



ALASKA BIRD NEWS

February 2010

Lin Westgard, Editor

Volume 21 – Number 02

Available on-line at www.alaskabirdclub.com
Dedicated to all the current and future parrot owners of Alaska

CLUB NEWS

The Alaska Bird Club's Mission Statement
The Alaska Bird Club's mission is to promote responsible avian ownership through education and when possible, to provide rescue and adoption services for abandoned and unwanted birds in communities across Alaska.

But also important, we try and keep you up on the latest information regarding the care for your bird. Big changes in aviculture have been made in the past few years. Things we used to know are no longer applicable and things we never thought to try we are now being encouraged to bring to our homes and to their cages. This newsletter is dedicated to helping you understand your parrot as well as to give you tools to help them enrich their lives. It's not about just living in a cage in your living room anymore. It's more of making them your flock member and having them join your family.



2010

Board Member Changes



There's new Parrots on the Perch!!!

The board of directors are changing for 2010. Your new officers are as follows:

President: Lin Westgard. Former Bird News Editor and President, she's excited for 2010. Lin has traveled to visit one of the nations largest parrot sanctuaries and continues to further her education in parrot care.

Vice President: Amber O'Neill. Amber continues as 2nd year as Vice President and will also chair the Lost/Found Rescue Committee, which she has done for several years. With several success stories, her committee and her volunteers have helped parrots and their owners re-unite.

Secretary: Amy Benefield. Amy is also the chair person for our Adopt-A-Bird program and first time board member. As Secretary, she'll record board member meetings and membership meeting notes.

Treasurer: Ann Gilley. Ann continues her third year as treasurer and the bird club is happy to have back on board once again. A dedicated Emergency Placement member and a long-term foster home, Ann contributes greatly to the club.

Seargant-at-Arms: Garry Wallen. Garry is a long time member of the Alaska Bird Club and heads the Emergency Preparedness part of our club. Also a past president, Garry bring a wealth of information to the club. Garry is also our web master.

Member-at-Large: Karen Metcaff, DVM and 2nd year Board member.

(Continued on page 3)

CLUB INFORMATION

The Alaska Bird Club is a 501(c)(3) non-profit incorporated in the State of Alaska. It meets the first Tuesday of every month at Serendipity Adult Day Services in Anchorage at 7:00pm. Location: 3550 East 20th Ave (off of Northern Lights Blvd & Nichols St).

The mailing address is:

THE ALASKA BIRD CLUB
P.O. BOX 101825
Anchorage, Alaska 99510-1825
(907) 868-9070

President:Lin Westgard....868-8058

Vice President:Amber O'Neill

Secretary:Amy Benefield

Treasurer: Ann Gilley

Member-at-large: Karen Medkeff

Sergeant-at-arms:Garry Wallen

Editor:Lin Westgard
 E-Mail: westgard@gci.net for article information

Adopt-a-Bird Chair Person: Amy Benefield
Hospitality Chair Person: Position Open
Membership Chair Person: Ann Gilley

You can e-mail the Alaska Bird Club at:
akbirdclub@aol.com

Or visit our website:
www.alaskabirdclub.org

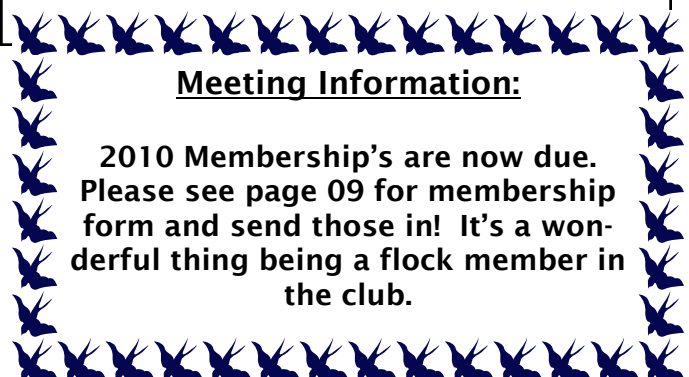
We welcome any comments, articles or any ideas for the club or the newsletter. Current issues and extra copies of previous editions of The Alaska Bird News are available at the monthly meetings.

