



Angel Wings

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

December 2012
Volume 7, Issue XII

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HAPPY HOLIDAYS

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



In this month's issue:

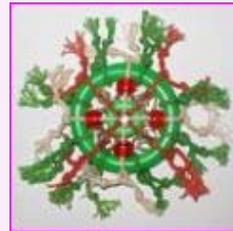
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Angel Toys For Angels

December's Featured
Toys
"Limited Quantities"



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



[Li'l Wreath](#)
Small to Medium Birds





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

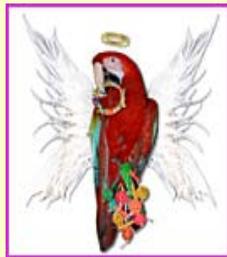
[Green Peppermint Tree](#)
Small to Medium Birds

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



ANGEL ANNOUNCEMENTS

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



PERFECT FOR GIFT GIVING:

-  [Gift Certificates](#)
-  [PTA Tote Bags](#)
-  [Holiday Toys](#)



Deck "their" Halls

Deck the halls with boughs of millet
 Fa la la la la, la la la la
 Hang it near where we can get it
 Fa la la la la, la la la la
 Lay out all your decorations
 Fa la la la la, la la la la
 Chances are we'll rearrange them
 Fa la la la la, la la la la
 Everyone should have a stocking
 Fa la la la la, la la la la
 Filled with toys that keep us squawking
 Fa la la la la, la la la la

And of course, we will do just that. These little feathered beings have changed our lives in ways we would not have believed possible. Our love for them extends well beyond our own homes and *because* of them we have opened our hearts to birds we will never meet, never see. Yet, we know that because of us one bird at a time will lead a happier life.

Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays to all Angels and to our incredibly generous supporters

--ilona





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



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

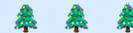


From the Angel's Toy Chest
 By Wyspur Kallis



Snowballs

This festive holiday toy is a ball of fun made with white coffee filters. This toy is around 8" wide and is strung on bird-safe string with colorful beads for lots of playtime. Snowballs are available in Red or Blue and available for sale at <http://www.parrottoyangels.com>



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 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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On-line store at

[Drs. Foster & Smith](http://Drs.Foster&Smith.com)



FEATHERED FUNNIES



*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!!



Murphy's Laws Regarding Making Bird Toys

By The Parrot Toy Elves

- 🌲 If you spend all day coloring just enough parts to do a project, you'll discover when you are part way through, you didn't color enough.
- 🌲 You always have enough beads of a certain color to do 9/10ths of the toy you are working on.
- 🌲 You will no doubt find a part you are sure you can use in a dozen ways - and it will sit in your parts collection for ages. THEN you will get around to finding those dozen ways to use it... only to find you can no longer get it!
- 🌲 If you need to drill 4 holes in something, the first 3 will be perfect. The 4th will either be crooked, or crack what you are drilling.
- 🌲 If you carefully measure out all the rope, chain or wire you need for all the toys you plan to make, you will discover, part way through, you miscalculated and they are all too short.
- 🌲 The parts you are looking for will mysteriously not be where they should be, until you start gathering parts for something else, then you will find *most* of the parts for the first thing you wanted to make.
- 🌲 If the bead is exactly the size you need, the hole will be too small, or too large. If the hole is exactly the right size, then the bead won't fit at all. If both the beads and the holes are the right size, then you surely don't have enough of them to do what you need, and they are all the wrong color!
- 🌲 You finish your project and it turns out just the way you want, but in the end you go to add hardware for hanging and it cracks the top of your project.
- 🌲 You get an idea for a wonderful toy. You spend hours making it, only to decide it's ugly. You will then take it apart and start over. If Murphy is *really* on your case, you'll hate the remade one as well, at which point you might as well give up for the day.
- 🌲 You decide to use a bunch of your one-of-a-kind parts to make a toy. You spend

hours, and it turns out really cool, and *everyone* wants one just like it!

🌲 Someone will *always* show up when you are covered in many shades of food coloring and have freshly colored parts laying everywhere. They will usually bring a small child with them AND want you to go out to some place fancy. In-laws who don't understand your love of birds are especially drawn to you at these times.



