



Angel Wings

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

February 2011
Volume 6, Issue II

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WELCOME

George G. from North Carolina

♥ Happy Valentine's Day ♥

Angel Toys For Angels

February's Featured Toys



[Fringe Swing](#)

Small - Medium Birds



[Here's My Hearts](#)

Small Birds



[Jinglin' Hearts](#)

Small Birds

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

ANGEL ANNOUNCEMENTS

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



NEW NEW

ON THE SITE:

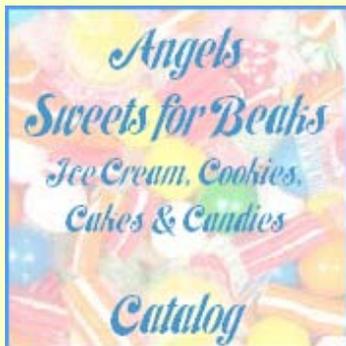
- ♥ [New Items](#)
- ♥ [Happy Flappers](#)

♥ ♥ ♥



♥ ♥ ♥

ANNOUNCING



We are pleased to announce the opening of our "Angels Sweets For Beaks" Shoppe.

We have delightful treats, and every day can be Valentine's Day! Our Angel candy-makers have been busy making beautiful treats for the special feathers in your life.

No birdie too small or too big, we have sweets for every birdie in every size. [Take a look!](#) You'll find everything from Tootsie Rolls and Oreos to ice cream cones and Gummy Bears.

For a truly wonderful HATCHDAY CELEBRATION we even have Hatchday Cakes and "Bird-Day Baskets" for your pampered feathers. Each basket will be customized with just-right toys for your li'l one.

Won't you please take a moment and

Recycling, Angel Style

Kitchen Magician

By Wyspur Kallis



Supplies you will need:

- Wooden Spoon
- Large Plastic Wiffle Ball (softball sized)
- Several Recycled Toy Parts (size appropriate)
- Vegetable Tanned Leather Strips - OR -
- 100% Bird Safe Cotton Rope
- Drill & Scissors



Drill a hole in the top of the wooden spoon handle. Slide the plastic wiffle ball over the spoon handle. Using a piece of vegetable tanned leather, string through the hole in the spoon and tie a knot. Cut off any excess leather.

String the recycled toy parts (or use new ones) through the wiffle ball. Make sure the strings are not too long. Cut off any excess. There should be approximately an inch of space between the toy parts and the wiffle ball.



Add a hanger to the Kitchen Magician you have just made and introduce it to your parrot. Let the fun begin!

♥ ♥ ♥

browse through our Candy Catalog?
YOU will have a happy, busy bird...WE will
continue our mission of helping
"one bird at a time".

From our hearts: Thank you for your
support, YOU make our work possible!



PTA COUPON

10% off anything
on the site!

Use Coupon Code
pta211

Expires 2/28/11



Sick Pluckers

By Angel Savannah

Plucking can be caused by such a myriad of things, both psychological and health related. The focus here will be on health related plucking problems.

The primary health reasons for feather plucking are malnutrition, environment, allergies, illness, and parasites.

When a bird does not have their basic dietary needs met, the lack of nutrition can cause their feathers to grow in poorly which can cause pain or itching. Research into proper diet for your type of bird will help to improve the health of a bird with this problem.

The bird's environment may have a lot to do with plucking. If the air is too dry or they are exposed to cigarette smoke, they can become itchy or have poor feather growth which would lead to brittle feathers and then plucking. Many of our parrots are native to the rain forest, so we should be trying to duplicate this setting. Dry air is an easy thing to combat. Daily misting/spraying will definitely help.

Allergies are more common in birds than I had thought. They can be allergic to foods, things in the environment and even other birds! You can test for allergies in birds similarly to how people are allergy tested. A small amount of an allergen is injected just under the bird's skin around the keel bone. If a bump develops, the bird is allergic to that thing. Food allergies are among the easiest to deal with, as you can just remove that food from their diet. Our Catalina Macaw at home is allergic to cockatiels and African Greys. She is kept in a room away from the other birds and we add Benedryl to her water to keep her symptoms to a minimum. This was prescribed by our avian vet and she does have certain mix ratio of Benedryl to water.

Illness does not usually have the symptom of feather picking, but takes on other symptoms. However, in Quakers specifically, if you notice that they start plucking on their backs and they have not plucked before, a high percentage of them have a respiratory infection. Once treated with a broad spectrum antibiotic, the feather pickers in this category typically cease plucking.

