



12th Annual Bird Fair—June 24

African Gray Screams Like a Girl

Ten Steps to Good Bird Behavior

Summer 2006

A Welcome to New and Prospective Members

For those of you who have recently joined the Southwest Virginia Bird Club, we offer you a hearty welcome and look forward to seeing you at our monthly meetings.

For those of you who have not yet joined our happy group, we hope you will decide that we have something to offer you and we know that you would be a wonderful asset to our club.

Please welcome our new club members:

Judy Wilhelm
Dr. Bev Rezigalinski
Joes Williamson and Family
Cathy and Wayne Reynolds

This issue of the quarterly SWVBC Newsletter contains a humorous story about a screaming African gray, information about the bird fair, and tips on helping your bird learn good behavior. So, take a few minutes to enjoy your newsletter.

Our cover birds this issue are Duchess and Merlin. Read about them in the Club Notes beginning on Page 9.



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SWVBC Board of Directors for 2005

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Website: www.swvbc.org

My Parrot Screams Like a Girl

By Mark Morford, SF Gate Columnist

March 31, 2006

She used to just squeal and chirp and squeak and burp like a tiny feathered sailor. She used to just make adorable little noises like a moderately hyperactive little monkey holding a banana and looking at the sky and talking to the clouds.

But not anymore. Now, the SO's African Gray parrot, 1 foot tall and 2 feet of wingspan and 1 solid pound of tiny-boned flesh, named Anaya and cuter than a drunk squirrel and more exasperating than a knotted shoelace and more lovingly spoiled than a blond grandchild in the Hamptons, this bird, now nearly 2 years old and maturing a bit and moving away from her fledgling awkward vocal confusions and into a more adult phase of happy confident incessant noisedom, this parrot has learned to scream. Like a girl. *Exactly* like a girl. And also chat on the phone. Sometimes at the same time.



Parrots, you should know right now, are enormously weird. Surreal. They bring with them a bizarre sense of wild and unfamiliar nature and you cannot feed them or watch them move and preen and waddle awkwardly down the hall without this sense of trippy *otherness*; you cannot hold a parrot in your hand and stroke their funky tiny pencil-thin neck bones and not feel like you are in the presence of something just a little out of the human range of cosmic understanding. Personally, I think it's the wings that do it. Or the black tongue inside that shockingly powerful beak. Or the eyes, black and sharp and eternally vigilant.

I am here to tell you, large parrots make for the most fascinating of pets, entirely rewiring what the hell you think a barely domesticated creature is supposed to do because they so easily flout and mock any and all of the things a dog or cat or hamster would do -- which is to say, they can talk, they can read your meek little human mind, they will only get angry if you get angry and will only laugh and shrug and nip at your feeble attempts at punishment and will stare at you in utter unblinking fascination as you have sex -- because large parrots and especially large African Gray parrots are a) preternaturally smart, b) creepily observant and c) neurotic as a Jewish comedian on meth.

Plus, of course, parrots mimic. Especially Grays. Especially well. They are legendary for it. Did I mention they can live for 50 years? And that this bird isn't even 2? It's a long haul, baby. You'd better love the bird thing. Otherwise, it's all "Wild Parrots of Telegraph Hill," you know?

In fact, the weird-crazy-beautiful parrot Anaya is sitting on my shoulder as I write this, right now. She is making strange gurgling noises to accompany the

Arctic Monkeys. Also, smooches and wolf whistles and long, sustained raspy sounds like pineapple being dragged across a cheese grater for 10 solid seconds. This is normal. This is to be expected. After a while you barely notice and the SO and I can be watching TV or talking in the living room and the bird will be yammering away in her own little world, conversing with the spirits for a solid half hour and unless she chimes in with a crystal-clear "I love you" or "Hello" or "What's up?" you just sort of tune it out the way a parent, I imagine, tunes out the sounds of the children imbibing lighter fluid and stabbing each other with little plastic forks.

Unless, of course, she screams. The screaming is new. It is piercing and startling and, well, surprisingly cute, probably because it sounds exactly (and I do mean exactly) like my girlfriend.

