

Squawk 'n Talk

December 2019

HO HO HO

Santa Claws is coming to town

He sees you when you're sleeping.
He knows when you're awake.
He knows if you've been bad or good,
so come party for goodness sake!



Gateway Parrot Club 2019 Holiday Party

December 8 at 1PM
Varietees Bird Store

Chef Christine will be serving Turkey on the buffet. Please bring a dish to share. As always, your feathered friends are welcome to join. We ask that all birds be clipped or wearing a harness..

Voting for new officers begins at 1pm. If you'd like to participate in a friendly game of ROB YOUR NEIGHBOR, please bring a \$10 wrapped gift.

You do not need to be a member to attend.

Chirps From the President's Perch

This will be my last Presidents Message to you. I want to thank everyone for all of their help and cooperation while I've been President of this wonderful club. I've gotten to know so many great bird owners as we've ventured through the last few years together. I look forward to continuing to stay involved and active and hope to get to know everyone better.

December is our Election Meeting. Our Nominees are as follows:

President - Renee Davis

Treasurer - Cathy Timma

Secretary - Heidi Hellmuth

Membership Chairperson - Beth Poll

Board positions: (3 to be elected)

Karen Tabaka

Georgia Fletcher

Jess Ellis

Julie Morgan

Renee Davis has been our Membership Chairperson for several years. She has agreed to accept the (unopposed) Nomination of President so we polled our existing Board Members to see if any would be willing to run as our Membership Chairperson. Beth Poll has agreed to run for this position.

Since this position wasn't discussed at the Nomination Meeting, I am asking our members: If you would be interested in running for Membership Chairperson please contact me at 314-504-5019 no later than December 4th. We must print election ballots in time for the December 8th meeting so Wednesday the 4th has to be our deadline for preparing the ballots.

December is also our Holiday Party meeting. We will be having our "Rob your Neighbor" gift exchange. Bring a nicely wrapped gift (maximum value \$10.00) to place into the gift stack. RULES: Each person who brings a gift will sit in a circle and be given the opportunity to pick a gift from the stack or steal one from someone who has already chosen. Any gift stolen 3 times becomes immune from being stolen again. All gifts will be opened after all have been chosen or stolen.

Bring your holiday cheer and come prepared to vote, to share a turkey dinner, and to have a GREAT TIME. Please bring something to add to the buffet. I'll see you all at 1:00pm on December 8th.

Time to renew your club membership for 2020! See Renee Davis or renew online at gatewayparrotclub.org
Georgia Fletcher

Pictures from our November Meeting

Randy Morgan had a "Honey of a Bee" presentation! We were also fortunate to have these two cute "honey bee" caiques in attendance. Beth Poll had fun selling raffle tickets for lots of Christmas items. Everyone had a good time.



Gateway Parrot Club



Meeting Dates - 2019

- * **December 8, Holiday Party
and Annual Election**

Meeting Dates - 2020

**January 19, Stephen Johnson, "Anatomy of a Training
Session",**

*** Meeting will be on 2nd Sunday**

General Meeting Notes

Come and enjoy the fun and bring a bird (as long as it is clipped). It's so enjoyable seeing all the different species of parrots and talking to other parrot owners.

You don't have to be a member to attend, but we would love to have you join. Meeting starts at 1:00 and it will be a full afternoon of meeting, socializing, eating, program, and raffle. For members who have not renewed their membership or who would like to join, please see Renee Davis, our membership chair person. She will be at the meeting to sign you up. An annual membership fee of \$20.00 includes your family (two voting members) and brings you our monthly newsletter by email, helps us to provide special speakers, and allows us the opportunity to support not-for-profit organizations. Thank you for joining and helping support the parrot community in St. Louis.

We meet at Varietees Bird Store, 60 Meramec Valley Plaza, Valley Park, MO. Varietees will be open in the afternoon so you can purchase bird food, supplies, toys, cages, play stands, etc.

GOT FEATHERS? If you do and want them to go to a good cause, bring them to club meeting and give to board member, Aubrey Kiener.

We do have a raffle most months so if you would like to donate item(s), they are always welcome. They do not have to be bird related. We sell raffle tickets for \$1.00 each or 6 for \$5.00.