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No Newsletter? Need Extra Copies of the Newsletter?
 Pick it up at any of the following locations:

- | | |
|---|--|
| All Creatures Veterinary Clinic
Mi 7.4 Palmer-Wasilla Hwy
376-7930 | 276-2340
North Star Animal Hospital
840 S Cobb St (Palmer)
907-746-7387 |
| Alaska Mill & Feed
1501 E 1st Ave
276-6016 | Palmer Veterinary Clinic
Mike 39 Glenn Hwy
745-3219 |
| Alaska Pet-ography
9130 Elim St (on Abbot
across from Fred Meyer)
868-1680 | Petco
8621 Old Seward Hwy
365-5500 |
| The Pet Zoo
Anchorage - 901 E Dimond Blvd
344-2966
ER -12046 Business Blvd
622-2966 | Pet Emergency
2320 E Dowling Rd
274-5636 |
| Palmer - 10201 E Palmer-
Wasilla
Hwy 746-0056
Wasilla - 1481 E Parks Hwy
357-7335 | The Pet Stop
1921 W Dimond Blvd
522-1006 |
| Chester Valley Veterinary
1571 Muldoon Rd
333-6591 | VCA Alaska Pet Care
3900 Lake Otis Pkwy
562-7387 |
| College Village
2036 E Northern Lights Blvd
274-5623 | VCA Alpine Animal Hospital
12531 Old Seward Hwy
345-1515 |
| Hillside Pet Clinic
2101 Abbott Rd #1
344-7913 | VCA Eagle River Animal
Hospital
11710 Business Blvd.
694-3800 |
| Northern Lights Veterinary &
Laser Center Inc
2002 W Benson Blvd | VCA E Anch. Animal Hospital
2639 Boniface Pkwy
337-1561 |



Meeting Information:

2010 Membership's are now due. Please see page 09 for membership form and send those in! It's a wonderful thing being a flock member in the club.

(Continued from page 1)

President Emeritus: Kathleen O’Keefe. Kathleen is our former president and has worked very hard and the Alaska Bird Club thanks her for her wonderful input and dedicated time spent to the club. Kathleen will continue to attend board meetings and contribute to the club. Kathleen also did a fantastic job on the Bird News as the editor and made sure all our newsletters were distributed throughout Alaska.

Outgoing Board Member: **Leanna Rein.** Past president, many thanks to Leanna for implementing many of the policy and procedures of the various committees and her dedication to the club itself.

A HEARTY THANKS!

Without the hard work of so many dedicated volunteers, we would be unable to help the many parrot owners in Alaska. Since the state of Alaska is without any bonified, registered Sanctuaries, it is imperative that the Alaska Bird Club help current and future parrot owners learn to live happily ever after with their birds.

To become a volunteer is easy. Contact any board member with whatever it might be that you want to do. It takes a village to raise a parrot. As your parrot might say... “step up”.

P.E.A.C. (Parrot Education & Adoption Center) **www.akpeac.org**

P.E.A.C. is a volunteer organization dedicated to teaching current and potential bird owners proper physical and psychological care for their pets. Failing to understand the nature and complexities of parrots is leading cause of displacement. Advance registration is recommended. Check the web site (www.akpeac.org) for more classes, or call P.E.A.C. at (907) 929-BIRD for more information

Thursday 2/18/09 7:00-9:00 Understanding, Preventing, and Resolving Parrot Behavior Problems

Tuesday 3/23/09 7:00-9:00pm The Naked Parrot– Feather Destructive Behavior in Parrots.

A N OLD WARNING

Worth repeating:

REYNOLDS COOKING BAGS: Apparently they are aluminum and plastic and made to go up to 450 degrees. When someone used 2 at 375 degrees for 40 minutes, they came back after 30 minutes to find their Amazon pumping for air and its eyes severely burnt. A metallic odor had filled the house as well. Several other Amazons suffered eye irritations as well she reported. She said she called to report it to the company. Further research should be done before using one of these bags.



Something to look forward to... our 2010 Seminar!

