



Angel Wings

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

February 2013
Volume 8, Issue II

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Small Birds



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

ANGEL ANNOUNCEMENTS

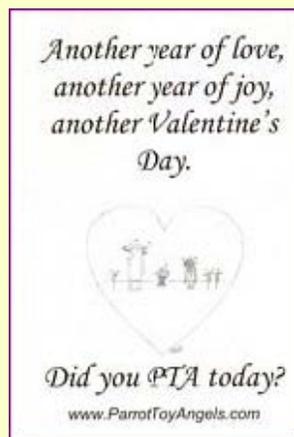
Watch for upcoming events, news, website updates, etc. [here](#)



NEW NEW

ON THE SITE:

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



From the Angel's Toy Chest

By Wyspur Kallis



Snuggli

This Snuggli is a perfect toy for any parrot who loves to cuddle up and snuggle. This toy is made with bird safe fleece and knotted onto plastic chain. It measures approximately 14" long and is easy to attach to most cages. This Snuggli is suitable for conures, caiques, quakers, amazons, and small cockatoos. This toy and others are available for sale at <http://www.parrottoyangels.com>



Calling All Writers!!

Have you ever wanted to see your Bird's name in "lights"?...Do you have a story to tell about how you and your bird met?

Over the years you have read our stories, seen our photos, looked at our toys and how

we make them, hopefully shared some of our recipes with your feathered children. You have gotten to know us, well; we'd like to get to know you too.

Do you have a story to share?? Do you have a super easy toy you'd like to share instructions for? A recycled toy idea? How about your birdie's favorite recipe? A cute story? A sad story? We'd love to run it in an upcoming edition of Angel Wings. Please submit it to: editor@parrottoyangels.org.. (By submitting your article(s) you agree to allow the Angel Wings Committee to make any editorial changes deemed necessary.)



Sweet Potato Balls By Toni Fortin

1 cup whole wheat flour
1 cup brown rice and 5 grains (cooked).
(This was saved and frozen from the last time I made rice and grains in the rice cooker.)
1 6oz. jar baby food sweet potatoes
1 egg, slightly beaten
1/4 cup raw wheat germ
1/4 cup sesame seeds

In medium size bowl, combine the brown rice with 5 grains, sweet potatoes and the egg. Mix in your whole wheat flour and wheat germ. Pour sesame seeds in a smaller bowl. Using wet hands roll into 3/4" balls and then place in the smaller bowl with the sesame seeds. Roll the balls in the seeds. Lightly spray a baking sheet with olive oil and place balls on it. Bake at 325 for 15 minutes. Rotate balls half way through cooking time. These balls freeze well.

Yields: about 60 balls



Rikki Sez

Rikki will try and answer frequently asked questions here.



Rikki, Mom put a blanket over the window behind my cage. I hate that blanket there and want to rip it off the window. Why did Mom do that to me?
Signed, Unraveled

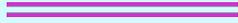
Dear Unraveled, You're lucky you have a mom who cares about you, even though you don't like the blanket. Covering that window will keep the cold and draft out and it will keep you from getting sick. You will be much warmer now.



Rikki, How come my feet hurt? I have a nice big cage and many dowels to sit on, but have to wrap my feet around them to hold on. What can mom do to help me?
Signed, Hurtin' Hoofers

Dear Hurtin' Hoofers, Tell your mom that it is important to have many different size perches for you. The dowels are the worst for birdie feet. There are Comfy perches and real branches from safe trees. The important thing is that they are not smooth like dowels. It is the smooth even surface of the dowel that makes

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



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



your little feet hurt. You also need a perch where your little feet are almost flat, maybe the one that is highest. That way you can sleep up high and be very comfy.



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



Please take a moment and enjoy

[The Faces of Heroes](#)



Marla the Caique

By Wyspur Kallis

I received a call from a very good friend, Renee, who runs a shelter in my area. She told me about a young lady who needed a new home for her bird. I called this young lady and we talked for some time about her bird and my experience with this particular species of bird. She agreed to rehome her bird with me and my flock. I was so very excited to be getting another Caique as I have two boys of my own. The day came when this young lady brought her bird to me and showed me a few tricks that Marla did and then left. I watched Marla for a few days and I noticed a few things Marla did that were characteristic for females. I did a DNA sexing test and was overwhelmed to find I have two boys and one girl. Marla is a very young and energetic little bird which makes it a challenge for my other two older Caiques who don't yet know how to handle this little gal. Caiques are one of the few species of small parrots who tolerate being in the same environment with other Caiques, making it easy to be owned by more than one Caique.



We'd love to run your "Favorite Bird Story". Send it to us at editor@parrottoyangels.org

Household Hazards

By Kim Perez

Are we oblivious to hazards our homes present to our birds? We don't always think of ordinary household items as problematic until there is an accident.