Did you know that the Gateway Parrot Club has a Facebook group page? If you would like to join this group, search for "Gateway Parrot Club" in Facebook and request membership. We have over 700 members! Also check out our website at gatewayparrot-club.org If you ever want to contact the club via email, go to our website, select "Contact," select the board member you would like to contact, and send your message.

Chef Christine will be making turkey with dressing, mashed potatoes, and gravy for our meeting. As usual there will be water and an assortment of soda. Please feel free to bring something to add to our food table. We appreciate anything you would like to share (dessert, salad, casserole, etc.). It doesn't have to be home made.



Association of Avian Veterinarians

November 2019 AAV Bird Club News Release

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How to Know When Your Bird's Condition is an Emergency (Part 1 of 2)

By: Jodi Berls, CVA, LVT

It's 11:00 p.m. on a Saturday, and something is wrong with your bird. It may be something obvious, like a seizure, or something much more subtle, such as vomiting one or two times, or the bird is just quieter than normal. Your usual avian veterinarian's office is closed – do you really need to pack up the bird and head for an emergency clinic?

If you own one or more pet birds, you're almost certain to face this dilemma someday.

You should make a plan now for what you will do when confronted with a possible emergency: Have the telephone number for your avian veterinarian and the appropriate emergency facility ready at hand; have a safe, appropriate carrier available for transporting the bird; prepare a basic bird first aid kit. It'll be much easier to deal with these issues in advance, rather than trying to gather information or supplies on short notice.

Even if you know your avian veterinarian's office is closed, it's a good idea to make a call there first. Often there will be a recorded message offering recommendations about what to do when your bird needs help after normal business hours.

The following conditions should always be considered an emergency, requiring immediate attention from a veterinarian:

- **Bleeding:** Because birds are small compared to humans, what seems like a small amount of blood loss to us can be very serious for a bird. Most often, the source of the hemorrhage is an injury to a beak, toe(s), or blood feather, but it can result from internal injuries or trauma to other areas of the body. If the bleeding cannot be stopped rapidly by manual pressure or application of styptic powder, or you suspect the source of it is internal, the bird will need emergency attention to prevent fatal blood loss.
- **Animal Bites:** The degree of urgency depends on the seriousness of the wounds, which can range from small punctures to large lacerations, penetration of organs, fractures, or even limb amputations, with associated shock. Superficial bite wounds from a predatory animal such as a dog or cat often are not life-threatening on their own, but an accompanying infection can be lethal, and the infection can set in very rapidly. These cases should be seen by a veterinarian immediately, even if the wound seems minor.
- **Burns (Chemical, Thermal, or Electrical):** These are always emergencies, even though, similar to bite wounds, often the burn itself is less serious than the aftermath that can come with infection or dehydration. If there is chemical exposure, such as drain cleaner or ammonia, the wound should be rinsed immediately. Thermal or electrical burn wounds also should be rinsed with cool water. Do not apply any oil-based ointment or cream to the wound. These wounds will need additional attention immediately, however.
- **Fractures:** A bird's long bones are only covered by a small amount of tissue, so most fractures involve sharp edges of bone just below the skin that can easily become an open fracture, predisposing the bird to infection, hemorrhage, and/or nerve damage. These injuries require stabilization with some type of external fixation, such as a splint or bandage, immediately, as well as medications to manage pain. If the fracture is open, the bird will require antibiotic therapy. Any associated large lacerations may need surgical closure at the

same time the external fixation is applied.

