

Southwest Virginia Bird Club



**Conference
Reports**

**Jessie Finds
a Home**

Club Notes

**Outreach
Program
Pictures**

Winter 2003

Welcome to New and Prospective Members

For those of you who have recently joined the Southwest Virginia Bird Club, we offer you a hearty welcome and look forward to seeing you at our monthly meetings.

For those of you who have not yet joined our happy group, we hope you will decide that we have something to offer you and we know that you would be a wonderful asset to our club.

This issue of the quarterly SWVBC Newsletter contains lots of information, including reports from two recent conferences, a touching letter from a grateful bird, pictures from our outreach program, and much, much more.

So, take a few minutes from your busy day, sit back, and enjoy a few moments with us.



Winter 2004

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SWVBC Board of Directors for 2003*

Sue Brewer, Chairperson -----	366-1193
Melody Blankenship -----	344-0313
Craig Burkhead -----	389-5093
Edie Manuel -----	992-2948
Angelika Miner -----	965-3057
Terry Moore -----	265-4777
Angela Myles -----	382-2627
Gayle Richardson -----	345-1208
Vanessa Rolfe -----	387-2212

The election of a Board of Directors for 2004 will take place at our December meeting. Please call Sue Brewer with nominations.

December Meeting

Annual Holiday Potluck Dinner Sunday, December 14 at 5:30 p.m. Huntington Court Methodist Church

In December each year the Roanoke and Blacksburg meetings are combined for a holiday potluck dinner in Roanoke. This is a time for all of us to get together for good food, silly gifts, and lots of fun.

Bring your favorite dish to share and a wrapped gift (for birds or people) costing no more than \$10. There will be a crazy gift exchange, which is always a lot of fun. Please call Angela Myles at 382-2627 to coordinate food dishes.

This party is a great way to meet new club members and for the Roanoke and Blacksburg members to get together. For further information, please call any of the board members listed on page 3.



*Picture courtesy of Holiday Cards for Birds, Bird Talk Magazine Dec. 2003
Cards available at www.weshootbirds.com*

Holidays Make Great Times For Photographs

On top of a pumpkin? Inside a Horn of Plenty with fruit? In front of a toy Santa? Coming out of a wrapped box? Just THINK of the great shots you can get of your birds for the Bird Fair photo contest in June! Just be careful around ribbon, colored paper and poinsettia plants, which are poisonous to birds. Also, keep them away from candles, potpourri and greenery. So, get out that camera for the holidays and use it.

Sally Blanchard and Dr. Vanessa Rolfe Speak at PEAC Conference

– by *Beth Bottom, SWVBC Blacksburg Coordinator*

The Parrot Education and Adoption Center (PEAC) held its annual conference September 21 in Pittsburgh, featuring a full day of informative sessions, great raffle items, a lunch buffet and many bird-related books and gifts for sale. This event's big draw was, of course, keynote speakers Sally Blanchard and the Southwest Virginia Bird Club's own Vanessa Rolfe, D.V.M.

Dr. Rolfe kicked off the PEAC conference with a presentation on avian medical tests and why they are important. As many members of the SWVBC may know, Dr. Rolfe started her Avian and Exotic Veterinary Services practice in 1992 and is an active member of the Association of Avian Veterinarians, the Gabriel Foundation, and is on the SWVBC Board of Directors. She also founded the club's annual bird fair.



During her keynote address at PEAC, Dr. Rolfe helped to translate the medical

terminology for the various tests that companion birds need at one time or another. She stressed the importance of all birds having a baseline blood test during their first few years to determine what is normal for each bird. She added that, although beak and feather disease (PBFD) is rare in South American birds, Old World birds from Africa and Australia should be tested for this disease.

Drawing blood from a bird is essential to conducting many medical tests. Dr. Rolfe gave the formula for determining the maximum safe amount of blood that can be drawn from a bird: total blood volume is approximately 10 percent of the bird's body weight. It is safe to remove 10 percent of total blood volume. Therefore, taking an amount of blood equal to one percent of body weight should be safe for most birds. For example, a bird that weighs 100 grams could have a maximum of one milliliter of blood drawn for testing. Dr. Rolfe noted that less blood is taken in the case of significant illness. From this small quantity of blood, many tests can be conducted to measure the health of the various systems in the bird's body. Following are some of the various tests and what they indicate:



