



Angel Wings

A monthly journal for human angels who make a positive difference in companion birds' lives.

August 2013
Volume 8, Issue VIII

Having trouble viewing this email? View as a [Web Page](#)



In this month's issue:

- Happy 8th Anniversary!
- Angel Announcements
- Birdie Popsicles
- From the Angel's Toy Chest
- Love, Loss, Happiness
- Avian Heart Strings
- Rikki Sez
- You Don't Have To Be Perfect!
- On Being An Angel
- Angels Wanted
- Help Us

Angel Toys For Angels

August's Featured Toys



[Hearts & Fleece](#)
Small Birds



[Conehead](#)
Small Birds



[Stiks](#)
Small to Medium Birds

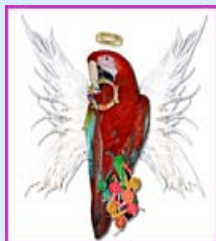
Check out all the [Angel Toys for Angels](#) now!



*** 20426 Toys ***

ANGEL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Watch for upcoming events, news, website updates, etc. here

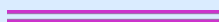


NEW NEW

ON THE SITE:

- ♥ [New Items](#) ♥
- ♥ [Toy Making Kits](#) ♥
- ♥ [Happy Flappers](#) ♥

♥ ♥ ♥



♥ ♥ ♥



Birdie Popsicles
By Toni Fortin

- ♥ Choose a variety of fruits and/or vegetables. Pick your bird's favorites. Watermelon, pineapple, peeled apple chunks, blueberries or melons are always a good choice.
- ♥ Organic juice, such as carrot, apple,

From the Angel's Toy Chest
By 'Sana Emberg



Fleece Celebration

Supplies

- 1 heart shaped plastic bangle
- 12 star pony beads
- 8 1-inch heart beads
- 8 1/2 inch wide fleece strips, 8 inches long
- 6 1/2 inch wide fleece strips, 12 inches long
- 1 plastic link
- 1 straw bead

Left side:

Take one 12-inch fleece strip, fold it over the bangle, and thread both loose ends through a star bead. Pull snug against the bangle, and tie a knot snug to the bead. Then thread one heart bead on each piece after the knot. Tie a knot after each heart, the one closest to the center being a little longer than the outside one. Trim ends to a point about 1 inch from the end. Slide this to the center, where the top of the heart makes a 'V'.

Fold one 8-inch long fleece strip over the bangle and thread both ends through a star bead, pull tight against the bangle and tie each loose end in a separate knot. Trim the ends to a point about 1-inch from the bead. Do this three more times on that side.

whatever you have on hand.

Place above ingredients in the blender and whirl. Fill ice cube trays. When partially frozen, add the popsicle sticks.

Guaranteed a tails-up on a warm summer day!!



Dont'e enjoying his Bird Popsicle



Fold one more 12-inch fleece strip just like the first one, with a star bead, knots and heart beads, but leave them just a little bit longer than the top. These make the dangles at the bottom.

Right side:

Repeat as above, but on the other side of the bangle, making a 'mirror image' of what you did on the left side.

Add the link and straw bead in the center between the center dangles, hang and let the birdies enjoy!

Fleece Celebration supplies and instructions are being offered in a Toy Making Kit available here:

[Fleece Celebration Kit](#)



Love, Loss, Happiness -- And Velcro Was Her Name
By Ruth Ann La Rue

Preface: Members of Parrot Toy Angels have sent toy packages to Oasis parrots in foster care at our home in the past. Velcro, African Grey Parrot, was one of the lucky recipients. Toys, especially the coffee filter ones, helped Velcro through some self-mutilation episodes. This is the story of Velcro's passing.

On June 2, 2013 at 10:05 a.m. Arizona Time a little soul winged its way to Heaven. The soul's name on earth had been Velcro.

