

Squawk 'n' Talk

Volume 3, Issue 12

December 2003



Presidential Perch

Monthly Update

Phyllis Cotton

It is hard to believe Christmas is just around the corner! I hope everyone can attend our annual holiday party on Dec 21st at 2:00 PM. We will have fun & games along with a lot of good food to eat. Anyone wishing to participate in the gift exchange can bring a wrapped gift (\$10.00 limit). I perused the internet and found the actual rules for playing "Rob Your Neighbor" so this year we will play it according to the rules! That should be great fun! Snacks & side dishes are welcomed as well. Bring your favorite dish to share. If you have questions, please call Pat Seiler, our Hospitality Chairman.

Nominations were made in November for the next term; therefore we will hold the election in December at the meeting prior to the festivities. We have a great slate of nominees up for election. Each has been a great asset as well as a hard worker for our club.

I have some good news! Niki Shaffer has agreed to coordinate the annual fair with me! Thank you, Niki! Our featured guest speaker has already been booked. We are pleased to announce that Katy McElroy, renowned author, researcher and Cockatoo breeder from Hornbeam Aviary in Ohio, will be speaking on Saturday, August 28th. Katy & her husband lived for many years in Australia before moving to Ohio. To learn more about Katy, you can visit her website at:

<http://www.hornbeamaviary.com>

Please let Niki or me know if you have any suggestions or new ideas for the fair. We are always open to new ideas & ways of doing things. Let us know if there is any special topic you might like to see discussed or a speaker you would be interested in hearing at our seminars as well.

We have many new members and would love to see them at our party! I apologize to the members who attempted to

See President, on Page 4

A PARROT'S BILL OF RIGHTS

Stewart A. Metz, M.D.

1. GET TO KNOW ABOUT PARROTS BEFORE YOU BRING ME HOME - I am not a domesticated pet like a dog or cat. I still have the spirit of the jungle in me. I have special needs which you may find it hard to fill. Please don't learn these too late for my well-being. And please don't acquire one of my cousins wild from the jungle—it will jeopardize his survival and well-being, and that won't be a party for you either!

2. GIVE ME THE LARGEST HOME POSSIBLE - I am used to flying through rainforests or savannas. I have given up this great gift for your pleasure. At the very least, give me enough room to flap my wings and exercise. And I need toys for my amusement and wood to chew—otherwise, I might confuse your Home with the forest and its trees.

3. GIVE ME A NUTRITIOUS DIET - I need a wide variety of fresh and nutritious foods, even if they take time to prepare. I cannot survive on seeds alone. Take time to learn what my needs, and preferences, are.

4. LET ME HAVE A 'SOCIAL LIFE' - I am a gregarious flock animal—but I am not one of you. I need lots of socialization to learn how to act with you, and with my siblings. I also need to have adequate quality time with you every day—no matter what your schedule or other needs are. I am a living, feeling creature. Above all, I need to be able to have complete trust in you, and count on your predictability in looking after me—every day.

5. LET ME BE CLEAN - I may like to drop food or even throw it, but I need meticulous cleanliness to be healthy. My skin itches without frequent showers, the barbs of my feathers won't seal if they become oily and, worst of all, I may become ill if my food or water is not always sanitary.

6. I NEED MY OWN DOCTOR - You may not understand my physiology and therefore you may not recognize it early on when I get sick. And it may be too late when you do, because I hide my illnesses (remember what I said about my being an animal of the jungle, where there are lots of predators). And I need an avian vet—a specialist (no HMOs for me please). If you can't afford one, perhaps you shouldn't have taken me home.

See Rights, on Page 3

Articles and Content

Thanks to Dr. Metz, for the Bill of Rights, and to Phyllis, who ran across it and secured Dr. Metz' permission with an email. Please keep your eye, or your web browser, peeled for material of interest.

The rest of the articles this month come from MAARS' handbook. They were gracious and gave permission to reprint portions of its content. Remember, information about Midwest Avian Adoption & Rescue Services at: www.maars.org.

The first article has a lot to say about herbs and nutrition. There is a short item about pine cones as treats, and a strategy for converting a bird from seed to pellets. Read the article about Parrotlets and then ask Dorene about them...

