



Angel Wings

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

November 2011
Volume 6, Issue XI

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Happy Thanksgiving

Angel Toys For Angels

November's Featured Toys



[Lotza Knotz](#)
Medium - Large Birds



[Footer Wheels](#)
Medium - Large Birds



[Fantastic](#)
Small - Medium Birds

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

Parrot Toy Angels 2011 Fall Auction

Shopping from the comfort of your home is not a new idea. But have you ever wished your shopping could truly make a difference to somebirdie? Well it can if you shop our Fall Auction. We have wonderful gifts for both the humans and the feathers. Our Angels have truly outdone themselves with donations...as have our generous supporters. Please visit our Fall Auction December 1 thru December 11 on eBay. The gifts you buy will bring joy to birds who may be living in empty cages. We have bird toys guaranteed to keep your bird busy and happy, toy making supplies for those that make their own toys and birdie stockings to be filled. We have playstands and paintings, gift certificates and get-a-grips, totes, toys and t's, ornaments and jewelry...and so much more!

Here's a sneak peak:



But before the bidding begins, we would like to give a huge "Thank You" to all of our generous 2011 donors.

The official kickoff of the 2011 Fall Auction will be Thursday, December 1 at 12:00pm PDT. The eBay banner below will be active then and take you directly to the auction. Have fun...and please, bid often!



Auction runs Thursday, December 1st until Sunday, December 11th, 12:00pm PDT.

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

BIRDIE STOCKINGS



NEW NEW

ON THE SITE:

♥ [New Items](#) ♥

♥ [Updated Project Pictures](#) ♥

♥ ♥ ♥



♥ ♥ ♥



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!!

♥ ♥ ♥



TIRED of sad little faces glancing at the mantle? Little eyes wondering "Where oh where will Santa Birdie leave my presents?" Light up those faces now with our [Birdie Stockings](#)

"Stuffed" Stockings also available. Each stocking will have 20+ footers included. Ready to hang! Personalization is also available.

Please allow 2 weeks plus shipping time to custom make your stocking. Not only will your feathers love their own...but they make great gifts for any occasion.

Order by 12/1/11 for guaranteed holiday delivery
[Order Now](#)

Personalized: \$24.00

Non-Personalized: \$20.00

Stuffed & Personalized: \$39.50

You can find all our Birdie Stockings at: [Stockings](#)
or, drop us a line if you don't see your birdie.

♥ ♥ ♥

Your Right To Know About GMO
By Lori M. Nelsen

The federal government recently approved the commercial development of genetically engineered alfalfa and sugar beets, with many more foods to follow. With an overabundance of these altered organisms, it is thought that there will not be any organic or non GMO (genetically modified organisms) food eventually because of cross-contamination of fields.

Both farmers and consumers are concerned about the effects of the GMOs on the environment and human health. These concerns have led to a number of national and local lawsuits to pass "right to know" and farmer protection legislation that would help stop and turn back the GMO commercialization clock. The US House of Representatives recently passed legislation prohibiting the FDA from approving genetically altered salmon.

In January, the USDA announced the complete deregulation of genetically engineered alfalfa. Alfalfa is a perennial crop that flowers over a long period of time increasing the cross-contamination. It is the fourth most widely grown crop in the US, with over 21 million acres in production. It is a key component in animal feed. Genetically engineered alfalfa, by Monsanto, is engineered to resist the herbicide glyphosate. This herbicide is marketed by Monsanto as "Roundup™". Currently most alfalfa is grown without herbicide. Anti-GMO groups filed a lawsuit in March against the USDA arguing that unrestricted approval was unlawful. The lawsuit is pending.

There are similar struggles underway: GE Sugar Beets (Monsanto) have cross pollinated the weeds in the beet fields that are "Roundup™" resistant and cannot be killed. Kentucky Blue Grass (used as pasture grass) is now herbicide resistant and poses a threat to organic gardening.

If you are concerned about these issues for your parrots and your families, contact your local and national legislators and ask them to sign pending bills. You can also find information about some 700 suppliers of GMO-free products at Non-GMO Sourcebook www.nongmosourcebook.com. These companies are self-reporting but some participate in the Non-GMO Project certification program, which provide third-party verification.