See, parrots go through phases of mimicry as their tongues and brains and observational skills develop, and this particular bird has recently added to her astounding orchestral repertoire the *exact same* high-pitched, ear-rattling, neighbor-alerting yelp emitted when I jump out from behind the door to scare my SO (which I do frequently, as a way of keeping the relationship fresh and snappy and ever on the verge of, you know, murder). It is, in a word, uncanny. Hilarious. Adorable. The screaming, I mean. And, I suppose, the girlfriend.

She will scream without provocation (the bird, but also the girlfriend). She will scream as part of her normal twice-daily verbal gymnastics wherein she runs through every noise she knows and rearranges them on the fly, like her own built-in GarageBand. She will scream when you leave the room. She will scream when you enter the room. She will scream whenever she hears a woman scream on TV, a sort of scream-à-tête. Thankfully, she does not scream so often, or so loudly, that we have to consider duct tape and a sedative.

But then again, screaming is not her favorite thing. Not by a long shot. For that, we have the telephone.

Parrots, as I said, are terrifically weird. Parrots are highly unpredictable. Parrots attach to random things and are utterly freaked out and terrified by other random things (example: Wave a big broom in front of Anaya and she just looks at you and rolls those tiny black eyes and yawns. But bring a simple toothbrush within five feet of her and she will jump and flap her wings and growl like you're a drunken Dick Cheney carrying a shotgun), and there is little explanation for it. Telephones are, for now, just her thing.



She is amazed by them. You will be talking and laughing and muttering into the handset, and you glance over and the bird is leaning way in and cocking her head sideways and watching every ... single ... syllable ... as it passes your lips. She is absolutely mesmerized. She is taking it all in. Recording. Studying. Analyzing.

(Continued on page 6)

Hence, she can now imitate, with freakish precision, the exact tone and cadence of the ring of my SO's home phone. She will ring the phone two or three times, answer it with the exact same beep as the on button, say, "Hello, how are you?" in pitch-perfect girlfriend intonation, proceed to have a full conversation in human-pitched bird gibberish (with all appropriate pauses and cadences), say, "OK, OK, bye-bye," and hang up with another perfect beep. She will do this over and over again. All day long.

Parrots happily, effortlessly smack around your normal perceptions. Parrots make you look at the world anew, every single day, perhaps more than any other sort of pet, though I've never owned a potbellied pig or a miniature pony or a three-toed Republican, so I can't speak with absolute authority. In fact, we don't even know for sure if Anaya is male or female (requires a special blood test we have yet to get around to) and so in about six years if she lays an egg, we will know for sure.

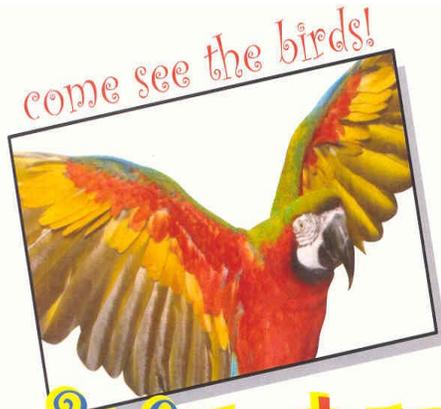
Hopefully, she will scream when it happens. And so, probably, will we. How much fun is that?

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SWVBC Member Interviewed by *Bird Talk*

Barry Young, a long-time SWVBC member was interviewed by and quoted in the June 2006 issue of *Bird Talk* magazine in their article on [webcams](#), "Your Electronic Nanny." As many of you may know, Barry is an avid photographer. Below are some of his fids.





THE BIRD FAIR

Saturday June 24, 2006 ~ 9am-5pm

**Minnick Educational Center
775 Dent Road Roanoke, VA**

Admission \$5.00 Children under 12 FREE!

Proceeds go to the SWVBC mission. Southwest Virginia Bird Club is a 501C Non-Profit Organization.

