



THE FRONT PERCH NEWSLETTER



While we await hordes of
trick-or-treaters on The Front
Perch, let's squawk about:

- Paranormal activity at TGF (p. 2)
- Autumnal enrichment ideas (p. 4-5)
- Tasty seasonal selections (p. 6-7)
- The Dracula Parrot (p. 9)
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PARANORMAL ACTIVITY AROUND THE AVIARY



Staff have reported strange and unexplained occurrences around the aviary recently... and we are starting to think a ghostly presence is in our midst!

Small, white apparitions have been seen bouncing through the halls, leaving trails of nut crumbs behind them, and ripping chunks out of wooden baseboards...

As they ricochet about, raucous screams and haunting laughter reverberate in the ears of the living...

But that's not all in this terrifying tale...



As passers-by move through the aviary, small hands with sharp claws reach from within our innocent flock members' cages to grasp at clothing... And when the sweater or pant leg are finally wrenched free, something has bitten ragged holes into the fabric...

When we look to the cage in question, only a perfectly sweet umbrella cockatoo remains... But we are certain none of these occurrences could be them! At this point, we've accepted that a few playful poltergeists may have joined the flock.



BOARDING YOUR BIRD DOESN'T HAVE TO BE SCARY



Lightning cracks as you approach a path fogged with ambiguity about your upcoming trip. *Where will your beloved bird stay?* Have you ever gazed anxiously at your parrot before travel, fretting over if they'll be lonely, if the pet sitter will follow your careful instructions, if, if, if...?

Let our team wake you from this all too familiar nightmare! Board your feathered family member with our knowledgeable and caring TGF team, who try every day to make our aviary feel like home. Banish your worries and instead let images of fresh diet, one-on-one attention, tidy cages, full toys, and cheerful birdie neighbors fill your mind. The best part: if you ever need reassurance while away, we are happy to send photos and an update on how your cutie's doing! Not so scary, after all.

BOARDING
THIS WAY

Now is the best time to
make your boarding reservation
for upcoming fall and holiday trips!

thegabrielfoundation.org/boarding/

Considering boarding with us for the first time?
Schedule a boarding tour by contacting:
tours@thegabrielfoundation.org





AUTUMNAL ENRICHMENT: BROWSE

Are you feeling haunted by an enrichment rut? Don't be afraid! Fall is the perfect time to summon fresh ideas and give your bird some frightfully fun, autumn-inspired activities!

BROWSE:

As the trees shed their leaves and our yards take on a ghostly hush, we can take advantage of the season's offerings to provide safe, natural enrichment for our birds, allowing them to engage with flora they might encounter in a wild environment. Branches and leaves can be incorporated into cages and play stands. Sunflowers, rose hips, and marigolds are just three parrot-safe flowers available this time of year (they're edible, too!) Pinecones make another eerie-but-enticing option for shredding and foraging for pine nuts.

When offering browse, always ensure that plants are bird-safe, free of pesticides and chemicals, and thoroughly cleaned and disinfected before use. For more detailed information about safe browse and cleaning methods, watch our enrichment webinar here:

Watch the Enrichment Webinar



AUTUMNAL ENRICHMENT: TOY THEMES

HALLOWEEN SHOPPING FOR TWO:

The holiday season is also a great time to haunt the craft aisles for toy-making supplies! Treat boxes, paper straws, crinkle paper, and festive gift wrap can all be transformed into enrichment treasures — just make sure they are bird-safe before offering them. (You can find toy part safety information in our enrichment webinar as well!) We've included a few pictures of some adorable and engaging Halloween-themed toys, crafted by our wonderful volunteer, Cherish!



We hope these eerie enrichment ideas inspire you to create a harvest of fun for your flock. Wishing you and your birds a spooktacular season of foraging and play!



FALL FLAVORS FOR FOODIE FLOCKS

If you're anything like our team, you've been ready for the gastronomic delights of the fall season: soups, pumpkin, well-spiced treats, and maybe taste-testing the trick-or-treat candy... we won't tattle! Don't let the flavorful fun end with your own tastebuds! Here are some ways to enrich your bird's autumn through taste:



Lafeber's Limited Edition Pumpkin Spice NutriBerries

are available again until the end of November! These were a huge hit at the aviary last year, and they have formulas for both larger parrots and small birds.