Sources:

[Taste for Life](#)

[Union of Concerned Scientists](#)

[Organic Trade Organization](#)



Sweet Potato & Nut Balls
By Toni Fortin

- 1-1/2 cups steel cut oats
- 6 oz. jar sweet potato baby food
- 1 slightly beaten egg
- 1/2 cup chopped walnuts
- 1 Tbsp. hulled sesame seeds
- 1 tsp. raw wheat germ
- 1 tsp. palm oil

Recycling, Angel Style
Muffin the Pumpkin
By Wyspur Kallis



- Supplies you will need:
Jute string -OR-
100% bird safe cotton rope
Muffin cups
Plastic bottle cap from a
safe food source (washed and dried)

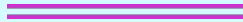
Combine all in a bowl. Let sit for a few minutes for oats to absorb liquid. With wet hands roll mixture into balls. Place on lightly sprayed cooking sheet.

Bake at 300 degrees for approximately 20 minutes in the middle of the oven. Keep out enough for 2 days and freeze the rest. They take just a few minutes to thaw. My guys gave me a beaks up on these treats. Yields: 38 balls



Gracie Girl enjoying her Sweet Potato & Nut Ball

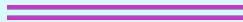
♥ ♥ ♥



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Gaby & Dinky who own Angel Ilona

Paper shreds
Small plastic pumpkin left over from Halloween
Scissors & Drill



Remove the handle from the pumpkin. Drill center holes in the muffin cups, pumpkin and bottle cap.



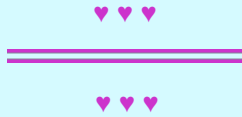
Thread the string through the pumpkin and string the muffin cups on one at a time, inverting each cup until you have used all the cups.



Thread the string through the bottle cap and tie a secure knot in the string.



Now tie a loop in the string on top of the pumpkin.



Pull the string tight on the bottom of the pumpkin to take the slack up. Cut off any extra string. Stuff your pumpkin with the paper shreds. What an awesome toy you've made! Introduce this toy slowly as your bird may find it a bit scary at first!



Featured Fid ~ Alexandrine Parakeets

By Kim Perez



Left - Male ~~~ Right - Female

The Alexandrine (or Alexandrian) Parakeet, (*psittacula eupatria*), is a beautiful parrot named after Alexander the Great. These majestic parrots measure approximately 23" in length and weigh in at 250 grams. They closely resemble their relative the Ringneck Parakeet, but they are a larger, deeper voiced version. They are native to India and can be found in altitudes greater than 5000 feet in the Himalayas. Their life span is approximately 40 years.

The Alexandrine is mostly green with a brighter and somewhat iridescent green on the head. They have an exaggerated black ring around their necks (males - the females have no ring) with a little pink patch in the back of the ring. They also have maroon patches on their wings and a little pale green to light yellow under their wings and at the end of their tails. Their beaks are orange and quite impressive in size.

The Alexandrine is a very intelligent bird. They are able to learn large vocabularies and mimic many sounds. They are a parrot frequently used for trick training. You can find a myriad of videos on You Tube showing off their speaking and trick talents. Many Alexandrines learn to talk around the time they wean. They are very people-friendly birds, and love to be able to communicate with their humans. They do have a shrill wild call, but they are not known to be screamers.

As one could guess from the size of their beak, the Alexandrine loves to chew. Offer a variety of toys to keep them busy. Since you have to provide a fairly large cage (because of their long tails), you will have a lot of room for toys, swings, boings and more.

They eat a varied diet including seed, pellets, fresh fruits and vegetables, pasta and anything else you feed your other birds. They are not afraid to try new things.

Overall, it is their sweet and outgoing personality that will win your heart with these birds.



The Hat Trick!! Who Knew?

By Ilona Peterson

My flighted birds can't bear to see me sitting comfortably reading the paper and having coffee. My head and shoulders become landing strips. Enjoying a little bite of toast is a pipe dream. No matter how much I share, it tastes better if there is a crumb on my lips or cheek, or even my hand. I know it's cute, but after the 5th time of getting up and putting them on one of their play areas, cute disappears. This is where accidental discoveries become the highlight of your day!!! It had rained the day before and on the coat rack was my rain hat. Hmmmm...I wondered...

VIOLA! It was the answer to getting a peaceful 20 minutes of enjoying the paper and coffee! I put on the hat and was ignored like the plague. Ahhhhhh...

If only that had worked with the kids when they were little!!!



P.S. Be prepared to go to the 2-hat defense!



Rikki Sez

Rikki will try and answer frequently asked questions here.



Rikki, Mom gives me foraging toys, but I don't like them. I just have no interest in any of them because it is too much work. What can mom do to get me interested in foraging?

