

The Challenge

To keep you informed about avian PDD and related research
and the fundraising and outreach activities of AHN's StopPDD Challenge™ campaign

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BIRDS OF A FEATHER QUILT

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Ritchie selects 2005 "Birds of a Feather" Quilt winner May 22, 2005

Following slide presentations of current work by the Emerging Diseases Research Group at the University of Georgia's College of Veterinary Medicine (see "EDRG RESEARCH" below), Dr. Branson Ritchie reached into the 415 tickets his supporters had purchased and withdrew winning ticket A0067, belonging to Kari Banta, an Austin, Texas transportation planner.

Kari won a unique quilt that is the first of its kind in avian charity fundraising, a collaborative collage of colorful parrots assembled by charity quilter Ardith Raine in Las Vegas, Nevada, from quilt squares ("blocks") sewn by seasoned and amateur bird lovers and bird clubs across the U.S.

Photographed block by block and in its entirety, the "Birds of a Feather" Quilt was impressive to see on the Internet. But displayed behind AHN tables at several Bird Marts to test its 'road appeal', the quilt was absolutely striking. Some passersby found it very moving, indeed, and many more browsers than usual stopped to hear about PDD, often staying to buy a ticket (or 5, for a price discount) in the hope of winning the unique piece. One man offered to buy it outright for a princely sum. When table volunteers explained that the quilt was a drawing prize, he asked for the names of the contributors so he could contact them to make a quilt "just like this one."

The names of AHN's "QuiltingBirds" are not for sale, of course, but they should certainly be acknowledged. As the quilt is made with many small stitches, it is also made of many gifts of time and talent and heart and pocket money by the people most affected by this brutal disease. AHN's QuiltingBirds developed quilter guidelines, stitched

squares, helped AHN plan and orchestrate its first charity quilt program. Forgive us, please, if by accident, we fail to list you here among these folks and organizations with whom the 2004-2005 “Birds of a Feather” Quilt would not have been possible – and please let us know so we can correct our oversight:

2004-2005 “BIRDS OF A FEATHER” QUILT PROGRAM

MANAGERS

Randy Wood (2003-4)
Diane McKinney (2004)
Valerie Schuster (2004-5)

QUILTING BIRDS AND OTHER VOLUNTEERS

Ardith Raine (NV)

<u>Quilter/Volunteer</u>	<u>Quilter, Bird Club</u>
Pam Thompson (VA)	Charlene Beane, African Parrot Society (WA)
Lynn Santana (MN)	Barbara Anne Bronson, Treasure Coast Exotic Bird Club (FL)
Margie Hobbins (GA)	Suzanne Buck, Phoenix Landing ³ (VA, NC)
Vona Marengo (MA) ¹	Kathy Dinnon, The Avicultural Society of Chicagoland (TASC)
Eve Weiler (NY)	Becky McKirahan, The Bird Heard (MD)
Miriam B. Walling (FL) ²	Gloria Wheeler, International Parrotlet Society ⁴ (CA)
Steffanie Budnick (MI)	
Diane Royal (VA)	Michiana Bird Club (MI)
Debra Standiford (TX)	<i>(passed the block around at a club meeting, each member adding a few stitches)</i>
Ingrid McCue (PA)	

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

- No words can express AHN’s deep respect and gratitude for the efforts of The Bird Heard in bringing the 2005 Quilt campaign to a memorable close.
- Lisa Minnich⁵ (Eastern Berks County Pet Bird Mart) and John Long (Mid-Atlantic Bird Mart) shared table space with AHN’s StopPDD Quilt campaign at busy bird marts in Pennsylvania and Virginia in 2004 and 2005; and countless dozens of show vendors generously donated prizes that AHN volunteers raffled off to shoppers at hourly intervals to raise funds for PDD research.
- Carla Thornton interviewed key AHN volunteers as well as photographer Bob Howard, whose bird Rocky was the first bird added to the StopPDD Campaign’s [virtual memorial quilt](#)⁶ on the Internet. Her moving article called the “[The Quilt of Hope](#)⁷” in *ParrotChronicles* helped educate the avian public about PDD devastation, and provided much needed press for the Quilt program.
- Special thanks to Kyle Sandler and [Parrotrents](#) and [BirdTimes Magazine](#) for their active support in educating the public about PDD and PDD research, and for their help in promoting AHN’s StopPDD fundraising and outreach events.
- Gina and Damian Haase recast AHN’s website into a handsome professional presence for fundraising events like the Birds of a Feather Quilt, and for better access to information about PDD and PDD research.
- Debra Standiford’s unflagging efforts on behalf of AHN’s newsletter in 2004-2005 helped promote the Birds of a Feather Quilt to a wide audience of interested Internet bird groups and mailing lists.

¹ Vona Marengo of Worcester, Massachusetts donated 6 blocks, as follows: “Stanley Flying Home to Momma”; “Biggles (Gtoo) meets Chuckie (CAG)”; “B&G, Scarlet, and GreenWing”; “Jungle Windows”; “Fanciful Amazon”; and “Biggles Flying”.

