



THE TROPICS EXOTIC BIRD REFUGE

SUMMER / FALL, 2005

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Special Announcement: A new book about parrots has just come out; "PARROT CULTURE", "Our 2500-Year-Long Fascination with the World's Most Talkative Bird". Author: Bertram H. Davis, Professor of English at Florida State University. *The Tropics' interview and credits appear in this book.* He has 5 other books of various titles including: "Shakespeare Among the Animals" & "Nature and Society of Early Modern England".

Special Features



Volunteer: JANE

Jane Roberts is our most loyal volunteer, having been coming here faithfully for almost 5 years.

She has quite a menagerie of her own, including several birds she has adopted from The Tropics. Some of the species she has are: Goffin's Cockatoo, Amazon, African Gray, Cockatiels, and others.

Sacrificing her time and energy, Jane volunteers here about once a week and catches up on ALL the cage and floor cleaning and gives us a day's break from feeding & watering the birds. This time is a real sacrifice for her, as she has to travel at least 1 hr. each way, and holds down a night job at Federal Express. Needless to say we greatly appreciate her.



Featured Bird: JAKE, the Severe Macaw

Jake is a beautiful female Severe Macaw that has been here for years. Her owners,, Donna and David visit whenever possible, as they live near Buffalo, NY. They also generously support Jake's care on a monthly basis and we send photographs of Jake whenever possible. We also talk frequently on the phone.

This couple, has become very good friends to us and keep us in their prayers daily. Naturally, we are sure that this and the prayers of MANY others of you out there is what keeps us going.

A great big thanks goes to David and Donna, along with Jane our most loyal friend and volunteer. Also, I must mention a few others that help out whenever possible: Mary B. in Charlotte, NC, and Beverly and Teresa in New Jersey.

If it weren't for these fine people, we would never get a break or be able to take vacations that were made possible by them over the last few years.

GREAT JOB ALL, AND MANY - MANY THANKS!



OFFICIAL ORDER FORM

2005 PARROTS AT PLAY CALENDAR

Calendar price is \$15.00 plus \$1.50 to cover postage. \$10 of your calendar purchase will benefit the non-profit avian organization shown on this order form.



The 2005 program is proudly sponsored by: 4Z Bird Products, www.4zbirds.com; Madcool BirdGyms, www.madcoolbirdgyms.com; Cage Avianix, www.freedomcage.com; GoneNutz, www.gonenutz.com; White Feather Bird Products, www.whitefeatherbirdproducts.com

Indy is a Severe Macaw and is the Poster Parrot for the 2005 Parrots At Play Calendar. He was rescued in 2002 from humans who maintained him in a small cage with no toys, one over-sized perch, second-hand smoke and junk food. The happy news is that he was adopted in 2003 by caregivers that are giving him good food, love, and a quality of life. You can read his story at www.parrotsatplay.org



GO TO www.parrots-at-play.org TO SEE THE PHOTO WINNERS FOR 2005. THEY ARE UNBELIEVEABLE!!!

SEND IN YOUR PAID ORDERS TO: "The Tropics, P.O. Box 686, Kannapolis, NC 28082

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Organization

EIN#: 56-1869732

Non-Profit Number

Yes! I want to support this organization and have paid them \$16.50 for my calendar. Please send my calendar to the address below. Your name and address will be used SOLELY for mailing you the calendar and not retained for any other purpose.

Please print clearly - this portion of the form will be used as a mailing label.

Name: _____

Address line 1 _____

Address line 2 _____

NEWS UPDATE

FUNDRAISING: It has come to mind that many of you may not realize which options we have regarding our fundraising methods. To date and for the last 10 years, our fundraising has amounted to this mailing list, our Parrot Head Club mailing list and our Vendor mailing list. Of those three, we seldom mail to vendors, as we get no response. We got a small response from the Parrot Heads, but are hoping that will improve in the future.

Therefore, we publish this quarterly newsletter to approximately 420 people, many of whom we never hear from, but we still hope they will find a way to help. Of those who donate regularly and others when they can, we have no more than 160 donors, total.

