

Squawk 'n Talk

July 2019

Gateway Parrot Club Toy Making Party

Sunday, July 21, 2019
Varietees Bird Store,
Valley Park, MO
1:00 p.m.

The bird toys we will be making will be added to our raffle tables at the upcoming fair on Saturday, August 24th. We appreciate you coming to help with this project. See you on the 21st!



Chirps from the President's Perch

Summer heat has finally arrived. I'm enjoying my screened in back porch and the birds are too. Many thanks to a special friend who got my misting system connected and running today. It makes those hot days much more comfortable for me and the birds. Now I can move the finches and canary cages out too. They will love sunlight and the misting system even more than the parrots. I hope you and your birds are enjoying safe outdoor time too.

Last month many came to Varietees to hear and meet Robin Shewokis Sullivan. Robin was with us at our 2018 Gateway Fair. She spoke and had a full display of all of her enrichment toys at our Fair. Many of her toys are now at Varietees. Thank you Tracy for bringing Robin in to share her knowledge and her foraging ideas.

This month's meeting, Sunday July 21st, is our fun toy making session as well as our last planning and organization meeting before the August 24th Fair. Join us and help make toys to be used in our raffles at the Fair and to share in a fun time and a great meal. See you all then.

At the end of this newsletter, we have two articles that are very interesting. The first is "Medicating Your Bird Without Bloodshed" and the other is "Go Outside", an article listing the benefits of taking your bird outdoors with lots of excellent ideas.

Georgia Fletcher

Pictures from June Meeting

Thank you Stephen Johnson for a very informative presentation!





GATEWAY PARROT CLUB

32ND ANNUAL ALL-AMERICAN HOOKBILL

BIRD FAIR

SAT AUG 24
10AM - 5PM

What Polly wants, Polly gets.
It's time to spoil Polly! Enjoy 10,000 square feet of parrots, toys, food, cages, play stands, handmade items *and more!*

Parrot Meet + Greet

Raffle Items

Concession Stand

Silent Auction

Birdie Bake Sale

Seminars

2019 Guest Speakers

Dr. David Kersting
Heidi Hellmuth

when? 10AM - 5PM
AUGUST 24, 2019

where? MACHINISTS' HALL
12365 St. Charles Rock Rd.
St. Louis, MO 63044



VENDOR SPACE AVAILABLE!

Contact Fair Coordinator, Dick Grommet
(636) 529-0026 | rwgrommet@att.net



- www.GatewayParrotClub.org
- facebook.com/groups/GatewayParrotClub

Fair Update (Dick Grommet)

The fair is fast approaching and we want to remind you that if you have any items for our raffle or silent auction tables, please bring to our July meeting or email us and we can pick them up. While at the fair, be sure to check out both the raffle and auction tables. We always have some wonderful items on them.

As we approach the fair date, more vendors are requesting space, but if you know of anyone who has a bird product that would be of interest to our attendees, let us know so we can contact them about becoming a vendor. If you would like to be a vendor, we would love to have you..

Our speakers this year are Dr. David Kersting (Bird Medicine and Surgery) and Heidi Hellmuth, Curator of Primate at the St. Louis Zoo. Dr. Kersting will talk about avian medicine and Heidi will have an interactive seminar entitled "Enrichment Action Planning for Your Parrot - an Interacting Presentation"

Adeline and Abbie will again have the popular special exhibit called "Meet the Parrots." It has always drawn a lot of attention and positive feedback from fair attendees. There will be parrot owners with their birds to talk about their parrots and what is unique about each species.

Christine and Dave Kinkade are doing the concession stand and planning to serve hot dogs, chili dogs, brats, nachos with cheese, popcorn, chips, soda, and water for a reasonable price.

Reminder that individuals may not bring their personal birds into the fair unless they are participating in a special event. The birds must stay in the special event area and owners may not walk around the vendor area with them.

