

October 2008

Volume '08/11

WAES MONTHLY

Wasatch Avian Education Society

AFFILIATED WITH American Federation of Aviculture

OUR NOVEMBER SPEAKER IS:

Susan G. Friedman, Ph.D.

Next Meeting
November 08, 2008
7:00 p.m.
Salt Lake County
Complex
2001 So. State,
Room N1100
(North Building)
Salt Lake City

Everyone
Is
Welcomed

Join the
WAES Chat
Group and be
up to date

<http://www.wasatchavian.com/>

Click on the
Chat menu

Susan G. Friedman, Ph.D., is currently a faculty member in the Department of Psychology at Utah State University. A behaviorist for more than 25 years, her area of expertise is learning and behavior with a special emphasis on children's behavior disorders. In the last several years, Susan has helped pioneer efforts to apply to animals the humane philosophy and scientifically sound teaching technology from the field of Applied Behavior Analysis, which has been so effective with human learners. The guiding principle of this approach is a hierarchy of teaching interventions starting with the most positive, least intrusive, effective behavior solutions.

Susan is a steadfast proponent of changing behavior through facilitation rather than force. These tools of facilitation focus on animals' extraordinary biologic capacity to learn by interacting with their environment. By changing the environment for success, animals learn to behave successfully. These principles and methods comprise her course, Living and Learning with Parrots: The Fundamental Principles of Behavior, which she teaches several times a year in workshops and on the internet.

Continued on page 7

WAES MEETINGS OFFER NOT ONLY EDUCATIONAL LECTURES BUT ALSO THE OPPORTUNITY TO SOCIALIZE WITH OTHER PARROT ENTHUSIASTS OVER LIGHT REFRESHMENTS.

President's Letter

From WAES President - Shawna Augustine

It's exciting to see the candidates for 2009 board positions posted. I hope each time I open the web site, I'm able to read more and more people are interested, by reading their bios. I would really like to see our membership expand. And having members interested in board positions is a great way to start. Thank you to all of you who have posted already. If you haven't, please consider it. What a great way to help and support the birds in need, and especially the homes with birds in need. There are so many homes out there that get into situations with their birds, that the family wants to throw in the towel on their birds. We all can help them by providing education and/or assistance in many ways, even if it's just a phone conversation with a person who simply needs a piece of advice that allows them to want to keep their birds and realize what a wonderful addition to their family their bird can be. Even if you don't think you have the time to spend as a board member, please consider helping on committees that will be needed for each position. We need you!

Shawna Augustine

2008 WAES President

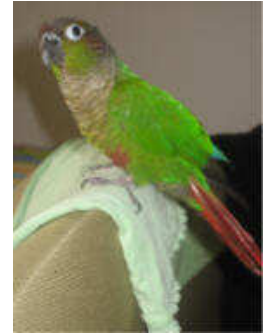


Introducing the following wonderful birds:

Damon the Cute Crimson Bellied Conure

Damon is a green cheek conure about 10 years old, he loves to go exploring and visiting people throughout the house. He is a very adventurous eater (he loves berries, bananas and oatmeal) but mostly he eats Zupreem and a variety of seed, he loves being spoonfed! Damon is afraid of large groups of people (he gets right in his cage and doesn't want to come out) but he is quite friendly in smaller groups. He knows how to step up and he loves doing the dishes with his foster mom. He also loves to take baths. I just put out a lukewarm bowl of water, and he jumps in and has fun. He also loves to eat mandarin oranges.

Adoption fee: \$180.00



Jasper Another Amazing Amazon, Orange Wing

Jasper was adopted from WAES approximately 3 years ago and has been returned to rescue because of lifestyle changes. Jasper is approximately 11 years old, male, and has a couple of deformed toes. He has been on a good diet of Zupreem, seed, and fruits and vegetables. His favorite foods are tomatoes, apples and bananas. He does talk and has been known to be a bit nippy, but he loves head scratches! He is currently not stepping up very well, but the foster family is working with him. [\(Update on our web site\)](#)

Adoption Fee: \$250.00



Pepe the Amazing Amazon, Red Lored

Pepe is an unpredictable bird. It is estimated that he is 9 years old. He prefers to remain in his cage and not be handled. He is not friendly and is NOT good with children. He bites very hard. Pepe will step up onto a stick, and then to your hand. He will move out of the way while you change his food and water. He eats Pretty Bird pellets and nearly everything else he is offered. He is not loud, and is rather quiet for an Amazon. He only says "Hello".