Signed, Forageless

Dear Forageless, Maybe mom can get smaller foraging toys or she can hide treats or nuts around your cage so you have to go look for them but are not working too hard for them. Another option for your mom would be to have a foot toy basket hooked inside your cage and she can put treats and nuts in with the foot toys so digging through foot toys is not as hard as tearing open a foraging toy.



Rikki, I'm a bigger bird and mom gives me these toys that are huge, but I don't like them. She can't understand why I do not play with them and she gets upset with me saying something about the money she spends and that I don't like anything she gives me. How do I tell her that sometimes they scare me or they are too hard to play with and I lose interest?

Signed, Confused

Dear Confused, Your mom needs to know your play habits. That is very

Simple Substitutions

Eating healthy is something many of us do. We also enjoy cooking for our birds. Here is a chart for substituting olive oil for butter or margarine.

Butter/Margarine	Olive Oil
1 teaspoon	3/4 teaspoon
1 tablespoon	2-1/4 teaspoons
2 tablespoons	1-1/2 tablespoons
1/4 cup	3 tablespoons
1/2 cup	1/4 cup + 2 tablespoons
2/3 cup	1/2 cup
3/4 cup	1/2 cup + 1 tablespoon
1 cup	3/4 cup
2 cups	1-1/2 cups



important. If you are a bigger bird and mom is giving you toys that are too large for you then maybe she can find some toys that are a bit smaller. If the wood is too big, then mom needs to buy something with smaller wood so you can destroy it and feel a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction. If mom is going to buy you toys a tiny bit smaller, she also needs monitor you during playtime to make sure you do not hurt yourself. I am pretty sure that once your Mom finds a toy that will interest and satisfy you that you will graduate into larger toys once you are comfortable.



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



Entomophobia or Just Aversion?

By Angel Savannah

I have read that entomophobia (fear of insects) is not an uncommon phobia, but do we have a phobia or is it just aversion? If you just 'hate bugs', it is most likely an aversion and this is completely normal and natural.

Either way, I don't want them in my parrots' food. I read and hear complaints from people all the time about buying bird food with bugs in it. Some people feel that this is typical and usual. I do not. I also do not recommend it for your birds. Although most veterinarians will tell you that the bugs themselves, whether in larvae form or moth form, would not cause harm to your birds, their excrement can be of concern.

Feed stores will advise you to simply freeze the food to kill off the bugs. They will tell you that this will prevent any future pests in that particular bag. As we have seen time and again in the vet clinic, even once frozen, there can be future bug problems in the same sealed bags. The likely

Hold It Together!

By Kim Perez



There are times in making toys when we don't know what exactly to use to hold the parts all together. I see bird toy makers at various bird fairs in the Chicago area, and they use many different items to accomplish this - from the great idea to the really unsafe.

Of course you can use Paulie Rope and leather cords to tie things to your toys. You can use other ropes as well, such as cotton or sisal. But when you want something pulled really tight, you typically would want something thin and powerful.

source of these new creatures is eggs that were laid in the feed by the bugs which have since perished.

Many feed suppliers will also tell you that this is common and you will find it in all foods. That simply is not true. Since I grew up in a house with many birds, I can tell you that the only time we ever had any bugs at all was when we bought commercially packaged foods.

Once you get these bugs, you will probably see the little moths flying around, too. That is a telltale sign in any pet store - if you see moths, do NOT buy their feed. That is where they came from. We have clients at the vet clinic who complain that the moths are really difficult for them to get rid of, so I would strongly recommend avoiding any chance of bringing them into your home.

The alternative to commercially packaged feed is to buy fresh from a feed mill. We are fortunate to live within 15 minutes of a huge feed supply plant. They package and sell feed wholesale to all of the surrounding states. Since they don't get it from another source, but rather they are the source, they have the freshest feed available. We buy each individual seed and mix our own mixes. This is practical when you have several birds and don't mind keeping in excess of 500 pounds of feed on hand.

If you only have a few birds, you should be able to find a mill that will mix your food for you and sell it to you fresh. You should also be able to locate online and local sources with guarantees against pests.



Good idea: Zip ties. Zip ties are found in a variety of widths and lengths and they are everywhere from the hardware store to the dollar store. They also come in many different colors, which can add to the festivity of your toys. You can pull these really tight with a pair of needle nose pliers and then snip off the long end so nobody gets poked.

