



THE CAPITAL FLYER

The Monthly Newsletter of the
National Capital Bird Club
4615 Harvard Road
College Park, MD 20740-3752
carol.rees@usa.com

<http://www.ncbc-dc.org>

March 2002

March's Speaker TBA at Meeting

Since it is uncertain which of several speakers will actually give the presentation at the March meeting, the speaker will be announced at the meeting.

I hope to see you all there and really appreciated the support I received at the last meeting for my bird's featherplucking problem. The members are a great resource for information and advice.

"Featherplucking: The Bird Owner's Nightmare" By Carol Rees

Recently my Quaker Parakeet, Noelle, had a featherplucking episode. When I arrived home from work on Friday I found one of my lovebirds, Nikto, on top of her own cage. Apparently she had popped out a food dish in her cage and escaped. Noelle's feathers looked a little funny in one spot on her chest, but I assumed that Nikto probably got over to Noelle's cage and

there may have been a skirmish between the two birds. On Saturday, however, it became obvious that Noelle was plucking and breaking her breast feathers off. Despite trying to distract her, hold her, give her treats (she can't pluck while she's eating), and begging her to quit, she continued on destroying her beautiful plumage and plucking down to the bare skin in spots.

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Above Noelle in her newly plucked state

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FUTURE MEETINGS

- March 3**
- April 7**
- May 5**
- June 2**
- July 14 ***
- August 4**
- September 8 ***
- October 6**
- November 10 ***
- December 8 **, ****

* Note date change
** Different Location

“Featherplucking: The Bird Owner’s Nightmare” continued

I could not believe that one of my birds was doing such self-destructive behavior as featherplucking. She is loved and well cared for, not like those other birds they always show on TV that are ignored and poorly treated. I kept wondering what I had done wrong. I was also terrified that she wouldn't quit or would start self-mutilating and do permanent damage to feathers.

I made a vet appointment for the following Monday at noon and anxiously awaited the bird club meeting the next day. I could ask other bird owners what to do, plus Dr. Canny was having a question and answer session, in which I planned on asking about it.

By Sunday, Noelle was starting the pluck the feathers on her back and apparently continued while I was at the meeting.

I soon became aware that featherplucking seems to be not uncommon and may have little to do with the attention and care given to the bird. Quite a few attendees at the bird club meeting had serious problems with a featherplucking or self-mutilating bird. One well-known bird, Teddy Bird, also a Quaker Parakeet, owned by John Davey, has been plucking her feathers for over five years despite everything that he has tried. While being very friendly during the meeting (much more so than my Quaker), Teddy didn't stop

plucking her feathers.

I learned that there are no miracle cures for this problem and no guarantee that it will not reoccur at a later time. Featherplucking can be due to a physical problem or a behavioral issue. There are some steps to take but the process may be long, involved, and may not necessarily have a happy ending. Fortunately for me, Noelle stopped her major plucking sometime Monday morning before I took her to my vet, but she is still doing occasional plucking and started shredding her wing and tail feathers.

Diagnostic Approach – Avian Web	http://www.avianweb.com/featherpicking.htm
Featherpicking Website	http://www.featherpicking.com/
Featherpicking Email Group	http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Featherpicking/
Feather Disorders in Quakers	http://www.quakerparrots.com/qms/
QuakerParrots.com Messageboard	http://forums.delphiforums.com/quakerparrots
Sally Blanchard Article on Featherpicking	http://www.petbirdreport.com/articles/complexities.html
Basics of Featherpicking by Tammy Jenkins, DVM	http://www.petbirdreport.com/articles/featherpicking.html

Adoption: Birds That Need Homes

Owned since she was a few months old, the owner now needs to sell and find a good home for this sweet and talkative bird. She has no health problems or special needs. The owner will try to attend the March 3rd meeting so that she can talk to people there.

10 year old female African Grey

Call Simone Engelhardt-Greer at 703-924-2383 (home) or 703-922-7034 (office) or via email at seg3103@hotmail.com

A previously owned bird can be a great blessing and addition to your family. Please consider adopting a bird in need of a home. Every pet bird deserves a loving home. Before purchasing a bird, consider if the needs of the breed are compatible with your own lifestyle and living arrangements.

If you own a bird that needs a new home, you can contact me to have it listed for adoption in the newsletter and also on our new webpage. All I ask is that you notify me when the bird has found a new home so that I can remove the reference to it from the next newsletter and the web page.

