



Angel Wings

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

December 2011
Volume 6, Issue XII

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HAPPY HOLIDAYS

*Happy Holidays from our nest to yours.
Have a safe and happy holiday season.*



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Angel Toys For Angels

December's Featured Toys
"Limited Quantities"



[Cookies for Santa](#)
Small to Large Birds



[Holiday Trumpets](#)
Small Birds



[Green Peppermint Tree](#)
Small to Medium Birds



**I hope Santa is good to
all my birdie friends**

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



Parrot Toy Angels 2011 Fall Auction ... Let the bidding begin!

The official kickoff of the 2011 Fall Auction was Thursday, December 1, 2011. It will run until Sunday, December 11 at 12:00pm PDT.

Here's a sneak peak:



The eBay banner below will take you directly to the 120+ items up for bid.
Have fun...and please, bid often!

Every Little Bid Helps! Go to  and Support Our Cause
Giving Works

100% of the proceeds from this auction go to the cause we hold dear :
Making a difference...one bird at a time!



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

Recycling, Angel Style
Activity Board
By Wyspur Kallis



PERFECT FOR GIFT GIVING:

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-  [*NEW* PTA Tote Bags](#)
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Supplies you will need:
 Plastic Plates - 1 or more (these can be purchased at nearly any store)
 Veggie tanned leather laces
 -OR- 100% bird safe cotton rope
 Baby link or quick link to hang toy with
 Toy parts you'd like to recycle (I'll be using wood pieces colored with bird safe colorant and plastic chain, both recycled from a "previously enjoyed" toy)
 Scissors, drill, pliers



Using the drill, make as many holes in the plate as you'd like to fill. For this toy, I will drill 5 holes in the flat part of the plate and 1 hole at the top for the hanger.



Using the veggie-tanned leather laces, tie a knot on one end and string the pieces onto the lace.



Thread the leather lace through the hole in the front of the plate and pull it tight. Turn



Send Rudolph Your Wish List
[Mail Rudolph](#)



Codee G. telling Santa Birdie & Rudolph what he wants for Christmas!



the plate over and tie a very tight knot on the back side of the plate. Use the scissors to cut the extra string off.



When you've attached all the parts to your plate, string a piece of leather lace through the hole on the top of the plate and tie a knot. Cut the extra leather lace off and add a hanger.



Now you're ready to introduce your awesome Activity Board to your feathered loved one.



Eclectus
By Randie Cook



Miss Chyna, who owns Randie

While many people are not familiar with them, Eclectus Parrots (*Eclectus roratus*) are becoming more popular as companion birds. About 7 years ago, my husband and I were adopted by a six month old Solomon Island Eclectus named Chyna.

Eclectus parrots are native to the Solomon Islands, New Guinea, N.E. Australia and the Maluku Islands (Moluccas). There are of 7 (possibly more) subspecies of Eclectus parrots:

-  Eclectus roratus roratus, the Grand Eclectus
-  Eclectus roratus vosmaeri, the Vosmaeri Eclectus or Vos Eclectus
-  Eclectus roratus cornelia, the Sumba Island Eclectus Parrot
-  Eclectus roratus riedeli, the Tanimbar Islands Eclectus Parrot
-  Eclectus roratus polychloros, the New Guinea Red-sided Eclectus Parrot
-  Eclectus roratus macgillivrayi, the Australian Eclectus Parrot
-  Eclectus roratus solomonensis, the Solomon Island Eclectus Parrot

Eclectus parrots, commonly called "Eckies," are often referred to as the couch potato of the parrot world. Chyna, like many of her cousins, enjoys playing with fun toys and climbing around her cage, but she is equally content to sit and zone out. With Chyna, we have actually had to touch her gently or ring the bell on the outside of her cage to get her attention.

Chyna's diet consists of organic pellets, fruits, vegetables (she hates broccoli), organic baby food, rice pasta and occasionally chicken, eggs and salmon. However, given a chance she loves to feast on my father's homemade key lime pie.