Bad idea: Twist ties. The majority of twist ties, such as those from a loaf of bread, have metal on the inside. This metal is not made to be around food, even though used on food packages, and is definitely not considered safe for our birds. It can rust, it can be an unsafe metal, or it can poke an eye out. There is no sense taking a chance on these when the alternative is so inexpensive.

I use zip ties to hold bunches of curled straws together and then either hook them on wire or pull them tight when they are around rope or leather. If you ever get a bunch of parts crooked and want to change it, simply snip the zip tie with a side cutter and get a new one and re-do it.

Contact [Parrot Toy Angels](#) if you have any bird toy part safety questions. We would love to answer them!



The Domestic Turkey, *Meleagris gallopavo*
By Nikki Slade

What has a beak, feathers, wings, and an amazing personality?

Your Thanksgiving Turkey!

As Thanksgiving Day is approaching, let's take a few minutes to learn a bit about the very quintessence of Thanksgiving Day, the turkey. First, let's consider the fact that turkeys are birds, too! In fact, they are no more distantly related to, say, a cockatoo or a budgie than a zebra finch or a toucan. All of these belong to different taxonomic orders,

but the same class, Aves.

Domesticated turkeys are descended from the wild turkey, *Meleagris gallopavo*, a bird native to North America. The South Mexican Wild turkey was domesticated by ancient Mesoamericans and gave rise to the domestic turkey as we know it. This subspecies was thought to be critically endangered as of 2010. Like parrots, the wild turkey's numbers and range have decreased due to hunting and loss of habitat.

Wild male turkeys (toms) have a large flap of skin down their neck called a wattle, as well as a flap of skin above the beak, the snood. These are used to attract females...the wattle changes color from light blue to red when the tom is aroused, and his snood becomes elongated and distended. They have no feathers on their head. Their tail is long, dark and fan-shaped, and their wings are glossy bronze. The tom's feathers are iridescent, the female (hen) has duller feathers. There are white bars on the primary wing feathers. Toms are larger than hens, weighing from 16 to 21 lbs. as opposed to the average 9 lb. female. Their wingspan is 49 to 57 inches. They are very agile fliers, usually flying close to the ground, and can fly up to 55 miles per hour. They have many vocalizations, the tom's "gobble" carrying up to a mile. Turkeys are omnivorous, eating ground shrubs, small trees, grasses, nuts, seeds, berries, insects, and some small amphibians and reptiles. They forage in the early morning and late afternoon. Hens lay 10 to 14 eggs, usually one daily. The eggs are incubated for 28 days; the babies (poults) leave the nest in 12 to 24 hours. The hens are good mothers, and some instances have been reported of toms sitting on, incubating, and hatching eggs! Poults may stay with their mother until the following spring.

While many often think of turkeys as being large, bland or even ugly birds, originally Heritage turkeys were selected for both productivity and specific color patterns to show off the bird's beauty. There are at least 11 Heritage varieties today, and they are truly beautiful to look at. However, the most common domestic turkey farmed today (which we are most familiar with) is the Broad Breasted White, which has been selected in part for its white feathering.

All turkeys, whether the wild turkey, domestic factory-farmed turkey, or Heritage turkey variety make wonderful pets! They tame easily and are very gentle when handled. Many enjoy being hugged, and may climb on your lap for a nap! Many owners say turkeys are like puppies, coming when called, taking food from you, and following you everywhere. They love attention, are curious and friendly, very social, and all have their own personality. Their favorite treats are apples, plums, sweet corn, sunflower seeds and cabbages. They love to wander and forage, graze grass, chase insects and eat berries. They make excellent sentinels, protecting their flock and people. If they are to be fenced in, the fence should be at least 6 feet high, although some turkeys can fly over this. 90 square feet is the minimum recommendation for two turkeys. They also require shelter from the weather, and should be locked in at night for protection from predators such as foxes.

In keeping with our motto, "Making a difference, one bird at a time!" why not consider making a difference this Thanksgiving by not buying turkey? As an alternative, you could sponsor a turkey instead! Check out the Farm Sanctuary Adopt a Turkey Project at www.adoptaturkey.org. You can still have a turkey on your table...they send you a certificate and a photo of the turkey you sponsored!

SOURCES:

www.albc-usa.org/cpl/wtchlist.html#turkeys
www.adoptaturkey.org
www.farmsanctuary.org
www.poultrykeeper.com
www.burkesbackyard.com



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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