Adoption Fee: \$250.00



Kiwi the Eclectus

Kiwi is a female Eclectus that comes with a big metal cage and toys. She is 14 years old. She has bitten the lady of the house but not the husband. She shares a cage now with a male Eclectus, and they seem to tolerate each other. They used to be more of a pair than they are now. She laid eggs many years ago, but not in recent years. She had some feather loss but the feathers are slowly growing back in. She says a couple of phrases, but is not often vocal. She says "hello", "who's the pretty bird/girl", and "how are you". [\(More on our web site\)](#)

Adoption Fee \$250.00



Yellow Crown the Yellow Crown Amazon (Who would have guessed?)

Yellow Crown is a Yellow Crown Amazon. He/she has been in foster care for a couple of months for rehabilitation. He/she has been to the vet twice since being in Rescue and the Doctor said that he/she is back to "whole health and is doing alot better". He/she is a complete sweetheart. Yellow Crown has become a great cage mate with Keiko, yet will now come to individuals easily as long as they both get some attention. [\(More on our web site\)](#)

Adoption Fee \$390.00



Puddles the Bare-Eyed Cockatoo

Puddles is a male Bare-Eyed Cockatoo. He is very loveable and in perfect feather. He was purchased from a pet store over 10 years ago and has only one owner. He is used to living with dogs and other birds, which he has been friends with for over 10 years. (Tiger and Pilot) Vet results normal. Adoption Fee \$250.00

**Pilot the Yellow Collared Macaw**

Pilot is a male Yellow Collared Macaw. He was purchased from a pet store and he is terrified of people because of people poking fingers and other items in the cage bars at him, which absolutely traumatized him. He tries very hard to talk. He has lived with one owner for over 10 years. He is used to living with dogs and other birds, which he has been friends with for over 10 years. (Puddles and Tiger) Vet results normal. Adoption \$250.00

**Little Bird - Senegal**

Little Bird is close to 22 years old. She has been in her latest home for 7 years. She is pretty much a one-person bird. She is very loving with her "mate" but has a vicious bite with those who are unlucky enough to not be 'the love of her life'. Little Bird has a wonderful repertoire of calls and whistles. She can mimic telephone ringers and makes Star War sounds. She says 'pretty bird' in several voices and will on occasions say 'what's up?' She has plucked as long as we know of. She does not have a cage. She had some health issues. Vet results normal. Adoption fee: \$150.00

**Larry Bird is a Male Ecelectus.**

Larry Bird was formerly the cage mate of Kiwi but they did not get along. Larry Bird has been plucking but his foster mom is putting him thru Madeleine's re-feathering program. Larry is very companionable and would like you to spend a good bit of time with him. He doesn't play with toys much. He enjoys his food. He responds verbally to female voices

Vet results are normal.

Adoption fee \$250.00

**Tikki is a Blue and Gold Macaw**

Tikki is a 20 year old Blue and Gold Macaw. (We do not actually know if she is male or female). She/He loves bananas, oranges, apples, applesauce, peanuts, all nuts and cooked sweet potatoes. She bites due to some bees getting into her cage and stinging her on her face. She scares easily. She loves to be rubbed on her head. She can be gentle but if scared she will bite. She does talk. She says, sugar, pepper, Tikki and stop it. Due to family circumstances she has been alone a lot and she has been plucking and moody. Vet results Pending Adoption fee: 300.00



Bart is a Nanday Conure

Bart is a cute fellow. He is friendly to his foster mother but still a bit shy of the rest of the family. Once he knows you he likes having his head rubbed and will take food from your hands. He does bite. He can be loud. He likes his swing and chew toys and loves his mirror. All test results is in normal ranges. He'd make a lovely pet in the right home. Vet results normal.
Adoption fee: 180.00

**Timmy is a Double Yellow Head Amazon**

Timmy has lived in his last home for the past 7 years. He came to them as an abused bird, and he is very skittish of hands and being held. He does not trust any human. Timmy is very quite for an Amazon. He loves to eat just about everything, especially whole fruits, although his main diet is pellets. He loves to chew up wood toys and calcium perches. He enjoys being out of his cage, but does not feel comfortable being held. Vet results pending. Adoption fee: 250.00

