

Monthly Newsletter From Gateway Parrot Club!

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Squawk 'n Talk

September 2018

Hello <<First Name>>,



**GATEWAY PARROT CLUB
JOIN US ON
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2018
VARIETEE'S BIRD STORE
VALLEY PARK, MO
1:00 P.M.
GUEST SPEAKER, MICHELLE VRBKA**

Most of you have met Michelle. She is going to talk to us about the importance of documenting as much information as possible about each of our parrots (daily routine, food choices, bathing, sleeping, behavior, etc.). Your bird sitter would appreciate as much information as possible to make her or his job much easier. It is also very important in case you have to rehome your parrot for any reason (lifestyle change, illness, etc.). The benefits of providing as much information to the caregiver makes the transition so much easier for the bird.

***Come join us for a fun afternoon:
Meeting (1:00), Food (1:30), Program (2:00), Raffle (3:00)
You are welcome to bring your bird(s).
The only requirement is that wings be clipped (for their safety).
If fully flighted, please keep them in a carrier.
You don't have to be a member to attend.***



Fair Update

The 2018 fair was a big success thanks to all the vendors, speakers, volunteers, attendees, and all members and companies who donated items for our raffle and silent auction tables. Also special thanks to Adeline and Abigail for their "Parrots as Pets" Exhibit. It was a big hit and worth a repeat next year. Dr. David Kersting and Robin Shewokis were outstanding speakers. The addition of reptiles and small mammals added extra fun for the everyone.

The fair is the only fundraising event of the year and it is what allows us to raise money to donate to other non-profit organizations. Your support is greatly appreciated.



Many people worked to make this a successful fair. Thanks to all the board members committee heads:

Dick Grommet, Fair Chairman

Cathy Timma, Treasurer

Renee Davis, Membership

Beth Poll, Admissions

Heidi Hellmuth, Volunteers and Silent Auction

Dixie Danzeisen, Raffle

Christine Kincade, Snack bar

Carole Grommet, Advertising (Social Media)

Sandy Warren (Abigail and Adeline), Parrots as Pets

Bryan Gilchrist, Website Manager

Georgia Fletcher, President

Every worked very hard before, during, and after the fair!

Also a big thanks to all the 2018 volunteers: Barbara and Paul Agathen, Megan and Jorg Augusten, Jim Berk, Cindy Burquin, Jess Ellis, Debbie and Todd Hixson, Tom Howk, Aubrey Kiener, Nancy Marron, Julie Morgan, Sandy Newcomb, Barbara Peach, Pat Seiler, Christy and Rocky Sigwerth, Rick Ruderer, Mary Staab, Karen Tabaka, Terri Uhlmeier, Casey Uhlmeier, Sharon Wilkins, and Barbara Williams.

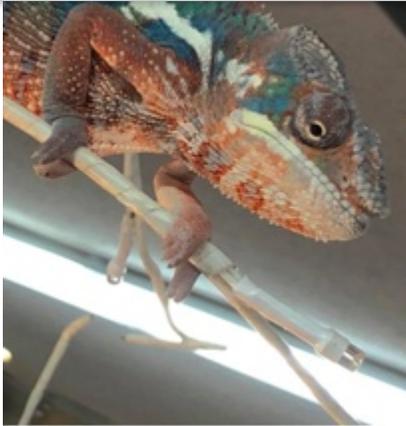
PICTURES FROM THE FAIR:



The “Parrots as Pets” Exhibit was very popular:



The reptiles were a big hit (including the puppy)!



BIG GARAGE SALE!

Sunday, September 23, 2018

8:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

9236 Castle Ragh Ct.

Olivette, MO 63132

Cages, Toys, Equipment and various parrot related items.

Robin Shewokis, in her seminar at the fair, showed a slide of a reptile exercise yard at the Philadelphia Zoo, which coincidentally Heidi Hellmuth (parrot club treasurer) was involved in designing when she worked at the zoo. Below is an article Heidi coauthored years ago about the exercise yard.



Enrichment, Education, Activity – A Win-Win-Win Situation

by Heidi Hellmuth and
Kristen Lewis



In the summer of 2001, the education and animal departments at the Philadelphia Zoo collaborated to turn a negative situation – an empty exhibit along the main zoo path - into a positive experience for guests, staff, and animals. The exhibit in question, informally called the “reptile pit” due to its proximity to the Reptile House and former reptilian occupants, had been empty for about two years. The zoo puts a lot of effort into providing the best guest experience possible, including the implementation of daily “zone checks” of all aspects of the zoo to notice and correct problem areas as quickly as possible. Among other things, empty exhibits are discouraged, leading to efforts to identify the reasons for their current non-use and plans for filling them as soon as is practicable. Being located along the busiest path in the zoo, the “reptile pit” exhibit needed some occupants.