Parasites are probably the number one health cause of plucking. Worms of different varieties can invade a bird's intestinal tract, and are in general easy to treat.

[Giardia](#) and [Hexamita](#) are one-celled parasites which can be found in the bird's intestines. They are highly contagious and they can be difficult to both diagnose and treat. Birds who have these most often pluck under their wings and their flight feathers.

Mites are the most commonly found parasite on birds. They are very tiny and an infestation can cause birds to have what look like growths on their faces and feet primarily. The mites will bite and suck the blood of the birds. They typically only do this at night, so when you are looking for mites in daylight, they may not have any on them. If you cover the cage at night with a white sheet, if they have red mites, they will be all over the sheet by morning and very easy to spot. Mites are also very easily treated.

Ivermectin will most likely be prescribed and you may administer it to your bird orally or topically, or sometimes both. You should see an improvement within a few short weeks.



THANK YOU!

A heartfelt THANK YOU goes out to the Central Indiana Cage-Bird Club for their very generous donation! We appreciate your support!



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!!



Sprouted Blueberry Muffins By Toni Fortin

- 2 cups whole wheat flour
- 2 Tbsp. baking powder (non aluminum)
- 1 Tbsp. milled flax seed
- 1 cup Sprout mix, sprouted & whirled in food processor**
- 1 egg
- 2 Tbsp. honey
- 3/4 cup greek plain yogurt
- 3/4 cup natural applesauce
- 1/4 cup water
- 1/2 cup blueberries, fresh or frozen

Mix all together, add blueberries last by folding in. Spray mini muffin pans with cooking spray. Bake at 350 in the middle of the oven for 15 minutes. Cool on racks. These muffins freeze well

Yield: 44 mini muffins

**NOTE: Tiny tails appear following the 12 hr. soak. Do not use after 24 hours after sprouting.

I buy mine here

www.parrottoyangels.com/sproutingmixes.html



Featured Fid ~ Lilac Crown Amazon Parrot
By Kim Perez



The Lilac Crown Amazon, *Amazona finschi*, also known as the Finsch's Amazon for having been documented by Dr. Otto Finsch in 1864, is a medium sized Amazon parrot with a very large personality. The Lilac Crown measures approximately 12 - 13 inches in overall length. They are primarily a green bird with a dark red or maroon forehead and lilac from their forehead to the back of their neck. Their beak is horn colored and their feet are gray.

The Lilac Crown is considered a good talker, but their voices are not as clear as some other Amazons, such as the Yellow Collared or Double Yellow Head. They also have a wonderful sense of humor. In my experience, they will do things for the pure amusement of seeing a person's reaction to what they have done. They can be very headstrong and stubborn and will not easily give up on an idea they pursue.

Lilac Crowns, like other Amazon parrots, enjoy chewing wood and must be kept busy with toys and activities. They can be very destructive when not given a proper outlet for their chewing and curiosity. A large cage will serve dual purpose for this type of bird - allowing you to put enough different toys to humor them and allowing them to have adequate exercise space.

Lilac Crowns also have a propensity for becoming overweight. You have to monitor their diet and their exercise to give them a good balance. Ideally, they would be fed more fruits and vegetables than seeds. You may also add pellets and nuts to their mix. Along with this, activity is necessary to avoid obesity. Along with the toys in their cage, it would be advisable to place ladders, swings and foraging areas in their cages.

Lilac Crowns are one of the Amazons who, although not excessively common in captivity, are not difficult to get to breed. Lilac Crowns have a natural breeding season in the spring, when they will lay an average of three eggs. Eggs take 26 - 28 days to hatch. Their babies wean around 12 - 14 weeks of age and hand-fed babies make spectacular pets.



Bumblefoot

By George Goulding

We recently had the opportunity to take a behind the scenes tour of the North Carolina Zoo with the head veterinarian, Dr. Ryan DeVoe. During our visit, Dr. DeVoe made a follow up visit to check on one of the Zoo's Bateleur Eagles which had previously had surgery for bumblefoot. It was obvious from looking at the affected area that this was a serious condition which, as Dr. DeVoe explained, could easily cripple or kill a bird. We learned that bumblefoot is common in raptors (eagles, hawks, etc.) in captivity as well as cage birds of all sizes.



Bumblefoot (Pododermatitis) is a condition found on the bottom of a bird's feet. It appears as a callous or infected lesion normally on the ball of the foot, but can affect the toes as well. Bumblefoot is a common disease. It tends to be chronic, progressive, invasive and eventually disabling if left untreated. Serious cases can become infected forming abscesses, and can involve tendons, ligaments, and bones.