*Our Annual Fun(D)-Raiser with plenty of
Toys, Cages, Birds, & Informative Seminars!!!*

FREE SEMINARS

- 10am - How Phoenix Landing Works
- 11am - Making/Buying Safe Bird Toys - Liz Baxter
- 12pm - Foraging For Birds - Karen Justice, Bird Behaviorist
- 1pm - Making/Buying Safe Bird Toys - Liz Baxter
- 2pm - Reinforcing Good Bird Behavior - Karen Justice
- 3pm - What we need to know about Avian Flu -
Paul Stewart, DVM, Valley Animal Hospital

12th Annual SWVBC Bird Fair

The Bird Fair is almost here! As a member of the club, you will surely want to come to the fair to attend the seminars, check out the new birds, and stock up on bird food, treats, toys, cages, and all the other paraphernalia our little darlings need. But don't come alone; bring a friend or two to share this great experience. Remember, as always, profits from the fair will be donated to bird conservation and rescue organizations—Phoenix Landing, Gabriel Foundation, World Parrot Trust, and others.

We are in the Minnick Center this year, a new location that we hope will serve us well. The Center is located on Dent Road near its intersection with Airport Road. Coming from Peters Creek Road, turn onto Airport Road then turn left on Dent Road, just before the tunnel. The Center is on the left on a hill. Coming from Airport Road towards Peters Creek Road, turn right just after leaving the tunnel.

Volunteers Needed

We still need volunteers on Friday, to set up club, photo, and raffle tables and move in vendors, as well as Saturday morning to move in vendors, staff the club and raffle tables, sell tickets, and staff the membership table. Volunteer for an hour or two and bring a friend. For more information or to volunteer, give Wanda Crowder a call at 774-8233.



Bird Fair Photo Contest



The photo contest this year will be free of charge. We are asking, however, that each member enter at least one photo of their bird(s). In the past, we have had the same people entering multiple photos of the same birds and we need to mix it up. Non-members are also welcome to enter their bird's photos. Photos can be sent by email or regular mail. Please keep the size roughly 4x6 inches. There will be four contests as usual—Large Beautiful, Small Beautiful, Large Fun, and Small Fun. For more information contact Holly Traquino at holly7766@yahoo.com. Photos can be emailed to that address or sent by regular mail to Holly at 211 Cleveland Ave., Martinsville, VA 24112.

Bird Talk Subscriptions Available

Two years for the price of one! Our own Edie Manuel will be representing Bow Tie Publishing and selling Bird Talk subscriptions at half price at the Bird Fair. Bird Talk is a lovely magazine with lots of beautiful color pictures plus many articles about the basics (and advanced!) of bird keeping. Don't miss this opportunity to renew or begin a subscription. You might even think of someone who would love to have a subscription as a gift.



Seminars

Please see the poster on Page 7 for titles, times, and speakers for the great seminars at the fair this year.

Club Notes

April

We had very special guests for our April meeting. Lois McDonald brought her two beautiful Hyacinth Macaws, Duchess and Merlin, for all of us to enjoy. Lois told us how Duchess came to her as a re-homed bird while Merlin actually belongs to a friend. Lois felt that Duchess was lonely, especially after Duchess lost her Scarlett Macaw friend. Lois found Merlin and Merlin's owner and the two birds became fast friends. Now they share their time between Lois and Merlin's mom, staying months at a time at each place. Lois also brought a gorgeous Harlequin Macaw. Check out the pictures below.



Duchess



Merlin



Lois and Duchess



Harlequin Macaw



Melody Blankenship was honored with an award from BVC.



May

Our May meeting was a whirl of scissors, stencils, sheets of gaily colored plastic, and black markers. We formed an assembly line to make 25 lawn signs announcing the bird fair. Signs will start appearing in neighborhoods beginning June 1.

Upcoming Meetings

Please remember that all meetings are held in Roanoke at the Huntington Court Methodist Church at 7:00 p.m. on the second Tuesday of each month, unless otherwise noted.

June

There will be no regular meeting in June. Come to the bird fair instead and have loads of fun. And don't forget the raffle. We have extraordinary prizes this year including:

- Roomba robot floor sweeper
- \$20 gift certificate to Bed, Bath, and Beyond
- Red muumuu embroidered with a parrot
- Sequined parrot T-shirt
- Parrot puppets
- Rainforest paint sets
- Gift bucket from Zupreem
- And much more.