PEAC continued

- Hematology measures such things as white and red blood cell count, which can indicate changes in the immune system. Hematology test results may indicate aspergillosis, psittacosis, avian tuberculosis, dehydration, anemia (which does not usually indicate iron deficiency in birds), polycythemia, and respiratory allergies.
- A Biochemistry Panel tests levels of compounds in the blood. Changes in the levels of these compounds can be indicative of dehydration, diabetes, starvation, infection and calcium deficiency, and may indicate problems with the kidneys, gastrointestinal system, and liver, as well as neurological problems and muscle injury (including the heart).
- Electrophoresis tests for inflammation and infection.
- Toxicology tests for lead and zinc poisoning.
- Antibody tests detect exposure to infection or disease, such as chlamydophilia (which causes psittacosis) and aspergillosis. Dr. Rolfe noted that antibody tests sometimes produce false negatives.
- Measuring bile acids tests liver function.
- Fecal Trichrome tests for giardia.
- PCR (Polymerase Chain Reaction) Probe tests for PBF (beak and feather disease), polyoma and chlamydophilia, and may eventually test for giardia.
- Culture tests indicate the presence of bacteria, which can be indicative of chlamydophilia, mycoplasma and mycobacteria, among others.
- Microscopic exams using smears and/or stains test for bacteria, parasites, fungus/yeast, chlamydophilia, mycobacteria, giardia and worm-type parasites.
- Body Reaction tests include cytology, biopsy and radiographs.
- Barium and fluoroscopy tests for PDD (Proventricular Dilation Disease).
- Crop Biopsy tests for PDD. However, Dr. Rolfe said that a negative crop biopsy does not mean PDD is not elsewhere in the gastrointestinal tract.

Dr. Rolfe listed some common shared symptoms among diseases that should serve as a red flag for bird owners. These include lethargy, not eating, feather picking and too much urine. Any bird exhibiting these symptoms should be brought to the veterinarian immediately, who will likely suggest performing any of the above diagnostic tests.

Parrot Education & Adoption Center (PEAC – pronounced “peace”) is a non-profit, volunteer organization dedicated to educating current and potential owners on the care of companion parrots. Unwanted or found parrots are accepted at PEAC and in turn are placed with qualified, educated applicants.



PEAC continued

During her session on phobic parrot behavior, Blanchard mentioned some possible triggers for a bird's phobic behavior, such as physical pain, its cage being knocked over, a visit to the veterinarian, and being forced out of the cage. She said that when a bird goes into a phobic prey response, regardless of the trigger, psychologically its caretaker goes from friend to foe. When a bird becomes phobic, Blanchard suggests that you try to determine what you have done differently in order to determine the trigger of the phobia. Something as simple as growing out your fingernails or shaving your mustache can trigger a bird's phobic episodes.



Sally Blanchard

Blanchard gave some tips on what to do when a bird has a phobic episode:

- Stand near the bird and totally relax: Stand still, cross your arms, lower your head, and close your eyes.
- Ignore the bird, possibly using the chair exercise, which initially involves sitting in front of the bird's cage and reading a magazine or something, completely ignoring the bird. Then, continue the chair exercise while eating grapes in front of the bird. The bird will eventually feel safe enough to come out of his cage. Then, very gradually and calmly, begin interacting.
- Be very submissive, avoiding eye contact.

Blanchard said that birds' fears often stem from people being too direct and coming on too strong. She made some general suggestions about how to prevent phobic reactions, including those listed below:

- Introduce birds to new things away from their territory (cage).
- After you've been on vacation, greet your bird **CALMLY** when you come home again.

Speakers such as Sally Blanchard and Dr. Vanessa Rolfe help PEAC achieve its mission of sharing current information and correcting misconceptions about parrots. PEAC is a non-profit, volunteer organization dedicated to educating current and potential bird owners of proper physical and psychological care for their pet birds. Unwanted and found parrots are accepted at PEAC and in turn are adopted to qualified applicants. For more information on PEAC, call (724) 378-7588 or visit their website at: www.pittsburgh.parroteducation.org.



