Great news! **A Bird’s Eye View** is back! As you may know, earlier this year we lost our dear friend and long-time contributor to the West Valley Bird Society, Ruth Kain. She not only produced and edited our newsletter, she also served as web mistress, among other duties. “We miss you, Ruth”. It’s not easy to fill the shoes of someone so talented, so we’ve had to regroup and carry on. With that said, here’s our long-awaited attempt at publishing the news about our club. Thanks for your patience.

As we learn to create an updated newsletter, we will actively solicit from all of you, our readers and club members, the opportunity to submit your stories, photos, poems, and general news articles about topics we enjoy most: our birds, of course!

We know how talented they are, we know how demanding they are, we know how they manipulate us—so let’s hear some of those stories and anecdotes that make our lives complete. Snap a picture and jot down the latest drama that your avian friend created. Post a close-up of those $175 dress shoes that now have a gaping hole in the toe because you-know-who flew off their cage when you weren’t looking and just happened to wander into your clothes closet. We’ve all been there. Show a picture of the smiling culprit. Have you traveled somewhere out of your neighborhood and encountered any other “bird people”? Helped rescue any wayward flying creatures? Maybe you have a secret recipe that causes your companion to turn somersaults. We want to hear about it. We can’t wait! This is your newsletter too.

- Carl
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Susan shows us that by looking to the natural world we can reclaim lost parts of ourselves and heal our broken relationships with both people and our beloved animal companions, our broken hearts and disconnection from our oneness with All Life. Susan lives in Los Angeles, CA with her Doberman, Jody, and her African grey, Joseleyn and Sengal, Laur.

For more information go to: http://www.channelanimal.com

Susan is available to give telepathic communication/behavioral consultation sessions immediately following talk on Friday Oct.21, 2011 at 7:30 PM. You may bring photos of your animal friends. Price is $50 for 20 minute reading. Bring exact change/check.

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Calendar of Events

WVBS 2011

- October 21 - Club Meeting - Susan Hill
- November 18 - Club Meeting - Madeline Franco
- December 16 - Club Meeting - Christmas Potluck
- 2012 is full of even more surprises!
- Join the fun.

Remember to bring a dish to share or leave a donation. Thanks!

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.

Birds are welcome at our meetings, but please:

- 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.
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Remember—please send photos of your bird to the editor at acarl99@hotmail.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. Carl

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Diane Grindol: “How Birds Make a Difference in Your Life” Diane Grindol, long-time columnist for BIRD TALK and author of several bird care books, including Cockatiels For Dummies® and Teaching Your Bird to Talk, will speak on how having companion birds has changed her life. We’ll look at changes you’ve probably noticed in your life, too, from the amount of exotic produce in your fridge to the number of dust busters in your house. This is a true but tongue-in-cheek look at owning a companion bird (or several).

Sybil Eden: “From the Beginning to Now: The Growth of the Avian Welfare Movement” Sybil is the Founder and President of The Oasis Sanctuary in Benson, AZ, a rescue facility for captive exotic birds and home to the famous sea-faring macaw, Guilliver. Sybil began her professional life in the art world, and in 1996 was directing an artists’ coop that she’d founded, when she decided to take her 50+ rescued parrots and establish a non-profit sanctuary for them and others who shared their plight. The result, The Oasis Sanctuary, is currently home to over 600 parrots, who now have the quality of life they so deserve.

Noelle Fontaine: “Where Do We Go from Here? Helping People Keep their Parrots!” How do we catapult the exotics industry out of the limitations of the proverbial “pet in the living room” and into educated, contributing, long-term capable family environments? Noelle Fontaine, well-known conservationist of the blue Macaws, helps us identify the characteristics of certain people that enable them to keep their exotic animals through crisis; how we, the parrot community, can expand our resources, knowledge, and experiences to assist during times of crisis; and how proper facilities make a difference in the long term.

Jeffrey Jenkins DVM, D-ABVP-Avian: “Debunking the Myths of Parrot Ownership” We are proud to present Dr. Jenkins, one of our own PEAC veterinarians and a member of our Board of Directors. Dr. Jenkins is internationally recognized for his work and research in avian medicine and surgery. He was among the first group of 20 vets to achieve the Diplomate status in Avian Practice by the American Board of Veterinary Practitioners. He has lectured nationally and internationally on a variety of topics in avian medicine, and his work has been published in numerous peer-reviewed journals, texts, and monographs.