**Junior is a Moluccan Cockatoo**

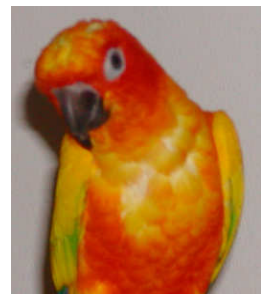
He is a good bird. He is a 15 YO dna sexed male M2 with a shy/skittish personality until he gets to know you. He is not to be around small children as he is back in foster care due to attacking the 2 YO of his last adoptive home. He has a scissor beak that must be groomed every 4-6 weeks and walks on the sides of his toes due to his nails, at some point, not being trimmed. He is a good eater once he is comfortable and will allow most adults to hold him. He does not like tattoos/moles/freckles and will bite at them trying to remove them from your skin. He was known to attack the arm of the previous adoptive family's friend due to tattoos on his arms. As with all cockatoos he loves the sound of his own voice. He is very loud in the am and then again in the pm. [\(More on our web site\)](#) Adoption fee: pending

**Apollo is a sun Conure**

Apollo, sex unknown. Apollo was very plucked and it might be that Zeus plucked him. His feathers are still recovering. He self mutilated and has recovered. He loves his seed mix and also enjoys fruit and vegetables particularly fruit. He eats Pretty bird pellet as well. Pretty Bird pellets is one of his staple foods. He has a more quiet personality. He is attached to Zeus but they need to be kept apart due to Zeus being more aggressive. Vet results pending.
Adoption fee: pending

**Zeus is a Sun Conure**

Zeus, sex unknown. Zeus is a feisty little guy and will nip at you but can be very affectionate as well. He loves seed mix, fruit, and vegetables. He does need a lot of fruit and Pretty Bird pellets is one of his staples. Vet results pending.
Adoption fee: pending



Tikko is a Orange-winged Amazon

Tikko is a 30 year-old Orange-winged Amazon. Tikko is shy and doesn't like to be touched but she will step-up, and mimic others when they speak to her. Tikko is relatively quiet but will bark when someone enters the room. She say a few words like "silly bird" and "hello". She eats Zupreem pellets but loves a variety of foods like pasta, cheese, and beans. Vet results pending

Adoption fee: pending



Ten Things Your Parrot Wants You to Know about Behavior

*By S.G. Friedman, Ph.D.,
Department of Psychology, Utah State University*

Reprinted from PsittaScene Magazine
May 2008

Speaking for oneself is hard enough, so how does one speak for another species? The general laws of learning and behavior from the field of behavior analysis provide an articulate voice to speak about best practices for all animals. In recent years, as the teaching technology of applied behavior analysis has become more widely known and practiced, the quality of life for captive parrots has improved by leaps and bounds. Although they may not tell you in quite this way, all parrots will benefit from caregivers who know these ten things about behavior.

1. Behavior is what a parrot does, under certain conditions; behavior is not what a parrot is.

Next time you are tempted to describe a parrot with an "is-label" (such as is vicious, is dominant, is neurotic), answer these three questions instead: What does this label look like in terms of actual, observable behavior? Under what conditions does this behavior occur? What is the immediate outcome the behavior produces for the bird?

The answers to these questions will help you set clear behavior-change targets, identify the antecedent predictors in the environment that promote the behavior, and determine what consequences maintain the behavior. For example, see how much information is gained by replacing a vague label – "My bird is vicious." – with specific antecedent-behavior-consequence descriptions – "When I offer my hand near the cage (antecedent), my bird lunges (observable behavior), to get me to remove my hand (consequences)." We can't replace "vicious" because it's just a label, but we can replace lunging with an alternate behavior we want to see more.

2. Every behavior serves a purpose for your parrot; the purpose is the consequence the behavior produces.

Behavior is a tool parrots use to produce desired consequences (outcomes) from the environment (including the environment inside their skin). To discover the reason for a particular behavior, look at what happens right *after* the behavior. Outcomes generally fall into one of two categories – to get, or to get away from, particular items, events, or conditions.

The motivation to behave in a particular way today comes from the consequences the behavior produced yesterday. This is called the law of effect, which states that behavior is a function of its consequences. The law of effect describes nature's feedback loop. Behavior that works from the animal's point of view is repeated and behavior that doesn't work is modified or suppressed. For example, many parrots vocalize persistently because doing so has produced social reinforcers (human attention) in the past. The bird is a learner not a screamer.