The Amazona Society and Bird Clubs of America Convention, Hampton, Virginia October 4 and 5, 2003

A Report from Edie Manuel

Even though I do not own an Amazon parrot, I looked forward to the first-ever combined meeting of the Amazona Society and the Bird Clubs of America Convention. I was most impressed by Sally Blanchard and Dennis Saydak's presentation. Dennis is a Canadian like myself and it was great to listen to his familiar accent. He made me feel at home. Dennis impressed me with his knowledge and compassion in the care and breeding of Amazons and other species in his closed aviary. The president of the Amazona Society told us that Dennis is "the authority on Blue Fronted Amazons." He is a very dedicated man with the cleanest, safest, and most humane facility in his area. Dennis stressed that he and his wife took on no more birds than they themselves could effectively care for. He shared many pictures, anecdotes and a lot of valuable information on the Amazon breeding process as well as the standards of his business.



Sally Blanchard & Edie

Sally Blanchard, a well-known bird behaviorist, is a delightful person and a very interesting and humorous speaker. She discussed many Amazon behaviors – how to correct some undesirable traits and how to prevent others. She also gave us tips as to how to encourage certain desirable behaviors. She even gave us a lesson on "the birds and the bees" (hormonal behaviors) using her little toy Amazon. She was full of many personal experiences, most of which we could all relate to in some way. Sally is very down to earth and easily relates to her audience. Her talks are very animated and you can tell that she could go on forever! Nancy very generously donated eggs for our club's educational display at last year's bird fair.



Nancy Speed & Sue

The few vendors present had many fine bird toys, food, pictures, and some live birds (mostly Dick Ivy's amazons!). Sally was there with her books and ready to sign each one sold. She didn't even hesitate to sign my year old copy of her Companion Book.



Sally Blanchard, Nancy Speed, and Dennis Saydak were all speakers at the Convention

Club Notes

September

Wayne and Melanie Bond presented the September program in Roanoke with the help of their green winged macaw, Elmo. Joann and King Irvin entertained and informed the Blacksburg meeting with their milligold macaw. Honeydew is a cross between a blue and gold macaw and a military macaw.

October

Our guest lories for our October meeting in Roanoke were unable to attend. Instead, Sue Brewer gave us a report on the combined Amazona Society and Bird Clubs of America conference held in Hampton, Virginia October 4 and 5. Please see a report by Edie Manuel on the conference in this issue on page 8. Fortunately for our Blacksburg group, Debbie Duttenhofer was able to bring her lories to their meeting and describe how living with these beautiful, colorful birds is a wonderful adventure.

November



Our November meetings in both Roanoke and Blacksburg featured Angelika Miner with her wonderful conures. Although conures can be very noisy, Angie's babies were very well behaved as she talked about the different types of conures and their characteristics. All who attended the meetings came away with a better understanding of these colorful and fun balls of feathers.

New Board of Directors To Be Elected/Installed

During all the fun of the December Social, we will enjoy at least one moment of seriousness. We will take time out to elect a new Board of Directors, the group that guides the programs and progress of SWVBC. Following the election, we will have a short service to install these new officers.

Raffle Items Needed For Each Meeting

Our raffles at the Roanoke meeting help to pay for the refreshments at each meeting. We are constantly in need of new prizes for this event. Prizes can be donated by a business or individuals and need not be exclusively related to birds. Movie passes, gift certificates, etc. are very welcome. If you have any articles for the raffle, please get in touch with Terry Moore. At some point, we may be able to do the same thing in Blacksburg.

On My Journey Home

By Jessie

I am a Moluccan Cockatoo named Jessie. The best I know I have seen nine summer seasons and have lived in several homes. Some of those homes have been okay and others have been real bad. In some of the homes the humans were not very nice. Whenever I would call to them for love they would respond by hitting me with their hands. They never offered me anything to keep me busy during the day so all I could do was sit and be lonely.

My last home was with a nice human who fed me well, gave me a nice cage and loved me. I liked to play games with her but I don't think she liked my games. My favorite game was bite and chase. I don't understand why she did not like playing my game. I thought it was a lot of fun to see her run away and make funny noises.

One day she put me in a small cage and drove me a long way. That is when I came to meet the nicest human I have ever met. This loving human put me in a big cage in a bright sunny room with lots of places for me to stand and things to see. This cage had bright colored wood things hanging all over and she gave me bright colored rattle things. I was not sure what I was supposed to do with all of the things surrounding me, since I had never seen anything like them before.

This wonderful human took me out of my cage everyday and snuggled with me. She played different games that I didn't understand but she told me that these were good games for birds to play. She would sing songs to me, give me good food and clean up after me all the time. I think there were others like me at this place but I could only hear them calling to me from another room. When they called she did not get mad; she only called back.