Hillary Hankey: “Shaping the Mutually-Enriching Human / Avian Relationship” We have coexisted with parrots for thousands of years, but only in the last few decades have we begun to examine our role in this relationship. Many of the ways we have been taught to manage parrot behavior fail to prioritize communication, inhibiting the potential for a rich relationship. Using positive reinforcement and empowerment, we can replace undesired behaviors with mutually beneficial ones and break down communication barriers to construct a truly enriching relationship. Hillary Hankey, a professional animal trainer, will provide training demonstrations assisted by PEAC program birds!

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The Dangers of Stunting in Handfed Psittacines By EB Cravens

The accepted practice of handfeeding parrot chicks in order to make them into social house pets has a sobering down side to it.

There are quite a few undersized pet psittacines coming on the market these days so buyers need to beware!

A vast majority of these are incubator-hatched babies fed from 'day one.' Large macaws are the most common, but also cockatoos, amazons, and the occasional conure. Truly parrot breeders, pet stores and the buying public need to concentrate to stop this growing problem.

With the advent of so many popular books on incubation methods and neonate husbandry, there is an increasing number of beginning aviculturists who are rushing out to buy themselves an incubator so that they may take the eggs away from their breeding hens and hatch and feed the chicks artificially. In some cases, this works out fine, but where the novice reads the guidebook less than thoroughly, or where corners are cut in the handfeeding process, the results can often be malnourished, undersized, stunted parrot babies.

The Natural Method

All expert aviculturists know that the best possible start to be given a domestically-hatched psittacine chick is to be fed by its parents for at least 21 to 30 days. At that stage, the critical internal formation of the bird has climaxed and the bird's body growth begins to accelerate at a great rate. Eyes are open and well-formed without the stress of too much early light. Brain, lungs, kidneys, and liver are all developed. Immune system resistance to threats is well taken care of by the parents’ regurgitation of natural flora.

Chicks fed by humans from day one incubator hatching have slower growth curves, and if adequate steps are not taken, the parrot may never recover full development. In addition, if a beginner does not keep daily weight charts and compare them with professional data, he or she may not even know that the baby bird is undersized and malnourished. Until one has fed many chicks of a certain species, one cannot know what is an optimum growth rate.

Much of the trend to pulling eggs and buying an incubator comes from breeders too inexperienced, or too impatient to teach their hens to set well, hatch, and feed their chicks. Young parrot pairs who make mistakes their first time or two as 'teenage' breeders are labeled as 'incompetent', and turned into egg factories, while the breeder dooms himself to round-the-clock feedings and one-sided pets totally imprinted on humans. Many people are trying to breed young parrots well before their optimal breeding age, but that is another story.

I received a call recently from a man who wanted to buy an incubator to hatch his sun conure chicks because the 18-month old hen was making mistakes. I mean, sun conures are excellent, prolific caring parents!! There is absolutely no reason to incubate sun eggs from a healthy experienced pair of birds.

The reason one sees so many stunted macaw pets is that keepers do not run enough nutritious formula calories through the birds to develop full-sized parrots. Crops are incompletely filled, allowed to empty over and over again between too-long feeding intervals, and birds are forced on to 4, 6, 8, and 12 hour schedules prematurely. Some keepers who insist on getting a full-night's sleep, leave babies with empty crops for 1½ to 2 hours every morning for weeks. Add to that the times the bird empties and goes 15-30 minutes before being re-fed and you have some 2-4 hours empty crop 'down time' each day. Over an 8-12 week handfeeding period that can result in a stunted bird.

So Many Stunted Hyacinths

Furthermore, many aviculturists who have fed a few blue and gold or greenwing macaws assume that they have the know-how to handfeed and raise a Hyacinthine macaw. When the larger Hyacinthine is fed, raised and weaned much like its smaller cousins, it turns out 10-15% undersized. Just go to the bird marts and look at the hyacinths often offered for sale—huge heads, huge feet, small chest and poorly muscled. Hyacinthine nutritional needs are different. Many of the commercial formulas on the market need to be fortified in the home with say, macadamia nuts crushed and ground, for optimum growth as the result. We had raised dozens of blue and golds, scarlets, etc. before attempting our first hyacinthine, yet we still had phone numbers of four hyacinthine experts to call for advice... and did we use them! 'Baby Huey' turned out huge, gentle,
beautiful, and able to fly, but it was the help we received in consultation that made the difference.