Once it spreads to the bone, amputation is the only course of treatment. The eagle we observed with Dr. DeVoe had a serious case of bumblefoot affecting both feet. The foot on which Dr. DeVoe had performed surgery had become

infected and was still presenting pus when we observed it. This bird was clearly in a lot of discomfort (see photo).

The primary cause of bumblefoot in captive/cage birds is unsuitable perches, but may also be due to problems with nutrition, poor hygiene, obesity, and inactivity.

Plastic perches, wood perches of a uniform diameter (such as those that come with cages), and perches covered with sandpaper are examples of inappropriate perches. Remember, a captive bird spends most of its time resting on its perch, so it is important to use different perch sizes and types. We like to make our own perches using natural branches from local apple or dogwood trees. Natural branches, even over a one or two foot length, are likely to vary in size, shape, and texture, and this helps to ensure that the bird's feet are not held in the same position all the time. If using natural branches be sure the branch is pesticide free and clean. We bake ours in the oven to kill any bacteria.

Poor cage hygiene can lead to bumblefoot or other problems. Dirty cage floors and perches that are not cleaned frequently can accumulate bacteria that can infiltrate a bird's foot if the foot already has cracks. Once bacteria infiltrates, infections and abscesses can occur leading to bumblefoot.

Since most captive birds have easy access to food, inactivity can easily lead to obesity. Obesity puts increased strain on a bird's feet making them more susceptible to foot problems that can lead to calluses that crack and become infected. Obesity can be the result of inactivity when a bird's wings have been clipped. It is important to provide toys and play stands to encourage climbing and other activity in birds with clipped wings.

Poor diet can be a factor in obesity, but may also be a more direct cause of bumblefoot. Studies have shown that fatty diets, vitamin A deficiencies (vitamin A promotes appetite, digestion, and increases resistance to infection), and diets that are high in cholesterol and low in calcium can cause bumblefoot.

It is important to be able to recognize bumblefoot and conditions that can lead to bumblefoot early. Inspect your bird's feet often and be able to recognize abnormalities. The symptoms are not always apparent, but one of the first signs is an unwillingness to land, stand, or grasp normally with one or both of its feet. Look for signs such as a slight reddening of the skin around the feet and a loss of the normal scale. Look for cracked or traumatized skin. Any condition that appears suspicious should be brought to the attention of an avian vet.

An avian vet may recommend several courses of action to treat bumblefoot. In moderate cases, treatment may include applying antibiotic ointments to the affected area, using oral antibiotics to control any infection, and applying ball bandages to relieve pressure on the foot so the bird can stand comfortably. In addition, a blood sample may be taken to test for other health problems that could compromise the bird's immune system. More serious cases may involve surgical procedures to treat infections and remove dead tissue.

Recovery can vary from a few days in very mild cases to months in severe cases. The most severe cases can result in permanent disability or even death, so it is important that this health issue be recognized and treated early for the best result.



Rikki Sez

Rikki will try and answer frequently asked questions here.

Hanging Around the Cage

By Kim Perez

Rope is a common toy hanging/stringing medium. There are many different ropes that you can choose from - some safe, and some not.

Cotton rope is perhaps the most commonly



Rikki, My dad is getting my mom some chocolates for Valentine's Day. Whatever that is. Can I have some too? Last year mom gave me some flowers and they were yummy, but this year I want what mom is getting.

Signed, Wanting Chocolates

Dear Wanting Chocolates, Mom's chocolates aren't good for you. In fact, they are toxic to birds. It would really make your mom sad if you were to get sick from her chocolates. Tell mom she can purchase some birdie toys from the [PTA web site](#) to help you celebrate Valentine's Day. As a treat, she can give you one of those yummy flowers. Wishing you a great Valentine's Day.



Rikki, My parronts were talking about what they're doing for Valentine's Day. They are going out to eat and coming home to snuggle on the couch. I want to go out and I want to snuggle with mom, too. It gets lonely in this cage by myself. Do you think they will let me go with them? How can I talk mom into coming in my cage and snuggling with me? Signed, Wanting to celebrate Valentine's Day too

Dear Wanting to Celebrate, Sometimes parronts need special time together and Valentine's Day is one of those special days. Restaurants don't allow parrots to go in and eat and it will probably be too cold for you to go out. Your mom and dad won't be back until after your bed time. Instead of snuggling with mom in your cage, ask her to check out PTA for their [snugglies](#) that will keep you busy snuggling and having fun at the same time. Happy Valentine's Day!



