

GOCBS NEWS LINE



Greater Omaha Cage Bird Society
3604 North 45th Street
Omaha, NE 68104

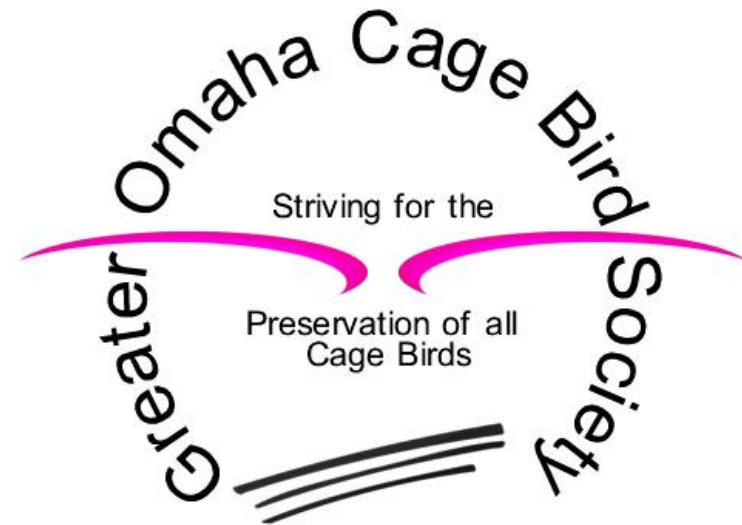
November 2011

Don't Forget!



Next Meeting

**Sunday
November 20**



Presidents Letter - November 2011

Dear GOCBS Members,

What a year it has been and only one month till Christmas, then the New Year begins. Next month is our Christmas party. For our dinner, the club will provide ham, turkey, and the beverages. We ask that if you can, bring a side dish and dessert is always optional. There is also a gift exchange and if you would like to join in please label the gifts by adult man/woman, child-boy/girl, or if it's other like small or large bird. The limit is around \$10 to \$20.

Nominations for the Board of Directors for 2012 will be at this month's meeting (November 20th) and the ballots will be in next month's newsletter. Please return the ballots before December 18th or at our Christmas party. If you have any questions about any of the positions, you can talk with any board member.

The adoption program needs you. If you have free time, some extra space in your home, and would like to help our avian friends then GOCBS would like to talk to you. We are currently looking for an adoption coordinator, assistants, and foster homes. For more information on the requirements of these positions, please talk to the current adoption coordinator.

Remember, now is the time to renew your memberships for 2012, the form is in this newsletter.

Thank you,

Rick Kling
President, GOCBS

2011 GOCBS Officers

President	Rick Kling renotoo402@cox.net	(402) 933-5686
Vice President	Michelle Mutchler-Burns gopack8763@aol.com	(712) 322-1448
Treasurer	Marcia Delehoy plbs@qwestoffice.net	(402) 453-5235
Membership	Ginger Bostwick glbostwick@cox.net	(402) 932-5866
Newsletter	Elsa Ashelford pandora1641@yahoo.com	(402) 309-0683

2011 GOCBS Officer Trustees

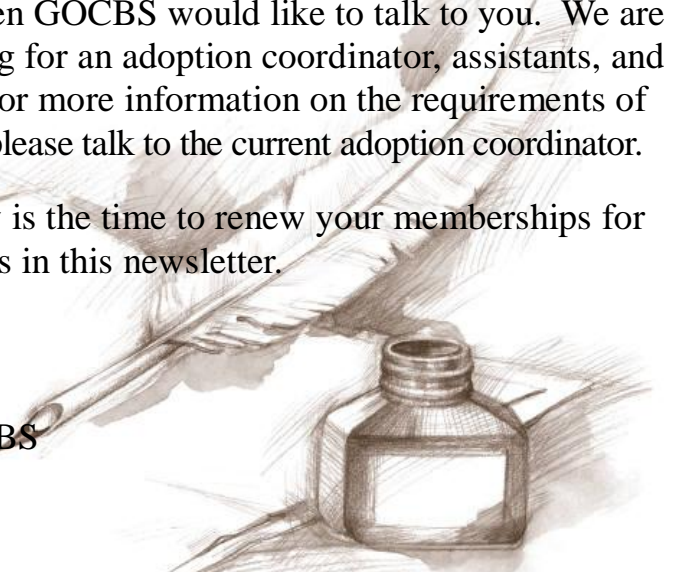
Vance Delehoy	plbs@qwestoffice.net	(402) 453-5235
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Adoption - Placement