I only stayed with this human for a short time, but that was okay. In the short time that I was there she made me feel so good. She told me that I would be going away and that the place that I was going would be good. She told me the people at this new place would take care of me and teach me how to play good games with humans and how to play with toys. She called it The Gabriel Foundation. She also told me that after I stayed at this place for awhile that I would get a new home, a wonderful home that I could stay at for a very long time. She was very sad but told me it would be okay. She again put me in a small cage and took me to a very big place with lots of people. Then I took a very long trip through the air.



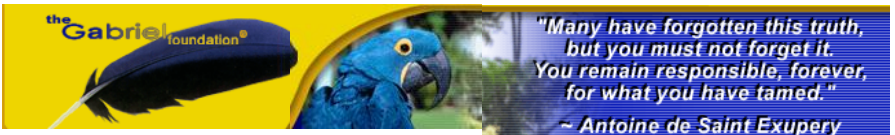
I am now at The Gabriel Foundation and the nice human was right. There are others here just like me that all need new homes. This is a very good place with very nice humans that are teaching me new things. The nice people snuggle with me and give me scratches and tell me how lucky I am because someday I will be getting a new home where I will have lots of love.

For all of this I want to say a great big fluffy pink **THANK YOU** for the wonderful human they call Terry. She is such a wonderful person to have helped me on my journey home. I am such a lucky bird to have known her for the short time we spent together and will always remember what she did for me.



Picture courtesy of CKC Birds

SWVBC is a supporter of The Gabriel Foundation. Please see their website at www.thegabrielfoundation.org.



Check out our website

www.swvbc.org is now up and running better than ever. Many thanks go to Joann Irvin who has taken over the reigns of our website and is now our official Webmaster (mistress?). Our November Conure program was the first update we saw-the first of many. The *Bird Care Guide* is on line, as well as this newsletter each time it is published. If members have any ideas for additions, please feel free to share them with Joann. Many thanks Joann!

Birds Up for Adoption

- Jake, a Nanday Conure-2yr. old male
- Bianca, a Medium Sulfur Crested Cockatoo
- Karen, a Yellow Nape Amazon- Female
- Angel, an Umbrella Cockatoo

The price is right for all these babies if you are the right owner! Call Sue Brewer at 366-1193.

Birdie Greeting Cards Available

Beautiful, high-quality color photograph greeting cards are available through our club. There are many different birds and greetings for all occasions. The cost is \$3.00 per card, with \$1.00 of the cost staying with the club. The cards will be on sale at our next club meeting. Hurry, supplies are limited.

Financial Report

August 8, 2003 to November 7, 2003

Accounts Receivable

Bird Fair	\$25.00
Membership Dues	225.00
Donations	10.00

Accounts Payable

Website	\$120.00
Publishing/Mailing	147.38
Refreshments	61.51
State/Fed Fees	35.00

Total **\$260.00**

\$363.89

We Were on TV

Our very own Beth Bottom was interviewed by Brent Walker on WDBJ, Channel 7 on November 12. Beth explained the mission of our club during the interview. Education being our prime mission, Beth was able to help further that mission by speaking in a public venue. Our thanks to Beth. If you know of any opportunities for members of our club to publicize our mission, please do not hesitate to let any member of the board know about them.

SWVBC Outreach Program

In October, Sue Brewer conducted two outreach programs for our club.

Garden City Elementary School



Roanoke Methodist Home



The Crazy 'Ole Bird Lady

People say, "She's crazy!
She's got too many birds!"
How can I help them see?
Where do I get the words?



To tell you of my parrots ...
My friends of feathered glory,
They are all so different,
Each has his own story.

Their dignity, the love they give,
Their trust that is so whole,
I look into those ageless eyes,
And swear I see my soul.

Some have known mistreatment
At the hands of those they love.
How can people be so cruel
To angels from above?

Some have been neglected,
Others have known pain ...
Some have been in many homes,
A life of stress and strain.

The people say there's too much mess,
There's also too much noise.
You must buy them decent food,
And pay too much for toys.

But what I see is a gift from God,
A privilege to behold.
I'm grateful for each day with them,
As together we grow old.

So let them say, "She's crazy,"
For there is a secret that I know ...
A parrot's love is heaven sent
And it's helped my spirit grow.