Chyna usually lays 2 eggs per clutch. Eclectus may lay as many as five per clutch. In the wild, Eclectus do not usually bond with a mate for life. Chyna is a good "mommy" and fortunately not territorial with us when she is sitting on her eggs.

Some parrots choose to bond with just one member of the family. Luckily, Chyna has bonded with both of us, but shares her days with my husband and her evenings with me.

Health issues common to Eclectus are toe tapping and wing flipping usually attributable to dietary issues and they are also known to be stress induced feather pickers. Eclectus are extremely sensitive to the emotions of their human slaves. It is recommended that Eclectus owners should go to the garage to argue rather than doing it in front of the "kid(s)"...feathered kids that is. They are considered low dander birds which is advantageous for members of the family with allergies.

The first question in outside encounters with folks, young or old, is does she talk. I always smile and say "no." She does not speak in human words but she is quite a conversationalist in her own right. Although she does not say hello or goodbye as most people would recognize, she has a number of calls and noises that she reserves just for me and my husband. When I am traveling home from work each night, I call my husband, who is retired, and chat with him about our day apart. Well, that is what he would like, but Chyna has other ideas. Whenever he tries to say something to me, Chyna interrupts with one of her calls or noises. We exchange sounds back and forth to the point that my husband is ready to hand her the phone. She also enjoys conversing with some of our friends when they call the house. Once a formal acknowledgement is made....."Hello Chyna, how are you?" she is happy and goes on about her business. The queen must be acknowledged.

Chyna is fully "flighted," but she loves to use her human slaves and be carried from place to place. Here again, when she is ready to leave our company, she gives very clear directions either by her eyes or body movement as to where she wants to go. If she wants a shower, she will step right up on my hand or she will fly into the bathroom. If she does not want to take a shower, she will not step up or fly into the bathroom. She just ignores us like we're not even there. She has a dance when she needs to go potty. She does a wing flap for a "pick me up, please" and she "pins" the pupils of her eyes

when she means business. Some folks use sign language, but at our house, we use "Chyna language."

Both my husband and I have learned so much about parrots and especially the Eclectus over the last few years. We have a new and greater appreciation for their intelligence, personality and loving ways. Parrots are a big responsibility but the rewards are well worth it. Chyna is our "feathered kid" and we love her bunches.

For more information on Eclectus parrots, please visit www.landofvos.com. Plus there is a wonderful group of people on the www.parrottalk.com (The Eclectus Connection) list who have been a great help to me through the last seven years in learning more about these beautiful creatures.



Beets
By Toni Fortin

If you like beets, here's one for you and the fids:

12 organic baby carrots, grated
3 large organic beets with tops
1/4 cup diced green pepper
1-1/2 cups cooked Garbanzos (chick peas)
1/2 cup chopped cauliflower
1/2 cup chopped broccoli
1 Roma tomato, chopped
1 cooked sweet potato
1 cup pellets, crumbled (I use Harrisons and the food processor)
1 cup frozen peas

Cover beets in pan with water and cook until tender. Slide skin off under cold water and pat dry. You will only need 1 of these beets.

Meanwhile, wash, blot dry and chop the beet greens (not the stems) from all 3 beets. Save young leaves for Parronts' Salad. (see below)

Mix everything in a large bowl except 2 beets.

Spoon into ice cube trays or into bags (depending upon the size of your flock) and place in the freezer. Remove from freezer and put in the refrigerator the night before feeding.

Rikki Sez

Rikki will try and answer frequently asked questions here.



Rikki, Mom and Dad just brought this great big tree inside. They are putting all kinds of glittery things and lights on it. It is kind of pretty with all that stuff on there. I want to check it out but Mom says no, it's not safe for me. Why? It's a tree. Isn't that where all my wild cousins stay and sleep? Are they in danger by sleeping and living in those trees?

