

Exotic Bird Show at Sesame Place, Langhorne, PA

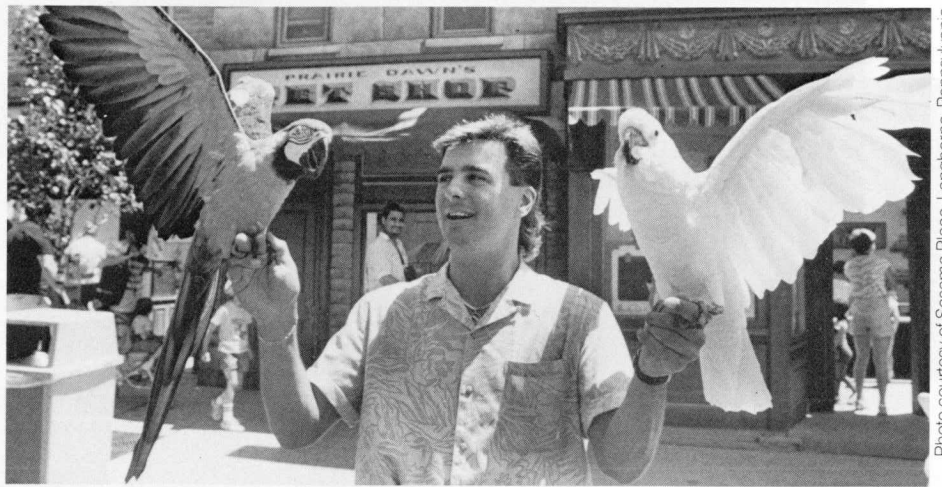


Photo courtesy of Sesame Place, Langhorne, Pennsylvania

Corey Schmidt poses with two of the Sesame Place cast members, Michael (left) and Grace, in the play park's new Sesame Neighborhood.

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Langhorne, Pa., July 28, 1988 — They've been featured on national television shows like "Late Night with David Letterman" and "Those Amazing Animals." They've even starred in their own show in Las Vegas!

Now, this troupe of exotic macaws and cockatoos are delighting youngsters and their families at Sesame Place, the uniquely themed play park just outside Philadelphia.

Billed as the "Sesame Place Animal Actors," the cast of tropical birds are among the park's most popular attractions. The show is presented eight times daily, delighting young and old alike with such antics as singing, roller skating, acrobatics and impersonations of other animals.

According to show director Corey Schmidt, training the colorful birds requires patience and understanding. "It takes a lot of time and tender loving care," said the 23-year-old entertainer, who performs on stage with his cast. "Birds don't always want to be trained when you want them to, so you have to work according to their schedule."

Among the show's stars is Freddy, a 12-year-old sulphur crested cockatoo native to New Guinea. His antics include imitating a chimp, riding a bike, performing sit-ups, praying and lying on his back while Schmidt tosses him in the air.

There's also King Tut, a Catalina macaw that rides a bike backward, plays dead and does somersaults. "I always have a youngster come up from the audience and King Tut will give the child a kiss," said Schmidt. "We consider him the class clown!"

Lolita, a yellow naped Amazon

parrot, is recognized as one of the best talking birds in the country. She answers questions, does animal imitations and even sings songs like "Oh What a Beautiful Morning."

Equally amusing antics are performed by other cast members, including Zachary, a rose breasted cockatoo from Australia; Michael, a blue and gold macaw from South America; and Grace, a Moluccan cockatoo native to Indonesia.

Schmidt noted that the birds are rewarded with raw sunflower seeds for correctly performing their behaviors. "These seeds are not included in any of their meals, so it becomes a treat when a proper behavior is performed," he explained.

The exotic birds are provided by Joe Carvalho, a nationally recognized bird breeder and trainer from Fremont, California. They are fed a carefully controlled diet consisting of vitamins, seeds and fruits. To ensure the proper proportions of food, the birds are weighed at the beginning and end of each day.

This show is just one of the many attractions offered at Sesame Place, the uniquely themed play park for families with children ages 3 to 13. The park also features over 40 "kid-powered" physical play elements, fun-filled water rides, challenging computer games and science exhibits, live entertainment and many of Jim Henson's famous "Sesame Street" Muppet characters.

Sesame Place is located adjacent to Oxford Valley Mall in Lower Bucks County, Pennsylvania, a 30-minute drive north of Philadelphia and 1-1/2 hours from New York City. ●



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