Collard Wraps - Birdie Style By Toni Fortin

8 to 10 fresh collard leaves, washed and patted dry, no rips or holes
1 large cooked sweet potato
1 cup cooked grains and beans, left over from last rice cooker batch
1/4 cup cranberries, heated in the microwave until they burst
1/4 cup shelled, chopped pumpkin seeds

Vertically cut stalks and trim collard leaves so they will roll. Microwave all for 20 seconds.

In a bowl, combine everything except collard leaves. Mixture will be thick and pasty. Lay one collard leaf out on counter.

Place 1 tsp. to 1-1/2 tsp. of mixture (depending on the size of leaf) to the stalk end of the leaf.

Roll 1 turn, tuck ends in, continue to roll. When you get close to the end, take a little bit of mixture and apply to the edge of the leaf in a couple of places. This will hold it together.

You can cut the wrap into slices or just give the whole thing to your fids. These freeze well.

As always, my guys said, "I like it, I like it and it's good!"

Rikki Sez

Rikki will try and answer frequently asked questions here.



Rikki, Last year, my brother and sisters had a lot of fun climbing in the big green thing. Mom called it a Christmas tree. When she caught us, we had to get out of it because she said it was very dangerous. We were having so much fun - why did she stop us?
Signed, 4 Sad Birdies

Dear Sad Birdies, The Christmas tree isn't a place for birds. It has lights, wires, tinsel, ornament hangers and other materials that are very dangerous to you. Enjoy the human tree from afar on your play-gym, atom or from your cage. Ask mom to purchase you and your siblings some Christmas toys from PTA, [Holiday Toys](#) This way, you can join in the Christmas spirit safely.



Rikki, I found a real pretty green string to chew on. It was rubbery feeling. I was having such a good ole chewy time until dad came by and took my string and put me back in my cage. He said it would hurt me because it was a stenshun cord, whatever that is. It looks like some of my other toys so how can it hurt me?
Signed, Just Shocked in Houston

Dear Shocked, That was an extension cord that you shouldn't be next to. One end is plugged into the wall and the other



Sequoia 'Zon loves her Collard Wrap!



Happy Holidays from Gracie and her babies



end is attached to lights so they can glow and gives electricity to so many things around the human home. Don't be sad, that thing could shock the feathers off of you. Hopefully all parronts will make sure their fids don't have access to them, especially during the holidays when they use more of these cords. Have a Merry Christmas and keep it safe!



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!!"
"BRRRRRRRRRR", 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!!"



What Makes Scents

By Angel Savannah

Christmas time brings to mind many amazing aromas. Some of these are safe for your birds and others you are better off without.

Candles are almost always one of those things to avoid. Many people believe that a soy candle is a safe option, but it is what gives the candles their scent that is to be considered. Essential oils are added to the candle to give off the best aromas, but essential oils are considered to be volatile toxins and are unsafe when inhaled by our birds. Truly the safest candle is a 100% beeswax candle with natural fiber cotton wick - no added petroleum or paraffin, no additives and no added fragrance.

Many opt for the candle warmers, thinking that these are a safe alternative to burning a candle. As far as a bird's respiratory system is concerned, this is not a safe alternative as the bird is still inhaling the synthetic scents.

Air freshener sprays are definitely not safe, except for one which has been marketed for both home and bird use. This one is a natural citrus spray in a non-aerosol can. The only ingredient is the oil from oranges. From the same company is a similar non-aerosol spray with the oil from oranges and from vanilla beans. The orange spray is marketed with a specific bird company label for use around birds and is veterinarian-approved.

Febreze and other fabric "refreshers" are unsafe. There are numerous reports from pet owners who have experienced illness and death of their birds due to these products. Just think about all of the chemicals in these products, none of which

Holiday Toys

By Kim Perez

This festive time of year offers several options when it comes to holiday themed toys for our birds. A great source for these is our very own Parrot Toy Angels web site.

www.parrottoyangels.com/christmas.html

What sort of things do you need to be wary of in holiday toys? As usual, you should examine toys for their components. A toy should begin with a safe "base." You will want a base made of wood, leather or other safe medium. I always double check the type of plastic used in a toy. Be sure it is a soft plastic and not the hard type that could make sharp edges when broken.