A good rule is if you have not raised a baby or more of a certain species, then ask for help and advice from another breeder experienced with that species.

Handfed Parakeet Species

Stunting of captive chicks is particularly prevalent in handfed parakeet species which in the wild are egg laid, hatched, fed, and fledged during a brief season with a limited abundant food supply. Princess of Wales, Neophemas, Amboina Kings, small lorikeets, and pocket parrots all fit into this category. In nature, the season moves in, and boom, boom, boom, the chicks are born, weaned, and gone from the nest. They attain optimum body size because of the constant supply of food packed into their crops day and night by parents.

I have raised Princess Parakeets by hand on occasion over the years and have yet to accomplish an eight hour night's sleep with this species because the chicks empty far sooner right up until they begin fighting the syringe to wean. What's more, it was only after realizing that I need to be feeding clean sterile food upon clean sterile food (crop 90% empty) round the clock with Princess that I began to get weaned fledglings from handfeeding which had the same full size as the parent-raised chicks my pairs raised their last clutch of the season. My 1997 Amboina King babies are much the same. They grow fast and they process a full crop quickly and they start fledging activity weeks before the slower-growing Amazons and cockatoos. To keep them full round the clock means setting the alarm every night—sometimes at five and seven-hour intervals. Such practices are often necessary to avoid stunting...

If a breeder absolutely must have an eight or ten hour break in feeding routine for a chick who needs to be filled more often, the best procedure is to anticipate the long night, etc. and during the day feed the birds every five or six hours, keeping them full and essentially adding one extra feeding to the daytime hours. Chicks treated like this will not be as hungry at night. The caloric intake is the same, it is only weighted to the a.m. feeding. When a feeding is missed, the next day the chicks will empty very quickly and will need to be fed again two or three hours later.

Mimicking Natural Behaviors

All such methods are aimed at mimicking the behavior of wild parrots who will keep their chicks full of food—as long as the food supply is available. Optimal breeding season is geared to the abundance of the natural foods parrots feed their chicks. It goes without saying that any handfeeder who chooses to feed fresh clean formula on top of formula in the last 10% of the crop, needs to be extra careful in hygiene practices. But in ten years we have never developed a sour crop in any of our babies. It is my belief that the concept of letting the crop empty in-between every feeding is outdated aviculture. Mistakes made with commercial baby formula gruels can also cause stunting.

Many novices mix their food too thin. It fills up a chick's crop but does not provide adequate nourishment. Formulas should be mixed so that they draw slowly up into a syringe, or pour off of a spoon thickly but not in gobs. Poorly mixed gruel can also cause problems because it dries out a chick and becomes indigestible. Any chick droppings which show grainy undigested substance are suspect. We always add Spirulina and often fresh papaya pulp or mashed apple to formula to provide green nourishment and raw enzymes not available in processed baby formula powders.

It is no surprise that field studies of crop contents show that many parrots feed an extremely 'green' regurgitate to chicks in the first several days after they hatch. Our amazon, conure, and parakeet pairs always seek our fresh greens, celery, buds, and such on the first days after the hatch. Incubator chicks, too need such green food. Where green juices are not available, use spirulina or wheatgrass powder.

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**Recognizing a Stunted Parrot**

So how does one go about recognizing a stunted baby handfed parrot? Especially for this article, I talked with expert aviculturist Dale R. Thompson. He indicated that the malnourished chick will have very red skin—not shiny, pudgy, and healthy looking. "Normal skin will billow back if gently pinched," Thompson explained. "Stunted skin does not rebound. Dehydration is the first problem."

In macaws, one sees a body out of proportion with large head and feet. Amazons will have a large head and a nob where the cere develops—this is early skull malformation. "Many handfed black palm cockatoos have this nob," Thompson said, "It is a sign of poor feeding." He added that it is the belief of experts that such birds will grow into adults but will have brain damage and in several generations of stunted babies, pelvic problems will begin to show. Another sign of stunting in macaws is feathers on the top of the head growing in swirls or like a 'cowlick.'"
I recently went to a friend's house where there was a new incubator. His first two chicks (Moluccan and Blue & Gold) were both underfed, developing stunted with turned-in toes and feet. At 14 days, they were very undersized. Nutrition, feeding amount, and schedule were all optimized to a professional level and daily weight charts were kept. I am happy to say the birds recouped their early losses and grew excellently.