Try adding some different spices to your flock's mash! Ceylon cinnamon, ginger, cloves, cardamom, and coriander are just a few safe and spicy ideas.



For the bakers out there, Harrison's has a fun **Parrot Carrot Cake** recipe using their Bird Bread mix plus a few other tasty ingredients.



Read on to "Seasonal Selections for the Parrot Gourmand" for some tastebud-tingling ideas using fresh fall foods to create a sensory experience for your bird!



Remember to offer special treats in moderation and to observe your bird with any new food.



SEASONAL SELECTIONS FOR THE PARROT GOURMAND



For the birds who love to destroy their toys, fall brings a perfect treat... pumpkins and gourds! Invite your feathered friends to join in the fun by giving them their very own mini pumpkin to “carve” or letting them help you with the big ones. The shell, pulp, fibrous strands, and seeds are all safe for birds, and the variety of textures and flavors offers a delightfully spooky sensory experience.



Other seasonal snacks include apples (remove seeds), corn on the cob, dried and cleaned corn husks (like tamale hojas), and a variety of squashes — perfect for those little beaks that can’t resist a good chew or shred! See some of our flock enjoying their seasonal spooky selections below:

Watch Our Birds’ Halloween Fun

Poetry Selection

Excerpt from *The Raven* by Edgar Allen Poe



Deep into that darkness peering, long I stood there wondering, fearing,
Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortal ever dared to dream before;
But the silence was unbroken, and the stillness gave no token,
And the only word there spoken was the whispered word, "Lenore?"
This I whispered, and an echo murmured back the word, "Lenore!"—
Merely this and nothing more.

Back into the chamber turning, all my soul within me burning,
Soon again I heard a tapping somewhat louder than before.
"Surely," said I, "surely that is something at my window lattice;
Let me see, then, what thereat is, and this mystery explore—
Let my heart be still a moment and this mystery explore;—
'Tis the wind and nothing more!"

Open here I flung the shutter, when, with many a flirt and flutter,
In there stepped a stately Raven of the saintly days of yore;
Not the least obeisance made he; not a minute stopped or stayed he;
But, with mien of lord or lady, perched above my chamber door—
Perched upon a bust of Pallas just above my chamber door—
Perched, and sat, and nothing more.

Then this ebony bird beguiling my sad fancy into smiling,
By the grave and stern decorum of the countenance it wore,
"Though thy crest be shorn and shaven, thou," I said, "art sure no craven,
Ghastly grim and ancient Raven wandering from the Nightly shore—
Tell me what thy lordly name is on the Night's Plutonian shore!"
Quoth the Raven "Nevermore."

Much I marvelled this ungainly fowl to hear discourse so plainly,
Though its answer little meaning—little relevancy bore;
For we cannot help agreeing that no living human being
Ever yet was blessed with seeing bird above his chamber door—
Bird or beast upon the sculptured bust above his chamber door,
With such name as "Nevermore."

But the Raven, sitting lonely on the placid bust, spoke only
That one word, as if his soul in that one word he did outpour.
Nothing farther then he uttered—not a feather then he fluttered—
Till I scarcely more than muttered "Other friends have flown before—
On the morrow he will leave me, as my Hopes have flown before."
Then the bird said "Nevermore."





BOO-OLOGY: THE DRACULA PARROT



Lurking across New Guinea, the ominously nicknamed “Dracula Parrot” seeks to quench its sickening craving for... figs? That can’t be right! It’s true, despite their delightfully punkish appearance, the Dracula Parrot, more formally known as Pesquet’s Parrot (*Psittrichas fulgidus*), is actually a frugivore! Their strict affinity for figs has caused multiple morphological adaptations including their elongated beaks for pulling out fruit pulp, large bare skin patches on the face to decrease feather matting due to the figs’ sticky juices, and decreased jaw and palatine sizes to allow them to swallow large chunks of fruit.