By Terry Moore



The Tool Box

The beak is:

- ✓ A third hand, used for climbing and holding food, and carrying things.
- ✓ A baby bottle for gently feeding the tiniest little babies (as compared to the beak size).
- ✓ A tool of romance, feeding each other, as a prerequisite to breeding.
- ✓ A comb for preening feathers.
- ✓ A pruner for birds' jobs as the farmers of the rainforest.
- ✓ A crowbar for breaking out of cages and wrecking the house.
- ✓ A lock pick for breaking out of cages.
- ✓ A peeler, in conjunction with their tongues, for getting the skins off of grapes, peanuts and other foods.
- ✓ A nutcracker for cracking open Brazil nuts and other nuts.
- ✓ A punch for tapping on things.

There is much more to a beak than biting. A beak is a **BIG** part of a birds **SOCIAL** and everyday **LIFE**.

Pretty amazing tool, if you ask me!

Thanks to Joanne King.



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Vanessa Rolfe, DVM.

Advertising space is available in the SWVBC Newsletter. Please contact Melody Blankenship at 344-0313 or melody.blankenship@taproanoke.org.

ALL OF THIS FOR \$15 PER YEAR!

IN SWVBC WE **SHARE** – Whether it’s consoling someone who has just lost a bird or rejoicing with someone who has just added to his or her flock. We also share a lot of fun about feathered antics.

IN SWVBC WE **SOCIALIZE** – Before each meeting we spend a little time “catching up”, having refreshments, sharing and laughing, and sometimes even picking a feather or two off one another! In July we picnic with lots of good food and fun. And in December we gather with holiday decorations to sum up the year, have good food and fun, and exchange gifts in the wildest way possible!!



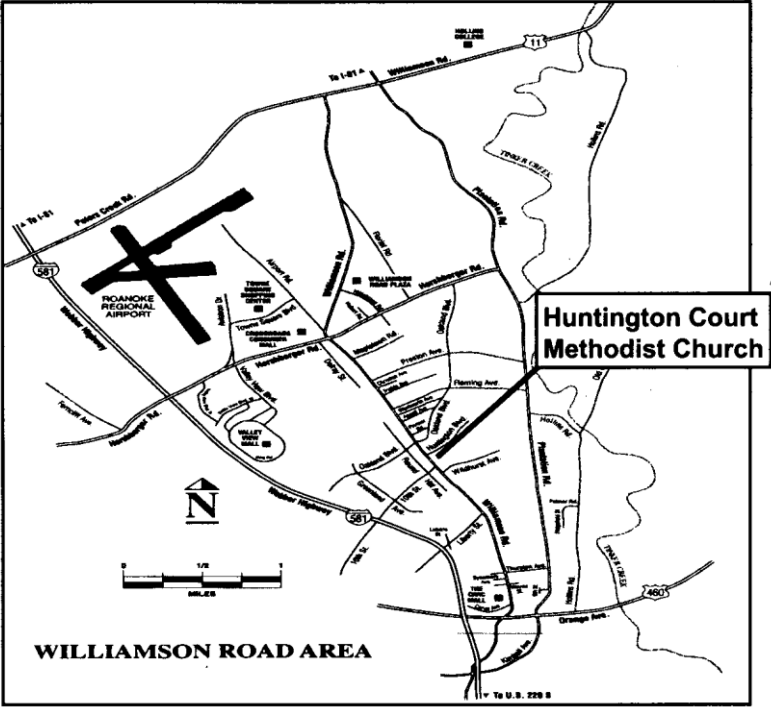
IN SWVBC WE **LEARN** – We have a program each month that informs each of us. We talk of specific species, first aid, nutrition, diseases, cages, safe toys, etc., etc., etc. We attend state and national conventions/seminars and bring back the best information to share. We read, read and read – *Bird Talk*, *Companion Quarterly* and the latest books. Our relationship with The World Parrot Trust and The Gabriel Foundation affords us some of the latest information on avian aviculture and rehabilitation. We sponsor nationally known speakers at our Bird Fair and invite the public to come and learn.

IN SWVBC WE **CONNECT** – We secure a “rehabber” to check on a pigeon in a parking lot and catch a lovebird in someone’s backyard in order to return it to its owner. We re-home a brown parrot with one of our members and get a pair of red-rump parakeets to a caring breeder. We facilitate the placing of a cockatoo with The Gabriel Foundation. We secure “babysitting” services when someone needs to travel and retrieve a quaker that has been relegated to a dark basement. We get information for a panicky pet owner that has a baby that won’t eat even though the expert had to do this by cell phone while on the way out of town. The list goes on as we speak...

