squawked its name, reports the Daily Post.

Smokey went missing after flying out of the door of Mr. David Edwards' home in Gwersyllt, near Wrexham. His two-day adventure in the wild came to an end two miles away in Wrexham, when he perched on accountant Sue Hill's shoulder.

She took him in and phoned the RSPCA which put her in touch with Mr. Edwards who had reported his Cockatiel missing. Sue said: "I called and spoke to his wife who told me her pet was called Smokey and asked me to put him on the phone.

"As soon as he heard her voice, he stopped chirping and began saying 'Smokey,' it was very funny. That was the first time the bird had spoken and it was then I was sure that he belonged to them."

Mr. Edwards said he was "over the moon" to have Smokey back. He said: "Smokey belongs to my 16-year-old grandson but lives here with us because we have two other birds. "They all have free rein over the house but I hadn't realized Smokey was upstairs when he flew past me and out of the door."

www.ananova.com
A Visit to Meet the Puerto Rican Parrot

*The following is by Carmen and Armando Leon. Carmen is a member of the Board of Parrots International. In October we had a story by Thomas White, Ph.D. telling how they got a pair of Puerto Rican Parrots in the wild to adopt eggs that were laid in the aviary. There are only 40 or 50 of these birds living in the wild at the present time. Above is Carmen visiting the aviary and one particular Puerto Rican Parrot, JJ, took a real liking to her and stayed with her for much of their tour! Please enjoy the following story. Editor*

When my husband Armando and I first visited the island of Puerto Rico, it was during the Christmas season back in 2002, and we were on vacation! We had a full two weeks to get to know the island, and we took full advantage traveling throughout Puerto Rico, discovering its wonders, including the El Yunque Caribbean National Rainforest. At the time we fully expected this to be the one and only time we thought we ever would experience the El Yunque. Little did we know, that we would become involved with Parrots International, and that would return us back again and again, to the “Island of Enchantment.” We discovered we could participate in the conservation of one of the island’s greatest wonders, the Puerto Rican Parrot (*Amazona vittata*).

Since that first trip, we have returned to Puerto Rico four times to work with the Puerto Rican Parrot and help support the work of the Puerto Rican Parrot Recovery Project. And, with the help of US Fish and Wildlife and the Puerto Rican Parrot Recovery Team, we have had the experience of a lifetime hiking through back trails in the rainforest, observing, monitoring, and photographing the elusive parrot.

Our first visit with Parrots International, along with Mark and Marie Stafford, in 2004, introduced us to the original Luquillo Aviary, located within the rainforest. The original aviary was situated in an old military facility, with limited space and faced environmental challenges that negatively affected breeding success of the housed population of the captive breeding parrots within.

As a result of that visit, Parrots International made the Puerto Rican Recovery Program one of its supported projects. PI made it one of its priorities to raise awareness about the status of the Puerto Rican Parrot, one of the world’s most endangered birds...the only endemic parrot found within the United States and its territories.

A major focus of Parrots International has been support for the construction of the new captive breeding aviary to

(Continued on page 9)
A Bird’s Eye View

(Continued from page 8)

replace the outdated original facility. Through publications, videos, photography, and educational presentations via Parrots International’s yearly Symposiums, Parrots International worked to increase awareness and attract fundraising. Via a partnership of Parrots International, Herencia, and the USFW Foundation a total of $750,000 was raised (coupled with Congress’ $1.7 million allotment) for the construction of the new Puerto Rican Parrot captive breeding aviary located within the rainforest in Rio Grande.

As one of Parrots International’s supported projects, we have had the privilege to be included in the phases of the aviary’s planning and construction. It was with great anticipation and excitement that in September 2008, we went and visited the finished aviary.

As we drove up the long driveway leading to the new aviary, we first encountered the new modern facility and Armando remarked, “It looks like a resort!”

At the main facility we were greeted by Jafet Valez-Valentin, Aviary Team Leader, and given a private tour of the finished construction. The other members of the recovery team were busy out in the field scouting locations for future release sites for the parrots hatched at the new aviary that would someday be released into the wild to save the Puerto Rican Parrot from extinction.

Sitting on a 1.2 acre lot with 5,200 square feet of usable space, the new aviary is a well equipped, self-sufficient facility. The main building of the aviary houses a workshop, the nursery, the hurricane room, the medical offices, general offices, and the kitchen.

Since we arrived just in time for “breakfast” (the parrots’ morning meal), the kitchen was where we began our tour. The kitchen is nice and big, complete with a walk-in refrigerator and freezer. The freezer door was opened so that we were given the opportunity to view its contents ….. it was full of ZuPreem Pelleted diet. We thought it was great to see the freezer full of ZuPreem, as ZuPreem has been a supporter of our Parrots International Symposiums. Even more exciting was to be given the opportunity to feed the parrots their ZuPreem breakfast!

The parrots had been brought up from their flights, located within the rainforest, to the breeding cage area, as technicians were busy working on installing video cameras in their breeding cages. The cameras are being installed inside and outside the cages and within their nest boxes so that, soon, the general public would have access to view the parrots via a live feed over the internet.

The tour continued to the larger flights housing the juvenile parrots. Here, the parrots learn to socialize and are able to begin to spread their wings. These larger flights are also the areas where the younger parrots are prepared to learn how to be “wild” parrots. The parrots must be trained to survive in the wild prior to their release into the rainforest to bolster the wild populations.

Returning back to the main building, we checked out the Hospital, set up with every piece of necessary veterinary medical equipment. From there we proceeded to the Nursery and the Workshop areas, where cages and nest boxes are fabricated by team members and volunteers during their “down time.”

(Continued on page 10)
A Bird’s Eye View

A Bird’s Eye View

(Continued from page 9)

From the Workshop area, we made our way to the Hurricane Room. This large room houses the parrots in the event that a catastrophic hurricane were to present a danger to the captive parrots. The room has suspended cages in the event that there is flooding within the room. There is also a map at the ready detailing where each parrot will be placed. A hand painted mural depicting the Puerto Rican Parrot, finishes off the room.

A separate building across from the main building houses the Quarantine Room. Upon entering the room, there are locker facilities with biohazard suits available, and a shower. Passing through to the next room is the area where the parrots are housed in their individual cages while spending the required time in quarantine before they are allowed to join the remainder of the flock. This room is self-contained to include all the necessary armamentarium needed to provide for the care of the quarantine parrots without compromising the health and safety of the rest of the population within the aviary.

As we continued our tour, we came across a room containing “Parrot Enrichment Devices,” aka bird toys. The toys were brought in from Jungle Toys, owned and operated by Mike Keens, once again, another of PI’s supporters and a member of PI’s Symposium Planning Committee.

It was great to see a PI supported project and supporters of PI tied together, proving that we all can help to make a difference in the wild!

The new aviary is a modern and amazing facility. The Puerto Rican Parrots are doing well in their new surroundings. Due to the dedication of the Puerto Rican Recovery Team, and their efforts and plans for future releases, these little wonders will once again thrive throughout their homeland.

by Carmen & Armando Leon

All photos by Carmen and Armando with the exception of the picture of the Puerto Rican Amazon on page 8 by Mark and Marie Stafford.

Puerto Rican Parrot to attend
Parrots International Symposium 2009.

Meet one of these endangered birds up close & personal!
May 29-31, 2009 • The “M” Hotel, Las Vegas, Nevada

The full list of speakers will be out soon. Below are two of the presenters.

Chris Biro will make a presentation on how to train your bird for free flight. Then he will give the attendees a special free flight show of his Macaws and Sun Conures during our outdoor luncheon. He will fly the parrots over the beautiful grounds of the "M" Hotel. You will want to be there for this special experience!

Steve Martin, a parrot trainer and behaviorist who founded the first free flight zoo show (in San Diego), will share his insight with the attendees.

Parrots International is working on other surprises also.
Stay tuned! Check website www.parrotsinternational.org.
Thank You!