Signed, Scared of Trees

Dear Scared, That is what our human families call Christmas trees. Christmas trees are special trees. They are grown to be cut down for humans to decorate while they celebrate Christmas. In order for the Christmas tree to be safe (for your human family) inside your home, they must use pesticides and other chemicals on it so that it will not easily catch on fire. The chemicals they use to keep bugs away and to keep it from catching fire are very hazardous to us birds. Also, those lovely decorations that are so pretty

My guys gave me a beaks up and as always said : "I like it, I like it and it's good!"



Parronts' Beet Salad

With the 2 beets that were left over with the saved young leaves:
Cut them up in a bowl and add 1 diced garlic clove and 6 rings of sweet onion. Drizzle extra virgin olive oil on them and several splashes of Balsamic vinegar. This goes great with some crusted bread to dip.



Roscoe and Kermit wish you a Merry Christmas



Happy Holidays from Gracie and her babies



and glittery can be hazardous too. So enjoy the beauty of your family's Christmas tree from afar in the safety of your cage. Oh, and the best part of the Christmas tree, is they put Christmas presents under it. You will soon find out what they have under the Christmas tree for you. Happy Holidays!



Rikki, Christmas is coming up soon. Mom and everybody have lots of good stuff to eat like turkey, ham, mashed taters, sweet taters, punkin and pecan pie. Mom won't give us any because she says it is not good for us. We want to celebrate, too. But what do we tell Mom?
Signed, Thankful in OH

Dear Thankful, Your Mom is probably right. A lot of food that humans make for Christmas isn't good for you. Suggest your Mom make you some special treats like Sweet Potato & Nut Balls. The recipe ran in our [November Angel Wings](#). They are good for you and yummy. After tasting these, you won't want what they're having. This way everyone is happy and celebrating.



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



Happy Holidays from Gonzo!





'Twas the Night Before Christmas

By Chester P. Featherbutt

NOTE: This originally ran in the December '06 issue of Angel Wings. It's become somewhat of a "tradition" to run it every year. We'd like to thank Chester P. for granting his permission to use it once again. Thank you Chessy!



Chester P. Featherbutt, bird with a 'tude

'Twas the night before Christmas, and Chester was awake,
thinking of all the plans that he would soon make.
He snuck from his cage, and hid in the tree,
behind decorations, and Christmas candy.
He had a new plan to get Santa this year,
that would not fail, and give Santa fear.
He was going to teach the jolly red man,
that Chester P. Featherbutt was taking a stand!
So he waited and waited, and then he heard a noise.
Sounds of crinkles of fresh wrapped new toys.
Chester stirred not a bit, and got ready to strike,
when from under the tree, came a four-legged, black little tyke.
A chihuahua puppy that looked like a rat, and was just as small,
except this one was chewing on a small tennis ball.
It barked real loud, and ran to the floor,
just then a big red Santa opened the door.
The little rat ran back under the tree and screamed,
"Chester!!" Help!!" You gotta save me!!!".
Chester smiled with a grin so wide,
you could have put in a whole kiddie slide.
He said "little black rat, go over there,
and hide in that red bag next to the chair".
So the rat went and hid, and did not make a noise,
as Santa drew near, and reached under the tree with toys.
Then a beak flashed out, and grabbed Santa's sleeve,
Chester beaked hard, and wouldn't let him leave.
He chuckled with glee, as his beak made a hole,
then he burst out laughing, and fell out of the tree....
into the dog's water bowl!"
"Yuk!!", Chester yelled, as he shook the water off.
"I've been big dog germed!!" and he let out a cough.
Santa said "Chester, you got me this year!"
You bit me so hard, I'm starting to tear.
But don't worry Chester, I wore big mittens,
just in case from last year,
that you might still be smitten!
I knew you were lurking. I know all these things,
and when you think evil thoughts, my naughty bell rings.
But I'll forgive, since it is Christmas Eve,
and here are the presents I'm going to leave".
Then he grabbed his bag and whisked right away
through the door, to the roof and into his sleigh.
As he yelled "On Donnor! and Blitzen!",
there was a short pause,
and Chester could hear.....a startled Santa Claus.
Then a yapping and barking, that just wouldn't stop,