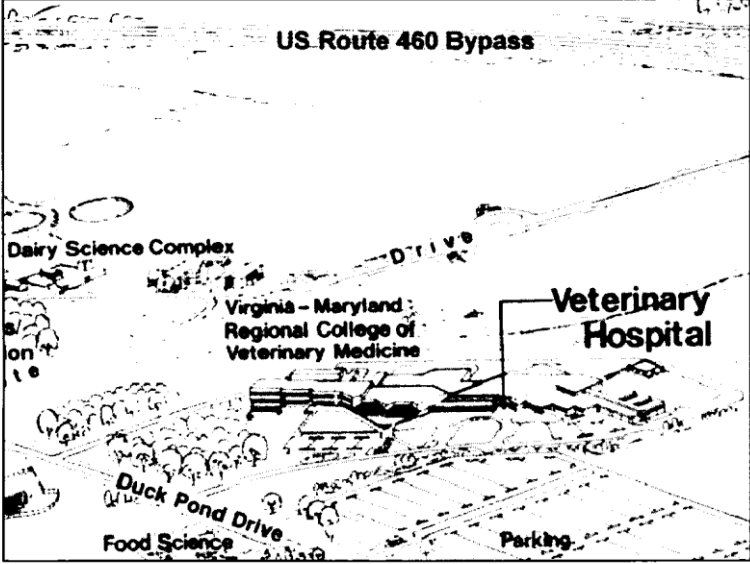
IN SWVBC WE **TEACH** – We teach each other. We teach 2nd graders as well as the elderly at the Roanoke Methodist Home where a lady talked for the first time in months when she touched a parrot. We teach to television audiences and at veterinary clinics and at pet stores. At every opportunity, we share what we know. Some of us even teach at national conventions and seminars. We design and construct wonderful educational exhibits for our Bird Fair.

IN SWVBC WE **CARE.**

Roanoke Directions



Blacksburg Directions



Southwest Virginia Bird Club

The Southwest Virginia Bird Club holds its monthly meetings in Roanoke on the Tuesday before the second Wednesday of each month, and in Blacksburg on the second Wednesday of each month. Roanoke meetings are held in the Huntington Court Methodist Church, and Blacksburg meetings are held at the Virginia Tech Veterinary School. The SWVBC does occasionally meet elsewhere. As the newsletter is only published quarterly, postcards with meeting information will be mailed to all members a week in advance.

Annual individual membership dues are \$15.00; the family rate is \$20.00. Please submit a completed membership application (see back page) to join SWVBC and again each subsequent year to renew.

Members are encouraged to submit articles, stories, pictures, etc. to the editor for publication in upcoming newsletters. The newsletter is published in the Fall (September), Winter (December), Spring (March), and Summer (July). Submission deadline is two weeks before the publication month. Please send ads, articles, pictures, etc. to Melody Blankenship, 2311-G Broadway, Roanoke, VA, 24014 or email to melody.blankenship@taproanoke.org.

Address all other correspondence, dues payments, etc. to:

Southwest Virginia Bird Club
P.O. Box 2034
Salem, VA 24153-0465

Bird of the Month

Our club is always concerned about the health of our feathered loved ones, which is why we ask members **not** to bring their birds to the meetings. Well, we have to express our love on *someone*, so each month this very special honor goes to a single bird per meeting. Due to logistics, the Bird of the Month may not be the same for the Roanoke meeting as for the Blacksburg meeting.

So, if you want your birdy to strut his or her stuff, please contact Sue Brewer at 366-1193 to coordinate visits. If you can, please send a photograph with a paragraph or two describing your loved one to the editor for inclusion in the next newsletter.

The SWVBC is proud to be a member of the American Federation of Aviculture, World Parrot Trust, The Gabriel Foundation and Partners in Flight.



Southwest Virginia Bird Club
Membership Application

Name: _____

Address 1: _____

Address 2: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Date of Application: _____

Annual membership entitles you to a newsletter, access to club library, and other club sponsored projects. Annual Membership Category:

- Single (\$15)
- Family (\$20)
- Paid Cash
- Paid by Check
- New Member
- Renewing Member

What type of bird(s) do you have?

Would you be interested in serving on any committees?
(Bird Fair Committee, Donation Committee, etc.)

Please mail to:

Southwest Virginia Bird Club
P.O. Box 2034
Salem, VA 24153-0465

Please make checks payable to Southwest Virginia Bird Club