Michelle Mutchler-Burns (Iowa)	(712) 322-1448
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2011 GOCBS Fair Coordinator

Rick Kling	renotoo402@cox.net	(402) 933-5686
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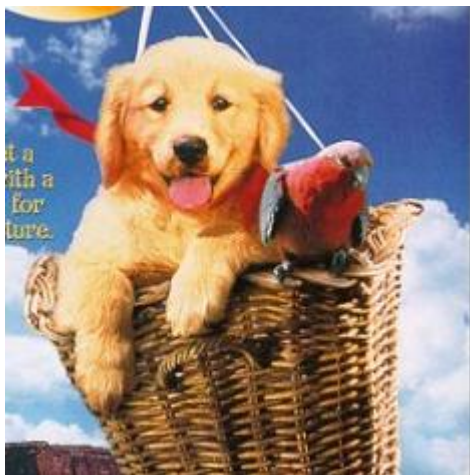


Movie Review - Napoleon

by Chloe Welstead
Certified Avian Specialist - Certified Aviculturist

Napoleon is an Australian Independent film (1995) about a Yellow Lab puppy that gets lost in the wild. He is befriended by a Galah Cockatoo (Rose-breasted Cockatoo) named Birdo Lucci. Together they travel through the Australian outback. The puppy wants to get in touch with his wildside, while Birdo wants to get Napoleon back home to his mother, a domesticated dog with a human family.

While on their adventure, they run across a small group of Rainbow Lorikeets. The Loris are funny to watch as they tease Napoleon. They all laugh and hassle each other. Their personalities appear to be exactly what



you would expect from a group of giggling goofballs.

This is a movie better suited for children, but I really enjoyed watching the Cockatoo and the Lorikeets. It is not animated and is really neat to see the interaction between a real puppy and all the other animals in the film. A very entertaining film when there was nothing else on TV.

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What's Wrong with the Step Up Command?

Barbara Heidenreich—Goodbird Inc.
www.GoodBirdInc.com

It has been reiterated for years in the companion parrot literature¹ your parrot must *obey* the step up command! Obey and command. For me these words carry strong implications. I visualize a parrot with no desire to step up onto the hand being forced to comply. This usually involves maneuvers such as a hand pushing into a bird's chest, quickly scooping a bird onto the hand, or peeling toes off of a perch. For a positive reinforcement trainer such as myself this is very unpleasant to picture. Why one might ask? Certainly the mentioned strategies can create the desired resulting behavior of a bird on the hand. However the process of training through force involves strategies that rely on aversive experiences. Pushing a hand into a bird's chest, scooping or peeling toes are uncomfortable experiences for a parrot, no matter how minimal the aversive is.



Fallout from Force

There can be serious repercussions with lasting effects from using aversives to gain cooperation. One of the most common results is a parrot that learns to bite in response to the presence of a hand. The important word in that sentence is *learns*. Parrots are not hatched with an inherent aggressive response to hands. This behavior is learned through repeated exposure to unpleasant interactions involving hands. Often as a last resort, a parrot bites in an effort to deter the persistent pushy hand. Should the bite produce the desired results; the bird can learn in that one encounter that biting works! And it will be likely to use it next time a hand invades its space.

This is not to say one should ignore a bite to dissuade the aggressive behavior. A more trust building approach is to heed the parrot's body language prior to when biting is even being considered. Typically a parrot will present other body language that indicates discomfort well before a bite is landed. By carefully observing body language and making adjustments so that the bird appears as comfortable as possible, a sensitive avian caregiver is more likely to gain cooperation without aggressive behavior.