Velcro hatched in 1993 as a Congo African Grey Parrot. All we know about Velcro before coming to The Oasis Sanctuary is that she was thought to be a male and she shared her life with another Grey named Otis. When she came to the Sanctuary in June 2007 she arrived with what had been described as a minor wound on her right wing. In truth she had a badly broken wing that had been left untreated. Velcro was trying to chew her wing off because of the pain was so excruciating. After attempts to close the gaping wound and help Velcro heal, her wing was amputated to save her life. Dr. Driggers, the surgeon, recalls the look Velcro gave him upon recovering from anesthesia – a look that said, "Thank you, that hurt so bad and now it doesn't hurt."

Velcro came to our foster care at "Chez La Rue" immediately after surgery that July day. She spent swinging from self-mutilation crises to periods of great happiness with nearly no chewing. Our solution to giving Velcro happiness and security was to offer ladders to and from counters and the floor to explore. This freedom to climb up and down her ladders, to eat and drink on her own schedule, and to rest and play was what Velcro seemed to want the most. We surrendered our home to her wanderings. When visitors, all of whom knew and loved Velcro, would come to visit, the first thing said was "Where is Velcro?" Then Tom would call "Velcro," and whistle a special call. In moments we would either see her appear or we would hear her call to let us know she was just fine where she was hiding.

Velcro had a very rocky recovery period and as time went by Velcro's behavior, mental health and physical health ebbed and flowed, with periods of wellness and periods of serious self-mutilation and skin infections on her tail. The trips to see Dr. Driggers seemed to be countless as we tried to ease Velcro's mental and physical symptoms. We used physical and drug intervention to keep Velcro from mutilating herself. We even talked about euthanasia. Recent x-rays had shown that numerous falls onto her back and tail had caused a compaction and distortion of the sacral vertebrae in her spine. Dr. Driggers was convinced that this vertebral compaction was the source of the pain that drove Velcro to mutilate herself.

But, even in the worst times of self-mutilation, she seemed to be a happy and loving parrot. She like nothing better than to sit with her Daddy, Tom, snuggled up to the left side of his chin on his chest. She would snuggle with Daddy for hours if allowed and it was clear that Velcro had a desire to live.

Finally, on the days that preceded her death, I became more concerned than ever with Velcro's behavior. I sought advice, as I so often did, with our bird experts at the Sanctuary. Secretly I was thinking we might be approaching the time to make the very hard decision to euthanize dear Velcro. Three days before her death, I made arrangements for Velcro to take a "vacation" back at the main Oasis location where she could be close to other Grey Parrots.

Then on Sunday morning, June 2, I knew that Velcro was in a very bad way. I rushed her to Dr. Driggers office. When we arrived it was determined by x-ray that Velcro had two eggs inside her. She was not able to push them out. She needed physical intervention to remove the eggs and she was anesthetized to do the procedure. All went as expected and, and although the prognosis was guarded, the doctor expected her to recover and be fit for a later operation to spay her.

As Velcro was waking from the gas, she just stopped breathing. Her heart stopped. She could not be revived. She died there on the operating table.

This is what I wrote to my friends and colleagues when I came home minus my little Velcro:

"Yes, I was desperate for a time. As I sat in my car sobbing, I felt a calmness come over me. I am convinced Velcro was consoling me. Her message to me was, "I am happy now. It was my choice to die. I am fine."

"So, as hard as it is, and as many tears as I shed, Velcro wants me and us to know that she chose her time to die. I have a void - a gaping hole that Velcro's presence filled. Her presence is a spiritual vapor now and I have not adjusted to the void. Clinic staff were perplexed because Velcro was recovering normally from the anesthesia, then her heart just stopped. Medical explanation could be that her body was overwhelmed by the trauma, but Velcro's spirit TOLD me she CHOSE to go."

"Have we reclaimed the kitchen stove, the bathrooms, and the closets with Velcro's passing? Perhaps. But I would much rather have Missy V occupying the space and filling my heart with concern and joy and wonder."

You see, happiness is not only on this side of existence. There is happiness in the spirit world, too. And Velcro loved us enough to ease our pain and let us know that she is finally happy and pain free. I absolutely know that Velcro will reunite with Tom and me and we will be happy together.