Thanks to everyone who helped set up the room at our November meeting. Thanks also to Linda Lindsay and Dawn Camancho for making the food table look terrific as well as making coffee, cleaning up, and all the other many things they do each month. Remember, we have to pay the facility to clean up. Please bring poop papers for your bird and do not put birds on the backs of chairs.

Take Some Photos! Write a Story! Save Those Magazines!

Remember—please send photos of your bird to the editor at voltrot@aol.com. Do you have a nice story about your bird? Please send those in also.

The club collects old magazines which we sell at the Bird Mart. Please bring anything you are done with to the next meeting. Just give them to a Board Member.

This is your newsletter. If you have any articles to share, please send them to me at voltrot@aol.com. Why not just write a little something about one of your birds - something cute it does, etc.  

Ruth
SEATTLE (Reuters) - Real estate agent Jeffrey Dolfinger was making a routine occupancy check on a foreclosed home near Poughkeepsie, New York, when he made a heart-wrenching discovery: two bedraggled Cockatiels nearly starved to death. "We had entered into this wreck of a house, opened the door, where there sat two Cockatiels with about a six-inch-high pile of bird feces under them," Dolfinger said. "I'm not a bird person, but I knew a bird is not supposed to look this way."

Despite terrible bird allergies, Dolfinger gathered them up and brought them to a pet store specializing in birds. A woman at the store nursed them back to health. The pair of Cockatiels represents a little-known side of the foreclosure crisis: exotic birds abandoned or dropped at shelters because their owners cannot move into an apartment or a relative's home with the sometimes noisy creatures.

No group tracks such cases, but animal rescue groups say they're becoming inundated with calls from people who lost their houses desperately trying to find a new home for their Macaw or Cockatoo. Adding to the problems of finding new homes is the life span of the birds, which can run from 20 years for a cockatiel to between 50 and 80 years for the larger birds.

"There are easily 8 to 10 calls a week here" because of foreclosure problems, said Judy Sawin, who with her husband runs Avian Retreat in Seattle, a sanctuary for abandoned or homeless exotic birds. "Not only are people in unfortunate situations, but this is throwing birds into terrible situations."

Many owners try to take their exotic birds to an animal shelter but most shelters are not equipped to house birds, Swain says, because they are built to handle mainly dogs and cats, who are also being abandoned in large numbers because of foreclosures.

**DIFFICULT TO CARE FOR**

Intelligent, lively birds like parrots, Cockatoos and Cockatiels can be time-consuming to care for, loud, and destructive to themselves or their surroundings if neglected or mistreated, she said.

Sawin, who also works full-time at a construction management company, is caring for 25 birds, which amounts to almost another full-time job.

"That's way more than what we want to have," said Sawin, who also screens potential owners willing to adopt birds. "What we try to do here is take the ones nobody else will take, like a cockatiel with one foot."

Mollywood, another sanctuary for exotic birds in Washington state, also has been inundated by birds left homeless after their owners lost their houses. Located near Bellingham, Washington, it is now home to 400 exotic birds.

"I've definitely seen a higher turnover of birds in the last six months than I have in a long, long time," said sanctuary owner Betsy Lott, who has fostered birds for 15 years.

"It's really sad -- you can tell these people are really struggling. For some, it's like losing a child," she said. "But they know they can't live out of a car with a bird."

"It's really hard, and it's really heartbreaking."

**By Elaine Porterfield**

(Editing by Mary Milliken; editing by Mohammad Zargham)
The Fires

The fires which took place all over Southern California in mid November were terrible. The following is the account of two people who were involved in the Tea Fire in Montecito south of Santa Barbara. Jamie McLeod was a real hero! She runs the Santa Barbara Bird Sanctuary. You will recall we just had an article about the big fundraising event up there. Jamie also hosts the Birdy Bagel Brunches on the first Sunday of the month at her shop, the Menangerie located at 2430 Lillie Avenue, Summerland, CA. Phoebe and Harry Linden have a large number of birds which needed help during the fires. They operate Santa Barbara Bird Farm. They used to raise birds for the pet trade, but no longer do that. Phoebe still writes for World Parrot Trust.

The following notes made the rounds on the Internet a few weeks ago. Thank you again to Jamie and her sister for their unselfish heroism. We are glad to hear that the Linden’s place escaped serious damage also. This should be a lesson to many of us to be sure we are prepared for an emergency. Many of us live in high fire danger areas. Are you ready? And, it might not be a fire, it could be an earthquake, flood, or who knows what kind of disaster. It is time to prepare yourself and your animal family to be ready to make an escape if that is necessary.

**Editor**

Dear Friends,

So many of you want to help Harry and me as we begin the arduous task of cleaning up after the fire. Thank you!!

Even though everything is covered in soot, we take our cue from Percy Lou and the 47 other safe parrots: sing while cleaning. We are sooooo happy to have a home and to be home.

The one most important thing everyone can do -- well, two things -- first, be prepared yourselves! Second, please make a donation to Jamie McLeod's SB Bird Sanctuary (sbbird.org). Any amount is welcome! All donations are tax deductible! (Hopefully, they'll get some new emergency carriers with the funds! Also, they are caring for many displaced parrots right now.

So, the flames are towers roaring down the mountain headed smack towards our back yard. Our friends* are prepping carriers but Harry and I don't know if we have enough time.

A part of my brain is wondering, will I have to decide who to take and who to leave? The columns twirl in the wind. Smoke and ash smack us as we work. Lots of the birds hurry right in to their carriers: they've got the whole "emergency" message!

I load Josserlynn and Garcia in the van, turn, and see out of the smoke, Jamie McLeod.

Ohmygoddessgoodness, Jamie. The relief I feel -- she's got carriers and she's moving fast -- is overwhelming even now.

* The moment I saw Jamie I knew we had a chance to get everyone out. **

Right behind Jamie is Jodi, sister terrific. Linda Wud! God bless you, bless you, bless you.

Jamie is right - it was a hellish night, but seeing those angels in the smoke provided the yin to the yang.

Please consider opening your heart and wallets to support the selfless work of the Santa Barbara Bird Sanctuary, a not for profit 501c3 organization where parrots find a flock and much, much more. Any amount is appreciated.

Jamie, Jodi, Linda -- you are my heros! I am full of gratitude for you and confident that your good works will continue and that support will come for you -- as it did for me -- out of smoke and ash.

With love,

Phoebe

*friends on the spot: Barbara and John who stayed throughout, Arnufloro our son/brother, Patty Keller an angel, too, Hiladio the strong and his helper. Elly and Michael!

** Many who know me know that I always say, If I had to give an injection to a rhino, I'd want Jamie to be helping me. Her competence is amazing, friends. Just amazing -- this woman can accomplish with non-human species the utterly impossible. There is no one better in an emergency than Jamie. I thank God for her anew. Please help me tell her the value of her specialness.

Phoebe Linden, 11-17-2008
A Thankful Thanksgiving

Dear friends of the flock,
Last Thursday evening just before six I was sitting at the computer with my African Grey, Babu when I got a call from a friend. A fire had just been reported in Montecito near Westmont College. Fierce 60 MPH sundowner winds were quickly spreading the fire which at that time was reported to be 3 acres.

My mother lives right next to Westmont College. Across the canyon is Harry and Phoebe Linden's Santa Barbara Bird Farm. My sister Jodi confirmed that Mom had captured the cats, gathered vital belongings and fled the fire with cats in tow.

My next call was to the Lindens......Phoebe said, "Yes, we could use your help if you can get here in 5 minutes, twenty might be too late." In the Sycamore Canyon fire in 1977, the Lindens lost their home including all the aviaries and their beloved flock. The Tea fire was giving them something that the Sycamore Fire did not....time to get their birds out. While still on the phone I threw my bird evacuation carriers and cages into the car, grabbed my sister Jodi and a bird net. With my good friend Linda Wuul following behind us in her car, we set off. Avoiding sheriff’s department roadblocks and closed roads, we raced together across Montecito hoping we could get to the Lindens ahead of the fire.

