



# THE CAPITAL FLYER

The Monthly Newsletter of the  
National Capital Bird Club  
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<http://www.ncbc-dc.org>

June 2004

## June Potluck

Instead of having a picnic this June, the club is having a potluck at our regular meeting place, the McLean Government Center. Members are asked to bring a side dish with the club providing the main course. It should be fun, and it has the added advantage since it's inside of having no cicadas.

## Whipper the Budgie

From Skynews 12:57 UK, Wednesday April 21, 2004

The strange looks of a very odd budgie are winning hearts across New Zealand.

Whipper the budgie's extraordinary plumage, stunted wings and bizarre attempts at whistling like a bird have not impressed everyone.

He was rejected by his mother and has been declared a mutant by his vet.

But Whipper has made fans and admirers of everyone in the small New Zealand town of Winton who has laid eyes on him.

"Nobody's ever seen anything like him before... there's just total disbelief," said owner Julie Hayward, who has played host to a steady stream of curious neighbours.

"He's so cute how he's got really fluffy, curly bits," was one young girl's reaction to Whipper.

But his looks are not the only thing that make Whipper stand out from the crowd.

"He doesn't make the same sound as budgie. In fact he doesn't make the same sound as anything really," said Mrs Hayward.

Whipper's mother, though, was unable to appreciate her offspring's unique curls and whirls.

"She threw him out twice, so the second time it was too risky to leave him in there," Mrs Hayward said.

Family friend Gillian McFarlane said: "He is just glorious. There was something right from the start that he was just going to turn into a little megastar."



*Above Whipper the Budgie*

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## FUTURE MEETINGS

- June 6, 2004 \*\*
- July 11, 2004 \*
- August 1, 2004
- September 12, 2004 \*
- October 3, 2004
- November 7, 2004
- December 5, 2004 \*\*

\* Date change

\*\* Different Location

## Next Meeting June 6, 2004

<http://www.sky.com/skynews/article/0,,91059-13064712,00.html>

# Spring (and Every Other Time) Cleaning

By John Davey

I hate cage cleaning. I mean, I REALLY hate cage cleaning. I know that these articles are supposed to be all warm and cuddly – about how wonderful our pet birds are, and how much they fill our lives with noise and laughter and song and happiness. I know that’s what these articles are supposed to be about.

And for the most part, except for the chewed Venetian blinds and the holes in the curtains and the seeds and pellets scattered everywhere, and the playful, loving nips and bites, my pet birds are loving, cheerful, friendly harbingers of love and affection.

But they do poop.

Boy! Do they poop! Old Teddy Bird, my 9 year-old female, plucked nekkid neurotic Quaker parakeet poops every 15 minutes, night and day, day and night, rain or shine, sleet, snow, hail, up, down, over and out. You can set a watch by her. Teddy, ever the Quaker nest builder, likes to sleep in one of those birdy bed, sleep sack, cuddle cot gizmos that hangs from the top of her sub-divided half of the big cage that she shares with Bilbo Bob Bird, our 6 year-old sweet, stubborn male Meyers parrot.

Old Teddy Bird is a fastidious little bird – her scraggly, nekkid little body notwithstanding. She doesn’t poop where she sleeps. Teddy does this back and forth shuffle in her sleep sock, backing her little butt out of the tube and dropping her 15-minute deposit down in the bottom of the cage grate. Back and forth, in and out – all night long. At least she is clean and consistent.

Bilbo, on the other hand, seems to shift his preferred sleeping location as time, season, and his own particular whims seem to drive him. For the past few months he has been sleeping upside down, wedged in the top corner of his side of the big, subdivided cage. Now,

Bilbo is one of those parrots who “holds it” all night. But brother, when he lets loose – in the morning – look out! I don’t know how a little bird like that could possibly contain all that ... poop! But contain it he does – until he thinks he has an outside chance of letting go all over me – especially when I have my special wedding/funeral/special meeting suit on. Then he tries and tries to see if he can “decorate” my suit. Whoever says that these birds don’t have a sense of humor – has never owned a companion parrot. I guess I would have to say that Bilbo is a 20-minute bird, when it comes to pooping.

But let’s get back to cage cleaning. (Have I mentioned that I absolutely, positively HATE cage cleaning?) Cage cleaning is one of those jobs – like laundry – that no matter how well you do it – it will be right back there, looking you square in the face, in another couple of days (a week at the most).

