

OREGON

State coordinator:

*

Birds Exotic All Bird Club
Emerald Exotic Bird Club
Fluttering Wings Bird Club, Inc.
Mid Oregon Bird Club
Northwest Bird Club
Rose City Exotic Bird Club

WASHINGTON

State coordinator:

Jeri Wright, legislative liaison
206-838-9802

Avicultural Society of Puget Sound
Avis Northwest Bird Club
Cascade Canary Breeders Assoc.
Greater Spokane Avicultural Society
Northwest Exotic Bird Society
South Sound Exotic Bird Society

WESTERN REGION

Kelly Tucker, regional v.p.
505-384-5490

fax 505-384-5441

ARIZONA

State coordinator:

Michelle Rietz 602-973-9282

Arizona Avian Breeders Assoc.
Arizona Aviculture Society
Arizona Seed Crackers Society
Avicultural Society of Tucson
Tropical Bird Fanciers
Yuma-Imperial Exotic Bird Club

COLORADO

State coordinator:

Ray Vander Leest 303-646-0885

Front Range Avian Society
Rocky Mountain Society of
Aviculture, Inc.

NEVADA

State coordinator (acting):

Joanne Edwards 702-436-0110

Las Vegas Avicultural Society
Reno Area Avian Enthusiasts

NEW MEXICO

State coordinator:

Sandi Brennan 505-281-7729

Las Cruces Parrot Club
New Mexico Bird Club

UTAH

State coordinator (acting):

Steve Long 801-647-3653

Avicultural Society of Utah

WYOMING

State coordinator:

Lloyd Baily 307-468-2871

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA REGION

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916-642-9050

fax 916-642-0874

CALIFORNIA (NORTH)

State coordinator:

Diane Grindol 408-384-6548

Aviary Association

Aviary Association of Kern

Butte County Bird Club

Capitol City Bird Society

Central California Avian Society

Central Coast Avicultural Society

Coastal Avian Society

Contra Costa Avian Society

Foothill Bird Fanciers

Gold Country Aviculture Society

Gold Country Bird Society

Golden Gate Avian Society

Monterey Bay Cage Bird Club

Redwood Empire Cage Bird Club

Redwood Exotic Bird Society

Santa Clara Valley Bird Club

Tri Counties Bird Club

HAWAII

State coordinator:

Joe Baker 808-966-6966

Hawaii Parrot Fanciers Inc.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA REGION

Aletta M. Long, regional v.p.

Phone/fax 310-596-7429

CALIFORNIA (SOUTHERN)

SAN DIEGO AREA:

State coordinator:

Marty Muschinske 619-468-3201

Finch Society of San Diego

County Hookbill Hobbyists

North County Aviculturists

San Diego County Bird Breeders

Association

CALIFORNIA (SOUTHERN)

LOS ANGELES AREA:

State coordinator:

Jami Kennedy 805-252-0437

Antelope Valley Bird Society

Hemet Valley Bird Society

Long Beach Bird Breeders

Norco Valley Bird Breeders

Orange County Bird Breeders

Santa Barbara Bird Club

Simi Valley Bird Society

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Ventura County Bird Club

West Los Angeles Bird Club

West Valley Bird Society

*Position open to a contact regional vice president if interested

**Indicated 2 year term has been fulfilled. If no

new interested party comes forward and indicates a desire to serve, incumbent remains in position.

For information about contacting any of these member clubs, please call that club's state coordinator.



1996 AFA CONVENTION
CONCORD, CA
(near San Francisco)
AUGUST 5-9

Eclectus

The Bird World's Eccentric Genius?

by Kathleen Bell, Olathe, KS

As an owner and breeder of these beautiful birds, I continue to grow in my admiration and awe of the Eclectus Parrot.

Much has been written about their simply dazzling physical beauty and I can add nothing new to those praises already sung on their behalf. We have also, although regrettably not enough, read articles on occasion about their impressive talking ability and their basic intelligence. But the fact remains that I feel the world just has not heard enough about how bright, funny and remarkably intelligent these birds really are.

I suppose, just to set the record straight, I need to tell you about Patrick D. Bell Eclectus who was, of course, hatched on St. Patrick's Day in 1992. His predecessor, Jeremy D. Bell Eclectus, was well on his way to becoming, as Dale Thompson said, "a genius" based on the extent of his vocabulary. Unfortunately, Jeremy spiraled into a psychotic feather plucking episode but is, hopefully, in recovery. When Thompson spoke to a local club we discussed Jeremy's feather plucking and his remarkable vocabulary and that's when Thompson observed that if what I told him was accurate, the bird approached genius.

Whether it is the environment in our home or something in our lifestyle that brings these birds up to a special level, I don't know. But I will tell you that Patrick is well on his way to equaling or possibly surpassing Jeremy in vocabulary.

Patrick lives in a great room with an Umbrella Cockatoo (Charlotte) on the other side of it. He also contends with me, the children (Karrie and Michael), the Doberman and the cat (Maggie Moo and Montgomery) and all the friends that drop in. Believe me,

Patrick has interaction with all of the above.

Just listening to Patrick's phrases is interesting and amusing but I want to emphasize that I truly believe that often times he is thinking about what he is saying and he is not just repeating words or phrases—at random times and in random pattern—that he finds interesting.

Of course, because I have a 15-year-old son who is all boy and very active, Patrick's most frequently heard cry is a loud, strident, "Michael!!!!" This can and does come at any time of day or night but, interestingly enough, only in the mornings does Patrick loudly call, "Michael, get your butt out of bed!" Naturally, this happens most often during the school year. He seems to let it go during the summer, which we do appreciate.

When the cockatoo occasionally goes into her cockatoo screams, Patrick will sometimes sit quietly until he has had enough at which point he will loudly call out, "Charlotte, shut up!" Now, I can understand that this might be a case where he associates words with an action since he has heard others make that same, er, *request*, when Charlotte yodels.

However, Patrick will, when the dog enters the room, call out, "Moo!" and then do the special whistle I use to call the dog. What interests me is his ability to identify the dog *by her name* when, to my knowledge, no one has formally introduced them to each other. Nor have we ever called the dog "Moo" and used her special whistle in front of the bird. Of course, he hears me call the dog and whistle to bring her in at night, but the dog goes to her own room and does not come within Patrick's view at all. To me, this indicates a definite ability to connect names to individuals.

Continued on page 8

Credit Due

Laboring on a special assignment from Editor-in-chief Dale Thompson, Eb Cravens spent a great deal of time and effort gathering the Eclectus articles for this special edition of the *Watchbird*. His efforts have resulted in one of the finest collections of Eclectus material to be found in avian literature.

For further proof, when I enter the room, Patrick will say some of his "mom" things such as, "I love my mom," "I don't bite mom," and, "Hello, my darling treasure. I love you soooo much!" This litany usually goes on when he gets his morning cuddle and then his breakfast, in that order.

What I view as yet another example of Patrick using actual thought processes in response to a given situation is a recent incident while I was vacuuming. But let me preface this by explaining one of my training techniques. When a baby, or any other bird, responds well to a command, I say, gushingly, "Praises!" and make quite a to-do over the bird in reaction to its behavior that I am trying to enforce.

Now both Charlotte and Patrick, and probably most other parrots, dislike having the carpet in their room vacuumed. Charlotte throws her crest and screeches loudly until the vacuum stops while Patrick hangs upside down from a swing and flaps his wings.

Usually, I just put the birds in another room to avoid their (and my) stress but one day I left them in their cages while I swept the room. It took a few

minutes longer than usual and with the vacuum going and Charlotte going, each at full strength, it was an obvious relief when the noise stopped.

How much of a relief became apparent when, with the cessation of the noise, Patrick very clearly and emphatically said, "Praises!" Evidently it is his hope that rewarding the cessation will eliminate future vacuuming.

I am often asked whether or not I teach my birds what to say. I have to answer that probably 80% of Patrick's vocabulary comes from what he hears around the house. I have to monitor the TV carefully since he has started laughing like Beevis and Butt-head and we certainly want to eliminate *that*. It is interesting to note that many things in his repertoire are words and phrases he has put together on his own. Sometimes sitting on his stand he'll go through a talking jag and put together similar phrases on a theme, such as, "I love mom"...then, "Michael loves mom"...then, "Patrick loves Michael"...and, "Patrick loves Moo," and so on, changing the subject of each sentence.

Of course he does the traditional, as saying "hello" when the phone rings. When the doorbell rings, he sometimes says, "Come on in Honey," which he has overheard me say when friends drop by. This worked to my disadvantage one summer when two earnest looking individuals with pamphlets in their hands rang the bell. To avoid the issue, I pretended not to be home but when Patrick called out in a loud voice, "Come on in Honey"—in *my* voice—I had to abashedly answer the door. Fortunately, the issue of my extremely friendly greeting did not arise.

Among the remaining 20% of Patrick's vocabulary are a few phrases I have intentionally taught him, although the word *taught* really only means he selected what I offered. I firmly believe that you can repeat the same word or phrase over and over, offer a treat, do what ever your training regimen includes, and if the bird does not care for the sound of that particular word or phrase, you can just about forget about ever hearing it repeated by that bird.

Among some of Patrick's cuter phrases which he has obligingly learned and enjoys saying are, "I'm a lean, green LOVE MACHINE," sometimes followed by kissing noises. He



Photo by Kathleen Bell

Patrick has plenty of personality and a wonderful vocabulary. He and Charlotte the cockatoo interact well in the home of the author.

says, "I'm an Eclectus," sometimes followed by, "Are *you* an Eclectus?" which I did *not* teach him.

Patrick says, "Give me a kiss," "I love you, my darling," and so on and on and on. I know many of you out there can imagine the sickeningly sweet things I have tried to get him to say.

One interesting sidelight, and, again, this goes back to my belief that he can truly think, is that for weeks I said to Charlotte, "I'm a cockaTOO!" Well Charlotte has a few adorable phrases said in her adorable "little child" voice which is a cockatoo trademark, but she has never tried to say that one. One day, however, I heard loudly and clearly, "I'm a cockaTOO!!!" and, of course, it was coming from our lean green love machine. I then said, laughing, to Patrick, "No! You're an Eclectus!"

Now I am certain you will not believe me, but the Sunflower Bird Club board of directors were meeting at my home so I do have witnesses who will testify to hearing Patrick say, "I'm a cockaTOO! **NO!!** I'm an *Eclectus!*" Now that's clever and amusing enough on its own—but remember, I said to him, "No, *you're* an Eclectus!" Patrick, being grammatically as well as politically correct, uses the appropriate pronoun when he makes his declaration. Believe me, it never fails to bring down the house. ➔

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