Panic spreading; the roads were clogged with people, cars and even horses being led to safety. I could see the ridge above my Mom's house was now engulfed in flames. The wind driving the fire also spread smoke so thick that my eyes burned. Ashes and burning embers rained down on us as we arrived. We found Phoebe and Harry had captured more than half their birds and put them in carriers. Having run out of carriers they resorted to using cardboard boxes.

By some miracle I had brought two Macaw crates. Still to be caught were a pair of terrified Green-wing Macaws and a panicked pair of Blue and Gold Macaws who had holed up in nest boxes refusing to come out. Phoebe was scurrying about managing numerous volunteers and evacuating all the house birds and important belongings. Harry was out back in the yard evacuating the aviaries.

As the fire burned closer, a surge of adrenalin kicked in as I raced out to the aviaries to help Harry. The aviaries are on the hillside suspended over the canyon facing Westmont College. Being suspended, the aviaries are not designed for walking inside as the floor was chain link up on poles off the ground. Planks were thrown on the bottom to walk on rather like a teeter totter. I gingerly crawled in the aviary balanced on the plank with a crate and net and waited for Harry to flush them out.

I looked across the canyon as walls of fire raced down hill fed by the whirling winds; I watched with a breaking heart as houses rapidly were consumed by a fire that hop scotched across the canyon. It was like a being on the set of a disaster movie. I was sure the fire would gobble us up at any moment. A ground shaking ka-boom was heard and felt as an outbuilding at Westmont exploded sending a tower of bomb like flames into the air.

On that note the Macaws left their not-so-safe-after-all nest box, and I managed to quickly net and stuff them both into a crate while teetering on a two by four. We repeated the same scenario with next pair as the fire sped down the canyon. The rest of the assorted birds Harry and I quickly caught and crated while Jodi relayed the captured birds to waiting vehicles. We managed to bring just enough crates and cages for everyone.

As Harry and I finally left the yard with the last of the birds stowed safely in vehicles I said to him, "A little better than last time, Harry?" He looked at me with a very sad smile and said, "Yes, a whole lot better. Thanks so much for your help!"

The birds were all transported across town to a warehouse where Harry, Phoebe and the birds spent the long night wondering if their home would survive.

Into the small hours of Saturday morning I sat at home on the deck and watched the fire through binoculars. I could hear the helicopters as they flew all night. Prayers were answered after midnight as the hot winds receded. The next morning, although the winds remained calm, the fire was still burning. Our amazing fire department, the forest service, and firemen and engines from all over southern California battled the flames. A thick cloud of smoke and ash hung in the air above our once called emerald city.

On Friday, Harry, ignoring evacuation orders and closed roads, went to see if they still had a house. With prayers answered, Harry found his house still standing. My Mom was unable to get back in but thought it was a good sign, that when she called her house, the answering machine picked up.

Saturday when I spoke to Harry everyone was back in their aviaries, seemingly no worse for the wear. I was quite thrilled to hear from him that Montecito's wild flock of Amazon's, who had been coming to their house each afternoon, for decades, had put in an appearance and all ten birds were accounted for. Mom still has a house. Miracles do happen.

We all know there is a lesson here. Before we forget and go back to life in paradise please make sure you have an evacuation plan. Get to know your neighbors. Fire is a fact of life here. It will happen again.

Jamie McLeod, 11-21-08
Dear Ones,

Jamie writes a really interesting account of "that night," the night fire met friendship and -- fortunately for us -- friendship prevailed.

I thank each of you, more than you can know, for your thoughts, prayers and strength over the last days. I am very tuned in to these sources of goodness and tremble with the honor of your support.

I returned this morning (1:30 am) from Monroe, Michigan, where I surprised my Mum on her 88th birthday. What a great visit.

While I was gone, a sadness happened here. Mr. Fancy, a Medium-sulphur-crested Cockatoo, escaped from his aviary! This is so unusual. Harry had the door propped open a teeny bit so that, hopefully, a little trapped wild sparrow would escape; but instead, Harry hit the door and flew out. He landed in a tree in our yard - the walnut tree -- and tore off a couple of branches, acting tough. Then he flew to the eucalyptus trees behind our house, screaming. Next, he took off over the canyon -- the same canyon that was so recently engulfed in flame. Crest up, wings wide and strong, yelling as he went out of sight; gone in minutes.

Two days later, Fancy showed up in the backyard! Still a renegade, he stormed around the trees close to the aviaries which makes *everyone* scream in excitement. Energetically, Fancy ripped off branches and threw them to the ground, crest up, loudly calling. He flew to other trees and did the same. Next he went to the aviary roof, grabbed a stick and, marching, banged it over and over.

Any one with Cockatoos knows this fancy-walking which is how Mr. Fancy got his name!

Harry propped open Mr. Fancy's aviary door with that tried and true "stick attached to a long string" technique and, while Fancy watched, Harry filled the food bowls. Then waited.

Fancy Pants then flew around and landed on the Rosie-breasted Cockatoo's flight - they have a perch that sticks out the wire about 3" so he balanced there. The Rosie male actually handed Mr. Fancy a guava! He ate hungrily.

Next, Mr. Fancy walked back into his aviary. He's been busy ever since, telling his story, reporting back to the flock on the damaged hillside, I imagine.

Don't forget to read Jamie's account of Nov 13 on page 13.

Good evacuation plans are essential.

Things I'm changing in evacuation materials and plan:

1) each carrier now has its own towel which I cut in the center for the handle. This towel will be used to catch the birds and also provide needed "stress chewing" material while confined or privacy for shy birds who might end up beak to beak with someone else. This time, we lacked towels. There are tons in the house -- we needed them at hand.

2) ditto flashlights -- I'm going to place medium-sized flashlights around the aviaries so one can always be grabbed. Imagine catching everyone in the smoke-filled dark! Again, we have plenty of flashlights, but keep them in the house and we needed them NOW.

Otherwise, we were good.

Hugs,
Phoebe Linden, 11-24-08

---

AFA Convention August 5-8,2009 in Houston, Texas! "Branching Out" - Mark your calendar to attend!

Time To Renew AFA Memberships! It's that time again, time for AFA Affiliated Organizations to renew their memberships with the American Federation of Aviculture, Inc. Affiliation applications have been mailed and memberships run from Dec 31, 2008 thru Dec 31, 2009. Contact the AFA Business Office if your organization has not received an application

Purchase an AFA 2009 Calendar Today. $9.00 each. Contact the AFA office for a discount when purchasing 10 or more, by phone at 512-585-9800, by email at AFAOffice@earthlink.net or go to www.afabirds.org

Your donations make a difference. Consider the AFA Conservation Fund, the AFA CITES Fund, the AFA Legislation Fund and the AFA Disaster Relief Fund. Thank you for your support.


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Visit AFA online http://www.afabirds.org
Happy Holidays!
Bring “poop paper” for your bird’s use.
Clean up after your parrot (poop and food).
Do not allow your bird to roam around at will (on chairs, etc.) or get close to other birds.
Clip those wings! Meeting hall doors may be open.

Bio-security may be in place at the meeting entrance.
Use antiseptic hand wipes before touching other birds—respect other parrots’ health.
Birds brought to meeting must be healthy and not have been treated for illness for 30 days.

Calendar of Events
WBS 2008-2009

- December 19 - Club Meeting - Christmas Potluck, Giant Raffle, Birdie Bazaar
- January 16 - Club Meeting - Madeleine Franco
- February 8 - Tri-Valley Bird-A-Fair, Granada Pavilion
- February 20 - Club Meeting - Susan Hill
- March 20 - Club Meeting - Dave Weeshoff, IBRRC
- April 17 - Club Meeting - TBA
- April 17-19 America’s Family Pet Expo, Orange County

Please take an active role with the club. It's great fun. If you would like to help at any of the events, contact Linda at 661-803-1416.
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**Artificial Legs Help Maimed Bird Walk Again**

A top avian veterinarian has fitted a badly-maimed Cockatoo with prosthetic legs, saving the bird’s life and allowing her to walk again.

In an unusual procedure of his own invention, Dr. Don Harris fashioned new legs for Candy, a Leadbeater Cockatoo that had been viciously attacked by her mate, another Cockatoo that shared her cage in her human family’s home in Fort Myers, Florida.