The Roomba from
iRobot

July



Our annual Bird Club picnic will be held at Huntington Court Methodist Church on Sunday, July 16. If the weather is too hot, we will meet in the fellowship hall in the basement of the church. Otherwise, we will be under the picnic shelter at the back of the church. Bring your choice of dish(es) with enough to share. Drinks and ice will be provided. Don't miss this opportunity to have fun with your fellow club members and critique this year's fair.

August

We will take a break in August and return to our regular meeting schedule in September. Watch for the Fall 2006 newsletter or check our website for more information.

Ten Steps to a Better Relationship With your Parrot

By Liz Wilson, CVT

1. Ensure your companion bird is healthy by doing annual check-ups and routine diagnostics with your experienced avian veterinarian since birds hide the obvious signs of illnesses, allowing basic annual testing is critical to the early detection of medical problems.
2. Ensure your companion bird consumes a good diet. This is critical to the proper functioning of its immune system and increases its potential for a healthy life, as well as eliminating nutrition-based problem behaviors, such as some cases of feather destruction.
3. Ensure your companion bird lives in a sufficiently large cage, allowing it lots of room for exuberant wing flapping exercise and energetic play; allow it daily out-of-cage time on play stations other than just the cage to minimize territorial behaviors. Encouraging healthy exercise can decrease problem behaviors like excessive screaming, since a tired parrot is a quiet parrot.
4. Establish controls with your parrot by lovingly teaching it to respond to the simple commands of Up and Down, and setting clear and consistent limits on its behavior. By teaching manners and setting boundaries, parrots can become better companions.
5. Give your parrot quality interaction daily, no matter how busy your life gets even if for just 10-15 minutes for one on one time. Psittacines are biologically wild animals, and won't retain their "tameness" without daily contact with people.
6. Make sure your companion bird is a member of the family, since it is a flock animal and extremely social. Single birds should not be housed in rooms by themselves.

7. Socialize your parrot to family and trusted friends, thereby teaching it to adapt to the society in which it lives. It should be comfortable interacting with and being handled by other people. Do not allow it to become over-bonded to one person.
8. Assure your companion bird gets adequate rest, with 10-12 hours of dark, uninterrupted sleep time nightly. Sleep deprivation often leads to problem behaviors like biting, excessive screaming, and feather destruction.
9. Establish trust with your companion bird by teaching it that it is safe with you. Consistency is critical to establishing trust, as your parrot learns what to expect from you and what you expect from it.
10. Accept your parrot for what it is, not what you want it to be. No matter how well-trained it is, a healthy parrot may still be noisy, messy, and destructive because it is a parrot!

This article was funded by an educational grant from ZuPreem®, the makers of exceptional diets for extraordinary animals. ZuPreem is committed to the advancement of knowledge regarding avian husbandry and nutrition. Working together, ZuPreem and bird clubs with similar interests can support high-quality avian health in our Worldwide community.

Our new logo for the Southwest Virginia Bird Club is being unveiled in this issue of the club newsletter. Holly Taraquinio, Secretary for the club and a professional graphic designer, created this beautiful logo that depicts both a large and a small bird and is graceful in its simplicity. Please show your appreciation to Holly for her hard work the next time you see her.



Fun Stories from birdhotline.com

Say what!

As my husband was making coffee in the kitchen one morning Congo, our 7 year old golden capped conure, decided he wanted to take his bath in the kitchen sink. After he takes his bath, he likes everyone to say "pretty boy" and then he will repeat it. He will fluff his feathers and carry on as I tell him how beautiful he is. Well, my husband is always teasing our baby and trying to teach him to say new words, which up until this point has never worked. Congo never has repeated anything my husband has said. As Congo finished with his bath I said "pretty boy" and he repeated it and then looked over at my husband for his compliment. My husband responded by saying "ugly bird". Congo kept saying "pretty boy" as my husband said "ugly bird." My husband walked into the living room and I told Congo that Daddy was a bad boy. Congo and I went into the living room and sat on the couch by my husband. Congo backed his bottom up to my husband and did his business on my husband's arm! As Congo walked back to me he said plain as day, "Daddy is a bad boy and an ugly bird." Now whenever he takes a bath he says "pretty boy" and then looks at my husband and says either "bad boy" or "ugly bird"!