I am trying to gather information about parrot sanctuaries in the Washington, DC area. Please let me know if you know of any. I can be reached at (301) 277-9846 or you can email me at carol.rees@usa.com

NCBC Membership Renewal

NCBC membership for the year of 2001 ended at the end of December 2001. Membership for 2002 is from January 1, 2002 through December 31,

2002. The February issue is the last newsletter that you will receive if you have not paid your NCBC 2002 membership dues.

To keep current and not let your membership lapse, please fill out the NCBC 2002 Membership Form below and mail it in along with your check.

National Capital Bird Club 2002 Membership Form

Date _____

Name		
Address		
City		
State		
Zip		
Phone		
Email		
Publish in roster?	Yes _____ No _____	
Individual Membership (\$20 per year or \$10 after June)	Yes _____	
Family Membership (\$25 per year or \$12.50 after June)	Yes _____ Name _____ Name _____ Name _____ Name _____ Name _____ Name _____	
Amount Enclosed	\$ _____	

Please mail this form along with your check to:

***National Capital Bird Club
4615 Harvard Road
College Park, MD 20740-3752***



18th Annual BCV Convention & Bird Mart

Exotic birds, national speakers, educational programs and a huge bird cage and avian supply mart will headline the *18th Annual Convention of Bird Clubs of Virginia, to be held March 23-24, 2002, at the waterfront in Portsmouth, Virginia.* Convention proceeds benefit avian research, conservation, and education.

Join us for a wonderful weekend with seven great speakers:

- [Eb Cravens](#), Hawaii — Bird-Human Relations, Sun Conures
- [DVM Darrel Styles](#), Texas A&M — Disease Control Update
- [Carla Freed](#), Kansas — Nestbox Activity Videos
- **DVM Linda Pesek**, N.Y. — Bird Anatomy and Problems
- **DVM Margaret Federhart**, N.C. — Homeopathic Treatment
- **Susan Chamberlain**, Long Island — Unique Pet Care in Homes
- **Glenn Reynolds** — World Parrot Trust Conservation Projects

Early Registration is \$55 for 2 days, \$30 for one day. Early Registration drawing prize for 4 at \$25 each. Friday night, March 22nd, Hospitality Room opens at 6 p.m.

The convention will be held at the [Renaissance Portsmouth Hotel and Waterfront Conference Center](#) , 425 Water Street, Portsmouth, Virginia. Call 1-800-666-8888 and mention BCV when you make your reservations to receive the conference special rate of \$109/night.

The **Bird Mart** will offer specialty items including toys, cages, food, supplies, and other *parrotphernalia*. The newest in pet bird products will be on display.

Raffles for avian goodies and services will be ongoing throughout the convention.

[For more information on the convention, contact:](#)

General Information: Richard Hickman (757) 440-5243 or E-mail BRDDAD@msn.com

Registration: Carol Woodson mailto:CVMGA@aol.com or Genny Jacobs (757)-426-2570 or E-mail genjacobs@oldstone.com

To donate to the raffle, contact Angelika Minor at 540-965-3057

[For information on exhibit space at the Bird Mart, contact:](#)

John Long (703) 771-9678 or E-mail johndori@earthlink.net

Don't miss this opportunity to expand your avian education!

Who's the Boss By John Davey

Already, the days are starting to get longer. It's been a relatively mild winter here in the Nation's Capital. (Yeah! I know! Just wait until next week...!) But the Snowdrops have already bloomed and the Crocuses and Daffodils are already well up and starting to bud, so I guess it's safe to say that spring is just around the corner.

My two birds certainly feel that way! Old Teddy Bird, the plucked female Quaker, and Bilbo Bob Bird, the stubborn male Meyers, have both been reacting to the brighter, longer days. For the colder months, both birds share a sub-divided large cage in the dormer windows of one of the bedrooms. It's actually a nice location: There's lots of light, but not too much direct sun. The birds can see everything that's going on, both inside and outside.

Teddy Bird has always enjoyed sleeping in one of those bird beds – there are a zillion brand names for them – one of those tent-like accessories that you put in a cage and the bird can use it to sleep or hide. Since Teddy Bird is a Quaker with a tradition of nest building in her genes, she would spend all of her time in the tent – if I allowed it. So, I take it out of the cage every morning and put it back every evening.