he heard Santa jump from the sleigh with a big hop.
Santa yelled "Chester! WHAT DID YOU DO?"
Chester was giggling and laughing so hard
he knocked over momma's display of old Christmas cards.
He lay on the floor, covered up to his head...
if a quaker could be embarrassed, his face would have been red.
Santa came back, with a black rat in his arm,
red in the face and not full of charm.
"Chester P. Featherbutt!! You can't sneak away,
cause I found your friend, tucked in my bag,
like a lump of clay".
But Chester was laughing loud as a bear,
so much so, that he was loosing feathers into the air!!
"Nice try", said Santa, "You're such a big sneak,
I'm watching you now, and especially your beak!!"
With that he left, with no time to spare,
up into his sleigh and high into the air.
"Just for you Chester P, before I go,
I leave you with good tidings
and a COLD CHRISTMAS SNOW!!"
"BRRRRRRRRRRR", Chester thought, as the flakes fell.
"Dis stuffs is colds, I no like what he's sent.
Maybeeeez next years, I better repent!!
Then he heard Santa say
"No hard feelings... and have a great day.
Remember my friend, don't loose your feathers when you jester....
'cause no one wants to look at a "no feathered" Chester!!"



Bird Health

By Angel Savannah

One of the most frequently asked questions at the vet clinic this time of year has to do with whether our pet birds can catch our colds. Funny, it seems that before people buy a bird, they ask if they can catch a disease from the bird. Once they have a beloved feathered companion, their concern shifts to the bird's ability to catch a cold from them.

I have known since a very young age that there was little we could catch from birds. I have also been a little misinformed since a very young age about our birds being able to catch our illnesses. Mom always made us keep

Toy Parts From Nature

By Kim Perez

Knowing that birds are 'native' to the outdoors, you know that they find things to play with in nature. Because we love our birds and try to provide a natural experience for them in our homes, it only makes sense that some of the components to their toys are natural.

One such component that I use in some of my toys is corn husk. When dried, these are fairly colorless and bland looking things, but they have a texture to them that birds seem to enjoy and make a crunching sound when they chew on them.

Corn is safe for our birds, making corn

our distance from the birds when we were ill. I know she didn't mean to be wrong, but according to the vets in my clinic, birds can't catch the colds and flus that people catch. They do recommend, however, that we wash our hands and not unnecessarily spread germs. A germ is a germ, and just because the bird wouldn't actually catch a cold doesn't mean that excess germs couldn't wear down their immune systems.

So in a way, Mom was right. It doesn't hurt to take precautions and be considerate of our birds' health.

Do birds sneeze or cough? They do sneeze. Sometimes it is not a full-fledged sneeze, but more a clearing of the nostrils. It sounds like a quick "fffff." This is common in the dustier birds such as cockatoos, cockatiels and African Greys. Most other birds do this once in a while, and should not alarm you when you hear an isolated sneeze. If, however, your bird sneezes repeatedly, and there is discharge from the nostrils, you should get your bird to the vet immediately. These are symptoms of a respiratory infection.

The only birds I have ever heard cough are some African Greys we had obtained as adult birds. Their previous home had been with an elderly man who had an awful smoker's cough which the birds could imitate with scary precision.

On a silly side note, I have a Blue & Gold macaw who sneezes very dramatically. Paulie will slowly bend his neck and tilt his head back, and then quickly move his head down to his chest while making a "tsew" sneeze sound. He will do it on command, and will do this if anyone in our house coughs or sneezes or tilts their head up!



husks safe for our birds. But what about their cleanliness? I have seen discoloration on them and wondered what it could be from - dirt, mold, just natural coloration, etc.