Herbs for Health

More and more aviculturists desire to use natural foods and supplements for their bird's attainment of optimum health. Natural medicine may now be considered as an adjunct to conventional therapy or in place of conventional therapy for their bird when it is suffering from an illness or disease. Certain whole foods or whole food supplements can be added to the daily diet of your bird. These foods and supplements would be used as a preventive measure and for their nutritional values. For illness and disease there are many herbal formulas or remedies that can aid in the healing of many common avian ailments. The following list contains a handful of the herbs that can be used for optimum avian health and/or in some cases as medicine. However, I recommend that you seek the assistance and guidance of an individual experienced with herbs and birds when using most herbs, especially if they are to be used to ameliorate infection or disease.

Knowing the proper dosage of herbs for medicinal purposes takes education and knowledge not only of the herbs themselves, but also of the avian anatomy and physiology and the pathology and nature of disease. If the herbal dosage isn't enough, often there will be no results. When this occurs, the user of the herb may believe the herb doesn't work or won't have an effect on the ailment. Not necessarily true. If the dosage is too high your bird may experience a toxic reaction.

When using herbs it is essential that not only the weight of the bird is taken into account, but also the type of illness or disease the bird is experiencing along with how long the bird has been ill and the stage of the illness. All of these factors help lead to the right remedy and right dose.

Parsley - This frilly green herb is most commonly known for its use as a garnish, but it would be a wonderful addition to your bird's diet. Parsley is rich in beta carotene, B-complex, vitamin C, iron, potassium, calcium, phosphorus, sulfur and folate. Parsley also supplies chlorophyll, which aids tissue repair, purifies the blood and liver and assists in red blood cell formation. This herb may be helpful in the amelioration of kidney disease, diabetes, and blood disorders (infections). It is a well-known remedy for water retention and indigestion. I use parsley as a daily ingredient in my birds' diets.

See Herbs, on Page 4

Living With a Parrotlet

A Big Bird In a Little Body

Parrotlets are one of the smallest know Parrots. They have a lifespan of approximately 20 years.

The most common are the Pacific Parrotlets (Celestial Parrotlet or Lesson's Parrotlet). They are from the Pacific side of the Andes from West Ecuador to Northwester Peru. They range in size from 4 ¾ - 5 ½ in. They are green with the male showing a cobalt blue flight feathers and a blue streak starting above the eyes to the back of the neck. The female does not have the cobalt blue streak and both sexes have blue rumps. It has been stated that the males are less aggressive than female but I believe that both sexes make wonderful companions and will form strong bonds with their human companions. Females may tend to choose one human companion whereas males will not be as fussy. As with any parrot species, a lot of their tameness depends on the amount of time you spend with them.

A pair verses a single Parrotlet is a big decision . . . what are you looking for as a companion and how much time do you have to spend is the question to ask yourself. If your time is limited it is not fair to have only one Parrotlet. If you go with a pair than both birds need to be continuously socialized to gain trust. If you want your Parrotlet to choose you as his/her companion then stay with a single bird as your choice.

Don't let their size fool you. All Parrots are highly intelligent and interactive creatures. Their natural instincts are to be wild, social, aggressive and territorial and in their natural habitat they live together as flocks. If a Parrot does not have a mate, he will have a need to become an active member of your family so you can feel protected and have security.

7. PLEASE DON'T PUNISH ME - Just as I don't always understand your peculiarities, you may not understand mine. I don't TRY to get in trouble—remember, a house is not the jungle. If I do screw up, don't yell at me and never hit me. I have sensitive ears and I may never trust you again if you strike me. Hands are sometimes scary things to us (why in the world would you not be zygodactylous like us?). Even more importantly, we don't learn by punishment. We are gentle creatures who only strike back to protect ourselves; we learn through patience and love.

8. SPEAK MY "LANGUAGE" - I know you get upset with me when I knock over my water bowl, throw food, scream or pluck my feathers. I don't do these to annoy you—I am probably trying to tell you something (perhaps that I am hurting, lonely, or sad.). Learn to speak MY (body) language. Remember that I, alone of all creatures on this planet, learn to speak yours!