- **Anorexia (Not Eating):** There are dozens of conditions that may cause a bird to stop eating, some more serious than others. That said, birds have very fast metabolisms, so it is not normal for them to stop eating entirely for more than a few hours. Anorexia can rapidly lead to dangerous weight loss. Often the most obvious sign that a bird is not eating is that it abruptly stops producing droppings. If the underlying cause of the loss of appetite is not determined as soon as possible, the bird may soon progress to severe weakness or death.
- **Weakness:** Birds are amazingly strong for their size and delicate appearance, so signs of weakness should be immediately concerning. If a bird is less active than normal, that should be investigated right away, especially if it appears the bird is eating and/or drinking less than usual. These signs may be accompanied by fluffed feathers, a generally dull appearance, or a hunched posture that is a sign the bird just is not feeling well. A bird that is leaning on the side of the cage or staying on the bottom of the cage because it is too weak to perch is critically ill and needs emergency attention.
- **Seizures, Unconsciousness:** Seizures or convulsions/tremors can have many causes, and this is another situation that requires immediate investigation of the underlying trigger for the episodes. Exposure to a heavy metal toxin (lead or zinc) is one of the most common causes of seizures in pet birds. African Grey parrots appear to be predisposed to seizures that may be related to calcium deficiency in the diet; birds that are chronic egg-layers also may experience seizures associated with hypocalcemia. Place your bird in a small box or carrier that has been padded with a soft towel, and proceed immediately to an avian veterinarian.
- **Respiratory Distress:** Any sign that a bird is having difficulty breathing represents an emergency. Normal respiration in most birds is silent and difficult to visualize, so if you can hear or see your bird breathing, that is cause for concern. (Like other animals, your bird may pant for a brief period after vigorous exercise or restraint, but if the panting does not stop after about 3 minutes,

contact your avian veterinarian right away.) Open-mouth breathing or tail bobbing (vertical movement of the tail on inhalation and exhalation) also are signs that your bird is struggling to breathe. Frequent sneezing, coughing, or a change in the character of vocalizations also are signs of a respiratory problem. Respiratory distress can have a variety of causes, including inhalation of a toxin; foreign bodies in the trachea; fluid or other condition that causes a distended abdomen; fungal/bacterial infections of the upper or lower respiratory tract; allergies; parasites; and neoplasia.

- **Ingestion of a Toxin or Foreign Body:** Symptoms and treatment will vary widely depending on the type and form of the toxin, but if you know your bird has chewed, eaten, or swallowed something potentially harmful, contact your avian veterinarian immediately. For foreign bodies, such as small jewelry, it is much easier and safer to remove the object while it is still in the crop, rather than after it has progressed farther along the gastrointestinal tract. Prompt action is needed to prevent the situation from becoming much more serious.
- **Cloacal Prolapse:** Tissue that is protruding through the vent is a cloacal prolapse. This may involve urinary, intestinal, or reproductive systems, depending on the cause of the prolapse. It is most common in reproductively active females, but may be seen in male birds, as well. The tissue that becomes visible usually is some shade of pink or red. This tissue can become necrotic if it is not returned to its normal position promptly. Seek veterinary attention immediately.
- **Dystocia, Egg Binding:** Egg binding is considered any delay in the process of passing an egg through the oviduct, while dystocia involves an egg that is obstructing the cloaca or causing a prolapse of tissue through the vent. Thus, dystocia is often the more serious condition. These birds may be seen straining, unable to produce droppings, exhibiting an abnormal posture (hunched back, drooping wings, a wide-based stance with feet far apart), and/or having difficulty breathing. They may become severely debilitated very rapidly, especially if they're experiencing an associated respiratory distress or prolapse. They need emergency care right away.

- **Hypothermia, Hyperthermia:** Normal core body temperature in birds is around 105 degrees F, but birds who are in shock or are severely ill can experience exacerbated heat loss leading to hypothermia. Oil contamination of the feathers also can quickly lead to hypothermia and death. On the other side of the coin, birds that have been exposed to abnormally hot conditions may suffer from hyperthermia, especially if they are obese. These birds need emergency hospitalization to provide supportive care while they recover enough to regulate their own body temperature appropriately.
- **Trauma:** Any accident or injury can result in traumatic wounds or fractures. The most common accidents in pet birds involve falls; crashing into a window, wall, or fan; getting caught in a doorway or cage furnishings (toys, etc.); or accidentally being stepped on. A bird stuck on a glue trap set for insects or rodents may thrash frantically to escape and severely injure itself. Because the presence of feathers can make it difficult to see some injuries, these birds should be examined by an avian veterinarian right away. They may need radiographs (X-rays) or other diagnostic tests to determine the extent of the injury.



Photo courtesy Jodi Berls

This Quaker parrot arrived at the veterinary clinic very weak and unable to walk or perch, a condition that definitely warrants treatment as an emergency

To be continued in December.

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