Corn husks, when still around an ear of corn, are green in color. They are usually laid out flat and left in the sun to naturally dry. During this drying time, they lose their color and some have uneven color patterns in them. This is a natural coloration and of no concern. If the corn husks are put into containers before they are fully dry, they will get mold on them, which appears as little black spots. Mold can be removed by soaking them in a water and bleach solution. The amount of bleach is minimal and will not hurt your birds. They will then have to go through a short drying process again.

But what if they are dirty? Realizing that corn grows out of the ground, which itself is dirt, the husks could have some dirt on them. This should easily brush off and still be safe to use. But because these are for our beloved pets, we tend to make sure that everything is as clean as possible for them and most people would prefer to obtain very clean husks.

I buy my corn husks from a local Amish grocery store. They are very clean and I trust the natural processing they use here. Their prices are also fairly reasonable and the husks keep my birds happy for quite a while.

Ideas for using corn husks - I like to fold them and place them on toys in between other parts. When you put them on toys with a wire holding the parts together, the wire will easily pierce the corn husks so you don't have to go to the trouble of drilling holes in such a fragile toy part. I also roll them and stuff them into those little bamboo finger traps. The birds already love the finger traps - this really excites them!

Remember, please contact PTA if you have any questions on toy safety! We are happy to address them!





We recently welcomed Jacob into our home as temporary foster. Jacob is a sweet 8 year old Blue and Gold Macaw who has a history of suffering from acute respiratory distress. We first met him when we were asked by Ann Brooks of [Phoenix Landing](#) (Asheville, NC) if we would transport him from Dr. Lauren Powers' office in Huntersville, NC (where we live) to Dr. Frank Rutowski's office in Matthews, NC for further treatment.

Jacob, suffering from extreme respiratory distress, had been brought to Dr. Powers' office (Carolina Veterinary Specialists) by his foster parent. He had been treated for this condition in the past by various vets and at the University of Tennessee College of Veterinary Medicine. He had been diagnosed with probable Aspergillosis sometime around 2005, but testing at UT had been inconclusive.

Aspergillosis is a fungal infection caused by *aspergella fumigates*. Birds can develop the disease if exposed to the fungus under certain conditions such as when the bird's immune system is suppressed by a concurrent illness, malnutrition or stress. Stress-induced Aspergillosis is frequently seen in birds subjected to surgery, reproduction, environmental changes, capture, confinement or shipping. Respiratory irritants such as cigarette smoke, disinfectant fumes and aerosol sprays damage birds' respiratory systems and increase their susceptibility to the *Aspergillus* fungus. Birds with this disease typically exhibit chronic weight loss and difficulty breathing. More specific symptoms include open-mouthed breathing, tail bobbing and labored breathing after exercise, dyspnea (difficulty in breathing), gasping and polypnea (rapid breathing) accompanied by drowsiness, anorexia and emaciation according to the Merck Veterinary Manual. Treatment includes oral antifungal medications and may include nebulization therapy or surgery. Therapy is long term and usually needs to be continued for months.

Jacob was rescued in 2006 by Phoenix Landing along with several other birds from an individual who no longer was able to care for them. He was subsequently placed in foster situations, apparently without severe problems until recently. When he was transferred to Dr. Powers office in distress, the objective was to get him stabilized enough so he could be transferred to Animal Care Hospital of Matthews (Matthews, NC) so Dr. Rutowski could perform further testing for Aspergillosis and, if that was negative, to confirm what was by this time suspected to be Macaw (Pulmonary) Hypersensitivity Syndrome.