Our only other method of fundraising is our beautiful web site. Although it hasn't been updated in a while due to lack of time and money, we get an occasional donation through our debit/credit card acceptances. We have repeatedly offered very beautiful T-shirts, mouse pads, coffee mugs, and greeting cards. None of which have sold enough for us to continue to pursue. Our "web guy" is in the process of putting up 3 different styles of T-shirt patterns on the web site you can choose from. So check soon for that. In the past there were many, many more. We offered T-shirts with particular species of birds on them, in hopes that those who owned the same species would want them. We have never had any orders big enough to warrant doing bulk screen printing, so each shirt or other items had to be done individually. For that we thank Omega Graphics, Kannapolis, NC for their patience in doing one to a few items here and there.

Years ago, when I was younger, had less birds, and more energy I did much research into writing grant proposals. I did some over the years, but none ever amounting to over \$500, except for the one we got for partial payment for the dome. That donor is now history.

The last mailing you received was truly an emergency plea for funds. Each newsletter we send out, we hope also serves as a reminder for those who can give, to do so. We cannot afford to pay for what it costs to increase our mailing list. That would mean "renting" 5,000 names from Bird Talk's list, but the names have to be sent to a mailing house where they would print the item to be mailed, and get it in the mail. We would NEVER see any of those names unless they contacted us with a donation or for some other reason. The cost when I last checked many years ago was \$2,500.

Having been a marketing director for large software companies in the past, I do know the statistics are true; that for every mailing you send out you can expect a 1-3% return. We are fortunate in that we are getting over a 25% return on our little mailing list of only 420.

Normally, each newsletter (send out 4 times a year) brings in enough money to hold us over until it's time to send out the next one. We only need \$2,500 a month to run this sanctuary since we downsized. Prior to downsizing we had 400 birds and our budget was \$4000 a month. There are only a few large refuges like ours with a lot of birds, and their budgets range into the tens of thousands a MONTH. Why, I don't know. Why didn't our monthly needs go down more with so few birds? Because the electric, phone, rent, insurance, etc., doesn't decrease because the bird count does.

I've said all this for two reasons; first, to WHOLEHEARTEDLY THANK those of you that are giving, and to be open and honest about our needs to keep this small monthly amount coming in on a regular basis.

After the emergency plea went out in May, so many of you responded so generously, that we are actually about a month ahead, but that's all. So, we need you to realize that this newsletter which is all done manually; printing, folding, stuffing, licking, labeling which requires about 2 weeks of my time just to get it out the door. MANY, MANY THANKS TO ALL WHO CAN AND WOULD LIKE TO GIVE, BUT CAN'T. You all will be truly blessed for your faithfulness.

OTHER NEWS

My physical recovery is coming along, in spite of breaking my right foot for a second time. This is due to a disease called Osteoporosis. Otherwise, I am fine, but tired. John, on the other hand, has been diagnosed with Fibromyalgia a disease more common in women but in only 5% of men develop the disease at a much greater level. He is undergoing physical and water therapy and is on heavy pain medication. Not to worry about the birds, though. Since the downsizing, we can easily manage the feeding/cleaning, etc., of the 80 birds we now have. We are in no danger of shutting down, and GREATLY APPRECIATE YOU ALL!

IMAGINE THAT..... (by, Mary Bradford)

.....you are an adorable newborn baby fortunate enough to be born to the richest parents on the planet. It is the day you are to come home. Your room is larger than the largest of any other homes in the world, after all with the richest parents in the world, they also have the largest home in the world.

Everything is prepared for you; everything that you will need for the REST OF YOUR LIFE, from infancy to old age. Notice that there are bars on your windows and multiple locks on your door. You are placed in the best bed money can buy with all the trimmings, toys, games, etc. THEN THE DOOR IS SHUT AND LOCKED!