Suggestions and planning for year 2010 Seminar is currently underway. Anyone that has any suggestions, please contact the Bird Club President.

Some suggestions for a speaker have been:

Julie Muriad of the Gabriel Foundation, Barbara Heinrich, parrot behaviorist and Karen Webster of Parrot Education and Adoption Center. Submit your ideas of who you might want to see to the club.

Steve Martin
Charles Munn

.... Let us know who you’d like to see!

Why Caffeine is Toxic to Birds

Chocolate contains a substance called theobromine. Caffeine & theobromine belong to a chemical class of alkaloids called methylated xanthines. These are found in coals, coffee, tea & in chocolate. As a class of drugs, Methylated xanthines cause central nervous system (CNS) stimulation, diuresis (flushing of fluids through the body), cardiac (heart) muscle stimulation, & smooth muscle stimulation.

Methylxanthines are absorbed very quickly & easily from the oral cavity & intestinal tract. The liver is needed to metabolize these chemicals, & the waste products are excreted in the urine. These chemicals primarily affect the CNS & kidneys. These chemicals cause increased motor activity & also result in tachycardia (too fast a heart beat.) Because of the increased motor activity, seizures may occur. The kidneys may be affected causing diuresis & very high urine output. This may lead to dehydration. Respirations may become too rapid, & hyperthermia (too high a body temperature) may occur, resulting in death. There is NO antidote for these drugs. We may only treat symptoms with supportive care & drugs to decrease their severity.

Toxic dosages for birds are not well established. In dogs the toxic dose is approximately 200 mg/kg of body weight. In cats the lethal dosage is only 80 to 150 mg/kg of body weight. (higher metabolism means that less is needed to cause toxic effects.) A cup of coffee may contain 35 to 85 mg. A 12 ounce bottle of cola contains approx 50 mg. Now these levels would mean that a 1 kg (2.2kg) cat would need to drink 1 1/2 to 3 colas for death to occur. However, since a bird has a much higher metabolism than a cat, & a much smaller body size than a cat, we can safely say that it would take a much smaller dose for toxic effects & possibly death to occur.

Since we are unsure of the toxic dosages in birds, one definitely should avoid ALL caffeine & chocolate consumption for pet birds. (theobromine & caffeine are both found in chocolate-- this means that chocolate packs a double whammy!) I recommend that these substances be avoided in ALL pet species.

I feel that my birds have enough energy as it is. Why rev their systems up even more???

Sources:

1. Veterinary school lecture notes
2. Clinical & Diagnostic Veterinary Toxicology. Gary Osweiler, et Al.

Dr. Lisa
Lisa Paul DVM
Longmont, Colo

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Located at: <http://www.multiscope.com/hotspot>

Check out the Alaska Bird Club's Website!

Find out about our latest Lost and Found Birds, our birds that are available in our Adopt-A-Bird program and other various articles and videos. Advertise your un-wanted cages via newsletter and website! See what's up and coming and stay in touch!



Four Parrot No-No's:
Alcohol
Avocado
Caffeine
Chocolate

Do your research and find out what else not to feed your parrots. You can also find toxic and non-toxic house plants on the web! Beware of Ivy's !!

Bird Toys, Supplies and Food
Parrot Knick-Knacks
Cage Enrichment Consultations
Toy Making Parties
Basic Bird Care Instructions
Custom made bird toys
(907) 868-8058



Parrot Behavior Consultations

Need help with any of the following?

- Aggression
- Excessive screaming
- Inappropriate vocalizations
- Feather Destructive Behaviors
 - Diet
- Environmental Enrichment

Contact Karen Webster
to schedule your consultation today:
929-BIRD (2473) or akpeac@gmail.com.

REMEMBER: Teflon and other non-stick finishes are deadly to your bird. Do not take chances. Bird deaths have been recorded when nonstick cookware was used even at low temperatures.

Website of the Month

<http://www.birdsnways.com/index.htm>
Complete Guide to Pet Birds, Pet Parrots & Exotic Birds

<http://www.akpeac.org/>
Education on the proper care of pet birds.

WE NEED YOU!