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

used rope in bird toys. The safest cotton rope to use is unbleached, natural cotton. There are a couple of brand names (Supreme and Superior) which are exactly this type of rope. The fibers are all natural and digestible. They also are not so tightly wound that they can entrap and strangle toes.

Bleached cotton rope is white, pretty, and tightly twisted. It is not soft, and it is not loose. It is very easy for a bird to lose a toe from strangulation of the rope. This is a very pretty rope and very unsafe. This rope is commonly used for rope perches and rope covered swings.

Sisal rope is a rope of nature which is very strong. It comes from the agave plant, *Agave Sisalana*, which is native to and primarily grown in Mexico, although it has spread to other countries (US, Africa, and Asia). This rope is abrasive and strong. It is used on cat scratching posts to trim their nails. In bird toys, it is used to string toy parts onto and it is also used on swings and perches. This needs to be watched carefully for frays, as any loose fibers can be very dangerous to your birds. I will not use Sisal rope perches because I have a cockatiel that lost her leg from getting it twisted in a loose Sisal rope perch fiber. There wasn't a loose fiber when I checked the birds before bed and the next morning she was missing her leg. It happened just that fast.

Sisal rope can be either "oiled" or "un-oiled." It is imperative that you buy un-oiled Sisal rope if you are using it on bird toys. The oil that is used to treat Sisal rope is typically a petroleum product and not safe for our birds. There is definitely an unpleasant odor to the oiled Sisal rope. Un-oiled Sisal rope smells fresh like hay.

Finally, there are plastic ropes. Polyethylene rope called "Paulie" rope is one made for the bird toy industry. The weave is specifically made so that it does not fray and does not come easily unknotted. All of the rest of the woven plastic ropes are not recommended for use in bird toys. These will fray easily and cause far too many problems to ever be able to safely use them. These do not include non-woven plastic cords, which are mostly safe to use, but not very strong.

Safe ropes include: Unbleached, natural



cotton rope, un-oiled Sisal rope, and polyethylene Paulie rope. Use these and avoid the rest.



Delivery to Phoenix Landing By George and Nancy Goulding



Phoenix Landing is a unique organization dedicated to the promotion and protection of parrots. It is unique, in our opinion, because the folks at [Phoenix Landing](#) go beyond rescuing parrots and holding large numbers in aviaries. Phoenix Landing actually holds a comparatively small number of birds at its main facility just north of Asheville, North Carolina. It does have a much larger number in foster care throughout the Southeast and Mid Atlantic. As of the end of 2010, Phoenix Landing had adopted out over 1,400 birds. When we visited Phoenix Landing in Asheville on December 30, 2010 there were about 15 birds at that location, but they had 274 birds in foster care, and, amazingly, had over 100 birds waiting to come into the program. They will not take a bird until there is room in a foster home.



Their facility near Asheville is located in the Blue Ridge Mountains on an extremely beautiful tract of land with gorgeous views of the surrounding mountains and valleys. Everything was snow covered when we visited making the views even more striking. The main facility consists of a separate residence and a well built 2 story barn like structure used as an aviary (see photo) and an education facility. The main floor houses the aviary with room for several cages. It was very clean and orderly. The second floor houses their educational facilities and meeting area. It should be noted that this is just one of many places they hold educational events throughout the area they serve.

When we arrived around 2:30 pm after a 2-1/2 hour drive from Charlotte, we were greeted warmly by Ann Brooks, Mary, who lives on the premises, and Susan, a local volunteer. Ann, along with Mary, Susan, and many other dedicated parrot lovers are the folks who make this such a unique operation. Ann, Mary, and Susan helped carry the many PTA packages (all wrapped in Christmas paper) into the aviary building where we met the 15 or so birds in residence at the time. Several of the birds were out of their cages and all gave us a very warm and noisy welcome. A few of these guys were very memorable. Issey, a (very) vocal 'too'; Igor, an aptly named and very friendly grey with a deformed beak; Echo, another Grey that wanted my hat; Abby, a Lovebird who liked to perch on our shoulders and demand to be adopted by us; and Lilly, a marvelous Blue and Gold who was being adopted by Susan.