² Mimi Walling hand-made the Blue-throated macaw (*Caninde Macaw*).

³ Anne Brooks commissioned quilter Suzanne Buck to create 3 blocks on behalf of Phoenix Landing. Margaret Rolfe’s book, *The Quilter’s Ark*, provided two of the patterns, including the Quaker, and were used by permission of the publisher, Martingale and Co. (The Patchwork Place).

⁴ Sandee Molende commissioned the block on behalf of IPS in Santa Cruz, CA.

⁵ <http://www.minnichsbirds.com/>

⁶ http://www.stopppdd.org/problem/pdd_quilt/pdd_quilt.html

⁷ <http://www.parrotchronicles.com/septoct2004/quilt.htm>

KARI BANTA, WINNER OF THE 2005 "BIRDS OF A FEATHER" QUILT,

...got her first bird when she moved from New York to Texas. "I was very lonely and needed a friend," she said. "I had no idea what I was getting myself into!" She and her husband share their home with an 8 year old Quaker named Piepmatz and a four year old white capped pionus named Zoe. "I learned about the horrible nature of PDD by reading the story of one bird's struggle on an email list back in 1999," Kari said. "We've been lucky that we've not had personal experience with it, and I figure it's my responsibility to help the cause as part of what I do to take care of my little ones. I guess it's my hope that if enough people take action, no more birds will have to suffer."

Kari was stunned when she received the phone call announcement from AHN president Valerie Schuster last Sunday. "I actually couldn't tell my husband because I started to cry. The amount of love and caring that went into the quilt, as well as the sadness and urgency of the cause... it hit me all at once. I am tremendously grateful to receive this beautiful piece that contains the hard work and love of so many people. I've cleared a wall in my house where it will hang, proudly on display."

Celebrating Support

AHN acknowledged outstanding contributions to PDD research, education, and fundraising of benefactors on May 21-22, 2005. Certificates of Appreciation were presented to Len Charette, of C&L Aviaries in Bensalem, Pennsylvania; and Pam Thompson and Ed Daisy, of Chantilly, Virginia. Len has supported fundraising for PDD research since the very early days of Valerie Wixen's TGPC campaign and is well-known for his generous prize donations. Pam's and Ed's remarkable donations of money, time, and energetic talent distinguish the passion of their commitment to the cause of PDD research.

A Certificate of Appreciation was also awarded to The Bird Heard for its efforts on behalf of the 2005 Birds of a Feather Quilt. Bird Heard club president Becky McKirahan submitted one of the first blocks for this year's quilt, and her entire club pitched in to plan, host and cater the climactic events at the end of this first annual fundraising program. This was no small undertaking, but The Bird Heard, like the little engine that could, planned and hosted a truly spectacular presentation event that was awesome in its attention to detail.

Donations Top \$10,000 at Quilt Drawing in Maryland

Cotton milling started in Maryland in the 18th century. Before the 19th century, rail transportation served the mill town of Savage. Cotton shipped cheaply from Southern ports was hauled over land by mule and oxen teams to the town's textile mills on the falls of the Little and Middle Patuxent Rivers for manufacture into cotton duck sails for the tall ships at nearby Chesapeake Bay ports.

The Bird Heard, a cluster of Maryland bird lovers who seem to simply enjoy having fun together, selected Savage Methodist Church in this historical textile town to host AHN's First Annual "Birds of a Feather" Quilt Drawing. Postponed from April due to a schedule conflict with Dr. Ritchie's ECAMS presentation, the event fell on the weekend of the Preakness Stakes, one of America's top three horse races, at nearby Pimlico Racetrack.

Hotel rooms were hard to find and airfare costs to Baltimore were higher than local folks could ever remember, but that did not deter the determined! Nathalie Ross, who lost a precious bird in early May, flew in from Texas; Kyle Sandler, who is sponsoring a contest with vendor donated prizes reminiscent of Valerie Wixen's TGPC, made the trek from North Carolina; the entire staff of a shop called Birds of a Feather closed their doors in Pennsylvania for the day to drive down and drop a \$300 donation at the door; and at the last minute, Steffanie Budnick, one of AHN's own founding directors and a skilled nurse and mother of two in southern Michigan, was able to extricate herself briefly from her responsibilities to attend the event.

Following the Georgia researcher's presentations on EDRG research, Len Charette (C&L Aviary) presented Dr. Ritchie with AHN's check for \$7500, representing bird lovers everywhere whose generous donations and participation in AHN fundraising events support PDD research.

At the event's conclusion, The Bird Heard turned door receipts totaling well over a thousand dollars over to AHN for its next check to EDRG -- and a nearby benefactor promptly pledged to match it. The Bird Heard also turned over hundreds of dollars of proceeds from their raffle and refreshments tables.