Do yourself a favor, find the song by Willie Nelson, "Angel Flying Too Close To The Ground." It is Velcro's song. Play [Angel Flying Too Close To The Ground](#)"

Read Ruth Ann's original story about "V" here: [Thank you to the Parrot Toy Angels...and the story of V](#)



Avian Heart Strings

By Bridget Wagenbach

Every pet bird owner probably has a story of some bird, whether cockatiel, amazon, macaw, or cockatoo, that tugs dearly at their heart. It need not be a bird they owned. It could a foster bird or maybe a bird they encountered at a local rescue, or even a bird they have heard or read about, especially in today's world of social media. The stories of these endeared birds differ. It could be the story of Alex, the famous African Grey, who died at a young age for a Grey. It could be the story of a cockatoo, mutilated from plucking, at a rescue that is fighting wholeheartedly to stabilize its health. It could be a sick foster bird that eventually succumbs to disease. These stories go on whether the bird is special to one individual or many.

For me, my special bird was a cockatoo that I knew for a short while and I became another person in her life story. I do not know much of her history except she was abandoned to a rescue, supposedly in a shoebox. She was plucked and trusted few. But she trusted me. I was turned down for adoption by this rescue, which eventually was part of a seizure by a local animal organization. Later, I chose not to adopt her after she was diagnosed with an avian disease. The best home for her was one with no other birds. She eventually found a permanent home.

I cried many tears for this bird. She has a place in my heart that is different than the love I have for my own flock. She will always be special to me even though my chapter in her life story has ended.

Rikki Sez

Rikki will try and answer frequently asked questions here.



Rikki, I see all those birds on the electrical wires outside my house. They play, fly and kiss up there. Mom says I can't go up there with them. I want to play and kiss, too. Sometimes my mom is a meany. Why won't she let me?

Signed, So jealous...

Dear Jealous, Your mom is trying to keep you safe and happy. Look at it this way, those birds outside don't have a mommy to give them toys and fix them good food - do you know they eat BUGS? YUCK! They don't have a nice cage to live in and stay warm when it snows. They are also chased by cats and big MEAN birds. So, while it might *look* like they are having fun, your mommy wants to keep you safe and happy at home, where she can love you. So, give your mommy kisses and play with her, okay?



Rikki, I used to have a nice hiding place - my fleece toy. But, my parronts took it away. I miss my hiding place. Now I have no good place to relax and take it easy. How can I get my toy back?

Signed, Anxious with no place to go

Dear Anxious, Maybe your toy just needed cleaning and you will get it back soon, or



*Bird Cages Galore
Affordable Quality*

Why buy a Bird Cage from Bird Cages Galore?? Because we do not "just sell" top quality cages at reasonable prices, provide free shipping and a free toy with each cage; we offer first rate customer service and will answer your questions about most bird-related matters. Visit us on the web, browse our selection, join our discussion forum and sign up for our free Newsletter, [The Caged Bird Courier](#).

We are here to help, because we care about your bird!!



maybe there were threads that were too long and it is being trimmed. Some parronts just don't understand that we are prey and some of us need to hide from predators to get really really comfortable. We really don't need a fleece toy, any toy we can hide in or behind is enough.



Rikki, Are you a single birdie? I've seen your pictures, and have followed your column for a while, and you seem to have a good head on your shoulders. I'm a single female looking to make some beautiful babies, and I think you are one hot bird!

Signed, Lonely in Louisiana

Dear Lonely, I'm sorry, but I'm in a bonded relationship, but don't give up hope! I'm sure there's a birdie around nearly as finely feathered as me just waiting to find you!

Do you have a question for Rikki?
Please send it to The Editor at
editor@parrottoyangels.org



You Don't Have To Be Perfect To Be An Angel!

By 'Sana Emberg



Many years ago, an adorable little cockatiel named Gromit came into my life. He was a 12-week-old hand-fed baby, and although I wouldn't realize it for years, he taught me many lessons in life. I think the most important lesson he taught me was how to PLAY. Life moves so fast, and it's so easy to get caught up in the day to day routine, going to work, paying bills, fixing the car, there always seems to be something that needs your time and energy. Before you realize it, a big part of life seems to have just passed you by.