Harris, a PetPlace consulting veterinarian, developed the tiny devices after Candy was brought to the Avian & Exotic Animal Medical Center in Miami, severely injured and facing likely euthanasia.

“It kind of looked like she had sat in a blender,” Harris said. “At that point, most people would have said because she’s lost both her feet she should be euthanized.” But the owners asked, “Is there anything you can do?”

The heartrending trauma began on Christmas Eve when Candy’s male cagemate mauled her mercilessly, a show of violence he’d never before demonstrated.

Candy tried to defend herself with her feet, but they were raked to pieces, said Harris, director of the medical center. “Pieces of bone and tendons” were all that was left by the time Candy’s owners drove her to his door. A veterinarian in Ft. Myers had worked to stop the bleeding and stabilize the bird.

“I amputated one foot when she came in, and I amputated the other foot a few days later. Over the next two days I had to amputate the lower half of one leg, between the knee and ankle,” Harris recalled. “She looked like she’d sat in a blender.”

**Building Artificial Legs**

But Harris thought he might as well try to do more. Why not build artificial legs for Candy? One problem: No one had ever before tried that on a bird. Harris said he pondered the problem for several days, as Candy lay recuperating.

He settled on the idea of using bone pins, employed to splice human bones together, and dental acrylic – a substance commonly used to build a dental bridge in humans. “Birds are non-traditional, and you have to be innovative,” said Harris. “You basically have to invent one thing after another.”

He fastened the acrylic legs to the bird with pins and attached disc-like stands to serve as feet. Candy was asleep and Harris worried about how she’d adjust when she woke. But that fear proved unjustified. “She woke up from surgery and walked off the recovery towel,” he said. “Her parents are amazed and they’re thrilled.”

**First Successful Limb Replacement**

Harris knows of no other successful artificial limb replacements in birds, and he’s still finding his Christmas miracle a bit hard to believe. “I have not seen anything like this in any animal. I was just skeptical of my own idea,” he said.

Candy and her erstwhile lover won’t be reunited – he’s been banished to another cage, where he’ll stay until his aggression is vanquished.

Candy herself still faces challenges. Harris said he wants to adjust her feet a little better and see that she’s followed carefully to avoid infection.

Candy may be sweet, but she’s no grateful bird. Harris says she seems to blame him for the painful experience. “She tolerates me, but the fact is I’ve done so many things to her.”

by: Susan Rubinowitz

The aftermath of the seizure of 1227 African Grey parrots (*Psittacus erithacus*) from Douala Airport, Cameroon, back in December 2007 is still consuming much of our time and resources. Despite having released over 900 parrots back into the wild, we still have approximately 100 birds left. Back in February 2008, with assistance from the World Parrot Trust, we removed the damaged wing feathers from hundreds of parrots and of these approximately 200 have successfully re-grown their feathers and have been released into the forests around Limbe. The remaining 100 birds have not yet re-grown their feathers and are still living with us at the Limbe Wildlife Centre. Some of these birds may never re-grow their damaged feathers and will remain flightless, whilst others, we hope, will eventually recover their feathers and will be able to fly off.

The plan now is to build the remaining parrots an open-top enclosure surrounding a mango tree into which they can climb and live freely. Any parrots that are able to fly will be able to fly off into neighboring trees, thereby strengthening their flight muscles in preparation for the time when they will be able to freely choose to fly off. Whilst other parrots, whose feathers have not re-grown, will live in the mango tree, free to climb in and out of their home using ladders that will be placed in the tree. We will continue to provision the parrots with food, and treat them medically when necessary, and it is for this that we are seeking financial assistance. Currently it is costing approximately $450/month paying for food and medical costs for the parrots and any donations towards these costs would help enormously.

*By Felix Lankester, the Project Director of the Limbe Wildlife Centre and also the head veterinarian*

### African Grey Parrot Seizure in Cameroon Update

### Babysitter: Parrot Saved Girl's Life With Warning

A babysitter's parrot is being credited with helping save the life of a 2-year-old girl who was choking Friday at a Denver area home while the sitter was in the bathroom.

"While I was in the bathroom, Willie (the parrot) started screaming like I'd never heard him scream before and he started flapping his wings," said Meagan, the babysitter. "Then he started saying 'mama baby' over and over and over again until I came out and looked at Hannah and Hannah's face was turning blue because she was choking on her pop tart."

Meagan performed the Heimlich maneuver on Hannah, which stopped the choking.

"If (Willie) wouldn't have warned me, I probably wouldn't have come out of the bathroom in time because she was already turning blue; her lips were blue and everything," Meagan said.

"If anything happened to her, I don't know what I would do," said Samantha Kuusk, Hannah's mother. "I'm very grateful for the both of them because they both saved her."

Willie didn't say much when CBS4 visited on Sunday. Meagan said he is usually pretty talkative.

"He says 'I love you' and he says 'mama' and he says 'step up' and some other words that aren't so nice," she said.

*Karlyn Tilley, Denver (CBS4)*
How to Stuff Your Parrot for the Holidays

Ingredients:
- One turkey
- Corn pudding
- Green beans
- Stuffing
- Sweet potatoes
- Mashed potatoes with gravy
- Cranberry sauce
- Hot rolls
- Relish tray
- Pumpkin pie
- Whipped cream
- Hot coffee

Get up early in the morning & have a cup of coffee. It's going to be a long day, so place your Parrot on a perch nearby to keep you company while you prepare the meal.

Remove Parrot from kitchen counter and return him to perch.

Prepare stuffing, and remove Parrot from edge of stuffing bowl and return him to perch.

Stuff turkey & place it in the roasting pan, and remove Parrot from edge of pan and return him to perch. Have another cup of coffee to steady your nerves.

Remove Parrot's head from turkey cavity and return him to perch, and restuff the turkey.

Prepare relish tray, and remember to make twice as much so that you'll have a regular size serving after the Parrot has eaten his fill. Remove Parrot from kitchen counter and return him to perch.

Prepare cranberry sauce, discard berries accidentally flung to the floor by Parrot.

Peel potatoes, remove Parrot from edge of potato bowl and return him to perch.

Arrange sweet potatoes in a pan & cover with brown sugar & mini marshmallows. Remove Parrot from edge of pan and return him to perch. Replace missing marshmallows.

Brew another pot of coffee. While it is brewing, clean up the torn filter. Pry coffee bean from Parrot's beak. Have another cup of coffee & remove Parrot from kitchen counter and return him to perch.

When time to serve the meal:

Place roasted turkey on a large platter, and cover beak marks with strategically placed sprigs of parsley.

Put mashed potatoes into serving bowl, rewhip at last minute to conceal beak marks and claw prints.

Place pan of sweet potatoes on sideboard, forget presentation as there's no way to hide the areas of missing marshmallows.

Put rolls in decorative basket, remove Parrot from side of basket and return him to perch.

Remove beaked rolls, serve what's left.

Set a stick of butter out on the counter to soften -- think better and return it to the refrigerator.

Wipe down counter to remove mashed potato claw tracks. Remove Parrot from kitchen counter and return him to perch.

Cut the pie into serving slices. Wipe whipped cream off Parrot's beak and place large dollops of remaining whipped cream on pie slices.

Whole slices are then served to guests, beaked-out portions should be reserved for host & hostess.

Place Parrot inside cage & lock the door.

Sit down to a nice relaxing dinner with your family -- accompanied by plaintive cries of "WANT DINNER!" from the other room.

Author Unknown
On November 17th more than 60 people attended the book signing of Irene Pepperberg’s latest book, “Alex & Me” at Barnes & Noble, Long Beach. She gave quite an interesting talk, and we all had the opportunity to ask her questions about her relationship with Alex and what he meant to her when he passed away. You can read more about it in this book.

Cynthia Anchante

When Alex the African Grey parrot died in 2007, the world mourned. The New York Times, The Los Angeles Times and The Boston Globe ran articles reviewing his life achievements. The Economist devoted its obituary for the week of Sept. 22, 2007, to Alex. (Earlier weeks had featured Luciano Pavarotti and Ingmar Bergman.) ABC News, CNN and National Public Radio did segments about his lifetime collaboration with the scientist Irene M. Pepperberg. And an Internet condolence book (remembering-alex.org) was set up so that fans could grieve in public.