Volunteers Needed for the Fair! (Heidi Hellmuth)

Please sign up to volunteer at this year's bird fair, Saturday August 24. There are many time slots available and numerous areas that need help. There will be sign-up sheets at the July meeting, but you don't need to wait until then! Heidi Hellmuth would LOVE to hear from you anytime with your availability. Email Heidi.hellmuth@yahoo.com or call/text 301-431-0181.

See below for time slots and work areas. Please note that your choice of work area will be given if possible, but if the slots are full you might be asked to help in another section.

Areas: Set Up (8-10 a.m. slot) – Admissions – Raffle – Concessions – Membership – Silent Auction - Floaters

Time Slots: 10 a.m.-12 p.m., 12-2 p.m., 2-4 p.m., 4-6 p.m. (last slot helps with breakdown)

General Meeting Information

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, and helps us to provide special speakers and 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.

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 600 members!

Chef Christine will be bringing the club's hot dog roller and will be making meat hot dogs and veggie dogs. She will also make a potato salad, baked beans, slaw, and chips with a fruit salad for dessert. As usual there will be water and an assortment of soda.

Gateway Parrot Club



Meeting Dates 2019:

- * June 9, Stephen Johnson, Part 2, 2018 AAV Conference Rpt.
- July 21, Toymaking Party
- August 24 (Saturday) All American Hookbill Fair
- September 15
- October 20
- November 17 Randy Morgan, Honey of a Bee Presentation
- * December 8, Holiday Party

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

Membership Report (Renee Davis)

If you are not a member, we would love to have you join. You can do it online, at the meeting, or via snail mail.

Welcome new member: Renee Engler

June meeting attendees are below:

Georgia Fletcher	Connie Dennert
Cathy Timma	Renee Engler
Renee Davis	Jim Hermann
Heidi Hellmuth	Esther Hermann
Dixie Danzeisen	Nancy Marron
Steve Johnson	Edwin Massie
Aubrey Kiener	Julie Morgan
Christine Kinkade	Rick Ruderer
David Kinkade	Pat Seiler
Beth Poll	Denise Shibe
Pamela Alsop	Karen Tabaka
Jim Berk	Sharon Wilkins
Amanda Brantley	Lisa Williams
Michael Coburn	Janice Lang



Association of Avian Veterinarians

June 2019 AAV Bird Club News Release

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Medicating Your Parrot Without Bloodshed

(Yours or the Bird's)

By Jodi Berls, CVA, LVT

Few things make a parrot owner go pale with anxiety like the prospect of having to medicate their birds. They suspect (correctly, in most cases) that the bird won't be a big fan of this process. They worry that the process will damage the bond they have with the bird, or that they'll hurt the bird (or the bird will hurt them) during restraint. Or they just worry that they're doing it wrong.

Most pet parrots are pretty forgiving. At most, your parrot is likely to react to the sight of the syringe or a towel, but he probably won't hate you for giving him medicine, at least not for very long. As for that last fear, if the medicine goes in the bird and no one comes out choking or bleeding, you're doing it right.

What follows is a basic explanation of the techniques most commonly used.

Regardless of the method you use, start by getting the medication ready in advance. Draw up the medication in the syringe and then reclose the vial before

you allow the bird to come out of the cage – you don't want a sudden movement or wing flap to knock over the vial and waste the drug.

It's a good idea to speak softly to the bird to reassure it throughout the process. Make sure the surroundings are as calm and quiet as possible – there should be no unfamiliar people or pets nearby.

Monitor your bird's stress level at all times. If the bird seems to be panicking, starts to pant or appears to be choking, release him and try again after a short break.

The Gold Standard

Absolutely the best way to get medication into your bird is to ensure he or she is trained to take it before it's needed. This training is easiest with young birds who are likely to have happy memories of being hand fed from a syringe, but it can be done with older birds, as well.