The same can be said for fear responses. Many likely have met a parrot who will step onto an arm, or shoulder, but will do everything in its power to avoid a hand. Again it would be an odd adaptation for a parrot to come into this world with an innate fear of hands. More realistic is the explanation that the bird's experience with hands taught it to display fear responses.

Positive Reinforcement Offers Hopes

Unfortunately it can be challenging to retrain a parrot to step up onto a hand for positive reinforcement after it has learned aggressive behavior (and/or fear responses) towards hands. But the good news is it can be done. This is particularly important to note as so

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many birds are often given up, left with little or no attention, or suffer fates worse than that due to being labeled a biter or no fun, through no fault of their own. It is always a sad moment for me to encounter a parrot that has learned aggressive behavior. It is sad mainly because it never had to be if the people in its life had been given the opportunity to learn about positive reinforcement.

Having worked in free flighted educational bird programs for years it was quite a shock when I first discovered the thousands of parrots that had fear responses or showed aggressive behavior towards hands in the companion parrot community. This observation lead me to conclude that the difference is information. The community training flighted parrots for shows has been raised on a positive reinforcement approach to training. Flighted parrots can easily choose to leave should a trainer resort to negative reinforcement to force a bird to step up onto the hand. Therefore negative reinforcement and its drawbacks are usually not a part of the training strategy.

The companion parrot community, on the other hand, has traditionally been fed advice that heavily promotes the use of negative reinforcement. This in turn has lead to a plethora of troubled birds. This means an important opportunity lays waiting for companion parrot caregivers. With positive reinforcement training finally making its way to many avian caregivers, parrots and their owners now have hope. No longer do parrots have to obey, instead they can learn stepping up results in desired consequences. They can learn to look forward to stepping up!

Positive Reinforcement Vs Negative Reinforcement

Change can be difficult. And those accustomed to using negative reinforcement to create behavior often present solid evidence as to why there is no need to consider other strategies. These arguments include the statement that negative reinforcement works! This is true. Negative reinforcement does work. However effectiveness is not always the measure one needs to consider as a conscientious caregiver. The reason is that the process of learning through negative reinforcement is not a pleasant one. Negative reinforcement is also sometimes called escape or harassment training. The animal complies to avoid the aversive experience. Not exactly a trust building process. In addition negative reinforcement training strategies create a bare minimum required response. Animals only do what is necessary to avoid the aversive experience.

There is also the misconception that negative reinforcement will create faster more reliable responses. While results can be immediate, it should be noted that quick, efficient, reliable, repeatable responses can also be attained with positive reinforcement. Some argue that in an emergency the bird must step up quickly. In a true emergency, such as the house is on fire, it is understood that one may do whatever is required to ensure his or her parrot is safe. However sometimes the lines get fuzzy on what constitutes an emergency. Being late for work is not an emergency enough for this trainer to abandon her positive reinforcement training strategies. In the long run I will get more reliable performance of the behavior if I take the time to commit to using positive reinforcement even when it is slightly inconvenient to me. In my experience there is no real justification for the use of negative reinforcement for the behavior of step up in most cases.

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GREATER OMAHA CAGE BIRD SOCIETY

WHO NEEDS BIRD CLUBS ANYWAY?

If you keep birds as pets or raise them for a hobby, ***YOU DO!!***

Bird clubs are great resources for anyone interested in keeping birds. All bird owners go through similar experiences, so the sources of information about a variety of subjects can be a big help. Club members can recommend places to buy your supplies, teach you how to hand feed babies, and refer you to a qualified avian veterinarian. Or, if you have had a lot of experience, you may be able to help share that type of information with someone else who is just getting started out.

Bird clubs can also keep you aware of current legislation that may affect which species of birds you may keep or how many. Clubs may have functions that would interest you, such as fairs, shows, swap meets, and clinics. Meetings may include guest speakers. Even if you join only to get the newsletters, you will be well-informed! Another great benefit is that you meet a lot of people with similar interests, and some great, long-lasting friendships may evolve!

Meetings & Special Event Dates

Meeting	November 20
Holiday Party	December 18
Meeting	January 15

GOCBS meets at 3:00 PM

Hope to see you there!

Our Meeting Location!



Nebraska Humane Society

8949 Fort Street
Omaha, Nebraska

G O C B S W A N T A D S

Want ads are available to members at no cost for five (5) lines. If you are interested in more or are a non-member, the fee is \$5.00 per issue. GOCBS does not guarantee the health, quality, etc. of items listed for sale in these ads. All agreements are between buyer and seller. Verify prices, quantity and species of birds with the seller.

For sale

20-year-old DNA-sexed male Green-Cheek/Mexican Red Head Amazon. Either as a pet or breeder. Will step-up and accept head scratches, but is not overly affectionate, speaks some phrases but is hard to understand. Comes with cage and accessories. Asking \$350, but price is negotiable.

Call or text Elsa at 402-309-0683, email pandora1641@yahoo.com, for more info and pics if interested.

LONG TIME LOCAL BIRD BREEDER SELLING OUT DUE TO HEALTH REASONS
Chuck and Monica Sudds of Beakers Aviary, Mo Valley, IA, are selling their prolific PROVEN breeding pairs. Both have been in a closed aviary environment for over 12 years and have been checked by Dr. Scott McDonald.

2 pairs Umbrella Cockatoos - VERY REASONABLE!! Need to sell NOW!

For more information call Chuck or Monica Sudds (712) 642-3800
(Not long distance from Omaha)

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- Used, good, clean breeder cages. Most are 18" deep and 24", 30" or 36" wide. Some are stackers, some are on casters. All are either 1/2" x 1" wire or 1/2" x 3" wire. Most cages have trays. Cage prices start at \$10.
- Used cockatiel deep nestboxes plus a few small boot boxes. All nest boxes are \$5.
- If you are electronically inclined, Grumbach incubator that needs to be fixed.

Call Charlene Beane, Atlantic, IA (800) 734-9714.

If you leave a message, I will call you back.

WANTED:

Contact: Joy Yager (402) 690-0682

- Feathers are donated to Native Americans across the USA
- Colored feathers from all species of birds.
- Feathers are used for their tribal gatherings

To place an ad: email: pandora1641@yahoo.com



Web Links

G.O.C.B.S.

www.greateromahacagebirdsociety.com

Drs. Foster & Smith
www.drsfostersmith.com

ASPCA
www.asPCA.org

Exotic Pet Vet
www.exoticpetvet.net

Bird Talk
www.birdchannel.com

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www.NeBirdLady.com

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Chloe Welstead, CAS

(402) 450 - 2059



P.O. Box 128
Bennet, NE 68317

Certified Aviculturist II
Certified Avian Specialist
NE State Coordinator, AFAbirds.org

Tips on Training Step Up with Positive Reinforcement

A key component of training with positive reinforcement is giving the bird choice. Rather than forcing oneself on the parrot, the goal is to teach the parrot choosing to come to the caregiver results in desired consequences. These consequences can be food treats, head scratches, toys, attention, etc. Identify what the bird likes and use this to reinforce approximations towards the desired goal behavior of stepping up onto the hand.

An easy way to teach a parrot to move in a desired direction is to train the bird to orient its beak towards a target. The target can be any chosen object. The target can then be gradually positioned closer and closer to the hand identified for the step up behavior. The identified hand should remain stationary and in a position that facilitates an easy step onto the hand for the bird. The goal is not to move the hand towards the bird, but for the bird to voluntarily move to the hand by following the target.

A bird that has had an unpleasant history with hands may show signs of apprehension or aggressive behavior as it ventures closer to the hand. Reinforce generously the frightened bird that dares to move in closer. If the parrot shows aggressive behavior, gently remove the hand as well as any positive reinforcers being made available to the bird for just a few seconds. This not only demonstrates to the bird that its body language was understood and acknowledged, but it also removes the opportunity to gain positive reinforcers. When this strategy is paired with reinforcement of the desired behavior, the bird can quickly learn to increase calm behavior and decrease aggressive behavior without the use of training strategies that rely on aversives.

Eventually the parrot can learn to voluntarily step up onto the hand to earn positive reinforcers. While the bird is learning to step up, the targeting behavior can be used to help direct the parrot where to go if needed for basic husbandry duties. This helps avoid caregivers resorting back to negative reinforcement training strategies to move birds during the re-training process.

Conclusion

A positive reinforcement approach embraces giving animals choices to participate. Caregivers can try to make it easy for parrots to choose to present the desired behavior, such as step up, followed by ample rewards. The result is a companion parrot that eagerly anticipates interacting with its caregivers. One of the joys of sharing ones life with a companion parrot is the relationship that can be forged between the caregiver and the bird. Positive reinforcement fosters trust and that incredibly rewarding relationship. If there is one thing you change in your handling strategy, make it this. Move over step up commandí .. here comes the step up request.

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To learn more about products and services to help you train your parrot visit www.GoodBirdInc.com



The Storyline (as per www.imdb.com):

Napoleon is a little dog that lives in Sydney. He and his mother live with a family, but Napoleon loves to dream about meeting the wild dogs that live far away, and eventually becoming one himself. One day he gets into a basket hung from some balloons and flies away into the sky. The wind carries him to a nearby island where the basket finally lands. There he meets all kinds of different animals; some of them are friendly, but some aren't.

With the help of a parakeet friend he learns the secrets of living alone in the island and defending himself from wild animals. He goes in search of the wild dogs, whom he finally finds. He is very happy with them, but then he gets homesick and starts to miss his mother, so he decides to go home again. Written by Marcos Eduardo Acosta Aldrete



Paul Lucht Feed

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GREATER OMAHA CAGE BIRD SOCIETY

WHO NEEDS BIRD CLUBS ANYWAY?

If you keep birds as pets or raise them for a hobby, **YOU DO!!** Bird clubs are great resources for anyone interested in keeping birds. All bird owners go through similar experiences, so the sources of information about a variety of subjects can be a big help.

Membership fees are as follows:

	January - December	July-December 1/2 Price
Junior (under 16)	\$7.50/year	\$3.75
Single	\$15.00/year	\$7.50
Family	\$20.00/year	\$10.00
Business Associate	\$20.00/year	\$10.00

Meetings are at 3:00 p.m. on the 3rd Sunday of each month at the Nebraska Humane Society, 8929 Fort Street, Omaha, Nebraska

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO G.O.C.B.S.

Please fill out the following information:

Date: _____ New membership: _____ Renewal membership: _____

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

(DON'T FORGET ZIP CODE)

Birth Date: Month/Day (only) _____ (list all names from above)

Home phone: _____ (____roster or ____unlisted)

Work phone: _____ (____roster or ____unlisted)

E-Mail Address: _____ (for Newsletter)

Pet birds: _____

Birds you breed: _____

Please bring this to one of the meetings or mail to:
GOCBS, c/o Ginger Bostwick, 4406 State St., Omaha, NE 68112

Year _____ Pd \$ _____ ca/ck j____ s____ f____ ba____

Updated May 2011

By-law Change

At the beginning of November, you should have received a letter in the mail from the Greater Omaha Cage Bird Society.

It is very important that the club receive your response to the proposed additions and changes to the by-laws.

These proposed changes must be voted by members, not just during a regular monthly meeting.

Thank you!

Nomination for Election of Officers Form

October / November 2011

Nominations must be submitted by current members. Nominees must be current members. Please verify that nominees are willing to serve for one year if elected, two or three years for Trustee.

- I nominate _____ for the office of President
- I nominate _____ for the office of Vice President
- I nominate _____ for the office of Secretary
- I nominate _____ for the office of Treasurer
- I nominate _____ for the office of Membership
- I nominate _____ for the office of Newsletter
- I nominate _____ for the office of Trustee
- I nominate _____ for the office of Trustee

Respectfully Submitted by,

Please return by November 20, 2011 to:

Rick Kling
3604 North 45th Street
Omaha, NE 68104

You can also bring to the meeting November 20, 2011.
Elections will be held on December 18, 2011 at the Holiday Party.