

## THE TROPICS EXOTIC BIRD REFUGE

FALL/WINTER, 2005

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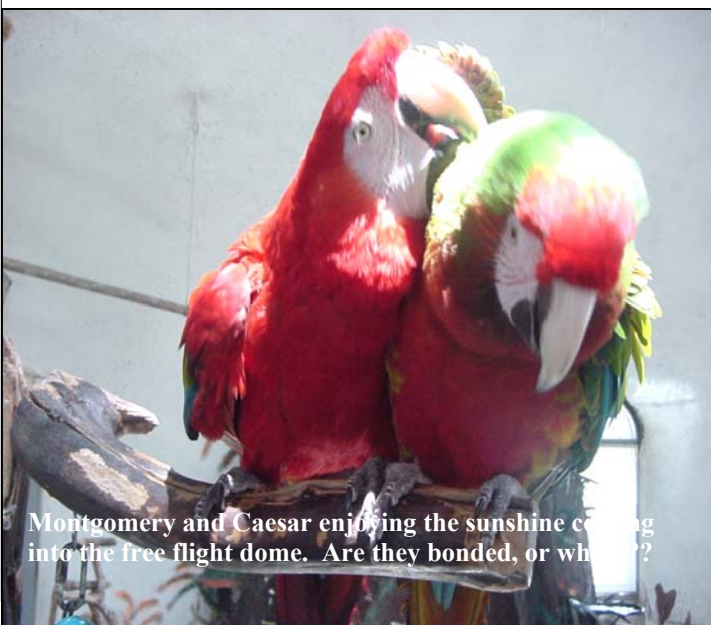
### HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

This year is almost gone. How fast time flies when you're having fun:) But this year has been less fun than in the past. John has a very painful disease, and I was in the hospital for major abdominal surgery in January, and given at least one year to recover. Then in May I broke my right foot, for the second time in less than one year. Lastly, in September I was bitten on the top of my hand, contracted a Cellulites infection that hospitalized me (after two trips to the Emergency Room) for 6 days. The infection traveled from the knuckle of my middle finger on the right hand all the way up to my elbow. I was on IV antibiotics and IV painkillers all that time. Each day the doctor would come in and put new pen marks on my arm to gauge how much the infection was traveling. By the fourth day he was terribly discouraged, but we continued on. Then on the fifth day the infection stopped traveling. At that point it was up to my elbow. It had traveled 2" a day. When it finally stopped traveling up my arm, then the swelling and purple color started to go slowly away starting at the site of the bite. On the 6th day I was finally released. When I went back for my post hospital check up the doctor said he didn't think the infection was going to stop traveling, saying that would've meant amputation at the SHOULDER!!! If you remember, 5 years ago, I was bitten on my left hand, contracting an even more dangerous, faster moving infection that almost cost me my left arm up to my elbow. I think I am finally on the mend and John has been on medication for pain and prescribed clinical massage therapy, both of which are helping. Nonetheless, with the onset of cooler weather, it has increased his pain level from what it was in the warmer months. But, at least we both are making progress, the birds are happy, healthy and beautiful, and we are maintaining the aviaries and dome with the part-time help of Jane, our long-time volunteer whom you met in our last newsletter. Lastly, as you will read again on into the newsletter, we are expressing our sincere thanks to all of you who have and continue to support us financially, prayerfully, and with hope that you could do more. We have made it through our **14th year**, with ALL the thanks going to those of you who are passionately resolved to helping these needy birds.

An update on our adoptions. Originally, this facility was formed as a PERMANENT home for our birds, but as time went on, and Sept 11 in NY happened, then the war in Iraq, and the fall in employment, it took it's toll on us financially, so we had no choice but to downsize. We maxed out at 380 birds, and for the last year we have maintained a count of between 70-75 birds. We still take in birds, but only if they are handicapped, the owners are ill, or the bird has a good chance of being adopted out. We are no longer able to increase our inventory (for lack of a better word). We get lots of positive feedback on the birds we adopted out and in just a few cases where it didn't work out, the adopters honored their contract and sent their bird back to us. We are amazed at how many birds lived here permanently for so long, and how many have come and gone out to great homes. I look back on past photographs of some of the birds with great longing, as I still miss them, but in the end it's what is best for the bird that counts.