“Alex, the African Grey parrot who was smarter than the average U.S. president, has died at the relatively tender age of 31,” read an obituary in The Guardian of London. “He could count to six, identify colors, understand concepts such as bigger and smaller and had a vocabulary of 150 words. To his supporters he was proof that the phrase ‘birdbrain’ should be expunged from the dictionary.”

As his owner and colleague, Dr. Pepperberg, writes in her charming new book, “Alex & Me,” the parrot she bought in a Chicago pet store in 1977 would help open a new window on the capacity of birds and other animals to think and communicate.

“Alex taught me to believe that his little bird brain was conscious in some matter, that is, capable of intention,” Dr. Pepperberg writes. “By extrapolation, Alex taught me that we live in a world populated by thinking, conscious creatures.”

In this volume Dr. Pepperberg — an associate research professor at Brandeis and a teacher of animal cognition at Harvard — describes her three-decade-long relationship with Alex and her struggle to win recognition from the scientific establishment, which was dominated, when she began working with the parrot, by “the behaviorists’ gospel,” which held that “animals are automatons, responding mindlessly to stimuli.”

In the 1980s, however, “the fortress of human uniqueness came under attack” with the findings of Jane Goodall and others who worked with primates, and Dr. Pepperberg proposed to “replicate

(Continued on page 25)
Hartselle Parrot Relegated to Back Room of Store

The Cowboys store on Highway 36 in Hartselle, Alabama is a popular place. But now, this store's main attraction is no longer center stage.

Festus, the parrot, not the television star, now occupies his cage behind center stage in the store's back room.

Customer Margaret Sittason says, "It just doesn't seem the same because he always sort of hollered at you."

Fellow customer Charles Boardman adds, "I don't think it's fair. I think every owner should be able to do what they want to with their store. The bird brings in a lot of business in here too. My son enjoys it, my wife enjoys it, and I enjoy it."

The reason Festus has been relegated to the back is because of a recent Morgan County Health Department inspection. It's against Alabama law to have pets inside a store that serves hot food.

Right now, the health rating here is 98. Festus cost the store two points. So for now, Festus sits quietly, with no customer interaction.

"Kids were coming in going to school and crying. It was awful here," said Cowboys' employee Beverly Sharbutt. "Nobody wants to see it go. We've had people offer to buy the bird and everything, so..."

So for now, Festus waits just like store employees, wondering if he'll ever take center stage again. If not at this store, then surely, somewhere else.

By Barry Hiett, WHNT NewsChannel 19 Reporter
I just came across in my files this question asked of me some time ago:

“Always have a guilty feeling when I remove babies from my parrot parents. I am excited when I have a new chick to feed and raise, but a part of me really goes out to Mom and Dad. How much trauma do you think they feel when we take their babies from them?”

For years I have been most concerned about the health and stress level on psittacine parents who find their chicks stolen away at an early point in the nurturing phase. The responsibilities of raising parrots in captivity go far beyond just guaranteeing that the young birds are raised well and provided for; consideration for breeding pairs is also important. Aviculturists need to realize that nesting parrots are operating on an intimate darkness/sense/touch level when they have newborns in the nest box. In some ways parents, especially the hen, are in a trance state with a single focus only, that being the baby birds. From the early stage when live activity is apparent inside the eggs, our hens are totally attentive and mostly out of sight for 14-21 days after hatch.

At that date, we keepers tend to notice “mom” appearing out of the nestbox more often, eating on her own, even sunning herself or bathing if a light spray is available.

Now, if a hobbyist is always taking the babies away from parents at two or three weeks, and if the hen and cock are utterly devoted, it will be much harder on her than should you make the decision to leave the chicks in the box for 28 or even 35 days! Some females will call loudly when they find their chicks are gone; others will enter a seemingly depressed state, not eating and moping around. This latter is especially apparent in birds that have had chicks taken away many times over the seasons and are quite aware of when the keeper is doing it. Certain cocks may even try to attack an owner who has appeared with a holding tub and is fooling around with the chicks in a box! An even worse development time to learn intimate touching and to realize that they are birds. Furthermore, in South American and many other species, the longer the chicks remain with the parents, the more contact they receive one on one from their father—an enormously critical factor for all the little male psittacines and their proper personality development. Over imprinting or impressing may be a result, with the later neuroses and identity problems towards humans a potential outcome.

In addition, it is almost impossible to keep from shocking a young two or three week old hookbill chick by exposing it to daylight when nature prescribes it should be inside a dark cavity eating, sleeping, and growing. Visual jumpiness and fright of objects and light are common in such cases. I trust that breeders, when they take a baby out of a dark nestbox will immediately put it into a dark, comfortable nursery enclosure, letting little if any light disturb it’s not-yet-fully-developed eyes…(please note, it may prove a bit more challenging the first few days to handfeed our older chicks, but it is certainly not an insurmountable difficulty…)

Some keepers choose to deal with the stress placed upon setting hens when their babies are removed, by entirely closing off the opening to the nesting box and preventing the moms from entering the box for three or four days before opening it up again. I do not agree with this method. I always treat any encroachment into the nesting “tree” as if I am a natural predator. In

(Continued on page 31)
Providing Avian Enrichment

It is now common knowledge that enrichment is essential to psittacine birds’ well-being. As such, there is a wave of interest in behavior and enrichment. Here, I will try to suggest means of providing enrichment to mentally and physically stimulate companion birds.

Enrichment should be based on what we know of the bird’s natural history. Knowing the type of behavior a particular species exhibits in the wild provides a solid foundation for species-appropriate enrichment. Enrichment can be divided into five categories: dietary, auditory, tactile, visual, and social.

Dietary is probably the easiest to provide, lists of foods that contain the nutrients needed for healthy birds are available from a wide variety of sources. Make sure that you know the foods to be avoided or that are toxic to birds, such as the common ones, chocolate or avocado. Variety foods should be offered two or three times a week as a supplement to a nutritionally sound base diet, such as a pelleted food diet. Presentation of these food items should create mentally stimulating devices or methods of foraging. Moving food bowls, hiding food items around the cage, using puzzle feeders are just a few examples of offering foraging time for the birds.

Auditory enrichment can be provided by playing nature sounds for the bird. If the birds are housed with a number of other birds, auditory stimulation may already be present.

Tactile stimulation can be provided with a variety of textures such as touch boards, cool or warm objects (never with extreme temperatures), different sizes and types of perching materials.

Visual enrichment can be provided with a view through a window. There are some DVDs offered that provide a visual picture for the bird to watch.

The most important enrichment is social. Placing other birds in close proximity may be effective, providing that the birds are compatible. Social interaction with the owner is very important in filling the need for social enrichment.

Robin Shewokis, BS, Pol Sci

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Candle Dangers

This note made the rounds on the Internet recently.

Hi All,

I just got off the phone with my friend Donna at Birdstuff, and she wanted me to help alert all parrot people I know of yet another preventable pet parrot loss one of her favorite clients just experienced. Her friend had put out her beautiful, fragrant holiday candles on display to enjoy for the first time last night and hours later her son's baby cockatiel died. Then this morning her 7-month-old Caique passed away at the vet.

The candles were Glade brand, and another mass produced, 3 wicked one with wire in the wicks. The wire is made of lead. On examination, the vet said they died as a direct result of the candle fumes. Everything about them was healthy and normal, but the erosive damage the pleasant candle fumes do to the bird’s lung tissue caused them to literally drown in their own fluids. It's a horrible, completely preventable way to die and Donna wants us all to be advocates for our helpless birdies. We need to protect them so please spread this around to all parrot people you know, OK?