Now, I feed my birds only the finest (most expensive) organic, no additives, nothing artificial, most healthful, most veterinarian-recommended, made-by-monks in the light of a full moon (most expensive) pellets that money can buy. Nothing is too good for my little feathered angels. Based on this simple fact, it does seem to me that “Quality In” equals “Quality Out.” My birds, with all of those quality pellets going into them, in turn produce the strongest, hardest, most durable bird poop in the world. I mean, honestly! The British Navy has fought entire wars over guano that was of lesser quality and quantity than the stuff that the Davey birds provide every quarter hour.

And all of that warm, gushy, but soon-to-be rock-hard “stuff” winds up in the cage tray, and on the cage floor grate, and on the cage bars, and on the floor mat under the cage, and

occasionally on the wall, and on the dormer window, and sometimes in places that I can’t even imagine how or when. And then I have to clean it up. That can involve anything and everything from soap and water (and a tuff-scrub sponge), to an old toothbrush, to a scrub brush, to that “orange essence” cleaner, to a putty knife, and even to the gasoline-powered power sprayer. (I am not exaggerating.)

I haven’t even begun to comment on the “help” I get from the two cage inhabitants. There are times when I just let the birds wander around the top of the cage while I clean it with a sponge. I always get lots and lots of “help” from overly curious parrots that seem to love chewing on sponges and crawling around on still-wet cage bars. There are other times when I’m able to move the cage outside and use a hose on it. At those times, the birds get to perch somewhere else.

That poop “stuff” is tough. And hard. And stubborn. It reminds me a lot of Portland cement. And parrot cages, even the biggest and the bestest of parrot cages, do not seem to lend themselves to easy access and facile cleaning by your run-of-the-mill, middle aged American male. There’s lots of bending, straining, and stretching involved – motions that I have devoted a lifetime to avoiding at all possible costs. And it seems that no matter how assiduous I am about cleaning every bar and every perch, I will finish the job and discover that I have missed an entire section, somehow, someway. I also seriously worry that cleansers that are strong enough to clean the cages may be way too caustic for the delicate sensibilities of the cage inhabitants.

*continued on page 3...*

## AFA IN BRIEF - April, 2004

### AVIAN INFLUENZA

Good news! The United States is clear of the disease. Unfortunately, we aren't quite out of the woods. Just across our northern border in southwest Canada, a virulent form of the disease is still running rampant. While we suspect that our exotics may not be susceptible, no one knows for sure. A slight mutation in the disease could be quite problematic, and we know that the disease can mutate when it chooses. At this point Canadian poultry seem to be its target. So far humans are not.

Migratory birds, especially ducks and geese, are believed to be important reservoirs for the virus, and are able to shed it in their respiratory secretions, ocular secretions and droppings. Infected wild birds are able to transmit the virus to domestic birds such as chickens and turkeys. Asymptomatic carrier birds may also transmit the virus. Birds can spread the virus to humans and other mammals, and humans may be able to infect their pet birds.

Clinical signs, if present, may include depression, anorexia (loss of appetite), dyspnea (labored breathing), swelling of the head, ocular discharge and diarrhea. Some infected birds may be asymptomatic and recover, while others may die suddenly, without showing signs of illness.

Our best bet is to USE GOOD BIOSECURITY. If you have chickens, guineas, or water fowl, keep them totally separated from your finches, softbills and parrots. Guard against possible infection from known carrier species in the wild population. Hand washing, clothes changing and footbaths will help. Don't think <sup>3</sup>It won't happen<sup>2</sup>. It almost did to Canada's largest parrot sanctuary. Only biosecurity and distance from infected flocks kept the government from depopulating the parrots.

### WEST NILE VIRUS

Due to the early spring in much of the country, the mosquitoes are here earlier than expected. Already California has confirmed several deaths in the wild bird population. That state, which has thus far been spared, is expected to be hit hard this year, as well as other states west of the Rocky Mountains. Does this mean that states which have suffered in recent years will be free of the disease? NOT AT ALL! The early spring has given the mosquitoes a head start everywhere.

What to do to keep you and your flocks as safe as possible? Get rid of standing water and encourage your neighbors to do so as well. If you have a pond or water trough, use anti-larvals to prevent mosquitoes from developing. If you have rare or valuable birds you could consider screening, but check it regularly for tiny holes and patch as needed. African birds <sup>3</sup>may<sup>2</sup> have some immunity to the disease, which originated in Africa.

Mosquitoes are hungriest morning and evening, and rest in the heat of the day. If WNV becomes heavy in your area, don't take seniors, small children or immuno-compromised people out when the mosquitos are hungriest. The same applies to your parrots. Wear long pants, socks, long sleeves, and lots of DEET.

If you find dead wild bird(s) call your local health department for instructions. They will want to test for the presence of the virus.