Macaw Hypersensitivity Syndrome is a progressive respiratory disease affecting some Macaws, especially Blue and Gold Macaws. It is thought to be caused or exacerbated by airborne irritants to which Macaws are especially sensitive. The major irritants are the dust and dander from birds that produce a great deal of powder, including cockatoos, cockatiels and African grey parrots. Macaws seem especially sensitive to this dust. The symptoms are not unlike those of Aspergillosis. In the early stages of Macaw Hypersensitivity Syndrome, the bird may appear normal, but wheeze when excited. As the condition progresses, dyspnea, a cough, and a bluish tinge to the facial skin (Cyanosis) develop. Hypoxia (not enough oxygen getting to the tissues) often leads to an increase in the number of circulating red blood cells (Polycythemia). This increases the viscosity of the blood so that it does not flow normally. Subsequent immuno-suppression may lead to Aspergillosis. It is extremely critical that Macaws, especially those displaying symptoms of Macaw Hypersensitivity Syndrome be kept in a well ventilated, clean, smoke free environment well away from cockatoos, cockatiels, and Greys. An air cleaner with a hepa filter is highly recommended.

In September, prior to Jacob's collapse, the folks at Phoenix Landing had talked to Dr. Rutowski about a cutting edge laser treatment that he had been using for treatment of some conditions in birds (unrelated to Jacob), and it was now thought that this treatment could help improve Jacob's condition by healing his lung tissue. The laser treatment is performed with a "cold" laser and known as cold laser therapy or low level laser therapy (LLLT). In an article by Angela Carpenter and published by Pacific Laser Therapy Centers, LLC in May of this year, it was reported that this therapy was recently given FDA approval for veterinary use, although it appears to have been around for many years in other countries.

LLLT uses a different type of laser than the high powered ones used by surgeons for intricate surgery. It is non-invasive, does not cause discomfort, and can be used to treat many conditions including dermatitis, eczema, softening scar tissue, edema, cysts, muscle inflammation, nerve injuries, rheumatoid arthritis, hematoma, etc. www.holisticbirds.com/images/Angelacey1. Simply put, it produces a photochemical effect that aids in the production of ATP (see foot note) in cells which increases cellular health and energy. The photons produced by laser light normalize tissue by activating enzymes within cells. One activated enzyme within a cell triggers a chemical reaction in which more enzymes are activated in a domino-type effect. In Jacob's case, the objective would be to stimulate and improve the lung tissue cells.

We knew nothing about LLLT when we first met Jacob. From what we read in his medical reports there was no doubt that he had been a very sick bird, and there was no guarantee that the cold laser therapy would help him, or, if it did, that the improvement would be dramatic enough to give Jacob a normal, happy life given the right home and environment.

Since Jacob needed long term multiple treatments, Phoenix Landing put out an urgent call for someone in the Charlotte area (Phoenix landing is in Asheville, NC, about 2 hours from Charlotte) to foster Jacob at least until his treatments were finished. We agreed to take him in, trusting that he would be a good fit with the several birds we already have. When we brought Jacob home for the first time, he had been at Dr. Rutowski's office for several days getting his first series of laser treatments. Dr. Rutowski had performed tests that confirmed the absence of Aspergillosis, leaving Macaw Hypersensitivity Syndrome as the most likely cause of the problem, and it was hoped that the laser treatments would help restore lung functions. Once we got Jacob settled in our home, it quickly became clear that the treatments were already working and that Jacob was well on his way to being healthy again. For the first 2 weeks, we took Jacob twice a week for his treatments. He is now getting just one treatment per week, and we believe at some point this will be reduced to even less frequent treatments.

After just a few weeks of treatment by Dr. Rutowski, Jacob has improved to where it is nearly impossible to tell that this is the same bird that nearly died from respiratory distress just a few weeks ago. He is thriving in his new home environment. He is active, loves to eat, enjoys playing with toys and loves being around his human companions. Oh, did I mention he is LOUD at times which we trust means his lung capacity is now near normal. Jacob also likes to watch football games on TV - my kind of guy! He definitely has become a welcome guest in our home. Once his treatments are completed, Jacob will likely move on to a more permanent foster home or, better yet, will adopt some very fortunate human family.