Unless you're medicating a very large bird, such as a chicken or duck, your veterinarian probably will prescribe liquid medications to be given via a syringe. Thus, you will want to train your bird to drink from a syringe.

Start with very basic target training with your bird. This commonly involves encouraging the bird to touch a stick, such as a chopstick, with his or her beak. Because parrots instinctively bite or grip such objects, most will readily reach out to the stick. When your bird touches the stick, reward it by giving a small treat.

Keep your training sessions relatively short so the bird remains interested and engaged. A few minutes each day should be enough. If your bird begins to seem bored or impatient, end the session and try again the next day.

If your bird seems reluctant or nervous about the stick, start by rewarding just for behaving calmly when the stick is present. Advance to rewarding for looking at the stick, then moving toward it. When the bird makes any significant improvement toward the goal of touching the stick, give a larger treat to provide additional encouragement.

Practice with the stick until touching it and taking the treat become like second nature. Then substitute a syringe for the stick and continue practicing. Eventually, you can start adding a liquid food your bird likes, such as juice or applesauce, to the tip of the syringe. Finally, add some of the liquid food inside the syringe and get the bird accustomed to having the food directed into its mouth from the syringe.

Refresh the behavior you've trained by repeating it periodically, so the bird remains comfortable with it. If the day comes that your bird needs medication, you can simply mix the medicine into the liquid the bird is accustomed to taking from the syringe.

Hiding Medication in Foods

As long as your bird is still eating, it may be possible to add the medication to a small amount of a food item the bird enjoys and feed it to him or her. Possible foods that can be used include crackers, bread items, yogurt, peanut butter, applesauce, juice or fruit-flavored baby foods. (If you use peanut butter, check the label to be sure it doesn't contain a sweetener called xylitol, which can be toxic.) It must be a food that you know your bird will eagerly accept, and an amount small enough that you're confident the bird will eat all of it, so that the whole dose is being consumed. It may help to give the bird the medicated treat before feeding time, so that the bird will be hungry when the treat is given.

A couple of caveats about this method: It will only work if your bird is still eating on his or her own. If the medication has a strong taste, it may turn the bird off from ever eating that treat again. Your avian veterinarian may be able to flavor the medication for you to help with this. Also, it's a good idea to make sure the bird doesn't see you adding the medication to the treat.

Direct dosing

If all else fails, it will be necessary to restrain your bird and give the medication directly. This usually involves restraint with an appropriately-sized towel wrapped around the bird to hold it still and give you adequate control of the head and wings. For larger birds, such as macaws or cockatoos, you will need a bath-sized towel. Smaller birds, such as conures, can be restrained with

a hand towel or wash cloth, while very small birds, such as budgerigars may be handled with a paper towel.

Once the towel is over the bird, grasp the bird around the neck with your non-dominant hand, as close to the lower jaw as possible. Don't use more force than necessary, but parrots have complete cartilage rings in the airway, so holding your bird this way is unlikely to cause damage. The towel should remain wrapped around the wings, so that the bird doesn't injure itself by thrashing or flapping.

A parrot's natural instinct to bite the syringe as it approaches may help ensure your bird opens his or her mouth for you. Place the tip of the syringe in the corner of the bird's mouth and direct the medication toward the other side of the mouth. If it is a large dose, you may need to give a small amount at a time to avoid introducing the liquid into the respiratory tract. Don't give more than the bird can swallow at any one time.

If your bird bites down on the syringe and doesn't let go, twist the syringe, rather than pulling it straight out. Twisting it is more likely to make the bird let go.

Once the medication has been given, gently clean any soiled feathers around the face with water before releasing your bird.

If You Need Help

Please don't hesitate to call on your avian veterinarian if you're having difficulty medicating your bird. Your veterinarian may perform these techniques every day, but he/she does remember that first moment of anxiety – they get it. It may be possible for the vet or a technician to talk you through the process. Ask for a demonstration of the technique. Some veterinarians may administer the medication for you at little or no cost, if needed.