About the size of an umbrella cockatoo (18 inches in length), they can be found in the lowland forests and canopies of New Guinea. Social groups of 10-14 individuals often roost in fruit trees, and mating pairs carefully select hollows in large trees to raise clutches of 1-2 chicks. Their loud, rasping calls are similar in volume and quality to a cockatoo’s harsh call. Look closely at the 2 photos we’ve included, and you will notice that one has a small red patch behind its eye, while the other does not! Only the males bare this subtle red marking.

Pesquet’s Parrot is currently classified as Vulnerable by the IUCN RedList, largely due to hunting for feather harvesting. Conservation efforts focus on banning non-traditional means of hunting and sharing preservation methods for native ceremonial headdresses to reduce the need for replacement feathers. The only bird in its genus,

Pesquet’s Parrot is a unique case study—though the truth about them is far less spooky than what meets the eye. We can confidently stow away the garlic and holy water, and perhaps replace them with enthusiastic support of conservation efforts—and a few figs!





SEARCHING FOR A SPONSOR:

Here in Colorado, fall brings a breathtaking display of color—golden aspens, burnt orange brush, and rich red mountain slopes. It's the perfect time to highlight one of our most vibrantly colored flock members: Cammie, the Shamrock Macaw! Shamrock Macaws are a hybrid between Military and Scarlet Macaws, and Cammie's stunning feathers reflect the full spectrum of fall... She's a living reflection of Colorado's seasonal beauty!

This fall, we're inviting you to become a sponsor and support Cammie's journey with TGF. Your monthly support helps provide food, enrichment, medical care, and love to parrots like her.

Beyond her looks, Cammie is playful, social, and full of personality. She loves outdoor time with her flock, shreddable toys, and interactive training sessions. While she's not hugely food-motivated, she lights up for dance parties and praise from her favorite caregivers. By sponsoring Cammie, you'll be directly supporting her care and helping us continue our mission to give parrots the lives they deserve.

Ready to sponsor Cammie? Sign up today at the level that works best for you—\$15, \$35, or \$70/month—and help us give this fall-colored beauty the best life possible!



SPONSOR CAMMIE: thegabrielfoundation.org/sponsor/cammie



SPONSOR UNMASKED: GARY DROLL

This month, we're thrilled to celebrate an incredible supporter whose generosity has truly made a difference in the lives of our flock members—Gary!

Gary first discovered The Gabriel Foundation through our episode on Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet and was inspired by the love he shares with his incredibly spoiled conure, Buster. In 2022, he became a sponsor of our conures, and since then, his kindness has only grown. From making thoughtful donations in honor of Buster's birthday to contributing during our end-of-year giving campaigns, Gary's support has been both heartfelt and consistent. Most recently, he became a sponsor of Max the grey, a special flock member featured in our previous edition of The Front Perch!

Gary's generosity has a direct and meaningful impact on the lives of our birds. His support helps us continue our mission: to provide a safe sanctuary for parrots in need, to match extraordinary birds with loving adopters, and to inspire others to responsibly improve the lives of companion parrots. To us, Gary truly embodies that final part of our mission — inspiring and encouraging others to be compassionate, responsible caregivers for parrots. Thanks to dedicated sponsors like Gary, our flock receives the love, care, and resources they need to thrive. Gary had this to share with our readers:



"My Conure, Buster, has been an invaluable companion for the last 15 years following my earlier serious illnesses. I am happy to provide sponsorship so that others may benefit from this same type of companionship."

Gary and Buster, we can't thank you enough for your ongoing support of our flock, foundation, and team. Your compassion truly changes lives. From all of us, feathered and human alike, our flock sends their love.

BECOME A SPONSOR TODAY: thegabrielfoundation.org/sponsor/



ADOPTABLE PUMPKIN: STARBUCK THE JENDAY CONURE

Starbuck is a scrumptiously handsome Jenday conure who we believe to be 22 years old. He is an active little guy with places to be. Starbuck would do best in a home that is willing to grant him his independence, as he prefers not to be handled by human caretakers. He is fully flighted, so he can get around and find his way back to his cage on his own, *thank you very much!* With that said, patient training may one day give him the comfort and confidence to step up for the right caregiver.



We would love to see Starbuck join a flock where he can make friends with another bird his size. He is an engaged yet respectful pal to other birds, seeking out companionship without being too pushy. His social skills are due in great part to the special bond he shared with another conure until his unfortunate passing in 2024. Starbuck has grieved the loss of his cage-mate and is ready to find love again! Most of our other conures already have a bestie, so though they welcome him as a third-wheel, he hasn't found his match quite yet.

Are you starstruck by Starbuck? Contact our adoptions team TODAY:

Email adoptions@thegabrielfoundation.org to learn more!

Read more about TGF adoptions: thegabrielfoundation.org/adoption/

TOY MAKING MISCHIEF WITH CSU'S PSM STUDENTS



Each fall, we are joined by Colorado State University's Professional Science Master's program focused in Zoo, Aquarium, and Animal Shelter Management (PSM-ZAASM) for a fun day full of learning! This year we were joined by 24 students. Together, we enjoyed the autumn weather as our team guided them in a toy making workshop and tours of the aviary. Their unique educational and professional backgrounds always lead to insightful questions and discussion throughout our time with them.

We have hosted two PSM students previously for their summer internship and capstone project, and each year we look forward to discussing potential internship opportunities with the rising cohort. Enrichment, animal behavior and training, and educating the public are all popular topics for their capstone projects... Interests certainly shared by our team at TGF! A student's capstone project is completed while they gain hands-on experience interning for the summer. At TGF this means learning our diligent husbandry routines, preparing our birds' healthy diet daily, building confidence with proper parrot handling, and working effectively within a team of animal welfare professionals.



By: Anna Wrona
(PSM-ZAASM class of 2022! Go Rams!)



HALLOWEEN & BEYOND:

FESTIVE CONSIDERATIONS FOR BIRD SAFETY

As we tiptoe into seasons of holiday decorating, cooking for those we love, and cherished traditions, it's crucial to pause and consider how we can make the most of the season while maintaining a safe environment for our companion parrots! You know your own home best, but here are a few considerations we brewed up to get your reflection started:

- Remind children that sweets cannot be shared with feathered friends! Stash your trick-or-treat bounty securely away from curious beaks.
- Don't go overboard sharing yummy human food; consider offering a festive parrot treat like seasonal Nutri-berries instead.
- Prevent birds from coming into contact with glitter, styrofoam, and other unsafe materials often used in holiday decor.
- Swap out candles for a simmer pot to fill your home with an autumnal essence without releasing soot into the air.
- Exercise great caution when cooking—give your flighted birds some cage time to keep everyone secure and burn-free! You might consider some autumnal enrichment ideas to keep their brains and beaks busy in the meantime.
- Monitor your flock's comfort during gatherings and direct your guests to treat them respectfully... not every bird is the life of the party, and that's okay!

Don't forget about your local wildlife's safety!

- Ditch the fake spiderwebs to avoid entangling birds and other critters.
- Decorate your windows to prevent flight collision! Fun and functional!
- Be mindful of your pumpkin placement... consider whether your mouth-watering gourds will lure birds and squirrels into unsafe areas.
- To dive deeper into more ideas for outdoor bird safety, visit:
[audubon.org/magazine/how-have-bird-friendly-halloween](https://www.audubon.org/magazine/how-have-bird-friendly-halloween)



30TH ANNIVERSARY WEBINAR



It's hard to believe that The Gabriel Foundation first spread its wings on October 25, 1995. Thirty years later, we're still soaring! How do you sum up three decades of caring for thousands of birds? How do you measure the countless beaks fed, toys shredded, and feathers fluffed? And what will the next 30 years bring, if the last 30 have already changed the avian world so much?

In honor of our "hatch-date," we're sitting down with TGF's founder and CEO, Julie Murad, for a special anniversary webinar. Join us Sunday, October 26th at 12 PM MT as we take a flight through TGF's history, reflect on the challenges and triumphs that shaped us, and share where we're headed next.

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)



FALL SEASON SAVE THE DATES

HILLTOP SCHOOL DAYS FALL HARVEST FESTIVAL



When: **Saturday, October 4th from 10AM-3PM**

Where: Hilltop Schoolhouse, 5748 Flintwood Rd. in Parker, CO

What: Visit our booth at the local Hilltop School Days Fall Festival! Aside from our parrot-packed booth, attendees will enjoy the harvest season with turn of the century games and activities, many artisan booths, food and merriment!

FALL ONLINE AUCTION

When: **Monday, October 6th-Monday, October 13th**

Take a sneak peek: **TGF Spooky Season Auction**

What: Get ready for the thrill of online bidding as you compete against your fellow TGF supporters for thoughtfully selected, bird-themed items!



OCTOBER CAGE SALE

When: **Saturday, October 11th from 10AM-2PM**

Where: At the aviary! 39520 County Rd. 13 in Elizabeth, CO

What: Come peruse a diverse selection of cages, **including brand new L and XL outdoor aviaries!** Our talented team have also prepared toys and natural perches to deck out your bird's space—be they small, medium, or large! You won't want to miss it.





MEANINGFUL WAYS TO GIVE

CONTRIBUTE TO OUR VET FUND!

[Donate Here-Select the Forever Norman Veterinary Fund!](#)

Thanks to the generosity of our community, we recently met our fundraising goal of \$15,000 for Ziggy + Freddie's surgeries—all within 3 days! **WOW!** Feeling the love like we are? Donate to our whole flock's wellness through our vet fund!

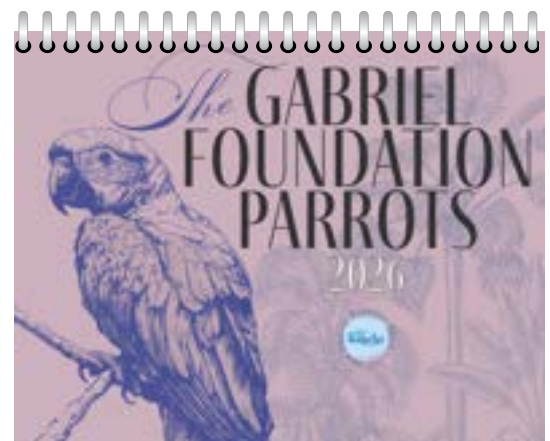


2026 CALENDAR

AVAILABLE NOW!

Purchase: **[CLICK HERE!](#)**

Let beautiful photos of our flock welcome you to each month by purchasing our 2026 calendar!



SHOPIFY STORE & ETSY FEATHERS

Shopify: **shoptgf.com**

Support our flock by purchasing parrot-themed goodies designed by our team: stickers, clothing, mugs, mouse pads, and much more for you to enjoy!

Etsy: **etsy.com/shop/TGFeathers**

Our Etsy store is where we sell naturally molted feathers from our flock! Great for crafters, collectors, or whatever your imagination can dream up.





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SOURCES & LINKS:

Lafeber's Pumpkin Spice NutriBerries: lafeber.com/pet-food/bird-food/limited-edition-pumpkin-spice-nutri-berries/

Harrison's Parrot Carrot Cake recipe: harrisonsbirdfoods.com/parrot-carrot-cake/

Read *The Raven* by Edgar Allen Poe in full: poetryfoundation.org/poems/48860/the-raven

The Dracula Parrot: iucnredlist.org/species/22685025/118772050,

lafeber.com/pet-birds/the-dracula-parrot-the-truth-behind-its-spooky-name/,

parrots.org/encyclopedia/pesquets-parrot/

Photos by Iggino Van Bael and Indian Defense Review.

Audubon's bird-friendly Halloween: audubon.org/magazine/how-have-bird-friendly-halloween

Find all TGF webinar recordings here: <https://thegabrielfoundation.org/webinars/>

THANK YOU FOR READING!