Windows and mirrors are some of the biggest, most easily seen hazards. Our birds just love the idea of soaring outside, as they were destined to do. When they see what they perceive to be an open window, it is an invitation and they aim for it. Unfortunately, this results in injuries and fatalities. The extreme answer would be to cover all of your glass doors and windows, but as this may be fairly impractical, there are alternatives. You can apply window "clings" to them - typically a thin plastic decal which affixes easily to windows and is then easy to remove when you would like. The presence of a shape or picture in the window will help to show the birds that there is not an actual opening present. Other ideas include thermometers, crafts (dream catchers, etc.), photos and more.

Ceiling fans can also prove to be dangerous when they are on. Sometimes a bird will run into one, even when it's off! The best recommendation for ceiling fans if you have them, is to have them off whenever your bird is loose, and perhaps have something highly noticeable hanging from it, such as a decorative pull cord.

Blinds can be a problem, too, depending upon what they are made of. The harder materials, such as wood or aluminum pose more of a threat than fabric or soft plastic blinds. But they almost all have cords of some sort, which, given their length, can

Bird Got the Winter Blues?

By Angel Savannah

Just like people, birds can also experience depression-like symptoms during the winter months. This is largely due to the fact that we are not getting nearly as much sunshine as we require. The full spectrum of UV-A and UV-B rays the sun gives off cause us (and birds) to produce Vitamin D internally. We can ingest other sources of Vitamin D, such as through supplements, but these are not nearly as efficient as the UV-B rays from the sun.

Birds also have a natural source for the precursor to Vitamin D, the preening (urophygial) gland near the base of their back. This gland secretes an oily substance which the bird will use to preen their feathers and body, some of which they also ingest. These precursors are activated by direct sunlight and allow the birds to produce Vitamin D.

With our birds, since the majority of them live indoors and their exposure to direct sunlight is minimal, we provide them with a combination of full spectrum lighting and supplements. We need to be aware that birds can get too much Vitamin D in supplement form (this does not include making their own Vitamin D internally from the sun or full spectrum light). When this happens, it can cause soft tissue calcification and renal failure. Macaws seem to be more susceptible than others to Vitamin D toxicosis. It is safer to give them Vitamin D as an inactive precursor called cholecalciferol, which requires a two stage process to become biologically activated. By using this type of supplement, the first stage of the

also create a hazardous situation. I prefer the cloth blinds and always tie the cord up. You can re-purpose an empty dental floss container by painting or decorating it to match your blinds/room and storing the extra length of drapery cord in the container.

Open pots and pans on the stove would be something one must tend to at all times if your bird is loose. It is much safer for your bird if they are confined to another room or their cage when you are in the kitchen. They just refuse to observe the meaning of the safety light on the stove when you have hot burners.

Open toilets pose equal threat, and of course, the answer to this one is obvious. It might seem like you are forever reminding your family/children to close the lid, but once they do it for a month, the habit will stick with them.

Electrical wires always look inviting to a bird. Do your best to camouflage them behind furniture, along the baseboard, etc. If you have several loose cords that are going in the same direction, you can use Velcro strips to hold them together and perhaps make them a little less intriguing!

Household cleaners and other chemicals need to be strictly kept in a cupboard or closet where birds have no access to them.

If you remain diligent with your approach to overall bird safety when it comes to your common household items, you will hopefully protect your bird from unnecessary harm.

If you have any toy safety questions or safety topics you'd like us to address, please submit them to:
editor@parrottoyangels.org



activation includes detoxification, which is what makes it safer to use. Your vet can recommend the safest supplements to use.

African Greys have always been known to have a higher calcium requirement, which translates to a higher sunlight/Vitamin D requirement. It is best to have direct sunlight or full spectrum lighting available to them daily for several hours. Did you know that the UV-B rays required to cause the body to produce Vitamin D cannot pass through glass? Looking out a window will not give your bird any of the required UV-B rays.

To know to what extent your bird requires full spectrum light, study where the bird is found in nature. For example, the African grey experiences extended periods of full sun with little shade available. South American birds, however, are often found in rain forests where they have very limited exposure to the sun, which would translate to making their daily requirement less than a Grey's.

The symptoms of hypocalcemia (lack of calcium or lack of Vitamin D, caused by lack of sunlight) include depression, illness susceptibility, loss of muscle coordination (in any muscle or muscle group in the body), poor reproductive performance, curvature of the long bones, thyroid problems and even seizures. This can happen in parrots of all ages, and through my research found that even babies are euthanized when this condition presents in an obvious manner in them. Considering that the birds will produce their own Vitamin D when given proper and appropriate exposure to either sunlight or full spectrum light, this would be the most natural supply method and should be supplied to all birds.



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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