

NONPROFIT

Bird-rescue agency depends on local foster homes

By Natalie Shelton

Kim Eckert is playing catch with a white-and-orange cockatoo named Skipper, who also enjoys a rousing game of peekaboo with a tea towel on his head.

She fosters Skipper in her Kearney home, which is filled with squawks and tweets and random mimics.

She also has Jojo, a Mexican redhead Amazon. She fostered the bird she calls hot-headed and then adopted him after he'd lived in a single room in another home for 14 years with only food, water and no attention, she said.

An adopted quaker named Fanny and a cockatiel named Sunshine round out her feathered menagerie.

Eckert is a member of Beak n Wings, an educational bird club founded in the Shawnee Mission, Kan., area six years ago. It's evolved into a rescue and adoption agency. Beak n Wings annually takes in about 50 birds, all fostered in club members' homes and rehabilitated if necessary.

The nonprofit club has about 190 members and is considered a licensed shelter in both Missouri and Kansas. It has photos and information of rescued birds available for adoption at www.beaknwing.org.

Beak n Wings member Kathleen Siska of Liberty just

BIRD EXPO

- Beak n Wings will sponsor its sixth annual Spring Bird Expo from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 25, at the KCI-Expo Center, 11730 N. Ambassador Drive in Kansas City.
- Those with companion birds will find pet birds, cages, perches, food dishes, seed and more.
- Admission is \$3.
- For more information, call Dean Tyson, executive director, at (913) 722-2632 or Wayne Ingold, director, at (913) 209-9705.

certain bird will be a good fit for their family," Siska said. "It's traumatic for them to be taken out of their surroundings. These guys bond with a flock for life."

Siska's adopted five of her birds and fosters Bailey, a quaker, and Coco, a Catalina macaw. She bought CiCi, a Solomon Island eclectus, from the club for \$500. She's worth \$2,200.

Siska also cared for blue front Amazon named Daryl. He didn't make it, despite her

spending \$1,000 in vet bills and the club spending another \$300 trying to save him.

Siska cares for the five adopted and two foster birds of fellow club member Linda Engelmann of Liberty when she's out of town.

Engelmann cares for the club mascot, Bob, a green severe macaw who has only one claw after being attacked by dogs before he was rescued.

A yellow nape Amazon in Engelmann's home, also named Bob, lived in a mechanic's shop for 14 years and squawks, "Get to work!" and "I'm comin' over!"

And Missy, a timneh African grey, spends about 30 minutes each evening with Engelmann. "She likes to sit and be talked to," Siska said.

Cradling her red-front macaw Scooter like a baby as he nuzzled her, Siska said the birds responded to good care



NATALIE SHELTON/Liberty Tribune

Kathleen Siska of Liberty is a member of Beak n Wings, an educational pet bird club that has evolved into a rescue and adoption agency. Siska has five birds of her own, some of which she's adopted through Beak n Wings.

with a gift of longevity. "It depends on their diet, their care and the other members of their flock," she said. "They'll thrive with a happy, healthy flock."

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