9. SEE ME AS AN INDIVIDUAL - I am a unique and feeling being... No two of us are alike. Please don't be disappointed in me if I don't talk like you wanted, or can't do the tricks that your friend's parrot can do. But if you pay close attention to me (and I always empathize with you, whether you know it or not), I will show you a unique being who will give you so much more than talking and playing.. Give me a chance to show you who I am; I think you'll find the effort worth it. And remember—I am not an ornament; I do not enhance ANY living room décor. And I am not a status symbol—if you use me as such, I might nip at your up-turned nose!

10. SHARE YOUR LOVE WITH ME - Above all, please remember that you are my Special Person. I put all my trust and faith in you... We parrots are used to being monogamous. (No bar-hopping for us!). So please don't go away for long periods or give me away—that would be a sadness from which I may never recover. If that seems to be asking a lot, remember—you could have learned about my needs before bringing me home. Even having a baby or taking a new job isn't a fair reason—you made a commitment to me FIRST. And if you think that you must leave me because you might die, provide for me forever after you leave. I may live to a ripe old age but I can't provide for myself. Remember I'm in a small cage amongst people who are not of my blood.

11. YOUR RIGHTS - You have lots of rights, but I can only assure one. And that is, if you treat me the way I described above, I will reward you with unwavering love, humor, knowledge, beauty, dedication-- and a sense of wonder and awe you haven't felt since you were a child. When you took me home, you became my Flock Leader, indeed, my entire universe—for life. I would hang the moon and stars for you if I could. We are one in Heart and Soul.

Be a Santa for World Bird Sanctuary

There is a need for toys for some of the large birds at the World Bird Sanctuary. They are, at least, two Thick-billed Parrots a Macaw and an Amazon.

This issue was raised in a posting on the mailing list. If you have anything you would like to donate, or would like to coordinate collection and delivery, please post an email message on our Yahoo! Group:

GatewayParrots@YahooGroups.com

Or with your browser:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/GatewayParrots>

Converting to Pellets

Let the bird eat all day from the seed diet, offering soft food and fruit and veggies when they are being served to the rest of the flock. After dark (AKA bedtime) switch the dishes, take out the seed and replace with pellets. The birds eat first thing in the morning and make sure that the pellet is their only choice. Then, in the evening, just before their bedtime snack, change the dishes again and allow them to fill up on seed. Again remove the dish after bedtime and replace with the pellets.

Pine Cones

Pine cones make excellent toys for birds. When collecting pinecones, ensure that they are not old, damp, moldy or growing moss. Ideally one should collect pinecones as soon as possible after they have fallen to the ground and before they have become wet from rain. This is not always possible. Pine cones are also a favorite hiding spot for little beasts such as spiders and earwigs.

It is not possible to "sterilize" pinecones but heating in an oven will kill molds and little critters and make them safe for the birds to chew on. I heat pinecones in an oven for about 20 minutes at 225 degrees F, and then turn off the oven. The pinecones are left in the oven for approx. 2 hours to dry out. It is important not to exceed 225 degrees F. otherwise the pinecones will scorch and possibly catch on fire.

The seeds inside the cones are a special treat and are safe for the birds to eat.

attend a meeting but were unable to locate us in the Training Center. We will have signs posted at the front desk of the Humane Society on every meeting day so this does not happen again. I also apologize to the new members who did come to a meeting but were disappointed when we didn't have the quorum of 15 members, according to our bylaws, in order to have a legal meeting. To prevent this sort of thing from happening again, it is important that as many members as possible try to attend the meetings. Please come, get to know the other members and get involved. We welcome your participation & ideas.

Don't forget that the December meeting will be held in the Lecture Hall, which is on the lower level of the main Humane Society building, due to renovation of the Training Center. All birds are welcome to attend the party as well! The room is carpeted, so please bring something to cover the floor under your birds.

I look forward to seeing everyone on the 21st!

Free Listing

Trey Shaffer

Just another reminder. Got a business? Want a listing?

It is up to the business to request the listing and provide information in a particular format. The details are on the website with a link labeled, Businesses, on the left side of the home page. A short article, similar to this one, appeared in the August newsletter. To date, I have not received any requests for listing. Please forward the information requested on the website, if you would like your business listed.