### HAVE YOU CHECKED THE WEB SITE LATELY?

You will notice some changes and improvements! It is much easier to navigate and you can find Convention Registration information easily. You will find some areas still a masterpiece in progress. Thank you to Natasha Schischakin for her hard work!

Visit <http://www.AFAbirds.org> today!

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### Spring (and Every Other Time) Cleaning continued...

So, I clean, and I scrub, and I reach, and I detail to the 'Nth degree. If I have to use a cleaning agent, even one of the so-called organic agents, I wash and rinse and then rinse some more. And finally – FINALLY! – once the job is finished, I'll normally rearrange the perches (trying to keep the higher

perches away from the food dishes) and then switch the toys to prevent boredom. After all is said and done, I'll put the two birds back in the sparkling clean cage, and they will climb around for a couple of minutes to investigate the new perches and toys, and then they will settle down on a favorite perch, give a

satisfied ruffle of their tail feathers, and finally – you guessed it – give a big, hearty, stored-up poop to mark their newly-cleaned territory.

And then it starts – all over again.

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# CLUB NEWS

## Treasurer's Report May 3, 2004

Beginning Balance:	\$1842.24
Total Income:	\$25.00
Dues	\$25.00
Total Expenses:	\$94.77
Refunded membership (member paid twice)	\$20.00
Printing	\$51.46
Postage	\$23.31
Ending Balance:	\$1772.47

## Membership Report May 31, 2004

Exchange Memberships	17
Single Memberships	30
Family Memberships	17
Total Memberships	64

### National Capital Bird Club 2004 Membership Application

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Would you like to be published in the roster? \_\_\_\_\_

Membership Type: Individual \$20.00 Family \$25.00

(If you are joining after June, your annual dues are one-half the above amounts for the year.)

Amount Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

If family membership, names of other family members: \_\_\_\_\_

Types of birds you own: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you a: Pet Owner Breeder Other \_\_\_\_\_

List any other societies, clubs, or bird magazines you subscribe to: \_\_\_\_\_

How did you hear about NCBC? \_\_\_\_\_

List the topics you would like to see covered by speakers or articles: \_\_\_\_\_

Would you consider volunteering on a committee for special projects or serving in a leadership position? Yes No

Would you be willing to serve as a guest speaker or do you know someone who would make an interesting guest speaker on pet bird-related topics? Yes No  
 If so, who? \_\_\_\_\_

### ANNUAL DUES ARE PAYABLE ON JANUARY 1 OF EACH YEAR

Mail your check, made payable to NCBC:

4615 Harvard Road, College Park, MD 20740-3752

Meetings are normally held the first Sunday of the month

At the McLean Government Center, 14537 Balls Hill Rd., McLean, VA

# CLUB INFORMATION

**President**

Kelsie Holtje ..... 240-876-1741  
iowehp@aol.com

**Vice President**

Kitty Miller ..... 703-914-1050  
Silvia Tennison ..... 301-474-1833

**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.



**CLASSIFIED AD RATES:**

Ad Type	Member	Non-Member
Line Ad	Free	15¢/word - \$ 3 min.
Bus. Card	\$3	\$ 5
1/4 page	\$5	\$10
1/2 page	\$8	\$15

**DONATE USED MAGAZINES:** Please donate your old magazines to the Club Librarian when you are finished with them. The club resells these at bird marts and it really helps out in raising money.

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## ANIMAL EXCHANGE

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Rockville City Centre  
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Rockville, Maryland 20850

Sunday 11-3  
Mon & Thurs 10-8  
Wed, Fri & Sat 10-6

# UPCOMING EVENTS

**June 19, 2004 (1pm-3pm)**  
**Ask the Experts (Phoenix Landing)**  
**Speaker: Dr. David Crum, DVM**  
Grace Presbyterian Church  
7434 Bath Street, Springfield VA

Directions: <http://www.gracepresby.org/directions.html>  
<http://www.phoenixlanding.org/seminars.htm>

**August 29, 2004 (9am-4pm)**  
**Mid-Atlantic Bird Mart**  
Tysons Corner VA. Westpark Best Western Hotel  
Contact John Long at 703-771-9678 or  
[johndori@earthlink.net](mailto:johndori@earthlink.net)

**September 18-19, 2004**  
**Sally Blanchard**  
**Sponsored by Phoenix Landing**  
[more details to follow]

<http://www.phoenixlanding.org/seminars.htm>

**November 20, 2004**  
**Liz Wilson**  
**Sponsored by Phoenix Landing**  
[more details to follow]

<http://www.phoenixlanding.org/seminars.htm>

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