3. Parrots naturally choose the behavior that yields the most positive consequences.

Given a choice, all animals tend to do the things that are most rewarding to them. This is called the matching law, which states that the relative rates of different behaviors (or the same behaviors in different situations) tend to match the relative rates of reinforcement they produce. For example, if Periwinkle Parrot is reinforced for stepping up 90% of the time when John offers his hand and 40% of the time when Grace offers her hand, Periwinkle will tend to step up for John 90% of the time but only 40% of the time for Grace. The matching law has been demonstrated with many species of animals including humans. We can apply the matching law to decrease the rate of a problem behavior by supersizing the rate of reinforcement for an alternate behavior. In this way we decrease problems without resorting to punishing strategies.

Continued On Page 6

From Page 5

4. Every parrot is an individual with a personal parrot point of view about what consequences motivate him or her to behave.

Reinforcers come in many different forms including tangible items, social interactions, sensory experiences, physical activities, and escape from unpleasant stimuli. The quality of an animal's life is highly related to the rate, quality and variety of reinforcers that motivate its behavior daily. Some reinforcers are automatically rewarding like food. Other reinforcers are learned through experience via the process of repeated, close pairing with existing reinforcers. The touch of a human hand is an example of a reinforcer learned by pairing with other reinforcers like food. The ability to learn new reinforcers is another one of Nature's clever plans. It ensures that there will always be a good reason to behave rather than be still.

5. To learn what motivates your parrot, carefully observe favorite items, activities, and people.

The label "reinforcer" describes the behavior-increasing effect a consequence has on the behavior it follows. It doesn't describe any fixed characteristics of the consequence, per se. Some consequences are reinforcing some of the time and not other times. A sunflower seed may not motivate a bird who has just eaten a bowl full of seeds and a human hand may not motivate a bird to fly who has been active all day. Knowledge about a species' natural history, the individual's behavioral history, and the current conditions in which the parrot lives provide important clues about what may motivate a particular bird. The best approach is to make no assumptions. When it comes to the needs of individual parrots, behavior is best understood as a study of one.

6. Increase your parrot's good behavior by delivering positive reinforcers immediately and consistently.

Perhaps the single most important consideration for highly effective reinforcement is contiguity, or closeness in time, between the behavior and the reinforcer. Speedy delivery of positive reinforcers is the clearest way to communicate the exact response that produced the rewarding outcome so that the parrot can repeat the response and earn more reinforcement. Late delivery can result in reinforcing a different response that occurs further down the ongoing behavior stream. Consistency is also very important because it communicates clearly the "if-then" contingency between the behavior and the outcome -- if you step onto the perch, then you get a scratch on the head.

7. The bad news is you can unintentionally reinforce problem behaviors too.

Behaviors that are not reinforced decrease over time by the process called extinction. It follows then that every single behavior repeatedly exhibited by a parrot is reinforced in some way, including problem behaviors like wandering off a play station, biting to remove unwanted hands, and chewing the woodwork for sensory rewards. Intermittent reinforcement will produce persistent misbehavior by the very same process that produces avid gamblers. Once a problem behavior is learned, the occasional jackpot is all that is needed to maintain a behavior like screaming for attention.

It isn't always what we do that reinforces a parrot's problem behaviors -- other birds, children, and internal sensations are some of the other usual suspects -- but, in any case, unintentional reinforcement is a problem we can do something about. The most helpful question you can answer when dealing with a problem behavior is not what's wrong with this parrot but rather, what reinforces this particular behavior. When we understand that behavior is functionally related to the context in which it occurs, we can change the context to change behavior, effectively and humanely.

8. To avoid problem behaviors, arrange the environment to make the right behavior easier and more effective than the wrong behavior.

Sometimes the most positive, least intrusive way to solve a behavior problem is to remove the environmental cues that set the behavior in play in the first place. For example, moving a well-appointed play station away from the wall will reduce a parrot's penchant for chewing the windowsill. Affixing a perch to the inside of the cage door, and teaching the parrot to stand there before opening the cage door, can reduce a parrot's inclination to bite a hand offered deep inside its cage. It takes a keen eye to assess the many ways in which the environment we provide presents obstacles to the behavior we want our parrots to exhibit. Many simple behavior solutions are missed because we are looking "in the bird" instead of in the setting in which the behavior occurs.

Further, you can remove the reinforcer that maintains a problem behavior and the behavior will decrease because it no longer effectively produces the reinforcer.