SOURCES:

[Avian & Exotic Clinic of the Monterey Peninsula](#)

[Cold Laser Therapy is for the Birds - LITERALLY!](#), May 1, 2011 by Pacific Laser Therapy Centers, LLC Merck Veterinary Manual

[Respiratory Diseases in Macaws. Pulmonary Hypersensitivity Syndrome](#), by Linda Pesek DVM, Diplomate ABVP (Avian)

[Aspergillosis](#), by Hannis L. Stoddard III, DMV

*ATP is a nucleotide that contains a large amount of chemical energy stored in its high-energy phosphate bonds. It releases energy when it is broken down (hydrolyzed) into ADP (or Adenosine Diphosphate). The energy is used for many metabolic processes. Hence, ATP is considered as the universal energy currency for metabolism (from <http://www.biology-online.org/dictionary/Atp>).



Holiday Safety Tips

By Holly Nash, DVM, MS
Veterinary Services Dept., Drs. Foster & Smith, Inc.

Pet accidents increase dramatically during the holidays. We do not mean to spoil your fun with these cautions, but hope to keep your holidays safe.

 Prevent exposure to electrical wires, which could cause dangerous burns or electrocution. Conceal them or use pet-proof covers. Otherwise, your pet may mistake them for a chew toy.

 Prevent access to holiday plants. Never allow your pet unsupervised access to poinsettia, holly (leaves and berries), mistletoe, or other plants commonly used to decorate during the holidays.

 A decorated tree is a magnet for birds, but unfortunately has the potential for causing problems. Do not allow your bird to have access to the tree. Tinsel, flocking, and artificial snow can be dangerous. The tree may also be coated with potentially harmful fire retardant, fertilizer, or insecticide. Larger decorating lights can become hot and cause burns. Some decorations may have small pieces that could be broken off and swallowed, causing digestive problems.

 Many of the foods we set out during the holidays can be toxic to pets, including chocolate (bakers, semi sweet, milk, dark), sugary cookies, salty snacks, and other favorites left out for nibbling and, of course, alcoholic drinks.

 Perfumes, potpourri, adhesives, glues, aerosol sprays, cleaning products, and of course, teflon, can all be toxic.

 Do not let your bird out of its cage when you have open flames in the house. Stoves, candles, and fireplaces always pose a serious threat.

 Do not tie ribbons on your pet or

Be Proactive

By Lori M. Nelsen

The recommendation of the addition of flax seed, flax seed oil or chia seed to your parrot's diet can be puzzling. Not all fats are alike. Red Palm Oil does provide some Omega 3, but it is saturated plant oil and no longer recommended as beneficial by most vets. The flax seed and/or oil and chia seed are high in special fats designated as EFAs or Essential Fatty Acids. These fats are necessary or "essential" for a body to survive. EFAs can not be manufactured from other fats or nutrients.

The EFAs "Linoleic and Linolenic Acids" help provide the body with energy. These EFAs are components of nerve cells, cellular membranes and prostaglandins which play an important part of keeping the body working correctly.

The mass commercial refinement of foods has increased the amount of unnatural fat and oils in the form of trans fatty acids and partially hydrogenated oils. Trans fats result when polyunsaturated oils are subjected to excessive heat, light, oxygen or other refining methods. They are semisolid or solid fats not duplicated anywhere in nature. These refined fats have actually inhibited the body's ability to use the EFAs that are consumed because they compete for absorption.

The signs of EFA deficiency may be overt, such as dry feathers, skin and fatigue. The lack of EFAs can affect the health of the blood vessels that lead to the heart and the brain. Most veterinarians never make the association between a health problem and an EFA deficiency because they are not trained in nutrition. Pellet manufacturers, such as Harrison's, are aware of the need for the addition of EFAs to a parrot's diet. Harrison's has been adding chia seed to their pellets for some time. Others add flax seed which contains the EFAs, alpha linolenic acid (Omega 3) and linoleic acid (Omega 6).