So far, Bilbo has shown no interest in the sleeping tent – except to use it as a method to drive Teddy crazy. For the years that the two birds shared quarters, Bilbo would sneak up and chew on Teddy's tent or wedge himself inside the tent. This would turn Teddy into a green, gray, and pink (She's plucked, remember?) buzz saw, which would scream and chirp and bite and peck and do anything and everything to drive the interloper out of her beloved tent. Bilbo himself will sleep in the oddest locations and positions - sometimes on the highest perch and sometimes wedged in the angle where the top of the cage meets the side of the cage. Sometimes, I guess

he sleeps hanging upside down from the top of the cage. Go figure.

With the approach of spring and the longer daylight hours, both birds have also felt the old hormones start to surge. The days are getting longer and brighter, and a young bird's fancy turns lightly to thoughts of Mating. These urges – perfectly natural – don't help the possessiveness situation one little bit.

Now, I consider myself the "Alpha Bird" of the family flock. And at least part of the time, my birds agree with this pecking order. I like to be able to go into the birds' cages to take the birds out or to adjust toys or water bottles or even sleeping tents!

Most of the year, both Teddy Bird and Bilbo Bob will acknowledge my "Alpha Bird" status and let me do my thing - on their turf. But recently, with the days getting longer, and hormones on the rise, and possession being nine-tenths of the law, the birds are having a tough time remembering who is Boss.

The other morning, I went into Teddy's half of the cage to remove her sleeping tent – the same exact thing I had done for the past five or six months. As I was taking the sleeping tent out of the cage, Teddy chomped down hard on my finger.

Now, I have read all of the books on keeping parrots. I have owned birds for more years than I care to acknowledge. I know what to do. The books all say that you should NOT pull away from a bite. You should not yell or react. The books all say that you should push into the bird – towards the bird – in complete reversal of your normal, human instinct. This push-in procedure will gently force the bird off balance and the bird will associate the awkward feeling of being off balance with the act of biting. The theory says that will stop the bird from biting again.

So ... wise, experienced bird owner that I was ... I pressed into Teddy's bite.

Ignoring the pain (I forgot to mention the pain, didn't I?) I pushed into her body, hopefully making her very uncomfortable. (I certainly was "uncomfortable!") In spite of all the great books and all of the wise advice, that little bird chomped down harder and hung on for all that she was worth.

I finally pushed Teddy backwards, off her perch. Now, don't worry about old Teddy Bird – she was fine. She didn't fall. She just chomped down all the harder and wound up hanging off my finger, like a bat or a bagworm, suspended from my finger by her beak.

I slowly removed my hand (and Teddy) from the cage. Have I mentioned the pain? Hoo, Boy! There was pain! I now know why I have always been subconsciously "drawn" to smaller parrots: Their beaks are not as big! I walked around the room, with Teddy dangling from my finger, looking for some way to get her to release me. I couldn't see too well because of the tears in my eyes. I finally put her down on one of the dressers and she relaxed her bite.

My finger really didn't bleed that much. Teddy, I'm pleased to say, was just fine, thanks. She immediately fluffed up her feathers and then made that peculiar Quaker begging motion that means, "Pick me up and love me!" I did take that chance to remove the sleeping tent from Teddy's side of the cage, and she went back inside for some pellets to go with her steak tartare breakfast.

CLUB NEWS

Treasurer's Report February 2002

Beginning Balance:	\$2962.78
Income	
Dues	418.00
Magazine Sales	99.00
Club Meeting Raffle	11.00
Bird Mart Raffles	79.00
Key Chain Sales	10.00
Total Income:	\$617.00
Expenses	
Printing Newsletter	63.00
Paper	6.29
Postage	34.68
Total Expenses:	\$103.97
Ending Balance:	\$3475.81

Membership Report February 2002

Exchange Memberships	17
Single Memberships	38
Family Memberships	19
Total Memberships	74

National Capital Bird Club Meeting Minutes 2/3/02

Dr. Carol Canny, a certified avian veterinarian of the Eastern Exotic Veterinary Center, held a question and answer session on avian veterinary and health issues at the January meeting. Questions were asked and answered on a wide range of topics including featherpicking, excessive egg laying, Giardia, tumors in Budgerigars, full spectrum lighting, water quality, and avian nutrition.

Assisting Birdsafe.com

How can you help us in our efforts? Currently Birdsafe.com, Inc. is an organization dedicated to spreading the safety and health message for companion birds. We have recently started our store to raise funds to help us in this effort. With enough funds we hope to start or sponsor a sanctuary for the Mid-Atlantic region of the country. Any purchases made at our store will help that dream.