On To Page 7

From page 6

9. Reinforce small improvements toward the final behavior goal.

You can't reinforce a behavior that never occurs but you can teach parrots new behaviors (or a new version of an existing behavior) quickly by reinforcing small approximations toward the final goal. This procedure is called shaping. For example, a parrot that is reluctant to step onto a perch can be shaped to do so by reinforcing several repetitions of the following approximations: Calm body language near the perch; quick touches of a toe on the perch; one foot remaining on the perch; a shift in weight onto one foot on the perch; and finally, two feet on the perch.

Highly successful shapers are skilled observers of the subtle, natural variation with which behavior is performed. In this natural variation, they notice and reinforce the next closer approximation toward the final behavior. Very small improvements must be reinforced with super-immediacy. If the bird shows any hesitation at a particular approximation, relax the criterion for reinforcement to the previously mastered step and then move forward again, approximation by approximation.

10. You get what you reinforce so catch your parrot being good.

It can be said that our cultural fog has us generally paying more attention to the misbehavior of individuals than their good behavior. In fact, the same amount of attention skillfully redirected to arranging the environment to make good behavior both easy and rewarding will yield fast, long lasting results. Follow the rule of *fair pairs*, which states that whenever you decrease a problem behavior (resulting in fewer reinforcers for the bird) be sure to set a behavior goal to increase at the same time. In this way you will protect the total amount of reinforcement your parrot experiences each day.

Catching your parrot being good will not only increase behaviors you want to see more but also improve your relationship with your bird. Animals will be empowered to make the right behavioral choices for the right reasons, that is, to get something of value rather than to escape something aversive. As a result parrots will live more successfully among humans.

Reprinted By Permission S.G. Friedman, Ph.D.,

As you read *Ten Things Your Parrot Wants You to Know about Behavior* by Dr. Friedman, you may come across unfamiliar terms or concepts, or you may see a behavior described that fits your bird. Feel free to jot down notes, and bring your newsletter to the meeting to take more notes. This meeting is all about teaching you how to work with your bird and solve problems.

Continued from page 1

Susan is the first author on two recently completed chapters on learning and behavior for two new avian veterinary texts (in press), and enjoys contributing to and learning from several internet lists on parrot behavior. She is a core member of the California Condor Recovery Team and takes every opportunity to work with companion animal caregivers, veterinarians, animal trainers and zookeepers to empower and enrich the lives of all learners.

WAES Nominating Committee

The members of the committee are Madeleine Franco, Shawna Augustine, and Audrey Hollaar. The purpose of the committee is to find candidates to run for board positions. Any member in good standing as of Sept 15 may run for office. There are additional requirements for the positions of President and Rescue Director. Please see the WAES Bylaws: <http://www.wasatcha.vian.com/bylaws.html> If you would like to run for office, or nominate another person, please contact one of the members of the Nominating Committee. MadFranco@aol.com, jellomoons@hotmail.com, or a.hollaar@utah.edu

President	Treasurer	Special Events
Vice President	Publicity	Fundraising
Secretary	Rescue Director	

President – *Shawna Augustine*
 Vice President – *Clark Caras*
 Secretary – *Gayle Chellis*
 Treasurer – *Audrey Hollaar*
 Fundraiser – *Danielle & Robert Blanch*

2008 Officers

Public Relations – *Peggie Tackett*
 Special Events – *Doug Judd*
 Rescue Director – *Susan Kelley*
 Newsletter – *Dennis Kelley*
 Website – *Dennis Kelly*

WAES has a Business Meeting at 6:00; before The Regular Meeting.

Newsletters can be sent by postal mail or e-mail. The e-mail version is in **color** and no waiting. Please send your e-mail address to: utahparrot@yahoo.com

Affiliated with American Federation of Aviculture: WAES
 Delegates:
 Carol Crane, ccc@sypotec.com 801-424-2894.
 Utah State Coordinator: Audrey Hollaar, a.hollaar@utah.edu 801-363-8086.
 Western Region Director: Lisa McManus, conurecare@comcast.net

The website has a new look – and gets updated regularly. Check for the latest news

See us for the latest in WAES: <http://www.wasatchavian.com/>

Wasatch Avian
 Education Society
 P.O. Box 651701
 Salt Lake City, Utah
 84165
 801-424-2589



Please check the address label for **membership expiration date**. Don't forget to renew. We need you!