Just another reminder this and any time of year to put all non-stick cookware, fabric protectors, new carpet, air fresheners, plug ins, potpourri, cooking bags, spray disinfectants, self-cleaning ovens, coffee makers, curling irons....on the list of hazards for our parrots along with these fragrant, and lead-wicked, and non-fragrant candles. Who knows where they were made and what exactly is in them? One of my favorite links on some hazards to our birds is at www.parrotparrot.com/birdhealth/alerts.htm. Please share with me any other links you use and have a safe holiday.

Sincerely,
Sue Bendheim
Lily Sanctuary Adoption Coordinator
www.lilysanctuary.org
the linguistic and cognitive skills that had been previously achieved with chimps in a Grey parrot, an animal with a brain the size of a shelled walnut, but one that could talk.”

Her book movingly combines the scientific detail of a researcher, intent on showing with “statistical confidence” that Alex “did indeed have this or that cognitive ability,” with the affectionate understanding that children (and children’s books about animals) instinctively possess: that “animals know more than we think, and think a great deal more than we know.” While her training as a scientist keeps her from lapsing into sentimentalty, her love for her longtime avian colleague keeps her from sounding like a stuffy academic.

Through years of painstaking trials, Dr. Pepperberg worked to show that her parrot was not just parroting things he’d heard from his handlers, but that he could also distinguish colors and shapes and sizes, that he understood concepts like “bigger,” “same,” “different” and perhaps even the existential idea of “none.”

Intellectually, Dr. Pepperberg said, Alex had the development of a 5-year-old; emotionally, that of a 2-year-old. He could identify objects by their color, size and material; do basic addition; and is said to have had a concept of phonemes, the sounds that make up words.

When Alex was sick of working, Dr. Pepperberg reports, he would ignore his handlers, preen his feathers or say, “Wanna go back,” meaning he wanted to return to his cage. When he knocked over a coffee cup or gave a wrong answer, he would say, “I’m sorry,” suggesting, Dr. Pepperberg says, that he’d “learned that ‘I’m sorry’ is associated with defusing a tense, angry and potentially dangerous moment.”

Alex’s essential personality, however, was mischievous, supremely confident, even bossy. “Once Alex had learned how to label objects and request things,” Dr. Pepperberg writes, “he relished the control it gave him over his environment, the ability to manipulate the people around him.” Her students joked that they were “Alex’s slaves,” and he was merciless with new handlers, running through his entire repertory of labels and requests: “Want corn ... want nut ... wanna go shoulder ... wanna go gym.”

He was easily bored with the repetitious trials Dr. Pepperberg and her students created for him, and he could be condescending with the other birds in the lab, correcting them with a brisk “You’re wrong” or “Say better.”

And yet, like most Grey parrots, who grow up in the wild in highly socialized communities, Ms. Pepperberg writes, “Alex was very empathic.”

“He could sense when I was particularly blue. He would sit close with me at these times, just being Alex. Not Alex the mischievous imp; not Alex the boss of the lab; not the demanding Alex. Just Alex the empathetic presence. He’d sometimes say, ‘You tickle,’ and bend his head so I could scratch his face. As I did, the white area around his eyes turned a subtle pink, blushing as Greys do when being intimate. His eyes would squint almost closed.”

Alex (whose name began as an acronym for the research project Avian Language Experiment) died on Sept. 6, 2007, apparently of a fatal arrhythmia, heart attack or stroke. His last words to Dr. Pepperberg were: “You be good. I love you.”

A version of this article appeared in print on November 25, 2008, on page C1 of the New York edition.

DANGER!!!!

Just received a note from Trish Pettinelli who read on one of her lists about a Hyacinth who died due to someone cooking with the new Reynolds Aluminum Foil with a non-stick coating on it. It is called Reynolds Wrap Pro-Grille—Non-stick Grilling Foil. Please DO NOT USE THIS IN YOUR HOME WITH BIRDS. Also, DO NOT use the cooking bags which are available. The cooking bags are a potential hazard for your birds. Please be careful! Do not use any products with Teflon. It is up to us to protect our birds from dangerous Fumes.

Editor
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Olivia the eagle has developed into a swimmer with real talon. Caretaker Patty Perry found teaching the sick bird to flap about in her pool was a good way to get back her strength. Olivia was discovered starving, half blind and unable to hunt last year. But she has made a dramatic recovery thanks to Patty.

The 55-year-old has helped dozens of birds with aqua training at her Californian centre and is specially proud of the eagle. She said: "Olivia loves to swim. We spend 20 minutes in the water three days a week."

Olivia, four, will never be freed into the wild as her sight is too damaged, but at least she's found a human who will go to any lengths to help…

http://www.mirror.co.uk

All pictures by Barry Bland/Barcroft Media
The Importance of Educating and Screening the Potential Parrot Caregiver

by Bonnie Kenk

If our childhood years included a companion animal, it was most likely a dog or cat. Therefore, most of us grew up learning from our parents how to care for these animals so they could successfully remain a part of our family.

However, in the United States, very few of us grew up sharing our lives with a companion parrot. And while most of us have the skills necessary to provide proper care to dogs and cats, those skills do not extend to life with a parrot.

Until 1992 and the Wild Bird Conservation Act, parrots ending up in homes in the United States were most likely imported from their native habitat. Because of this, unlike dogs and cats that have been bred in captivity for thousands of years, parrots, even though bred in captivity, still have all of their wild instincts. And because they are still essentially wild animals, with most of their wild instincts intact, we need to learn how to live with them on their terms rather than expect them to conform to our expectations.

And because most of us did not grow up sharing our lives with parrots, it is essential that we learn to care properly for their physical and psychological needs before they enter our homes. Proper training and care must begin as soon as the bird enters the home to ensure that problem behavior is less likely to develop. It is more difficult to correct a behavior problem once an incorrect pattern has been established than it is to prevent problem behavior from developing to begin with.

Because, here in the United States, parrots are losing their homes at an alarming rate, it is up to us, the organizations that have taken the responsibility to find new homes for them, to carefully screen our potential adopters. And the most important part of screening is to ensure that the person wanting to live with a parrot is properly educated on a parrot’s daily physical and psychological care. This is one of the most important components to help ensure that the bird will successfully remain in the home where he is placed.

Several days ago, I received a phone call from someone that had adopted a parrot, less than a year ago, from a bird club that is no longer in existence. The club he adopted from had no educational requirements, nor did they provide any education to their adopters beforehand. The bird this person adopted was permitted to become a one-person bird to the exclusion of everyone else in the home and the caller was now looking for another home for the bird. Not only did the caller not know how to prevent this behavior from occurring, he wasn’t even aware that parrots were capable of this type of behavior. Unfortunately, the caller was not willing to work with the bird’s behavior, so the bird is now on his way to being placed in another home.

Another component of the screening process is to ensure that the person’s lifestyle is conducive to life with a parrot. If they are very young and will experience a great deal of lifestyle changes such as schooling, marriage, children, it is best that they be deferred from adoption until such a time as their life becomes more stable. Which is not to say that you can prepare for every eventuality. But, obviously the more stable the person’s life is, the better suited they are to living with a parrot for the long term.

It is also extremely important that the organization responsible for parrot adoptions ascertains that the person’s home is appropriate for a parrot. Neighbors that live too close, apartment and/or condo living all should deter the organization from placing a potentially noisy bird in the home. Additionally the home must be large enough to have room for at least one large cage (if not two) and a playstand away from the cage.

Mistakes have been made in the screening process, but they are learning opportunities. And because parrots depend on us for their happiness, it is essential that we are as careful as possible to see that all the proper components are in place to ensure a parrot’s success in their new home.
WASHINGTON, DC, November 7, 2008 (ENS) - Only 300 Blue-throated Macaws still survive in the wild, but this critically endangered parrot species is getting a new lease on life in its native Bolivian grassland habitat. The Bolivian bird conservation organization Asociacion Armonia, with the support of American Bird Conservancy and World Land Trust-US, has created the world's first protected area for the large blue birds, prized in the pet trade.

Asociacion Armonia has purchased an 8,785 acre ranch in the grasslands of eastern Bolivia, a site frequented by 20 Blue-throated Macaws during the breeding season. The ranch has been renamed the Barba Azul Nature Reserve and will be managed to promote breeding and recovery of the rare birds. Bennett Hennessey, executive director of Armonia, said, "Raising public awareness to build local support for the Macaw is our most potent tool to halt the illegal taking of these rare birds for the pet trade."