Election Coming

At the November meeting the following were nominated.

Nominations for officers were Dorene Olson, Secretary; David Kinkade, Treasurer; Carol Grommet, Membership Secretary.

Nominations for the Board included: Christine Kinkade, Nancy Marron and Bob Smallwood. All positions were uncontested. The election will be held at the December meeting, before the party begins.

Prayer

Hear our humble prayer, O God, for our friends the animals. Especially for animals who are suffering, for animals that are overworked, underfed, cruelly treated:

for all wistful creatures in captivity that beat their wings against bars.

For any that are hunted and lost or deserted or frightened or hungry,

for all that must be put to death.

We entreat for them all the mercy and pity, and for those who deal with them we ask a heart of compassion and gentle hands and kindly words.

Make us, ourselves; to be true friends to animals and so share the blessings of the merciful.

Albert Schweitzer

Herbs from Page 1

Garlic - This herb is one of the most useful available. Garlic acts as an ant microbial with the potential to ameliorate many types of infections. It is rich in sulfur, phosphorus, zinc, bioflavonoids, and vitamin C. I use garlic powder as a preventive medicine in my birds' diets.

Comfrey - Comfrey has been used as a healing herb since at least the Roman times. Comfrey's constituents are: mucilage, allantoin, (up to 0.8 %), pyrrolizidine alkaloids, tannins, resin, essential oils, carotene, glycosides, beta-sitosterol, and steroidal saponins, triterpenoids, vitamin B12, C, E, protein (up to 33 %), potassium, iron, silica, zinc and other mineral salts.

Comfrey has been successfully used in treating wounds, aiding in digestive irritation (passing through if there is nothing to heal), and while it contains a fair amount of silica, is useful in the stimulation of bone, connective tissue and cartilage repair. It is also valued as a demulcent herb rich in complex mucilage materials, which can soothe inflamed mucous membranes, and improve respiratory disorders. I use fresh grown comfrey in my birds' diets during the summer/fall months, alternating with mustard greens and dandelion greens.

Ginger root - This herb is used for intestinal upsets

Continued on next page

and motion sickness. Ginger root is available in many forms and can be used for birds that are experiencing car sickness and indigestion. The most common forms used are the capsule powder, cookie, candied, fresh grated, and as a liquid extract or tea. Ginger is also used as a natural antibiotic, anti-inflammatory and is a powerful antioxidant. Its main beneficial compounds are gingerols, zingerone and shogaols. When I make a ginger root tea, I add just a touch of cinnamon for palatability. Ginger is rich in potassium, silicon, and manganese with moderate amounts of vitamins A, C, B complex, magnesium and phosphorus.

Chamomile - This is an especially valuable calming herb. In addition, it aids in digestion and because of its ability to relax the nervous system it promotes a restful sleep. Chamomile, a member of the daisy family, is a gentle medicinal herb and can be used safely and effectively for intestinal inflammation, constipation, diarrhea and mild infection. There are two common species of chamomile - German chamomile and Roman chamomile. German chamomile contains several valuable constituents - flavonoids and coumarins that aid in reducing intestinal irritation and relax the muscles. While both plants have similar medicinal properties, it is thought that the German species is more valuable as an anti-bacterial medicine. For the best results when making a tea for your birds, use fresh flowers and be sure to steep them for 5 minutes. Chamomile is high in calcium and magnesium and also contains moderate amounts of potassium, manganese and phosphorus.

Cranberry - Cranberries are a fruit, but are used as an herb in herbal medicine's materia medica. The berry, its juice or a cranberry herbal extract is used for kidney or urinary tract infection caused by bacteria, usually E. coli. Cranberry's beneficial action on the urinary system is the result of its vitamin C and flavonoids content. Be sure that if you use the juice form that you choose one that is naturally sweetened or purchase a brand that is sugar-free. You can add a couple of grains of Sucanat, a natural granulated cane juice.

Dandelion - The dandelion plant is often thought of as a pesky weed, but it has many beneficial qualities. Fresh young leaves, used before flowering has developed, possess the most valuable medicinal components. The most valuable attribute of dandelion leaves is its ability to reduce poisons in the body. Therefore, it aids as a blood-detoxifying agent. This herb contains nutrients that increase the nutritional value of your bird's diet. It is rich in calcium, potassium and sodium. It is also high in vitamin A, B1, B2, B6, B12, C, E, and iron. Fresh dandelion greens are fed to my birds during the summer/fall months and are always greatly appreciated.

Kelp - Kelp is a type of seaweed that is known for its rich iodine content. Its high mineral content makes it a popular nutritive herb. It can be beneficial to those birds that have a thyroid condition such as goiter or hypothyroidism. Symptoms of an under active thyroid manifest themselves in dry skin and feathers, sensitivity to cold, fatigue, constipation, repeated infections and so forth. By supplying a bird's diet with kelp, this may increase its basal metabolic rate, improve the release of energy from foods, and reduce excess body weight. Kelp also assists in the elimination of toxins and may help remove toxic metals from the body. It is rich in the following nutrients - iodine, potassium, sodium, calcium, magnesium, sulfur, silicon, iron, and B complex vitamins. Another seaweed that is beneficial to health is dulse and can be added to the diet in place of kelp. Kelp comes in either a powder or granulated form. I use kelp as a supplement in my birds' diets.

Pumpkin Seed - The seeds of the pumpkin have long been a traditional herbal remedy in China. The pumpkin seed is highly nutritional and is an excellent source of beta-carotene, B vitamins, zinc, iron, calcium, magnesium, and phosphorus. It is used as an anti-parasitic agent and may also increase fertility. Pumpkin seeds are an ingredient in my birds' diets.

Rose Hips - Rose hips are rich in vitamin C and contain 60 times more vitamin C than lemons. They are beneficial for the nervous system, infections, and used as a blood-detoxifier. Rose hips also provide vitamin A, E, rutin (bioflavonoid), iron, selenium, manganese and B complex.

Alfalfa - A relative of the pea and is classified as a legume, alfalfa has been used as a food, medicine and a nutritional supplement. The powder form can be used in your bird's diet to increase the diet's nutritional value. Alfalfa seeds and sprouts are nutritious and provide beta carotene and many important nutrients. They are rich in protein, contain eight essential amino acids as well as the vitamins: B complex, D, C, E and K and the minerals: calcium, phosphorus, magnesium, iron and potassium. The leaves, petals, flowers, and sprouts are commonly used for intestinal disorders and can be used in the liquid form as a blood-cleansing tonic. Alfalfa has anti-inflammatory properties and is a very helpful treatment for gout, an arthritic condition. For diabetics, alfalfa has been known to lower blood sugar and may reduce the dosage of insulin needed to regulate blood sugar levels. This herb has been useful in cases of hemorrhaging and as a fungal infection inhibitor. Alfalfa powder is used in my birds' diet as a dietary supplement.

Aloe Vera - The Aloe Vera plant is a relative of the lily family. The main therapeutic purposes of this plant are that it aids in the amelioration of intestinal tract irritation, indigestion, infection and toxins, reduces inflammation and pain, heals burns and wounds and improves immune system function. Aloe Vera comes in a capsule form, liquid form, and directly from the

plant as a gel. The overuse of Aloe Vera products can cause diarrhea and severe abdominal pain. This herb is rich in vitamin C and the minerals: selenium and germanium.

Bee Pollen - Bee pollen is a yellowish dust that is produced by the anthers of male flowers. It is an exceptionally healthy addition to your bird's diet. It is rich in vitamins A, B complex, C, D, E, and K, and numerous minerals, amino acids, fatty acids and enzymes. It has immune-strengthening properties thereby promoting healing and the resistance to disease. Bee pollen has many therapeutic uses because of its antimicrobial effects. From cancer to viral infections, I would suggest the use of bee pollen for any condition that's root cause is a compromised immune system. I offer my birds bee pollen 3-4 times a week as a preventative medicine.

Capsicum - Chili peppers are a member of the Capsicum family and contain a compound called capsaicin. This substance is highly regarded for its ability to lower cholesterol and can alleviate symptoms of sinus congestion, keeping the air passages clear. Capsicum can be used to stop bleeding, aid in digestion, improve circulation, and may neutralize carcinogens and boost the immune system. Ointments that contain capsaicin relieve arthritic and nerve pain. Red chili peppers provide your bird with an excellent source of beta-carotene, vitamin C, zinc, iron, calcium, potassium, and rutin (a bioflavonoid). Green chili peppers provide all of the above nutrients with the exception of beta-carotene.

Chickweed - This herb is used for both medicinal and culinary purposes. Both the roots and leaves are edible. An extraction of the roots promotes a hearty appetite and aids in digestion. Chickweed is a very nourishing herb containing vitamin A, C, iron, zinc, calcium, magnesium, phosphorus, potassium, manganese, and silicon. This herb is therapeutically helpful for reducing lung congestion; helps dissolve fatty tumors and acts as an anti-cancer agent.

Fenugreek - While fenugreek is used as a spice in Indian food it also has a wealth of other uses as a medicinal herb. It is known for its ability to lower cholesterol levels, relieve gastrointestinal tract discomfort, and may also help to control blood sugar for diabetics. Fenugreek is also helpful for congested lungs and infections. It is rich in vitamin A, D, and protein.

Papaya - This fruit is a favorite with my birds. Papaya contains the enzyme papain (similar to pepsin) that helps to aid in the digestion of protein. It is soothing to the digestive system and can ameliorate diarrhea. Its enzymatic action aids in the removal of worms. A rich source of beta carotene (provitamin A), vitamin B complex and C, folate, magnesium, and potassium.

The properties of herbs are proving to be useful for humans and our pets alike. Our birds can achieve better health when herbs are incorporated into their diets. However, we must always use them wisely and with skill. With the many herbs we now have available to us, our birds will not miss out on the exciting and beautiful ways that they maintain health and heal them successfully.

Mission Statement

Gateway Parrot Club
A not-for-profit organization
Established in 1988

Dedicated to the following goals:

- To bring people together in a friendly atmosphere in the interest of exchanging information on bird care and breeding.
- To create an interest in bird care and breeding through monthly educational programs and annual bird fairs.
- To educate ourselves, and the general public, on the ever-present danger of extinction in the wild.

Email Addresses

Evelyn Austin	EveAus@aol.com
Kathy Brockman	KathyDennis@FreeWWWWeb.com
Rich Carroll	The-Agent007@WebTV.net
Phyllis Cotton	Phyllis@Matlock.wustl.edu
Georgia Fletcher	GLFletcher@SBCGlobal.net
Marge Geraci	MyAngelToo@Earthlink.net
Al Grudzinski	AlGrud1@Charter.net
Kathleen Hertel	KathleenHertel@ArchStL.org
Sharon Nochta	BrdKpr@Charter.net
Dottie King	thou@usmo.com
Donna Krupinski	DonnaKru@HotMail.com
Dorene Olson	TaraDorene@cs.com
Tom Petroff	TommyMel@aol.com
Linda Roberts	LindyLu.Barnhart@att.net
Niki Shaffer	Niki@Shaffer-Family.com
Trey Shaffer	Trey@Shaffer-Family.com
Trinka Tansley	Trinka@Atlantis-Mkt.com
Cathy Timma	Cathy@Doodlebird.com
John & Pep Tomasovic	JohnAndPep@aol.com
Harriet Tucker	Harriet425@aol.com

Officers		
President	Phyllis Cotton	(314) 427-3679 (H) (314) 286-2202 (W)
Vice President	Janet Draper	(314) 432-3019
Secretary	Dorene Olson	(314) 569-1310
Treasurer	Dave Kinkade	(636) 343-8097
Membership	Niki Shaffer	(314) 432-4317
Board Members		
	Christine Kinkade	(636) 343-8097
	Nancy Marron	(314) 984-9524
	Pat Seiler	(636) 462-4732
	Trey Shaffer	(314) 496-8000
	Beverly Smallwood	(636) 343-1104
	Bob Smallwood	(636) 343-1104
Committees		
Education	Dorene Olson	(314) 569-1310
Hospitality	Pat Seiler	(314) 462-4732
Librarian	Christine Kinkade	(636) 343-8097
Ways & Means	Bernie Seiler	(314) 462-4732
Website, Newsletter	Trey Shaffer	(314) 432-4317