The Alaska Bird Club committees need your help! We need volunteers for several openings, including: Adopt-a-Bird, Hospitality, Membership, Publicity, etc. For more information please come to the next meeting, or contact any Board Member.



THE ALASKA BIRD CLUB MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

www.alaskabirdclub.org e-mail: akbirdclub@yahoo.com phone: 868-9070
Non Profit Club EIN# 92-0134866

The Alaska Bird Club's mission is to promote responsible avian ownership through education and when possible, to provide rescue and adoption services for abandoned and unwanted birds in communities across Alaska.

We are a statewide 501(c)(3) [non-profit] educational club. All money collected as dues is used to provide educational training and activities to assist people in caring for companion birds. Our main activities include convening educational monthly membership meetings, producing a monthly newsletter, offering an annual seminar featuring experts in avian care and managing a website. Additionally, The Alaska Bird Club manages a statewide Adopt-A-Bird Program offering placement referrals, emergency/foster care and rescue services. The Alaska Bird Club also has a Lost/Found-Rescue Committee that aids in the rescue and capture of lost birds. There are numerous other activities and services that The ABC offers. You do not have to attend the meetings to be a member.

MEMBERSHIPS:

Membership is due annually, and runs from January 1st—December 31st. (rate discount of 50% applies to members joining in August and later). New members receive membership packets and free newsletter mailings.

_____ Single: \$20.00 _____ Family: \$25.00

Mail Payment and Form to:

The Alaska Bird Club, PO Box 101825, Anchorage, AK 99510

Name(s): _____
Address: _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Phone: _____ E-Mail Address _____

Care to share what kind of parrots you live with? _____

How would you like to receive your newsletter?

US Mail ___ e-mail ___ Pick-up at membership meeting ___

Would you like to be listed on a registry that is available to other members? Yes ___ No ___

Would you be interested in carpooling from the Valley with other members? Yes ___ No ___

Would you like to be on a committee? Yes ___ No ___ and if so, do you have a preference?

Adopt-A-Bird: ___ Lost/Found-Rescue Committee ___ Hospitality Committee: ___

Membership Committee: ___ Educational Committee: ___ Seminar Committee: ___

Emergency Services Committee: ___ Other: _____

The Bird Club uses e-mail as the preferred method of communication. Do you wish to be included on this mailing list or not? Yes ___ No ___

Comments: _____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!!

How To Tell If You REALLY HAVE An Avian Vet

So there are lots of vets out there who will "see birds" who have perhaps less knowledge than one might wish. The following are a few tips that may help you differentiate between these people and their more knowledgeable colleagues. You *don't necessarily* have a REAL avian vet if:

- 1. When you call for an appointment for a sick bird, the receptionist tells you it's too cold to bring a bird out.** The vet may be experienced with birds, but his or her support staff is not. There are plenty of easy tricks to keeping a bird warm in transit -- which is definitely preferable to allowing the bird to die at home without professional help.
- 2. When you arrive at the hospital for your appointment and nobody knows what kind of bird you have.** If you have a rare species, be fair -- but if they think your cockatiel is a cockatoo, there's a problem.
- 3. Everyone at the hospital is afraid of your two month-old baby macaw.** Many bird vets have difficulty finding experienced avian technicians -- but the vet must know how to handle the animals if his/her support staff does not. If everyone on staff is afraid of a baby, no matter how big, then they have little or no experience with parrots.
- 4. The veterinarian does not remove the bird from its cage to do a full physical exam.** The days of diagnosing from the outside of the cage are gone. To do competent avian medicine, a vet has to do a proper physical exam, and to do that, a vet must TOUCH the animal.
- 5. The veterinarian does not weigh your bird.** Properly equipped avian vets will have an accurate gram scale with which to get weights on their patients *every time* the bird comes in. A current, accurate weight is not only necessary to properly calibrate a medication dose, but also to help the vet evaluate the overall condition of the animal. From my experience, "Feeling the keel" does NOT provide sufficient information.
- 6. The veterinarian and/or support staff does not spend considerable time discussing proper diet with you.** The most common cause of medical problems seen in avian medicine in this country is STILL malnutrition, therefore proper diet is crucial and should be discussed in depth.
- 7. They schedule bird appointments every 10-15 minutes.** There is a tremendous amount of time involved when seeing birds -- the avian vets I know schedule bird appointments for a minimum of 30 minutes, with most lasting considerably longer than that.
- 8. They don't think annual check-ups are necessary.** The AAV recommends annual visits, especially with very young or old birds. A vet in my area recently told the first-time parrot owner of an unweaned macaw chick that he didn't need to bring the baby back in "unless he thought there was a problem." As far as I am concerned, that is very bad advice. Weaning is an extremely stressful period in a parrot's life, and a brand new parrot owner often doesn't know there is a problem until it has reached emergency status. This is NOT the best thing for the bird!
- 9. They consider a beak trim to be just as routine as a nail trim or wing clip.** Generally speaking, a normal parrot beak does not ever need trimming, whether the bird chews on a "beak conditioner" or not. A change in the growth pattern of a parrot's beak could be indicative of a medical problem.
- 10. With a new bird check-up, the vet does a physical exam and pronounces the bird "healthy" without recommending any diagnostic testing.** A properly done physical exam can tell an experienced avian vet a great deal, but by itself it simply isn't enough. Diagnostic testing must be done to rule out the possibility of latent disease.