You can find a helpful video on this process here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fUv7gFi8W3w> For tips on low stress toweling technique, view this video:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DnL_q2u39wI

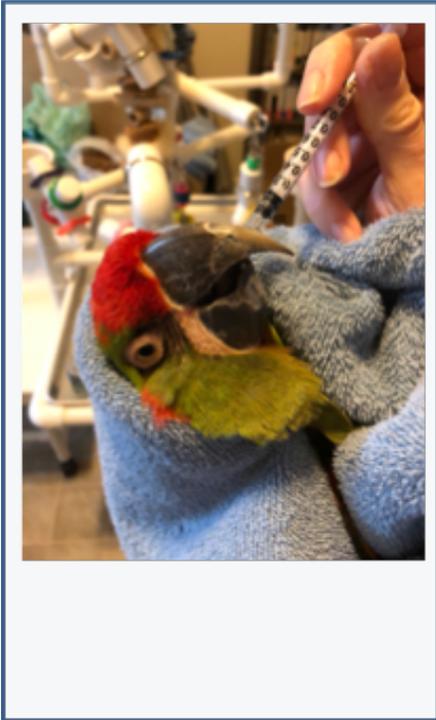


Photo courtesy Jodi Berls

Giving medication directly to a parrot involves restraining the bird in a towel and delivering the drug via a syringe.

References:

Giving Medication to Pet Birds. Merck Veterinary Manual website.

<https://www.merckvetmanual.com/bird-owners/routine-care-and-breeding-of-birds/giving-medication-to-pet-birds#> Accessed June 10, 2019.

Speer B, Hennigh M, van Zeeland Y. Low-Stress Medication Techniques in Birds and Small Mammals. *Veterinary Clinics of North America Exotic Animal Practice*. Elsevier: 21; 2018; 261-285.

Pollock C. Oral Drug Administration in Birds. LafeberVet website. <https://lafeber.com/vet/oral-drug-administration-in-birds/> December 9, 2010. Accessed June 10, 2019.

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Heidi Hellmuth was granted permission from Phoenix Landing to publish the following blog from their website discussing the benefits of taking birds outdoors and adding pictures of excellent ideas. After seeing this article a few years ago, Heidi converted a baby stroller into a “cageoller” for her three parrots.

Go Outside!

Earlier this spring I had the great pleasure to attend a [Phoenix Landing lecture](#), with guest speaker Nyla Copp, “Get The Flock Out!” in which she discussed the importance for the health of our parrots to provide them with time outdoors in the sunshine & fresh air. Exposure to UV light is vital to parrots in order for them to produce vitamin D, which is essential for the utilization of calcium, a necessity for parrot health. There is no better source for UV light than pure, unfiltered sunshine. Parrots have a highly refined respiratory system which makes them more susceptible to chemicals and contaminants in the air. With indoor air quality decreasing over the years, avian vets have been seeing an increase in the number of companion parrots with respiratory illnesses. This was true of the little lovebird, Orlando, who came to live with Nyla several years ago. Nyla combined her construction skills, creativity, and passion for providing the best care possible for her new companion and built Orlando an outdoor aviary. Through her business, [My Birdie Buddy](#), Nyla now designs and builds custom aviaries, as well as unique perches and playstands. In her presentation she shared invaluable tips and advice on design, materials and construction techniques for building aviaries, from simple to elaborate, from enclosing a porch or deck to building large free-standing structures or small portable ones, and left the entire audience longing for their own aviaries for their birds.

I have yet to build an aviary, for my requirements for one are high, as it must be able to contain my very powerful GreenWing Macaw, Annie, and be big enough to allow each bird to have enough personal space to prevent fighting and allow flight. In truth, I think I will need at least two separate enclosures; but this does not mean that my birds are sitting indoors waiting for me while I plan and dream and [research aviaries](#)? NO! We go outside as often as we can, nearly every day.