But this little handful of feathers made me stop and smell the roses every day. I'd wake up grumpy, only to hear his joyful song, and know the day couldn't be all that bad. I'd come home from work, let him out to visit with us, and the tension would melt away. The bills could wait a few more minutes while I rubbed his little head. The dishes could wait a few more minutes while he chattered and sang to me. And spending some time making a few little toys for him to play with made me as happy as it did him, and was a lot better than watching the news.

Of course, cockatiels and like potato chips - you can't have just one. Along came Kali, and she taught us patience, because Kali was NOT tame, and had hardly ever been handled by people. In fact, she nipped me several times just trying to get her into her

new cage. Then we got a call about a couple of cockatiels who'd been abandoned outside our local pet store, and the owner was looking for someone to try and save a little female. Enter Trinity, and one more lesson - trust. Suddenly, we realized that, like dogs and cats, there are tons of birds out there who who need a home for one reason or another, and need love and care. I really had no idea there were shelters and rescues that dealt solely with birds! Trinity was a real eye opener - she was so small, and so straggly and unkempt, but the instant we took her out of her cage, she crawled up my arm, snuggled up under my hair and started grinding her beak - a sign of contentment in cockatiels. She grew up quite spoiled, because for the first few months, if one of us was home, one of us was holding her, or she was on our shoulder, or sitting right by us. She hated being alone, and would cry pitifully if someone wasn't around.

Over the years we've taken in quite a few cockatiels, from rescues, from total strangers, from 'freebie' ads, etc. and every one of them has taught us something. But the biggest thing they taught me is, there's always time to care.



When Lynn found me and asked me to join PTA, I was thrilled. Here was a group of folks who understood my obsession with these little feathered Angels. Folks whose hearts ached at the thought of a bird sitting alone in a cage with no one to love him. And what a diverse group they were. Some had big birds, some had little birds. Some had one or two and some had many. They lived in different states, had different jobs, lived different lives, but they all shared one goal - to fill a special need in a trying time.

I've gotten to see a few bird rescues over the years, and I know how much work is involved in caring for birds who, through no fault of their own, suddenly find themselves in a new place, with new people, and quite often come with complex issues, both physical and emotional. It's a daunting task, made even harder by the longer life spans of some of these birds. Right now, I'm blessed with having a 24+-year-old cockatiel that shows no signs of slowing down any time soon, and the bigger birds like cockatoos and macaws can live a lot longer. I have a friend who has a 47-year-old cockatoo - imagine how full shelters would be if dogs and cats lived that long!

Lynn jokingly calls me her 'backward' Angel, because I work at night and am usually awake when most folks are sleeping. And well, I'm one of a kind, have a quirky sense of humor a lot of folks don't always get, and I just have to do things my own way. I know sometimes I drive her nuts, and for that I apologize.. a little! :-). But I wouldn't trade being an Angel for anything in the world. My motto is 'You don't have to be Perfect to be An Angel'. You just have to care. When I send off a box of toys for a project, I know I've made a difference, both to some poor birds whose lives have been turned upside down, and to the folks who are trying so hard to make those lives a little better. When I turn in an article for the newsletter, or any number of little things an Angel can do to help, I feel like I've brought a little sunshine to a dark corner, and for that I'll always be thankful!

Special blessings to Lynn, and all the Angels, and those around the world who take a moment out of their day to listen to a cockatiel sing, or watch a cockatoo dance, or rub a little feathered head and hand out a toy. You all rock, and you are Perfect just as you are!



...On Being An Angel...

Ilona P., Long Beach, CA...I started out typing up what being an Angel means to me...the usual things...but it is so much more than the words that I typed.



There is a quote that for me is 'truth'. It applies not only to humans, but to everything else I believe in. "You begin saving the world by saving one man at a time; all else is grandiose, romanticism, or politics" - Charles Bukowski

Thousands of birds are desperate for help...for rescue to escape from their sad lives. This is an impossible task... too many uncaring people standing in the way.

So I will simply say: I am so incredibly proud and honored to stand within this amazing group, the Angels. And I want to repeat that nothing says what we do better than our Mission Statement: "Making a difference...one bird at a time".

Please stand with us.