Easy to breed in captivity, the captive population of these large, brilliantly colored parrots is many times larger than the wild population. "This is a huge conservation achievement," said George Fenwick, president of American Bird Conservancy. "The main threats to the Blue-throated Macaw are capture for the pet trade and habitat destruction for cattle ranching, and, until now, the species' habitat was completely unprotected."

The Blue-throated Macaw, *Ara glaucogularis*, is native to savannas in the Beni province of Bolivia, and depends on motucu palms for nesting. These palms occur in groups called islands that are embedded in the seasonally flooded grasslands.

Research in the area of the new reserve found the highest known density of Blue-throated Macaws in the wild. One roosting site in the dry season holds 70 birds and 20 remain during the rainy season. The birds inhabit a remote area with poor access, and the large group roosts in the palm islands. The entire known wild population of this species exists on private ranches which undergo yearly burning and heavy grazing by cattle. The number of suitable nest trees has been reduced by land clearing.

"In the face of this development pressure, there is an urgent need to expand the new reserve to conserve a viable population of this spectacular Macaw and the many other vulnerable species within it," said Byron Swift, executive director of World Land Trust-US. Armonia is planning the development of a research station and ecotourism facility with access by airplane at the site to help support the project. Armonia also has been experimenting with nest boxes for the birds, with support from Bird Endowment and Loro Parque Fundacion, a Spanish foundation based in the Canary Islands that promotes the conservation of parrots and their habitats worldwide.

Hennessey says the Macaws are taking to the nest boxes and this provides an exciting opportunity to boost Macaw breeding success while habitat restoration is underway at Barba Azul Nature Reserve. Armonia intends to control the annual fires, which is expected to enhance habitat for all grassland species and prevent degradation of the palm tree islands. It should also be possible to expand Macaw habitat by creating new tree islands, said Hennessey. Removing grazing pressure will improve habitat within existing tree islands and improve conditions for other savanna species.

The Barba Azul Nature Reserve also protects Beni savanna habitat with good populations of other vulnerable bird species, such as the Sharp-tailed Tyrant, Cock-tailed Tyrant, and Black-masked Finch. Healthy populations of the Greater Rhea and Orinoco Goose are common in the area although both of these species are also at some risk of extinction.

Armonia and Loro Parque Fundacion have identified another five ranches for sale that are at risk of being developed and that are essential for the expansion of the new private reserve to protect 41 percent of the of the known blue-throated macaw population.

Hennessey said, "This work builds on the Armonia/Loro Parque Fundacion Blue-throated Macaw Conservation Program which has supported both research on the Macaw and public outreach, including a pride campaign to build awareness of the Macaw and support its conservation."

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truth, this is what I am as I have stolen their babies when they were not looking. We leave the roof or the cheek door on the box open for a week or more, showing the parents where the “predator” has come in and removed the chicks; then we pay close attention to the parent birds to see if they are in any way depressed or anxious to lay eggs once again. Certain species of psittacine like Eclectus, Conures, Cockatiels, and the like will literally jump back into a recycle mode and produce eggs within two weeks. That is why leaving the box open and lighted serves to discourage re-clutching right away. The object for us is to delay such repetitive nesting as long as possible so that the annual season can manifest naturally and the hens do not become habitual layers with little other life stimulus.

Of course the best method is to encourage hens to spend as much time in the family mode as is possible once they begin nesting. That means not taking away their chicks for many, many weeks, allowing them to be fed and nourished by parents thus satisfying the urges to feed and raise baby birds well into the second month after hatch. Essentially the longer I wait to remove a chick from the nest, the less traumatic it is for the mother of that baby. Obviously an optimum solution is to leave a single chick or two with the parents for the entire fledging/weaning process. Offspring completely parent reared are smarter and more valuable for conservation purposes, while parents receive all the benefits of having a fulfilling family experience, and strengthen their pair bonding considerably.

It is truly sad that so many wild-trapped psittacines have spent decades in captivity, never once being allowed to remain with their clutch of babies to total completion. That is disrespectful to the skills and knowledge these imported psittacines have to impart to young; and it is utterly callous and neglectful in relation to the emotional needs of breeding birds that have been in our captive care for ten, twenty, thirty years or more. Breeders who do the same things with their aviary parrots year after year after year should look closely at what they are accomplishing—and what they are learning—each season. Most any hobbyist can pull babies and handfeed them. Profound skills are often needed to accomplish proper parent raising and strong fledging of one or two young. Not only is such procedure good for the hens longing to fulfill their nesting urge, but in the end it is thoroughly satisfying to the aviculturist.

Aloha nui loa, EB
Texas A&M Needs Help with PDD Tests

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF AVICULTURE REQUESTS HELP TO DIAGNOSE PDD ILLNESS IN PARROTS BY TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY!

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY NEEDS YOUR HELP! Investigators at the Schubot Center at Texas A&M University have developed a Western Blot assay test. The test appears to detect antibodies directed against the causal agent of Proventricular Dilation Disease (PDD), most likely appearing as “avian bornavirus.”

Researchers need to evaluate this test in large numbers of birds to determine the test’s sensitivity, specificity, and usefulness in assisting in the diagnosis of PDD.

Serum from birds with known PDD status is now needed. Your veterinarian can prepare very small quantities (100 ul) of serum blood taken from individual birds. These samples can be submitted to the Schubot Center with a short background on your bird.

Ideally, samples are needed from birds that have tested positive for PDD on crop biopsies. Additional samples are also needed from birds that are negative for PDD, have no history of being exposed to PDD, and that come from an aviary without a history of PDD. Veterinarians should forward serum tests to:

Attn: Schubot Center
Dr. Tizard
Texas A&M University-Veterinary Medicine
215 VMS Bldg.
College Station, TX 77843

Samples submitted will help contribute toward identifying and bringing an end to this devastating disease.

Thank You

The following businesses and people have supported the showing of the film, HOTSPOTS. Their generosity helped make the event a tremendous success.

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Animal Poison Control Center

What To Do If Your Pet Is Poisoned

Don’t panic. Rapid response is important, but panicking can interfere with the process of helping your pet.

Take 30 to 60 seconds to safely collect and have at hand any material involved. This may be of great benefit to your vet and/or APCC toxicologists, as they determine what poison or poisons are involved. In the event that you need to take your pet to a local veterinarian, be sure to take the product’s container with you. Also, collect in a sealable plastic bag any material your pet may have vomited or chewed.

If you witness your pet consuming material that you suspect might be toxic, do not hesitate to seek emergency assistance, even if you do not notice any adverse effects. Sometimes, even if poisoned, an animal may appear normal for several hours or for days after the incident.

Call the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center

The telephone number is (888) 426-4435. There is a $60 consultation fee for this service.

Be ready with the following information:

- The species, breed, age, sex, weight and number of animals involved
- The animal’s symptoms
- Information regarding the exposure, including the agent (if known), the amount of the agent involved and the time elapsed since the time of exposure.
- Have the product container/packaging available for reference.

Please note: If your animal is having seizures, losing consciousness, is unconscious or is having difficulty breathing, telephone ahead and bring your pet immediately to your local veterinarian or emergency veterinary clinic. If necessary, he or she may call the APCC.

Be Prepared

Keep the telephone number of the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center—(888) 426-4435—as well as that of your local veterinarian, in a prominent location.

Invest in an emergency first-aid kit for your pet. The kit should contain:

- a fresh bottle of hydrogen peroxide, 3 percent USP (to induce vomiting for dogs & cats only)
- a turkey baster, bulb syringe or large medicine syringe (to administer peroxide for dogs & cats only)
- saline eye solution
- artificial tear gel (to lubricate eyes after flushing)
- mild grease-cutting dishwashing liquid (for bathing an animal after skin contamination)
- forceps (to remove stingers)
- a muzzle (to protect against fear- or excitement-induced biting)
- a can of your pet’s favorite wet food
- a pet carrier

Always consult a veterinarian or the APCC for directions on how and when to use any emergency first-aid item.