Once all the packages were inside and the meet and greet completed, everyone gathered around to open the packages. Of course there were several winged onlookers and helpers. There were lots of "oohs" and "aahs", not to mention the constant comments from Issey, as the packages were opened. Many of these toys were to be shipped out to the foster homes which house the majority of the birds at Phoenix Landing.



Mary, Ann & Susan

There is nothing that says "thank you" like the gratitude shown by the recipients of PTA donations as packages are unwrapped and toys revealed, and the folks at Phoenix Landing made it clear that the efforts of the PTA folks who participated in this project were very much appreciated. Altogether, we delivered more than 100 toys including footers. Those participating in this project were Nancy and George, Lynn, Steve, Bridget, and Toni.

By the way, yes, we did adopt Abby, that little Lovebird who demanded we adopt her.



Mary & Susan



Has this story 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.

As a Parrot Toy Angel, you will be asked to contribute on a monthly basis to help support our ongoing work. Apply for membership:

[Angel Application](#) ♥ ♥ ♥ [Join our Yahoo! Group](#)

Do You Want Your Parrot To Drink THAT?

By Lori M. Nelsen

The government does not mandate that bottled water be any safer than tap water. It is rare that FDA inspectors visit bottled water plants. The FDA website states that "bottled water plants generally are assigned low priority for inspection." This lack of oversight of the bottled water plants has resulted in recalling two brands of bottled water in the past 8 years - Safeway Select and Sam's Choice, due to contamination and/or mold. An increase of FDA inspections would provide a much higher chance for safety in bottled water plants.

The chemical pollution standards for bottled water and tap water are nearly identical. The sole exception is lead. The FDA's lead limit for bottled water is three times stricter than the EPA's lead standard for tap water. The EPA's more lenient standard takes into account the fact that many older houses have lead pipes and lead solder (FDA 2008a; FDA 2002).

The Environmental Working Group (EWG) has released their EWG Bottled Scorecard for 2011. EWG has been producing these reports since 2009 to make a stand against companies who fail to disclose information about their bottled water like where the water comes from, how it's purified and what contaminants are in it. Their report for 2011, testing 173 bottled water products, informs us that:

♥ 9 of the country's 10 best-selling water bottle brands don't release details to the public

- ♥ 32% of the brands fail to reveal treatment method or water purity
- ♥ 18% failed to reveal the source of the water

Let's take a look at the EWG's Bottled Water Scorecard assigned to each of the brands.
Note: no water bottle received an "A".

BEST:

Gerber Pure - Grade B
Nestle Pure Life - Grade B
Penta Ultra - Grade B
Evian - Grade C
Fiji Artesian - Grade C
Great Value - Grade C

WORST:

Aquafina Purified - Grade D
Deer Park Natural Spring - Grade D
Zephyrhills Natural Spring - Grade D
CVS Gold Emblem - Grade F
Publix Purified Water - Grade F
Wegmans Spring Water - Grade F

Ultimately, EWG recommends *filtered or reverse osmosis tap water*. It's the only thing that received an "A" on their scorecard. Below are some of the home water filters that EWG recommends:

Pitcher Water Filters*:

Clear2O CWS100A Water Pitcher
Culligan PIT-1 Water Filter Pitcher
PUR 2-Stage Flavor Pitcher
Brita Space Saver Pitcher*
GE GXPL03H Filtration Pitcher
Mavea Elemaris Filtration Pitcher
* 9 Brita Pitchers recommended

Faucet-Mounted Water Filters**:

GE Faucet Mount System
Instapure F8 Ultra Tap Water Filter
PUR FM-3333 Faucet Mount Filter
PUR FM-9600 Faucet Mount
PUR Flavor Options FM-5050B
Brita Faucet Filtration System
**Pur recommended 8 times

Nestlé Waters comments on the EWG scorecard:

"We think that can be best achieved by finding one best way to do so, across the country. EWG's scorecard holds up California as the standard for the best reporting law. We agree. Within the next few months, labels on all 1/2 liter Nestlé Waters products, (which account for about 80 percent of our single serve sales) will state the source of the water and two ways for consumers to obtain "a report on water quality." All other sizes will follow over the course of 2011. We have publicly endorsed U.S. Senator Frank Lautenberg" call for a federal standard for all bottled water companies to communicate water quality - from water resources to test results - in a transparent way, and will continue our discussions with his staff as they draft legislation to do so".

References:

Federal Department of Agriculture
Environmental Working Group (EWG)
<http://www.press.nestle-watersna.com/press/Nestle-Waters-Response-to-EWG.htm>



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.

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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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