Leigh Anne S., St. Petersburg, FL... I would just like to say I really love being in the Parrot Toy Angels group. When I first became a member, I made a lot of toys. Since then, I have been writing articles for the newsletter. I feel this is where I can show my talents as a writer, and share my knowledge with the reader. Writing for the newsletter makes me feel like I am somehow giving back to the group in a wonderful way. I will always be a part of the PTA, whether it is making toys for the needy rescues, or writing specific articles for the birds and their owners.



Bridget W., Centerville, OH...I have been part of Parrot Toy Angels for about three years and joined because I love birds, being crafty, and the idea of helping organizations in need. Since then, I have come to realize it is not just about the birds and making toys, but the people. I have met caring and generous people who have come together for the same cause. I see the struggles of these people in their daily lives and still contribute what they can to PTA as others give support to them. To rescues or individuals receiving toys and items from PTA, I see their delight as they show photos of birds playing with toys or share their stories of gratitude. I have seen companies or organizations and individuals who have helped PTA in their cause as well. For me, I feel like PTA has given me more than what I have given to the group and I hope to be part of this wonderful organization for a long time.



Vicki H., Amity, AR...My thoughts on being an Angel...where to start? At present, I am an absentee Angel. Having gone through months of illness with my best friend, soul mate and husband, leading to his death in September of 2012, I have not been able to handle making toys, not even for my own flock. The angels have been with me every step of the way with an outpouring of love, support, and prayers; even to the point of sending me toys for my babies. My husband, Wayne, and I both cried over the toys that my thoughtful friends and fellow Angels sent when we received the boxes. It has been hard trying to get back to a semblance of normal, but still my Angels are supportive. I miss being active, making toys to send, even though, laughingly I still buy bird toy making items when I run across that 'oh this would be perfect' item! The Angels have stood by me when I lost my job, when I had a stroke and with my husband - that is why they are all so special to me and why being an Angel is so important.



Angels Wanted!!

Have these stories got your toymaking talons twitching? Do you want to help make a difference in somebirdie's life? Come join our ranks! We have Angels from all different backgrounds and walks of life, and there's always room for another generous heart.

Click here for: [Angel Application](#)



Click to join Parrot Toy Angels Yahoo! Group:



Not a toy maker? Come join our Facebook Group:

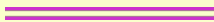
Help Us Help the Birds...

Our Angels generously donate their time making toys for our needy feathered friends. Quality toy-making supplies are expensive and shipping charges are outrageous. That's why we need your support to help keep us going. Every dollar amount, large or small, is gratefully accepted. Donations are tax deductible.

We also welcome donations of toymaking parts and supplies. A receipt will be issued for every donation. Contact us at [Parrot Toy Info](#) for further information on donating.



All donations tax deductible.



Don't forget you can help PTA by clicking one of the following buttons:

GoodSearch is a search engine toolbar that's totally spyware free.
Every time you use it we get a penny ...you can download it here:



Shop with GoodShop, you shop we earn:



Shop at any of over 680 stores using this banner:



and help PTA earn!



This is the official newsletter of the Parrot Toy Angels. Members and subscribers are encouraged to submit articles/photographs for publication. PTA reserves the right to reject, edit, or use only portions of items submitted. Opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the PTA Editor, Directors, Officers, or the general membership.

While PTA at all times tries to ensure any information provided in this newsletter is accurate, all articles are submitted by volunteers, and we are not avian professionals and make no claim as to the suitability of featured products, food, or toys for your particular bird. PTA strongly recommends that you ensure that all toys are safe, that you make sure your bird is fed a well balanced diet, and that you always provide continuing medical care through your avian vet.

Do you have a question or comment? Perhaps you have an idea for our newsletter, or simply want to share a story on how an Angel has touched your life. Drop us a line at: editor@parrottoyangels.org



© 2008-2013 Parrot Toy Angels • P.O. Box 34372 • Houston, Texas 77234
All rights reserved. No part of this newsletter may be reproduced by any means, print, electronic or any other, without prior written permission of the Editor or author.
For permission to reprint, please contact us at [Editor](mailto:Editor@parrottoyangels.com)
www.parrottoyangels.com