No matter how much you cry, your cries go unanswered until your parents are ready to come see to your needs. You are hungry, but until they come there is no food or water. Then you are brought nourishment, but not necessarily what you want or even need. You eat it anyway, because that's all there is...NO CHOICES! You are talked to for a while, maybe picked up and cuddled, then placed back in your bed. Sometimes you are allowed out of your room, but only for short periods of time and only when it is convenient for your parents. They dictate the amount of time you get out and get attention, otherwise you are always locked away in your own private mansion.

As you grow, so do your needs. You need to "spread your wings", but can't because you are prohibited to explore what should be your natural environment. You play with the toys, look out the window, wonder what's out there and could you survive. Still, you are locked away and only receive attention from your parents or whomever they decide will take care of you at any given time in your life. Again, you are hungry, but now that you are older you are much more lonely. You manage to learn a few words to speak during the brief time people interact with you.

You want so badly to be able to come out of your room, go to the frig and pantry for food and drinks that you want, need and like, but still you remain locked in. Then comes the time in your life when things begin to change within you. You feel restless, rebellious, and scream and cry louder for attention and for other, "strange" needs to be met that will never happen. You become increasingly frustrated and in order to vent this frustration you begin to pull out your hair, dig into your flesh until it bleeds, and you wait and wait.

Older and older you get. Still nothing in your life changes. If/when you become sick you are taken to a doctor, and then back "home" into what has long since become your prison. The door is shut and locked again. You pace, you hang your head in sorrow, yet nothing happens and no one comes along. Your screams become louder and louder until your "loving" parents decide they've had enough of your noise and taking care of you. So, you are farmed out to some strange other home or placed with others just like you. This is your life, FOREVER!

I'm sure you have gotten my drift by now. You are a parrot. Unable to fly, play, bathe, have friends, pick a mate, and have a family to keep your specie alive and growing. Some nice people come along and try their hardest to make you happy and at times try so hard to undo what has been done, but often to no avail.

Unfortunately, there are those "not so nice" people who allow their birds to live in filth and squalor, with feces stuck all over them, living in too small cages, not getting anything but seed to eat, dirty water to drink, and are alone from dawn to dusk.

Did you know that for instance, a macaw in the wild can fly up to 500 MILES A DAY? Yet, we get these adorable babies, clip their wings, cage them and only let them out when it's convenient for us. This article is NOT intended to put ANYONE down for this. Individual bird owners just don't realize that they have been sold a bill of goods, that this lovely and lively animal is NOT a pet, rather it is a WILD ANIMAL, just as wild as a tiger, elephant, etc. Yet, the industry that profits from the sale of these birds and the needs they have, continue to breed these babies in captivity and sell them to, in many cases, anyone who has the money to buy them.

I am NOT putting down bird owners or good breeders that care about where their babies end up. I was totally ignorant back in 1989 when I purchased my parrot. From then on, most of the rest were given to me because they are unwanted. We must realize that there are far more unwanted birds in the world than there are sick birds, yet most of the millions of dollars are poured into disease research with little success and yet there are many more MILLIONS of unwanted birds in the world. Both National Geographic and the ASPCA estimate there are over 60 million parrots in the US alone. Where will these birds go when the owners can't keep them for legitimate reasons or when other owners just don't want them anymore?

Yes, we must protect our beloved birds from disease and illness, but truthfully there are millions more that are unwanted than are sick. There are only a few large refuges for these birds, and are in great need of money, volunteers, and people to take over for them, as we all know these birds, if they remain healthy, will out live us, our children and our grandchildren. It is our plea that ALL captive breeding be stopped so that we don't continue this horrible cycle.

REMEMBER, THIS WAS NOT WRITTEN TO PUT ANY PERSONS OR GROUPS DOWN, BUT ONLY TO OPEN THE EYES OF THOSE WHO JUST DON'T KNOW. WE, AS A SOCIETY HAVE CAUSED THIS PROBLEM, AND WE MUST TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR WHAT WE'VE DONE TO THESE BEAUTIFUL, INNOCENT, AND INTELLIGENT CREATURES THAT WE SHARE THIS EARTH WITH.