You can help us by getting the word out. The more visitors we have to our site, the more knowledge we spread, the more birds we help. So spread the word, have all your bird-loving friends stop by and take a look and check back regularly.

You can also help us with content. Let us know through emails and surveys what you want to see and read about. We are adding new sections and information as we have time. So let us know!

Joe Arbogast
Executive Director, birdsafecom.com

Coming Next Month

Full spectrum lighting
Cockatoos
Excessive egg laying

Be sure to check out their website at
www.birdsafe.com

CLUB INFORMATION

President

Tammy Ellison 301-946-3511
 elton.tammy@verizon.net

Vice President

Tom Marshall 703-777-3252

Treasurer

Wayne Porter 703-751-5717

Secretary

Carol Rees 301-277-9846
 carol.rees@usa.com

Audit Committee Chair

OPEN

Hospitality Committee Chair

Elizabeth Moore 703-751-5717

Library Committee Chair

Silvia Tennison 301-474-1883

Newsletter Committee Chair

Carol Rees 301-277-9846
 carol.rees@usa.com

Publicity Committee Chair

OPEN

Ways & Means Committee Chair

OPEN

AFA Delegates

Tom Marshall 703-777-3252

NCBC is affiliated with the American Federation of Aviculture, Bird Clubs of Virginia, and Bird Clubs of America. NCBC is dedicated to education and aviculture with respect to all types of birds.

Annual **DUES** are payable on January 1 of each year: Individual - \$20; Family - \$25. After June, dues are one-half the above amount. Make checks payable to NCBC and send to: National Capital Bird Club, 4615 Harvard Road, College Park, MD 20740.

Club **MEETINGS** are normally held the first Sunday of each month at 3:30p.m. at the McLean Government Center, 1437 Balls Hill Road, McLean, VA; (703) 356-0551.

DIRECTIONS TO MEETINGS:

From Capital Beltway (I-495): Exit onto Rt. 123 EAST (toward McLean). Follow Rt. 123/Dolly Madison through watching for small blue sign that says "police substation." Turn left onto Lewinsville Road. Take immediate right on to Balls Hill Rd.

BIRDS are normally welcome at meetings; however, NCBC assumes no responsibility for their safety or welfare.

REFRESHMENTS: Please bring a snack to share at the meetings whenever you can. It doesn't need to be fancy or handmade, store-bought is fine.



DONATE USED MAGAZINES:

Please donate your old magazines to the Club Librarian when you are finished with them.

NCBC Advertising Policies

Advertisements appearing in *The Capital Flyer* are not endorsed by NCBC unless stated otherwise. NCBC assumes no responsibility for advertiser's claims or the quality of their product or service. NCBC reserves the right to refuse any advertisement it considers inappropriate. Advertisements must be prepaid.

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CLASSIFIED AD RATES:

<i>Ad Type</i>	<i>Member</i>	<i>Non-Member</i>
<i>Line Ad</i>	<i>Free</i>	<i>15¢/word - \$ 3 min.</i>
<i>Bus. Card</i>	<i>\$3</i>	<i>\$ 5</i>
<i>¼ page</i>	<i>\$5</i>	<i>\$10</i>
<i>½ page</i>	<i>\$8</i>	<i>\$15</i>

**Your new membership card
 is stapled here for paid members.**

UPCOMING EVENTS

March 23-24, 2002

Bird Clubs of Virginia 18th Annual Convention

Renaissance Hotel & Waterfront Conference Ctr.
Portsmouth, VA (757) 420-3354

April 6-7, 2002

Super Pet Expo

Info: (866) 787-3773
www.superpetexpo.org

April 6, 2002

NOVA Exotic Pet Bird Fair

Comfort Inn
6560 Loisdale Ct
Springfield, VA (703) 490-8820

April 14, 2002

Bird Mart

Doubletree Hotel at Tysons Corner
7801 Leesburg Pike
McLean, VA (703) 893-1340

May 11, 2002

Peninsula Caged Bird Society Spring Bird Mart

Columbian Center
12742 Nettles Drive
Newport News, VA (757) 874-4651

May 18, 2002

Baltimore Bird Fanciers Bird Mart

Tall Cedars Hall
Parkville, VA (410) 628-2051

June 2, 2002

Bird Mart

Tysons Westpark Best Western
McLean, VA (703) 771-9678

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Address Correction Requested