Trish

My little green rascal is a snitch!

The other day I came home from work and my son told me he had bid successfully on e-bay for something. He said he had gone ahead and logged onto Paypal and made payment. I asked how he had gained access to the password protected area and he replied "Oh, Tweets told me." He said he had been trying to get onto the site and using all the phrases he thought I would use. No luck. Then the bird climbed up on his shoulder and started chattering a phrase. Realizing what the bird was saying, he entered that phrase and bingo, he was in. I realized that the bird is usually on my shoulder when I'm on the computer and that I must say the phrase when logging onto Paypal. He made the connection between the screen image and what I say and then ratted on me. Little stinker. I've changed the password and will be more careful in future not to use it around The Green Mouth that Tells.

Jeannie

Check out birdhotline.com. You will find more stories as interesting and funny as those above as well as useful avian information. Bird Hotline also has a free lost and found service.

Birds Needing a Home

An Amazon and a Jenday conure are available for re-homing. Please contact Pat Rader at mmprader@cox.net for more information.

Check the *Adoptions* area on our website, www.swvbc.org, where you can find birds needing a home or homes needing a bird. Please check this site often for the most up-to-date list of adoption needs.

SWVBC does not take any responsibility in matching new owners; we will only help you make the connection.

Financial Report

March 2006

Beginning balance	\$ 2,014.89	Deposits	\$ 40.00
Ending balance	\$ 1,787.07	Withdrawal	\$ 267.82

April 2006

Beginning balance	\$ 1,787.82	Deposits	\$ 182.00
Ending balance	\$ 1,842.64	Withdrawal	\$ 126.43

To Date May 30, 2006

Beginning balance	\$ 1,842.64	Deposits	\$ 1,165.00
Ending balance	\$ 2,710.55	Withdrawal	\$ 333.67



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Thank You, Linda Cannon
for your generous donation that will cover
the entire cost of the Minnick Center for our
12th Annual Bird Fair.

A Note from the Membership Committee

- **Please check the date after your name on the address label of this newsletter; this is the date of your last dues payment. Dues are renewable once each year, so if the date is more than a year old, please renew your membership by completing the application form found on page 19. You may bring the form to the next club meeting or mail to the address on the form.**
- **To change your street or email address, please email 2chirp@cox.net with your changes, including your name, current mailing address, and e-mail address.**
- **Monthly meeting notices are e-mailed to current members; our quarterly newsletter is sent by US mail. E-mail addresses and names will only be used by the club membership and will not be used or shared for any other purpose. Thank you!**



Directions to SWVBC Meeting

- From I-81, exit at the junction with I-581.
- Take the Orange Avenue exit heading east. Turn left at the first traffic light onto Williamson Road.
- The Huntington Court Methodist Church is on the right at 3333 Williamson Road, NE.
- Meetings are normally held in the small building behind the church in the back parking lot.

Everyone is welcome to attend any of the Southwest Virginia Bird Club meetings which are held at 7:00 0p.m. on the second Tuesday of each month unless otherwise noted. Please check our website at www.swvbc.org for more information.

Southwest Virginia Bird Club

The Southwest Virginia Bird Club holds its monthly meetings in Roanoke on the second Tuesday of each month at the Huntington Court Methodist Church on Williamson Road in Roanoke. (See directions on page 16). As the newsletter is only published quarterly, postcards with meeting information will be E-mailed to all members a week in advance of each meeting. Information is also available on our website at www.swvbc.org.

Annual individual membership dues are \$15.00; the family rate is \$20.00. Please submit a completed membership application (see page 19) to join SWVBC and again each subsequent year to renew.