I am also very careful on sizing issues for toys. You don't want to use anything too small for a big bird. It's easy for a larger bird to get a toenail or beak caught in areas not meant for large birds. Some commonly undersized parts include plastic and metal chain, beads, and o-rings. Chain, both plastic and metal, can pose threats when undersized or oversized. Small birds can get their feet and legs hurt in chains big enough to allow their entire foot/leg through the opening. Big birds can get hurt on too small of openings in chain. They commonly get toenails or their entire toe caught. This frightens them and they react quickly, which can cause worse damage. Small beads can cause issues for big birds who may break and/or swallow them. Oversized o-rings can allow a small bird's head to become entrapped.

One of the hazards I see frequently is excess length on rope and fabric. Any sized bird can wrap too long of a piece of rope or fabric around their leg, wing or

are safe on our little avian friends' lungs.

Holiday smells emanating from the kitchen can trigger very special memories for us. I think of the holidays with my Great Grandma cooking when I was a little kid. Today I realize that the plain old steel and cast iron pots and pans she used were far safer than any of today's "non-stick" items available. When Teflon is overheated, it produces an odorless gas which has been the doom of many unsuspecting flocks.

If you love having wonderful aromas in your home, you can heat a small pan of water with orange rind, vanilla beans, berries, spices and other foods that smell delicious. You can heat the water to a boil and then remove from the heat. Something like this can give your home a festive and mouth-watering smell that will last for several hours, if not a day or two at a time. You can also dry these items and make your own home-made potpourri to keep in decorative containers, adding a great safe smell to your home along with increasing the aesthetic enjoyment.



neck. Be especially vigilant when it comes to this one detail, particularly with the variety of preening and anti-plucking toys currently available. Fleece cuddle rings and chains can also pose a threat if the fleece is cut too narrow and long.

Bird tents or any other accessory made from fabric are usually safe in their original form, but you do need to inspect for damage, including pulled threads and holes chewed in the fabric.

Overall, when we initially purchase toys for our birds, they are in their safest form. Once a bird plays with a toy, other hazards may present themselves due to the rough nature of birds at play! Maintain toy safety by visually inspecting toys daily. Trim any loose or frayed rope, fabric or threads, be sure all hardware is safely closed and properly sized to your bird. Your toys should maintain their safe state for a very long time with these strategies.

And enjoy the great selection and prices of PTA's Holiday Toys!



Featured Fid ~ White Winged Parakeet

By Steve Letter



The White Winged Parakeet, *Brotogeris versicolurus*, has also been called the Canary Winged Parakeet. Until recently, White wings were grouped together with another species, the Yellow-Chevroned parakeet and both were called the Canary Winged Parakeet. It was believed the two were the same species but recent work has shown that they are two distinct species. The confusion came because both have canary yellow patches on the edges of their wings but only the White Wings have the distinctive white area on the underside of their wings.

The White wing is the largest of the Brotogeris family weighing in at an average of 70 grams and a length of 9 inches. They are lime green in color. The front edges of their wings are yellow when folded and there are white patches underneath their wings.

These birds were imported into the United States in large numbers, and were known as "Bee bees" (as were the Yellow Chevroned). They have become more popular with the decline of another of the Brotogeris family, the Grey Cheek as they are similar in size and personality.

Their native range is the entire Amazon River basin. They are classified as a species of least concern by the IUCN. There are large numbers of them throughout Brazil. There are also colonies of released or escaped birds in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Miami, New York City and Puerto Rico. In the wild, their diet mainly consists of fruit and insects but also eat flowers, seeds (also sprouted) and green vegetables.

They can be noisy and are not known as to be good talkers. They are slow moving, but energetic birds and require a selection of toys to keep them entertained. They are quite easy to tame. They are smart, curious and playful and they make good pets. They enjoy hiding inside pockets, under shirts and investigating other dark or enclosed space where they feel secure. Care must be taken to keep track of pet birds as they may hide and meet with an accident.



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!



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.

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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



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