A number of ideas were discussed for either moving existing collection animals to the exhibit or acquiring new ones to put in this area. But the exhibit had been empty for a reason – there was no easy solution. Creative thinking was needed to fill this exhibit, and brainstorming between the education and animal departments soon yielded a unique and, as it has turned out, very successful solution to this dilemma. The area formerly called the “reptile pit” is now the “reptile exercise yard”.

From about 9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. daily, during the summer season, the reptile exercise yard is staffed with interns and used as an enrichment and exercise area for our education department’s reptiles, which are used for in-zoo and outreach programs. Although the zoo already has exercise/play areas for parrots and small mammals used in our teaching collections, nothing previously existed for other taxa. Because the reptiles in question are all comfortable being handled and transported, these exercise sessions could be initiated without any special training or desensitization of the animals. At least two interns staff the exhibit at all times, one to observe the animals and one to interact with the public. Depending on the number of animals in the yard, and/or the particular animals being used at that time, more interns may be assigned as needed. There are generally two “shifts” during the day, each shift involving two or three animals. The exhibit already contained a variety of diverse habitat options and temperature gradients, and the interns built a climbing structure of logs, branches, and rope for use with some of the snakes.

There are frequently misconceptions surrounding reptiles, both on the part of the public (fear, anxiety) and at times on the part of zoo staff (perception that these species have less need for interaction/enrichment/exercise). The success of this exhibit has helped to modify some of these preconceived ideas. Zoo guests have the opportunity see these animals up close, without tank walls or cages in between (although there is an exhibit railing and no public contact is allowed). The animals are usually also very active during their time out and exhibit many natural behaviors, such as various forms of locomotion and object investigation, which people may not get to see very often.

This exhibit has proven to be very popular with zoo guests, staff, and (seemingly) the animals involved as well. Species exhibited in the exercise yard have included the Florida king snake, red rat snake, Mexican hognose snake, common boa constrictor, Brazilian rainbow boa, Haitian boa, Baja rosy boa, bull snake, yellow rat snake, Sinoloan milk snake, ball python, Dumeril’s ground boa, African savanna monitor, Malayan box turtle, Eastern box turtle, red-footed tortoise, and radiated tortoise.

We were fortunate to be able to turn a negative into a positive and to enhance the welfare of an “under-enriched” portion of our animal collection at the same time. Communication, collaboration, and cooperation between departments were critical to the success of this venture, as well as the dedication and hard work by all of the interns involved, without whom this project wouldn’t have been possible. It has truly been a win-win-win situation for all.



Photo Details and Credits

Common Boa - top left
Eastern Box Turtle - top right
Savannah Monitor - bottom left
Sinoloan Milk Snake - bottom right
(photos by Heidi Hellmuth)





Gateway Parrot Club

Meeting Dates 2018:

September 16, Michelle Vrbka, Consider Your Bird's Future by Equipping Tomorrow's Caregivers
October 21, Alex Johnson, Companion Animal Enrichment
- November 18, Adrienne Mock, Protecting the Flock from Theft, Natural Disaster, Disease and Legislation
- December 9, Annual Holiday Party

Meeting Dates 2019:
January 20, Stephen Johnson, Report on 2018 AAV (Association of Avian Veterinarians) Conference

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

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. 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.

\$5.00.

For our September meeting, Chef Christine is going to have all the fixings for a Nacho Bar. There will be nacho chips nacho cheese, ground beef, jalapenos, black beans, black olives, sour cream, guacamole, salsa, and lettuce. So you will be able to make your own nachos the way you like them. In addition, she is making a fruit pizza and as always, there will be water and an assortment of soda.

Not a member yet?

[Download a membership application](#) and bring it to our next meeting, or email it to Renee Davis, our membership secretary, at membership@gatewayparrotclub.org.

Our PayPal email address is payments@gatewayparrotclub.org

You can also now join and pay dues securely from our site: <http://gatewayparrotclub.org/join-now/>

Our Officers and Board members: <http://gatewayparrotclub.org/about-us/>

Join our FaceBook group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/GateWayParrotClub/>

Email Bryan at 4birdsmax@gmail.com if you want to submit an article, send cute pics to post on the website or future newsletters, have a suggestion, etc!

The Gateway Parrot Club, Inc. is a 501c3 not for profit organization based in St. Louis Missouri and 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.

outreach.

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

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