



PARTNERS IN PARADISE
Newsletter for The Tropics Exotic Bird

SPRING 2002

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VISIT OUR WEB SITE AT: tropics.parrotrefuge.com



"HOUSTON, WE HAVE LIFT OFF!"

In spite of the repairs that still need to be made to the dome (this is still a work in progress both inside and out), we now have about 45 birds in flight. On February 9, 2002, we released almost 25 cockatiels and one sulfur crested cockatoo named Tara. We are happy to report that all are flying very well, and Tara is having a ball swinging on the swings, hanging and cutting flips on the ropes and toys. But, the best sight of all is to see Tara sitting high atop the tallest branch of our unfinished large tree. She looks exquisite sitting there, almost regal in her posturing, and it is the greatest pleasure to watch her preen and look out over the other smaller birds flying below her. Since then, we have released all of our white colored cockatoos that are compatible for free flight. In addition, there is one pair of Mitred Conures flying free with them, and all is well. Our next decision will be which birds to release next. This takes much serious thought and preparation on our part, to be ready to remove those birds that don't acclimate, and put them back in their cages. Not all birds will be able to live in an open environment.

The start of the release program was very joyous. We knew it would be emotional, but it was more exhilarating than any thing else. We had to spend a lot of time with the birds, especially watching over the cockatiels. They are easily upset anyway, so we had to be sure none of them got hurt. Although the dome is bird friendly, it is impossible to make it absolutely hurt proof. We will continue to release our best fliers first and as time goes by we will see just how many birds can live comfortably in the dome.

Now back to reality. In order to make the necessary repairs to the dome, we will have to fly in a dome builder from Houston, TX. We fired our original contractor, so the balance of the money he would've gotten will go to this more experienced builder.

Meanwhile, we are being overwhelmed with requests to take in more birds. Our current count is 357 birds. This leaves us with a difficult decision to make. At this time, we can no longer take in any birds, regardless of situations. Although our volunteerism has increased, most of them can only work on the weekends, so that leaves us with the usual daily chores. It now takes a minimum of 6 hours a day to feed all the birds we have. As more are released into the dome, the feeding time will

URGENT NEEDS

CASH
for operating expenses

TOYS
(we are literally out of toys, always!)

SEEDS & PELLETS
(preferably Topper seed and Roudy Bush pellets, but will take any brand that is donated)

VOLUNTEERS
for fund raising, hands on help here at the refuge if you are local, and new ideas for getting our needs met.

FUNDS
for newsletters (copies, labels, postage, paper, and envelopes)
OFFICE SUPPLIES
money for maintenance on our copier, or a copier that works. Also, funds for maintenance of our computer and peripheral equipment.

SPONSORS
for birds, veterinary care, landscaping for the exterior of the dome, maintenance and renovation of existing aviaries.

TRAVEL EXPENSES
to conferences and symposiums, networking with other sanctuaries, meetings to plan for future needs of unwanted birds

YOUR HELP IN ANY OF THE ABOVE AREAS WOULD BE MUCH APPRECIATED.

MEDIA ATTENTION

On February 17, 2002 the *Charlotte Observer* newspaper did a major article about The Tropics. The story focused on the huge amount of work

cont...from page -1- which will feature the dome and the freedom it is giving to both us and the birds.

SPECIAL NOTICE:

A recent issue of People Magazine, sporting Rosie O'Donnell on the cover featured an ad of a man sitting at a tropical bar with a Scarlet macaw on the T-shirt. He was smoking a DORAL cigarette. At the bar near him sat a LIVE Scarlet macaw. Once we learn the parent company that produces this brand of smokes, we will be contacting them about the awful message they are presenting regarding this danger to birds.

DON'T FORGET TO :

- *Send in your donations (A minimum \$10/month/per person would cover our monthly operating expenses).
 - *Sponsor a bird: \$300/yr.
 - *Sponsor a plant: \$25/ea.
 - *Sponsor a newsletter: \$500.00
 - *Send Toys of all sizes
 - *Purchase:
 - Brass Plaques for Dome
 - Bricks for Path
 - T-Shirts & Sweat Shirts
 - Mouse Pads & Videos
- Just go to our web site gift shop.