**PLEASE CONTINUE TO GO TO OUR WEBSITE AND SEE ALL THE NEW ITEMS THAT WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR SALE SOON!**

THE



Montgomery and Caesar enjoying the sunshine coming into the free flight dome. Are they bonded, or what??



Angel (Hyacinth), and Sidney (Eclectus) enjoying each others company in the sunroom. Sidney is growing in again.

# **PLACE YOUR 2005 ORDERS NOW!**



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](http://www.4zbirds.com); Madcool BirdGyms, [www.madcoolbirdgyms.com](http://www.madcoolbirdgyms.com); Cage Avianix, [www.freedomcage.com](http://www.freedomcage.com); GoneNutz, [www.gonenutz.com](http://www.gonenutz.com); White Feather Bird Products, [www.whitefeatherbirdproducts.com](http://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](http://www.parrotsatplay.org)



GO TO [www.parrots-at-play.org](http://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"**

THE TROPICS EXOTIC BIRD REFUGE

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 \_\_\_\_\_

To see this page, or the entire newsletter in color, go to our web site and click on "Newsletter"

New products from *PERFECT SCENTS CANDLES AND GIFTS*. 50% of the proceeds will go to help the birds at *The Tropics*.

These new items will be available on Jan. 1, 2005. To order at that time, go to <http://www.perfectscents5.com/tropics.html>

**WARNING:** Please do not burn scented candles if you have birds, as they may be toxic. Instead, use them as decorations or gifts.

### **Waxed Stuffed Animals**

				
"Droopy" 5" Tall Scented in Fresh Brewed Coffee \$ 16.00	"Snuggles" 5" Tall Scented in Butterscotch Pudding \$ 16.00	"Dottie" 5" Tall Scented in Cotton Blossom \$ 16.00	"Max" 5" Tall Scented in Baby Powder \$ 16.00	"Fluffy" 5" Tall Scented in Honeysuckle \$ 16.00

### **Waxed Bunnies**

		
Blue Bunny 10" Tall Scented in Country Clothesline \$ 20.00	Pink Bunny 10" Tall Scented in Victoria Secret's Pink \$ 20.00	Yellow Bunny 10" Tall Scented in True Banana \$ 20.00

### **Candle Mugs**

**Candle Mugs, 11 oz. & come in matching box. Can be cleaned and used as a mug after the candle has burned down.**

	
Pansy Candle Mug Candle Color: Purple Scent: Lilac \$ 15.00	Spring Garden Candle Mug Candle Color: blue Scent: Floral Bouquet \$ 15.00

## **Thanks!**

As I am sure you are well aware of by now, that this year has been very hard for us. With John's illness, and my two stays in the hospital and two trips to the Emergency Room, plus recovery time, and thankfully, a week's vacation, we are now on our way back up. There is ABSOLUTELY NO WAY we can possibly thank all of you who have supported us with your money, prayers, good wishes, and hopes of being able to do more, but can't at this time. Our mailing list now numbers 440 and out of that number, 199 of you have contributed either on an occasional or monthly basis. That blows the marketing figures out the top, as the statistics prove that you can expect only a 1%-3% return on a mailing. We are almost at 50% return from our donor mailing list. This goes to show how hard you are working for us. We wish we could name you all in a "thanks" column the way we used to, but there's simply too many of you to name :) This year we have literally felt like beggars, having sent out twice as many mailers as we normally do. From your response, it is clear that you understand and have definitely responded openheartedly.

In addition, we have a new chapter here in NC, and several others who can step in and take over, should anything undo happen to both John and I at the same time. This is a great relief for us and for those of you with birds here. The birds have remained disease free now for 4 years, with the exception of an occasional bacterial or fungal infection that is treatable. Our thanks goes out to our veterinarian, Dr. Judi Vogt, of "Take Flight Avian Veterinarian Clinic", located in Huntersville, NC.