Members are encouraged to submit articles, stories, pictures, etc. to the editor for publication in upcoming newsletters. The next newsletter will be published in August; the submission deadline is August 18, 2006. Please send ads, articles, pictures, etc. to Melody Blankenship, 2311-G Broadway, Roanoke, VA, 24014 or E-mail to melody.blankenship@taproanoke.org.

Address all other correspondence, dues payments, etc. to:

Southwest Virginia Bird Club
P.O. Box 7243
Roanoke, VA

Bird of the Month

Our club is always concerned about the health of your feathered loved ones, which is why we ask members **not** to bring their birds to the meetings. Some of our meetings are species specific and speakers at those meetings will bring one or more birds.

So, if you want your birdy to strut his or her stuff, please contact Sue Brewer at 366-1193 to coordinate visits. If you can, please send a photograph with a paragraph or two describing your loved one to the editor for inclusion in the next newsletter.

The SWVBC is proud to be a member of the American Federation of Aviculture, World Parrot Trust, The Gabriel Foundation and Partners in Flight.

ALL OF THIS FOR \$15 PER YEAR!

IN SWVBC WE **SHARE** – Whether it’s consoling someone who has just lost a bird or rejoicing with someone who has just added to his or her flock. We also share a lot of fun about feathered antics.



IN SWVBC WE **SOCIALIZE** – Before each meeting we spend a little time “catching up”, having refreshments, sharing and laughing, and sometimes even picking a feather or two off one another! In July we picnic with lots of good food and fun. And in December we gather with holiday decorations to sum up the year, have good food and fun, and exchange gifts in the wildest way possible!!

IN SWVBC WE **LEARN** – We have a program each month that informs each of us. We talk of specific species, first aid, nutrition, diseases, cages, safe toys, etc., etc., etc. We attend state and national conventions/seminars and bring back the best information to share. We read, read and read – *Bird Talk*, *Companion Quarterly* and the latest books. Our relationship with The World Parrot Trust and The Gabriel Foundation affords us some of the latest information on avian aviculture and rehabilitation. We sponsor nationally known speakers at our Bird Fair and invite the public to come and learn.

IN SWVBC WE **CONNECT** – We secure a “rehabber” to check on a pigeon in a parking lot and catch a lovebird in someone’s backyard in order to return it to its owner. We re-home a brown parrot with one of our members and get a pair of red-rump parakeets to a caring breeder. We facilitate the placing of a cockatoo with The Gabriel Foundation. We secure “babysitting” services when someone needs to travel and retrieve a quaker that has been relegated to a dark basement. We get information for a panicky pet owner that has a baby that won’t eat even though the expert had to do this by cell phone while on the way out of town. The list goes on as we speak....

IN SWVBC WE **TEACH** – We teach each other. We teach 2nd graders as well as the elderly at the Roanoke Methodist Home where a lady talked for the first time in months when she touched a parrot. We teach to television audiences and at veterinary clinics and at pet stores. At every opportunity, we share what we know. Some of us even teach at national conventions and seminars. We design and construct wonderful educational exhibits for our Bird Fair.

IN SWVBC WE **CARE**.

Southwest Virginia Bird Club

Membership Application

Name: _____
Address 1: _____
Address 2: _____
City, State, Zip: _____
Phone: _____
Email: _____
Date of Application: _____

Annual membership entitles you to a newsletter, access to club library, and other club sponsored projects. Annual Membership Category:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Single (\$15) | <input type="checkbox"/> Family (\$20) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Paid Cash | <input type="checkbox"/> Paid by Check |
| <input type="checkbox"/> New Member | <input type="checkbox"/> Renewing Member |

What type of bird(s) do you have?

Would you be interested in serving on any committees?
(Bird Fair Committee, Membership Committee, etc.)

Please mail to:

Southwest Virginia Bird Club
P.O. Box 7243
Roanoke, VA 24019

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Please make checks payable to Southwest Virginia Bird Club

SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA BIRD CLUB
P.O. BOX 7243
ROANOKE, VIRGINIA 24019



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NAME IF IT DOES NOT SAY '06'. YOUR DUES
AREN'T CURRENT.... PLEASE KEEP YOUR
DUES UP TO DATE...THANKS
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