ATTN: PARROT HEADS
We are in dire need of your support. By the time you read this, the Sandlapper PHC, Rock Hill, NC will have visited here. They will be able to answer all of your questions, and verify the type and quality of work being done here. We need EACH club in the country to sponsor just one bird a year (\$300.). By doing so, you will have the satisfaction of saving the symbol of your fan club, PARROTS
THANK YOU SO MUCH!

Special Thanks to Bird Clubs:
Charleston, SC club sent over \$300 worth of new toys. Parrot Breeders of Virginia sponsored Sweet Pea for a fourth year.

A BIG THANKS...
goes to Avitech Exotic Birds for their generosity. They sent us a gift certificate for \$100.

2002 News

Besides the first of the birds taking flight, this year has been very eventful. Many of you may not know that in March of last year I (Mary Bradford) broke my rightshoulder washing windows in the small bird aviary. Recovery was 3 to 4 months. As time went by, the pain didn't entirely go away. So, this February I underwent what was to be minor surgery. As things would have it, the surgery went from minor to major, including bone calcification, damaged rotator cuff, torn tendon and inflamed tissue in the joint. This damage occurred at the time of the original break, but went undected for a year. Recovery will be long, 4 to 12 months, and painful.
Then in March we had the newspaper coverage, resulting in the TV show filming. Now the mayhem begins in preparation for the show. We don't know yet if we (John and I) will be flown out to LA for the airing of that show. Meanwhile, the horror surrounding the plague of unwanted birds continues. We need to expand again, and we will. Anyone interested in being a donor for the next dome?

A REAL MIRACLE

It's been a while since I've shared some of the GOOD things that happen around here: On the first Sunday in January I got a frantic call from a lady who's Quaker had been attacked by her ferret. She asked if there was a qualified emergency vet she could go to on a Sunday. I told her NO! I suggested that she bring the bird here and I'd look at him. When she got here, I was shocked to see so many wounds on such a little bird's head. I realized that I'd have to treat this bird immediately or he'd die. She signed a release not holding me responsible for the bird's outcome and I began treatment. His head wounds were deep holes and cracks in his skull, not to mention that his left eye was also punctured. After cleaning him up, I began medication otherwise, if nothing else killed him, infection would. Oh, I should introduce you to him. His name is Sugar and it really fit him. One of the sweetest Quakers I've ever met. My vet was on vacation for a week, so I kept him medicated, tube fed and monitored his weight daily. He'd lost 10 gms. He was also put in a cage that we transformed into an oxygen tent. When the vet returned to work, she gave me a formula for birds in critical condition to feed him. Within 24 hours he was like a new bird. He spent 3 1/2weeks here and went home a healthy, happy bird having gained his weight back,talking, eating on his own, and still recovering from his wounds. Last report was that he hadbecome very spoiled...UH OH!

THE TROPICS GIFT SHOP

*We are sporting a new look for 2002 with a new T-shirt design that can be found on our web site: tropics.parrotrefuge.com. The company that does our product line, **Omega Graphics, Kannapolis, NC** designed this new shirt free of charge. The Amazons in the picture are from here and it is a photo we were able to capture during a rare moment. You may purchase this new 'look' on T-shirts, sweat shirts, and mouse pads. You may also continue to get our Moluccan cockatoo logo from last year, as well.*

THE ECONOMY

This is a special plea. Due to the downturn in economy, partial loss of our seed sponsor (instead of all free seed, we now pay a nominal cost), and mounting expenses for additional birds, the dome, two aviaries, the purchase of a storage building for the generator, seed and other food stuffs, utilities, vet bills, and all the other expenses incurred by any type of business has caused our operating budget to rise. We need \$3,600 a month to operate. \$1,000 a month goes just for grocery store food, not to mention other food needs. So, please keep your donations coming, and if you are not sponsoring a bird, please consider doing so. Thank you!