This year, we are sad to announce that Bob, the owner of Topper Bird Ranch Diet passed away suddenly from a heart attack. In his place his daughter has taken over the business and with the help of employees is still going strong. To this day, they still remain our most loyal commercial sponsor. They have been by our side since May, 1993. Congratulations and blessings to them in their time of loss, and while they are expanding their business. If you would like to place an order for safe, clean, bug free seed mixtures, and other product, please contact them at: 1-800-600-2473, place your order and they will ship it out to you. We feel that a major reason for our birds' health is the clean, infested free food that they supply to us is partly responsible.

## **Testimonials & Fund Raising Ideas #1**

(only one of a hundred I could print)

October, 2004....."Hello. My name is Kristen Satterwhite and I live in Richmond, Va. I learned about The Tropics I'd say about a year or so ago just from a random search engine online. I absolutely fell in love with the website and how devoted John and Mary Bradford were towards birds. They have educated me and many others I know about the importance of "adopting" over "buying" baby or adult birds. Sure, baby birds are adorable and I have owned a few, but once I was educated on how many birds out there DESPERATELY NEEDED a permanent family, I stopped buying birds from pet stores. In the last newsletter I received from The Tropics, immediately I knew something was wrong because it was in black and white, not the usual beautifully colored newsletter I was used to. So I started reading it and I knew somewhere I would see that they desperately needed money. I immediately told myself that I had to do something for these people and the birds they care for, so I had the idea of putting donation boxes in local pet stores around where I live. The response is amazing! I went to the copy shop two doors down from my office and had them print me a couple color copies of some of the birds on the website. Some of the birds I used were Oscar (because he was paralyzed), Orko and Jackpot (because they're pluckers), Georgie because she was blind), Ringer (because even the most exquisite of the parrot species, Hyacinths, can still have problems), etc. Their pictures were a good way for me to show people that this has got to stop and that we control this as consumers. Some of the birds are pluckers, some of them have one leg and will be crippled forever, and then there was Sweetpea who was born without eyes. No matter what is wrong with a bird whether it's genetically challenged or handicapped, they are still amazing creatures that deserve just as much attention if not more than a "regular" bird. I listed that The Tropics cares for many birds a day every day along with their website, newsletters and a little personal note asking people to donate their spare change. It has been less than a month and I have collected over \$30.00 between 2 stores. It doesn't seem like much right now but those numbers are going to grow because I'm not finished there. I go to the pet stores every day and check on the donation boxes and talk to the people there about the importance of educating yourself as a bird enthusiast/consumer and the importance of rescues like The Tropics. Remember, you control your birds' future and wellbeing, why not spread the word. Sincerely, Kristen Satterwhite, owned by a Blue Throated Macaw named Peru, and a Blue Fronted Amazon named Louie.

## **Testimonials & Fund Raising Ideas #2**

October 26, 2004.....Dear Mr. & Mrs. Bradford, I was very sorry to learn in your acknowledgement of my previous contribution that donations have been decreasing. I was wondering if you have ever suggested the following in a newsletter regarding donation.

You mentioned that in August you received \$1,434, or half of what is needed to operate - that is, about \$3,000 monthly. You also said you had a mailing list of 424 donors. That means if all of them could just give \$8.00 a month (or \$96.00 a year), you would at least meet your basic operating budget.

This is just a suggestion and I see from your letter to me that you can't afford to send out mailings based on mere suggestions, but it might be something to mention in a future mailing. I'm enclosing another \$40 for my part of the plan anyway, and sincerely hope that contributions have improved since you sent me this SOS. You are so special to have cared for these beautiful birds for such a long time, and I just wish I was able to help more financially. But you've probably heard that as often as some parrots' pet phrases!

Best to you both in the upcoming Holiday Season. Sincerely, Joyce Mastny.

## **NEWS UPDATE**

For the last two years (after the building of the dome) we took in \$98,000 a year in donations. Of course, we've downsized tremendously since then, but our only drop in expenses is feed and trips to the vet. All of our other business expenses (heat, electric, phone, insurance, automotive expenses, marketing/mailings, website upkeep, etc.) haven't changed significantly. This year our total donation intake will be approximately 1/3 of the last two years. We need a minimum of \$2,500-\$3,000 a month to survive financially. We have only one volunteer left because of the downsizing, so extra work is on John and I, but that is a given. If anyone can start giving the \$8.00 a month (or more) as suggested above, or increase your present donation by that much, it will help us make it without the expense of extra pleadings.