From my very first days with parrots, I have always taken them outside. At first, my little parrotlets were in a cage that I could pick up and carry so I would bring them out and set them on a table or bench or chair whenever I was out working in the yard. Then when Ariel joined the family, her cage was too large for me to carry around, and a friend gave me an older, travel sized cage which we used. But even that was very awkward, as it became more challenging to find places to safely set her outdoor cage.

Then one day I was attending a Phoenix Landing event, and I saw John Kerns, rolling a travel cage mounted to a baby stroller frame. Wow, what a great idea! John told me that his wife Bobbie put them together and calls them “cageollers” and most generously offered this one to me! I will be

forever grateful! Thank you, thank you John & Bobbie!



Once home I mounted Ariel's outside cage onto the stroller frame and secured it firmly with zip ties (the cage that John gave me had bar spacing too large for Ariel's little head). Now she traveled with me all around the yard wherever I went, she could reach through the bars and nibble on parrot safe plants, could easily be moved in or out of the sun or shade, with ease and safety.



From the day I knew that we would be getting Trixie, I began looking for a second stroller base to build a cageoller for her. I had no luck finding another like Ariel's, and upon meeting Trixie, a BIG Blue & Gold Macaw, realized I needed something bigger anyway. We had a large wire dog crate in our attic that would work as a cage section, and I just needed to find a base. While glancing through one of my husband's tool catalogs, Harbor Freight Tools, I noticed an ad for a flat (no sides) powder coated steel garden wagon. I checked the measurement of the wire crate, 36" long x 23" wide x 24" high, and realized it would fit nearly perfectly on the 24"x48" wagon, all the better that it was on sale! I removed the bottom plastic tray from the wire crate, and again used zip ties to attach the two together, trimming off the excess of the tie. I initially replaced the plastic tray, but realized that without the tray, poop, and water from misting, and pieces of

food could fall straight through into the grass, resulting in less required clean-up.



As I continued to foster various birds for Phoenix Landing, I kept searching for baby carriage bases, still with no luck, so I consulted the cageoller creator, Bobbie, again. She was now buying used Snap-N-Go stroller bases, made by Baby Trend. This is a stroller base designed for a baby car seat to be snapped into place, and comes in a single and double model. Used ones can be found for sale on Craig's List. Bobbie uses the double stroller frame with a wire dog crate, like that first one that her husband John gave me, for her macaws and larger Amazons. These would be suitable for larger cockatoos as well. For smaller birds, I have used standard "pet store" bird cages, as there are so many around that are really too small for a parrot to live in, but this puts them to good use. (Important side note here, make sure all doors, even food bowl doors are very securely latched when using these cages outdoors, use quicklinks, clamps or zip ties for extra

safety.)



One of the major downfalls of using this type of cage for cageollers though, is that since my birds really love being misted (and I mean soaked down to the skin wet!) nearly every time we go outside, the cages were rusting and powder coating peeling off very quickly.



That's when I came across the King's aluminum travel carriers (contact Phoenix Landing for purchasing questions). They all have 5/8" bar spacing, this would work for all but the smallest birds. The larger one is 20x29x20, the smaller one is 18 1/2x16 1/2x 18. Aluminum is very light weight, will not chip, flake or rust like powder coating. I will admit they are pricey, but I look

at it as a long-term investment.



The Kings are too small for Trixie and Annie macaws who still use the wire dog crates, but they work great for my other birds, so everyone has a cageoller to fit their needs.

Cageollers are great for traveling with your birds too. Once removed from the cage/carrier, the stroller folds flat, and when you reach your destination, reattach the cage to the stroller using several bungee cords, or you could use zipties, just remember to bring scissors to cut them off when you are ready to take the cageoller apart for the trip back home.

So go find a cage or carrier appropriate for your bird, pick up a stroller or wagon, build your own cageoller, and get outside this summer!



Made by Judy for her birds Dixie and Wilson