Expert Poison Control Services

Enrollment in the program is free, and offers participating members special benefits.

How can I receive additional information?

For more information about the center’s various services, please contact:

Dana B. Farbman, CVT, Senior Manager, Client and Professional Relations
ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center
1717 South Philo Road, Suite #36
Urbana, IL 61802
1-217-337-5030 (voice)
1-217-344-3586 (fax)
dfarbman@apcc.aspca.org
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"You've tried the rest . . . now try the BEST!"
November
Membership

New Members
Ingrid Harrington

Membership up for Renewal?
Check date on mailing label!
Membership questions, changes, corrections?
Contact Fred Lucas via e-mail at lucast@socal.com.

WVBS Membership / Renewal Application

Please print clearly

Today’s Date: ___________________________  □ New Member  □ Renewal

I am applying for the following Membership (check one).  □ Individual – annual dues $25  □ Family – annual dues $ 30

□ Senior Individual (65+) – annual dues $15  □ Senior Family (65+) – annual dues $ 20

Memberships run for 12 consecutive months.

Or, please consider one of the following If you would like to do a little more for West Valley Bird Society:

□ Platinum – Lifetime Membership -- $ 350  □ Silver Supporter – annual dues $ 125

□ Gold Supporter – annual dues $ 250  □ Bronze Supporter – annual dues $ 75

All membership dues & donations are tax-deductible!

Last Name: ___________________________  First Name: ___________________________  Birth Month: __________

Complete this section only if you have checked “Family”, “Senior Family”, “Gold”, “Silver” or “Bronze” Membership:

Spouse’s / Significant Other’s Name: ___________________________  Birth Month: __________

Children’s Name(s): ___________________________

Address: __________________________________________________________

City: ___________________________  State: _______  Zip: __________

Home Phone: (_____ ) ___________  Work / Other Phone: (_____ ) ___________

Email # 1: ___________________________  Email # 2: ___________________________

(Optional) Sponsoring by: ____________________________________________

In the future, we may offer the club newsletter, A Bird’s Eye View, by email. In that event, would you like to receive the newsletter by email? □ Yes  □ No

Would you like to participate in WVBS volunteer activities? □ Yes  □ No  □ Possibly

Note: the success of the Club depends on the volunteer efforts of members / bird lovers!

I am endorse a check in the amount of $ ________ for the Membership selected at the top.

Please make check payable to: West Valley Bird Society
Mail to: P.O. Box 8221
Northridge, CA  91327-8221

Members are asked to donate to our raffle at least twice a year.

We greatly appreciate your interest in the West Valley Bird Society, and hope to see you at the meetings!
Meeting:
Sunday - 2 p.m.
December 21, 2008
No charge
for guests.
Please join us!

Meeting location:
159 N. Cullen Avenue
(Between Foothill & Bennett)
Glendora, CA

Bird Slide Show by Diane
Super Members Only Raffle
Christmas Potluck

Information: 818-244-2230 or 626-335-2964

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East
San Gabriel
Valley
Bird Society

December
Meeting

Bird Slide Show by Diane
Super Members Only Raffle
Christmas Potluck

5-Table
Stuffed Raffle!

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South Bay Bird Society

Annual
POTLUCK

Monday, January 12, 2009
7:30 pm
Please bring a dish to serve 8 people
Also, bring your best bird stories

Come & Welcome Our 2009 Board of Directors
Raffle

Location: Salvation Army
4223 Emerald Street, Torrance
(Three Blocks West of Hawthorne Boulevard—Map on Website)

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West LA Bird Club

Meeting

Wednesday, January 14, 2009, 7:30 p.m.

Dale Gilkinson
“Captive Foraging”

Dale will show the Scott Echols, DVM, Dipl., ABVP-Avian Practice, DVD. Dale will also give lots of tips in what to use and where to get fun stuff for foraging. He is planning a time for audience members to tell what has been successful for them so be prepared to share your own ideas. Dale promises a “Go Do it Plan” and goodies to take home so you can start your bird into foraging if you have not already done so.

Culver City American Legion Hall
5309 S. Sepulveda (at Janisann)
Culver City
For more information, call 714-510-1478
www.westlabirdclub.com

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Long Beach Bird Breeders Club

Meets Fourth Tuesday of each month
7 p.m.
American Legion Hall
5938 Parkcrest Street
(South of Carson & East of Woodruff Ave.)
Long Beach
For Information call: 562-881-9847

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Parrot Education & Adoption Center

PEAC is not taking in any parrots right now, but they do have a lot of nice birds ready to be adopted. There are classes going throughout the month. The San Diego location has classes the last weekend of the month. Classes in Orange County are on the third Saturday of the month. There is a new class now being offered in Hemet on the first Sunday of the month. Please check the website for topics, times, and directions.

Please contact PEAC at parroted@cox.net or go to the website www.peac.org for more information.
Buy, Sell, Trade

Do you have something you would like to “Buy, Sell, or Trade”? See page 27 for information on placing your own ad. Ads are free to WVBS members.

Peach Faced Lovebirds and Lutino Cockatiels - $30 and up. 818-489-2276.

Adoptions

There are so many birds needing homes out there. If you are considering another bird, please think about adopting one. Call one of these rescue/adoption groups. They all have many wonderful birds just waiting for someone to come and take them home. Many of these groups have websites - take a look!


Wishing you happiness and good health on your Birthday and all the days after.

SHOP at these stores, PRESENT your current MEMBERSHIP CARD, and receive a DISCOUNT!

Disclaimer: Discounts vary from store to store. Some products may not qualify for this discount program. Stores above not honoring current Membership Cards need to be reported to a board Member immediately. WVBS has no control over the percentage of discount or product exclusions. No discounts on live animals!
West Valley Bird Society Inc. is a qualified tax-exempt corporation under IRS Code Section 501(c)(3).

MISSION STATEMENT
West Valley Bird Society offers education about birds and bird related topics and provides a forum for networking with people having similar avian interests.

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E-mail: lbuschesing@thevine.net
Treasurer Dawn Camacho 818-676-1333
Secretary Debbie Treadway 818-988-5879
Director Linda Lindsay 818-992-1811
Director Hazel Lampe 818-761-9025
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Webmistress Ruth Kain 310-377-0393
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Rose Blume Patricia & Karl Volger
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General Meetings
7:30 p.m., 3rd Friday of each month at Granada Pavilion, Auxiliary Hall, 11128 Balboa Boulevard, Granada Hills, CA 91344. See map to the right. www.granadapavilion.com

Board Meetings
7:00 p.m. on the Thursday following the general meeting of the month. Meeting location is Denny’s Restaurant, 16575 Sherman Way, (just West of Hayvenhurst), Van Nuys. All members are welcome. Please confirm with Linda at 661-803-1416 or via e-mail at lbuschesing@thevine.net since meeting dates and times are occasionally changed.

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Business Card $5/month or $25/year
1/4 Page $20/month or $200/year
1/2 Page $35/month or $300/year
Set-up charges for NON-COPY READY ads: $30

Rates are subject to change without notice.
Ads must be camera ready or .pdf, .psd, .jpeg, or .tiff format.
Contact the Editor at 310-377-0393 or e-mail to voltrot@aol.com

Buy, Sell, Trade ads are free to WVBS members. The fee to non-members is $5.00 per issue. Bulletins are mailed to all WVBS members and various clubs and businesses. Ads run for one month only and need to be resubmitted each month.

How to contact the editor:
Phone: 310-377-0393 • E-mail: voltrot@aol.com

WVBS membership runs for a period of 12 months starting from the month that you join. The date listed above your name on the mailing label is the month and year your membership expires.

West Valley Bird Society Website
www.thewestvalleybirdsociety.com
December Meeting
Friday, December 19, 2008, 7:30 p.m.
Holiday Party Potluck

EVERYONE BRING A DISH!

Membership Up For Renewal?
Check Date on Mailing Label Below!

First Class Mail to: