

South Dakota Bird Club Holds Annual

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“Birds and Blooms Day Event”



By Barb Paur
Mt Rushmore Birds

It all started 4 years ago with an idea, a wing and a lot of prayers. Patrick and I own and operate an aviary and retail showroom. Our business is called Mt. Rushmore Birds (www.mtrushmorebirds.com). We belong to the Rocky Mountain Society of Aviculture and travel to Denver several times each year. It had occurred to us that it would be great to have some public educational event in Rapid City and on one of these trips we heard of an event in a green house in Colorado that filled the greenhouse with birds and an enthusiastic public. Patrick and I went to see it for ourselves. When we came back home, we were bursting with ideas and excitement. We now knew the perfect place to hold our own event, but we would need to convince the owners of the greenhouse. After pitching the idea, they were sold! The event would be held at the Jolly Lane Greenhouse owned by Tim and Todd Sime. We named it the Birds and Blooms Day Event.

We had about 3 weeks to put it together. We introduced the idea to The Black Hills Companion Bird Club and we were off and running! The work began; we contacted the TV and radio stations, sent flyers to school children and burned gallons of gas hanging up flyers around town and in neighboring towns. Ads and articles were placed in the local papers. The day finally came and there were about 50 birds placed throughout the Greenhouse. Club members were

standing by their pet birds. Breeders or birds that weren't really pets were placed in cages around the greenhouse with stands beside them explaining the bird species, if they make good pets, their life span, their country of origin, etc. The greenhouse was bulging with beautiful house plants and exotic flowers. Rare orchids were all over. Outside was the cold South Dakota winter, while inside a tropical paradise. Jolly Lane Greenhouse popped the popcorn and provided free refreshments. Thus began the annual free public educational event called Birds and Blooms Day. In the beginning we were hoping and praying someone would come. In all, about 1800 people showed up for the two-day event held in Colorado. Members of our bird club invited family members, neighbors, and friends to attend; and we hoped that all the advertising and promotional activities would pay off. Well, we shouldn't have worried! That first year over 800 people crowded into the Greenhouse during the one day, six hour event. Club members were kept busy talking to people. Misty, the Cockatoo, was there in her glory playing ball with kids for hours, and other pet birds were doing their thing to entertain the public. What a wonderful way to educate people about the commitment and responsibility of owning a parrot!



people about birds and the dedication it takes to own one. It looks like the Black Hills Companion Bird Club will be holding the Birds & Blooms Day Event for many years to come. We are very grateful to have a greenhouse that gives so much general and financial support, without which this event would not be possible. ■

Sidney (the Blue and Gold Macaw) and Hannah (the female Eclectus) check out the many exotic flowers and other companion birds at the annual Birds and Blooms Day Event held in Rapid City, South Dakota the last Saturday of January.

Now, four years later, the event has grown beyond our wildest dreams. Additionally, the Black Hills Companion Bird Club has also grown. This year we were privileged to have Nebraska Exotics join us to display a pair of Hyacinth Macaws, a very rare Black Palm Cockatoo, Rose-breasted and Moluccan Cocatoos. Club members from Sioux Falls (350 miles away) brought an additional Hyacinth Macaw and a pair of Blue and Gold Macaws. They made outstanding displays. Another group called Wildlife Experiences has provided, each year, an educational program featuring live birds of prey.

The green house was bustling from 10am to 4pm with 70+ birds and well over 2000 people in just six hours. Young and old alike, from toddlers to residents of local nursing homes, all came to enjoy this great experience. If you ever get a chance to be in Rapid City, South Dakota on the last Saturday of January, by all means stop by the Jolly Lane Green House and meet the birds. If you are a member of a bird club, and don't know what to do in the winter, perhaps you and your club will consider an educational event like Birds and Blooms Day for your town. We can't think of a better way to educate



Aaron shows off Benny, his Blue-fronted Amazon Parrot.