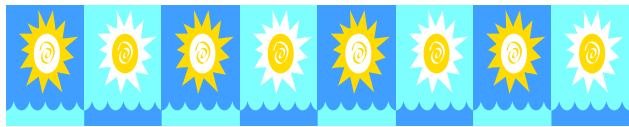
This article was first printed in THE PET BIRD REPORT, Issue #29.

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Liz Wilson, Certified Veterinary Technician, has been assisting pet bird owners with parrot behavior problems for over a decade through lectures, phone consultations, and house calls in the Greater Philadelphia area

She can be reached at (215) 946-5964 9AM - 9PM M-F

Website: <http://www.upatsix.com/liz>



**Fundraiser Table
Contributions
January 2010
(Thank you!)**

- **Jim Briggs– Entire 2009 Bird Talk Magazine Collection**
- ** Julie Forsyth- Wooden Ladder for Birds to play on.**
- **Greg Wilkie– Various Ronnie’s Food Bags and Cage Mess Bags.**
- **Rayma Hadley– Amaryllis Flower starter kit.**
- **Lin Westgard– Bag of un-shelled Almonds and a small bird toy.**
- **TABC – Large Parrot Toys**
- ** The Pet Zoo– Small Parrot Toys**
- ** College Village Animal Clinic- - Harrison food for our foster care birds and**

TREASURER'S REPORT



Income:
Memberships continue to come in for 2010!
Support your local bird club- become a member. Thank you!

Expenses:
The major expense to the bird club is storage fees and the newsletter. Any ideas on how to curtail these expenses, please bring forward at the next membership meeting. Any fundraising event that you might like to see?
E-Mail Lin Westgard at Westgard@gci.net



President’s Perch Feb 2010:

Hi Everyone! Please remember that your birds annual vet visits might be coming up. To have an annual vet check up is highly encouraged. It not only lets your vet know how he or she is doing, but provides an important baseline for when they are trying to diagnose when something is wrong. If you are unsure what these exams entail, please contact your avian vet and see what they recommend. Sometimes, what a vet is checking for or monitoring is based on your birds background and past/present environments. If you are at all unsure, contact several avian vets and see what they have to offer.

Lin Westgard
President 2010, The Alaska Bird Club



More *Alaska Style* from David Jensen Photography

Visit David's website at: www.alaskaportraits.com

9130 Elim Street Anchorage AK 99507

868-1680 Office 341-1030 Fax

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Tour our [Studio](#) Meet the [Paparazzi](#) See the [Jensen Zoo](#)

Catch [David](#) in action.

David

868-1680 david@alaskaportraits.com

David Jensen has been our volunteer judge for our Photography contest every year at the Alaska Bird Club for five years now.



The Alaska Bird Club
P.O. Box 101825
Anchorage, AK 99510

Place
Stamp
Here