Another sign of malnourishment in parrot chicks is acute hunger anxiety and noisy chicks. Well-fed babies will sleep quietly after feeding. If a chick is begging, it is for a reason! When a parrot baby keeps up noisy frantic begging even after being filled up, it is a sign the chick was allowed to get too empty. The begging will not stop until some of the new food is digested. This is a signal to increase the amount of food or frequency of feeding.

Other causes of stunting, according to Thompson are too high temperature of the babies caused by the brooder or the nursery climate. Formula too high in protein can cause this also. It can create a hyperactive baby and one that can literally 'burn up' and weaken an internal organ with heat by the time it grows to adulthood. This can be a problem in lories where the protein needs are less.

**Conclusions**

So it can be seen that stunting in handfed psittacines may be traced to many different causes. Guidelines which best avoid these failings are:

1. Train your breeding pairs to hatch and feed their own chicks at least 21 to 30 days, longer if possible for the last clutch of the season.
2. Concentrate your handfeeding in youngest chicks to keep empty crop 'down time' out of the equation, carefully feeding clean food on top of 10% full crop necessary.
3. Study the wild parrot weaning/fledging periods for the species you keep, so that you neither force early weaning nor delay it. Species that fledge quickly need more nutritional input round the clock up to weaning.
4. Get help when taking on a new species. The finest aviculturists share their expertise with conscientious beginners. Every time I take on a new species, I am again a novice!
5. Until you have raised many babies of several genus, do not presume you can visually ascertain growth curves. Keep weight charts. They have the added advantage of early diagnosis of an upset stomach.
6. Please think twice before you commit your hens' eggs to an incubator. Young mothers need time to learn to get it right. Be patient and prepare for the future.

**A Real Accomplishment**

It is my belief that the highest avicultural accomplishment is taking an unrelated pair of domestic-raised psittacines and teaching them to eventually raise one or two of their own chicks to weaning and fledging. I do not keep any CITES I endangered species and therefore, you could not GIVE me an incubator. I have plenty of friends who incubate all their most valuable eggs and feed them from day one. No thank you. I find the routine totally unchallenging, not to mention what this technique is doing to handfed parrot prices in the U.S. and the quality of breeder birds for the future.

As a prospective pet owner, learn to ask intelligent questions about the parrot you are considering. “Was it parent started?” is one of the first. Try to get a view of the baby's parents or healthy adults of the same species so you know what size the parrot should be. Stay away from any pet you see as 'lethargic' or 'dim-witted." In talking with Sally Blanchard about this topic, she revealed that she has in the course of her behavioral work, encountered "somewhat retarded or undeveloped mentally" parrots who were not coincidentally stunted physically. Sally told me that "While these birds were often sweet, much of their pet potential had been compromised."

And finally, forward this article and spread the word. Stunting can be prevented. Aviculture's future babies will thank us.

With aloha, EB
**October Membership**

**New Member**

No New Members

Membership questions, changes, corrections? Contact Fred Lucas at lucast@social.com.

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**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

**Receive the Newsletter by E-mail or add $20 to receive it by mail.**

Free Copies of “A Bird’s Eye View” Newsletter are available at monthly meetings!

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 AND 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: __________

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(Optional) Sponsored by: __________________________________________________________________

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 enclosing 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 refreshment table each month.

We greatly appreciate your interest in the West Valley Bird Society, and hope to see you at the meetings!
PEAC is not able to accept new parrots yet, however, they have established a waiting list. They do have a lot of nice birds ready to be adopted. Seminars in San Diego are usually the last Sunday of the month. Classes in Temecula will begin at the end of February at Wings & Beaks! Please check the website for topics, times, and directions.

Please contact PEAC at barb_peac@verizon.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.

Red-bellied Parrot babies - handfed and so sweet. 818-489-2276.

HF Pacific Parrotlets, HF WF and Normal Cockatiels (Most Mutations), HF and Parent Raised Lovebird (Many Mutations). Wanted to trade for new bloodlines (Breeder Black Cheek Lovebirds – 3 available now). Contact Dale at 1-626-335-2964

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!


October and November Babies

October

We need names!

November

We need names!

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 offers education about birds and bird-related topics and provides a forum for networking with people having similar avian interests.

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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 lbuesching@thevine.net since meeting dates and times are occasionally changed.
October Meeting

Friday, October 21, 2011, 7:30 p.m.

Guest Speaker:
Susan Hill

EVERYONE BRING A DISH!

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

First Class Mail to: