

Squawk 'n Talk

Volume 10, Issue 8

September 2010

Greetings from the Presidential Perch!

Whew! Another Fair has come and gone! I can't thank everyone enough who helped to make our Fair possible. Without the dedicated help of the club & board members and friends who volunteered their time and hard work, we wouldn't have the quality of fairs we do. Again, I would like to say, "THANK YOU" very much!

This is our second year at the Machinists' Hall and it has worked out very well for us. Placing the Silent Auction and Raffle tables out in the hallway worked out very well. We were able to place more vendors inside the auditorium area. Even with the added area in the auditorium, we still had to use the lobby area for some of the vendors.

I would like to thank all of the vendors who came to our fair, as they make our fair possible. With their support, we are able to support important avian causes and groups. Plus, they provide the club and community with much needed products, as well as introduce the community to companion birds.

I would also like to thank our seminar speakers for providing our educational program. Education is one of the primary goals of the GPC as it helps us understand how birds of all kinds relate to the world, the ecology, and to us personally as companion birds.

The bird shows went well. We had cockatiel shows, a finch show, and a parrot show. The bird exhibitors included many club members as well as others from out of the St. Louis area. I would like to thank our club members, volunteers, and show judges & personnel who helped to make the bird shows possible.

Don't forget that our next meeting is Sep. 12, and in November we will be nominating new club officers.

See you at the meetings! Dave

Tidbits

September Meeting – 9/12/10 – Second Sunday – The meeting is this weekend, not our usual third Sunday. Attendance is usually light when we vary our schedule, so make a special note about, and effort to attend, the meeting this Sunday.

The 22nd Hookbill Fair is History – Obviously, the big news comes from the Fair. The Fair is always a long busy weekend. Months of preparation comes together in a flurry of activity. First, we should thank the folks that made it all possible. Many people contributed, and Dave thanked them in his article; but he didn't really acknowledge all the time he and Christine and Phyllis Cotton put into the event; over the past year and the weekend of the event. We all enjoyed dinner, and our Saturday dinner event is always memorable. This year we had vendors coming up to the podium to thank the Club for the event, the dinner, and our dedication over the years to maintaining an outstanding event.

So how did the Fair do? Head count? Profitability? Its too soon to tell, particularly since the deadline for this edition of the newsletter is just a week after the Fair. I spend the entire weekend in the seminar room, so I see very little of the main floor activity, but my impression was that attendance was below last year's. As mentioned above, the September meeting is this weekend, so we will all compare notes and build a collective impression. Nancy will have preliminary numbers on monies in the various areas, like admission, raffles, etc.

Rudy Pluschke Retiring – We would like to thank Rudy for his support in past years, as a vendor at our Fairs. Rudy has been breeding Gouldian Finches. This year was his last at our event, and he has several cages he would like to sell. If you are interested in cages, and possibly other related equipment, please contact Rudy at (636) 375-0079.

New Parrot Magazine – Phyllis sent this link to a new magazine, Parrots (or maybe it's just new in electronic format)

www/ParrotMag.com

Check it out. There is also a website with parrot-related information. Annual subscriptions are \$48. Individual issues can be downloaded for \$4.25.

Seminar Summaries

Trey Shaffer

As I mentioned earlier, I spend the weekend in the seminar room, so I will share my impressions of the various presentations.

Lisa Rose – Clicker Training

Lisa brought in three birds and a variety of toys/props to discuss and demonstrate various training techniques. She spent a good amount of time covering very fundamental aspects of eliciting a desired behavior, marking it with the audible “click” and then rewarding the desired action or a progressive approximation. Like so many things that seem difficult or mystical, training your bird turns out to be straightforward, but requires incredible patience and dedication.

The techniques Lisa presented were applicable to teaching your bird a trick, or changing its behavior to be a better family citizen.

Jean Pattison – Early Rearing Techniques

In this interesting session we gained insight into Jean’s facility and how she grew into the breeding operation she has today. One of my most interesting take-aways was the fact that the vast majority of African Grays being bred today come from birds that were wild caught prior to the CITES agreement in the 1990s. Jean is very concerned and working to promote production by birds originally bred in captivity.

In Jean’s second presentation, on Sunday, she highlighted the fact that most birds will have more than one home in their lifetime, and that this isn’t necessarily a problem. Then there was an impassioned discussion of how legislators and law enforcement approach the regulation and oversight of bird/animal care, some emphasizing the revenue generation of enforcement, often making situations worse for people and animals through intervention.

Walter Crawford – World Bird Sanctuary

We were treated to a lively discussion of the need to work to preserve habitat thereby preserving the birds, and animals, that depend on it. Sorry Walter, but even more impressive was the free-flight demonstration by several of the Sanctuary’s residents, hawks, vulture and owl. We also had a visit from a GPC favorite, the Thick billed Parrot. Don’t forget, the World Bird Sanctuary annual Open House is coming up next month. See their website for details.

www.WorldBirdSanctuary.org

Michelle Karras – Don't Bite the Hand That Feeds You

For Michelle, it is all about RESPECT. That is an acronym summarizing her training approach, and reflects the traditional definition in the context of respecting your bird. The session covered a range of topics on how to properly house, raise and train your bird with an emphasis on techniques to modify undesirable behaviors and promote the things we love about our birds.

On Sunday, for her second presentation, Michelle invited us into her Circle of Knowledge. This very interactive session demonstrated, through human volunteers and role-playing, how the world in our house appears from the perspective of our birds.

David Kersting, DVM – Update on Avian Medicine

Dr. Kersting gave his now traditional presentation based on developments in avian medicine discussed and the annual conference of the AAV. The hot item this year was the evolution of research on the avian borna virus and Proventricular Dilatation Disease. The good news is that research is moving quickly on a number of fronts. This due, in great part to the confirmation of the link between the virus and the disease. The bad news is that as better tests become available and more testing is done, the presence of the virus is being confirmed in more birds than previously expected. Dr. Kersting says it is not time to panic yet. We will look forward to next year's update to see how things are going.

SO, DO YOU BELIEVE?

Editor's Note: This article came from the AFA, American Federation of Aviculture, through our association with them. As it appears at the end of the article, it apparently came from the Quaker Parakeet Society originally.

On Saturday, May 10, 2003, I went to Feathers, Etc. in Marlboro, MA. Feathers is a great bird store in the area that regularly has special guests, like Dr. Irene Pepperberg. This time, Feathers sponsored Dawn Allen of Dawn's Animal Connection, a "pet communicator".

Now, I'm not a believer; I'm also not not a believer, so I came into this with an open mind. People made 15-minute appointments and brought their animals (mostly birds, but 2 dogs did show up) to a secluded part of the store and talked with Dawn. As we waited for our turn, we talked with people once they completed their "readings".

Each person had something interesting to say. Most people said that their birds became very calm in Dawn's presence, especially when she communicated with the animal. According to one person, the bird likes it when the owner sings Madonna songs to her; however, the problem is that the owner sings the new Madonna songs and the bird prefers the old Madonna tunes. The owner said that this was absolutely true!

Another owner, Cheryl, brought her African Gray Fletcher for a reading. A couple that previously owned Fletcher had both become very ill. The wife passed away and the husband was still very ill, but he liked to visit Fletcher. According to Dawn, Fletcher knew that his previous owner couldn't take care of him and he misses him, but he likes where he lives now. However, Fletcher told the psychic that he wished the previous owner would not visit quite so often as Fletcher feels badly for days afterward. This really shocked Cheryl. Also, she wanted to know if Fletcher liked her other bird, a Quaker named Boomer. Again, according to the psychic, Fletcher said Boomer wasn't as smart as he is; as a matter of fact, Fletcher said Boomer was dumb because he didn't know how to speak English. Apparently, Boomer knows the basics but Fletcher speaks very well and very clearly. Hmmm.

Several other people also related positive and surprising results. When my turn came, my friend Ellen brought my blue Quaker Baby so that I could write down what transpired. Most of her "discussions" with Baby elicited what I would consider typical responses, like "he doesn't like being alone all day" or "he likes you better than Papa" or "yes, he'd like a lady friend if he met the right one". At that point, I was pretty skeptical. You could have said any one of those things about any pet. So I asked her if she could "talk" to other animals I have and she said she could do that through me. With one eyebrow raised, I asked her why Little One (a young green Quaker at home) chewed his long blue feathers ever since he was a baby. Dawn concentrated a bit and said that Little One says she feels hungry, even when she's just eaten or has food in front of her and that it's not behavioral. Dawn then said that she deals mostly with cats and dogs, but that she has encountered this same feeling with cats that have thyroid problems. What Dawn didn't know is that Little One has a cardiac problem such that her little heart races constantly which means her metabolism is going 100% all the time. Hmmm.

Pretty good, I thought. So I figured I would give her another shot. I asked Dawn if she could tell me what happened to Mikee's tail feathers, why they wouldn't ever grow. (Mikee is a 39-year-old macaw that we adopted 2 years ago.) Dawn concentrated again and said that he got his tail feathers caught in a door. He was flying, no, he was

coasting from a high point to a lower point and someone standing near a door thought he was going to fly out so they shut the door on him. What Dawn didn't know is that Mikee was pinioned at a very young age (they cut the wing bones so he couldn't fly) and has never been able to fly. Double hmmm. Okay, I thought, one more chance. I asked if Mikee liked being a dad (he had been a breeder before we got him) and his cryptic response was that he assumes he has very beautiful babies. At first I thought it was because his babies were pulled from the nestbox to be handfed and that he never saw them, but then I realized that he meant it literally because Mikee has cataracts and is blind! Wow.

Some of the things the pet psychic said were pretty generic, but others were so detailed and spot on that it made you wonder. So, do you believe?

(For more information on Dawn's Animal Connection, go to www.dawnsanimalconnection.addr.com)

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<http://qp-society.com/>

Animal Wars - Legislation Help Wanted

Trey Shaffer

As mentioned, in discussing our seminars, Jean Pattison made an impassioned presentation that included information about legislation affecting bird owners and breeders. Georgia Fletcher, our Missouri AFA Chairperson has forwarded information about how the AFA is tracking these issues. Change is afoot with legislation that may/can/will affect you and the animals you know... (Notice I'm trying hard not to use the word, "own.") That was intentionally vague, but I will clarify. Depending on whom you talk to, there is a war going on. On one side are animal rights organizations and the other, soulless industrial breeders. This is not all bird-specific, but has the potential to affect birds and their people.

The "Help Wanted" subtitle of this article is my request for someone to be a reporter/editor on this topic and keep tabs on its progress. In this article, I'll try to present an even-handed summary of some key items in the discussion, and let me start with the disclaimer that *the*

Club has no position on these issues. Information presented by the Club will attempt to be fact-based and offer opposing views.

The Parties

I'm going to present two theoretical opponents, representing extremes in the legal battle for animal welfare. In some respects, this is a "holy" war with parties believing, with great conviction, that "right" is on their side, and the "other side is the devil incarnate.

The NARA

This fictional group, the National Animal Rights Association, believes humans should not impose their will on animals and that animals should be left to their natural habitats. This group works through political, legislative and public outreach channels toward a goal of limiting or eliminating the breeding and keeping of animals as pets and in many cases in commerce and industry.

The BBA

This fictional group, the Bad Breeders Association, represents all breeders, particularly unethical and uncaring breeders, populating the world with animals to satisfy the basest of commercial desires.

Our Government

This non-fictional group is diverse and geographically distributed. They are composed of individuals with varying degrees of motivation, intelligence and authority. The Animal War is fought on battlefields from Capitol Hill in Washington, DC. to the town hall in your town/city/village. Our government also provides foot soldiers and the legal framework to resolve specific issues once elevated to their jurisdiction.

You, Me, Us

So what does this have to do with me? At the moment, not much. But in the tradition of democratic activism it is something you should be aware of, so you can choose if, and when, to engage. Missouri had a near miss last year when some ill-conceived legislation was presented that, while intended to address lions and tigers, would have imposed restrictions on pet bird owners, among others.

That was a simple case of legislators not understanding the effects of their own legislation, and the bill never had any traction. But some would say there is an ongoing, systematic, effort by the NARA to undermine animal production and ownership with long-term, incremental strategies. These are areas for observation and our "help wanted"

sign for a reporter. Please keep your eye out for information on these topics.

Legislation – Unintended Consequences

Not all legislation is bad. But taking the narrow focus of “bird people”, we should make sure that otherwise well-intentioned laws and regulations targeted at lions and tigers, or pigs and chickens, don’t “spill over” into our homes, affecting our birds. There are a number of individuals and groups that monitor proposed and new legislation and regulations. These range from the BBA to agricultural groups, to pet industry groups, bird clubs and associations. There is currently federal legislation in the works that could restrict bird ownership. This legislation will be released for “public comment” in 2011. Other legislation appears each year in various State and local jurisdictions.

As said, not all legislation is bad, and we would like our elected officials to produce good legislation, but history has shown they need help from time to time, and it is our place as bird people and citizens to offer help when needed.

Guardianship

This is really a specific example of unintended consequences, or it could be an intentional effort to curtail animal ownership. It boils down to the legal and semantic battle over the term to describe the relationship between an animal and a person.

Today, regardless of how you think of your bird, you **own** it. It is your property. Your children, however, have a different standing in our legal system. You have probably signed a number of documents, relating to your child, on a line that said “parent or **guardian**.”

If you do a web search for “pet guardianship”, you will jump right to the middle of this hot topic. On one side are apparently well-intentioned folks claiming they want to elevate the status of the animals we all love so much. It is difficult to determine quickly what side of the issue each group/website favors, because they all talk in such glowing terms about their love for animals and their responsible care.

The practical issue is that the term, guardianship, is finding its way into the language of human-animal relationships in both the conversational *and* legal arenas. The potential issue arises when the term is applied in the legal sense; and this has a number of people, organizations and industries concerned. We have a whole body of laws that control the relationship of people and their property. We have a different set of laws that control the relationships of guardians and their wards. What may seem to be a small change in wording in a law or

regulation may move the relationship from one category of laws to the other, with significant consequences.

This is another area where our “help wanted” reporter could help us by fleshing out the issue and letting us know how it might affect us, depending where the change is made; at the national, State or local level.

Conclusion

Hopefully, I haven't tilted the information presented, but interested you in finding out more about the issue, or best of all, taking that research and summarizing it for this newsletter.

The Gateway Parrot Club doesn't take a position in the Animal Wars. We publish our Mission Statement in every newsletter, so it is probably ignored. Three items in the statement define how we will approach these issues.

- Bring people together in a friendly atmosphere in the interest of exchanging information on bird care and breeding.
- Create interest in bird care and responsible breeding through monthly educational programs and annual bird fairs.
- Reduce neglect, cruelty and abuse of captive birds through education and public outreach.

The Club was founded, 22 years ago, in conjunction with a Bird Show. Over the years, member interest in breeding and showing diminished and our annual competitive Show evolved into a Fair and Seminar Series. Recently we have renewed bird shows in conjunction with the Fair and Seminar Series.

We support education about “bird care and breeding.” We promote “responsible breeding” and oppose any “cruelty and abuse.”

We would not support the NARA position of “better dead than in a cage,” but neither would we condone abusive industrial breeding or any mishandling through the wholesale/retail chain. We believe education is the key to making the marketplace manage the supply chain.

Dirty Fruits and Vegetables

Trey Shaffer

We don't want to eat dirty foods. Yuck! And of course, we don't want to feed our birds dirty foods... Thanks to Georgia Fletcher, who forwarded this information. The link to the article is on MSN at:

<http://health.msn.com/nutrition/articlepage.aspx?cp-documentid=100261286&vw=800>

The article title is, *The 12 Dirtiest Fruits & Vegetables*. The author is Josie Glausiusz and was apparently published in *Prevention* magazine. We don't have permission to reprint the article, but here is a very simple summary.

The underlying research was done by the USDA. They tested the fruits and vegetables *after* they had been washed in preparation for eating. The dirty in/on the vegetables may come from nature or science, and thus applies to many organic products as well as conventionally raised crops. Many contaminants come from insects or mold and fungus that are present in the natural environment or accumulated through transport and processing. Here is the simple list. The article includes specific information about why each is dirty.

Celery	Peaches
Strawberries	Apples
Blueberries	Nectarines
Bell Peppers	Spinach
Kale	Cherries
Potatoes	Imported Grapes

Don't despair. In a second part of the article is a list of 15 foods that are naturally clean, even when not grown organically.

Onions	Avocado
Sweet Corn	Pineapple
Mangoes	Sweet Peas
Asparagus	Kiwifruit
Cabbage	Eggplant
Cantaloupe	Watermelon
Grapefruit	Sweet Potatoes
Honeydew Mellon	

Just for good measure, here is a link to a USDA booklet to help you keep your food safe, *Kitchen Companion, Your Safe Food Handbook*.

http://origin-www.fsis.usda.gov/PDF/Kitchen_Companion.pdf

Mission

The Gateway Parrot Club, Inc. is a not for profit organization established in 1988 to:

Bring people together in a friendly atmosphere in the interest of exchanging information on bird care and breeding.

Create interest in bird care and responsible breeding through monthly educational programs and annual bird fairs.

Reduce neglect, cruelty and abuse of captive birds through education and public outreach.

Educate the public, as well as ourselves, on the ever-present danger of extinction in the wild.

2010 Schedule

Here is the year ahead. Mark the dates.

September 12 (Second Sunday)

October 17

November 21

December 12 (Second Sunday)

Contact Information

We welcome your comments and suggestions...

Officers

President	Dave Kinkade	(636) 343-8097
Vice President	Phyllis Cotton	(314) 537-6175
Secretary	John O'Grady	(636) 384-6656
Treasurer	Nancy Marron	(314) 984-9524
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Bird Shows	Sandy Warren	(618) 945-3608