Be proactive by providing your feathered friends with a good source of EFAs, either by supplementation or a manufactured pellet with plenty of research behind it.

its cage, or leave them lying around. The inks and metals used in gift wraps and ornaments can be toxic. These items also pose choking and entanglement risks.

🌲 Discourage guests from bringing their own dog or other pet into your home. If they do, understand that your pet and theirs are sure to be anxious. Keep them separated and do not relax your vigilance. We hope these tips help you and your bird enjoy a happy, fun, and safe holiday season!

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SOURCES:

[The Doctor's Prescription For Healthy Living](#)
[Feeding Feathers Group](#)

Happy Holidays from Lori and Gonzo



Gift Wrapping With The Help of Your Bird

Author Unknown

Please Note - This is a humorous look at life with our beloved birds. Please do not try this at home!



1. Clear large space on table for wrapping present.
2. Go to closet and collect bag in which present is contained and shut door.
3. Open door and remove bird from closet and put back on stand.
4. Go to cupboard and retrieve rolls of wrapping paper.
5. Go back and remove bird from cupboard, place on stand again.
6. Go to drawer, and collect transparent sticky tape, ribbons, scissors, labels, etc.
7. Lay out presents and wrapping materials on table.
8. Go back to drawer to get string, remove bird that has been in the drawer since last visit and collect string, being sure to untangle bird from it and place back in cage this time.
9. Remove present from bag.
10. Remove bird from bag.
11. Open box to check present, remove bird from box. Replace present as well as replacing lock on bird cage that bird unlocked.
12. Lay out paper to determine size to cut.
13. Try to smooth out paper, realize bird is underneath, unlock cage, actually put bird in cage this time and get back to work.
14. Cut the paper to size, keeping the cutting line straight.
15. Throw away first sheet as bird chased the scissors, and tore the paper.
16. Cut second sheet of paper to size - by putting bird in the bag the present came in.
17. Place present on paper.

18. Lift up edges of paper to seal in present. Wonder why edges don't reach. Realize bird is between present and paper. Remove bird again.
19. Place object on paper, to hold in place while tearing transparent sticky tape.
20. Spend 20 minutes carefully trying to remove transparent sticky tape from bird while getting the beak of death as tape pulls on feathers. Place band-aids on hands and nose.
21. Seal paper with sticky tape, making corners as neat as possible.
22. Look for roll of ribbon. Chase bird down hall in order to retrieve ribbon.
23. Try to wrap present with ribbon in a two-directional turn.
24. Re-roll ribbon and remove paper, which is now torn due to bird's enthusiastic ribbon chase.
25. Repeat steps 13 - 20 until you reach last sheet of paper.
26. Decide to skip steps 13 - 17 in order to save time and reduce risk of losing last sheet of paper and any more skin. Retrieve old cardboard box that is the right size for sheet of paper.
27. Put present in box and tie down with string.
28. Remove string, open box and remove bird.
29. Put all packing materials in bag with present and head for a room with lock.
30. Once inside locking room, lock door and start to relay out paper and materials.
31. Remove bird from box, unlock door, put bird in cage, close and relock.
32. Repeat previous step as often as necessary (until you can hear bird from outside door!).
33. Lay out last sheet of paper. (This will be difficult in the small area of the toilet, but do your best!).
34. Discover bird has already torn paper. Unlock door, go out and hunt through various cupboards, looking for sheet of last year's paper. Remembering that you haven't got any left because bird helped with this last year as well.
35. Return to lockable room, lock door and sit on toilet and try to make torn sheet of paper look presentable.
36. Seal box, wrap with paper and repair by very carefully sealing with sticky tape. Tie up with ribbon and decorate with bows to hide worst areas.
37. Label. Sit back and admire your handiwork, congratulate yourself on completing a difficult job.
38. Unlock door and go to kitchen to make drink and feed bird.
39. Spend 15 minutes looking for bird until coming to obvious conclusion.
40. Unwrap present, untie box and remove bird.
41. Go to store and buy a gift bag.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!



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