Okay. That's small potatoes for a man who needs a quarter of a million dollars to pave the way to a vaccine, but does it help? "Oh, yes!" Dr. Ritchie replied emphatically. He gestured at the people seated to hear him speak. "It's the people who love the parrots that are funding disease research. Without this support, we wouldn't be able to carry on any work at all!"

AHN launches "2006 Birds of a Feather Quilt Challenge to StopPDD"

Avian Health Network, Inc., is pleased and proud to announce its second annual charity quilt event, the 2006 "Birds of a Feather" Quilt Challenge to StopPDD.

As the 2005 Quilt ramped down to its conclusion with the events in Maryland on Sunday, the 2006 Quilt Challenge was already rising on its foundation. Program manager Valerie Schuster is reluctant to discuss details so soon, but notes that the technical guidelines for quilters are already being drafted and that last year's QuiltingBirds can expect to be contacted soon. Opportunities for artist and vendor sponsorships and partnering are on the drawing board.

Expect more details about the 2006 Quilt Challenge in the next newsletter, and check AHN's website for interim updates.

EDRG RESEARCH

- Veterinary Report on West Nile Virus
- PDD in a Colony of Cockatiels
- Ritchie Road Report
- Veterinary Vocabulary

At a special presentation accompanying AHN's Birds of a Feather Quilt drawing in Savage, MD, on May 22, 2005, University of Georgia Distinguished Research Professor [Dr. Branson Ritchie](#), ABVP & ECAMS, presented research information about avian infectious diseases to several dozen people in attendance. Attention was absolute through both presentations, and Dr. Ritchie was as responsive as an energetic undergrad professor during the Q&A session following. The slide presentations are already being discussed on psittacine-related mailing lists, interest groups, and blogs.

Report on WEST NILE VIRUS

Dr. Ritchie presented general and practical information about the disease along with a report on EDRG's work with Drs. Dr. Redig (University of Minnesota) and Dr. Tully (Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge) on a plasmid-mediated vaccine specifically for birds.

The disease is deadliest to crows, raptors, and waterfowl. Although 50 psittacine species appear susceptible to the disease, parrots generally appear relatively resistant. Most birds become subclinically affected, develop an appropriate immune response, and quickly clear the virus. Old World birds (African, Indian, European) can usually survive the disease. Birds originating from the New World or South Pacific are far more susceptible to infection and death.

Knowing the facts about West Nile Virus (WNV) can protect your parrots better than keeping them indoors. "The benefits of sunshine and clean air are so much greater than the risk," drawled Dr. Ritchie, "that it's just *silly* to deny your birds." But "use common sense," he cautions. Leave them inside until the morning dew is gone and bring them in before dusk, times when mosquitoes are most active.

Reports and Resources

Ritchie B.W. (2000). "West Nile Virus-A recent immigrant to the United States." *Compendium on Continuing Education for Practicing Veterinarians*. 22:576-587.

Ritchie, B.W. (March 2004). "[Ask the Expert: what are your thoughts on parrots contracting WNV?](#)", *Avian Health Network, Inc., Newsletter*, Volume II, Number 6. P. 3.
[<http://www.stopdd.org/downloads/newsletter/04-03-16%20news.pdf>]

Thornton, Carla. (November-December 2002). "[What can we do about the West Nile Virus?](#)" *ParrotChronicles*
[<http://www.parrotchronicles.com/novdec2002/westnile.htm>]

Tully, Jr., Thomas N." (2003). "Determining the Seroprevalence of West Nile Virus in an Exposed Psittacine Population," AAV Proceedings.

United States Geographic Service. (2005). [West Nile Virus Maps: Birds](#).

Wissman, Margaret A.. (c. 2002). "[West Nile Virus: What You Must Know For Your Bird's Sake](#)," Exotic Pet Vet.Net. <http://www.exoticpetvet.net/avian/westnile.html>

PDD Update: the Cockatiels study

A month after presenting "Epizootiology of Proventricular Dilatation Disease in Breeding Cockatiels" to ECAMS colleagues at the European Conference of the AAV in France on April, Dr. Ritchie explained the cockatiels study and its implications to a roomful of attentive laymen in Savage, Maryland, on May 22. A diplomate in ECAMS (the European College of Avian Medicine and Surgery), a Distinguished Research Professor and current Acting Head of the Department of Small Animal Medicine at the UGA College of Veterinary Medicine, Dr. Ritchie also commands respect in this audience as a practical veterinary practitioner. For many, there because they have lost their birds, he represented the single greatest hope that it can be stopped from happening again. Others were stunned to hear for the first time how radically lifestyles we have taken for granted are having to be changed by this disease.

Dr. Ritchie speaks well and is clearly accustomed to teaching. He quickly sketched the history of the disease, its spread in the United States, Canada and Europe, the epornitic (attacking many birds in a region at the same time) character of the disease. Waterfowl, such as geese, and other free ranging birds – finches, canaries, spoonbills, toucans and possibly woodpeckers – are known to carry the disease. All psittacines appear to be at risk, although data on free-ranging populations has not been collected.

The disease may be far more prevalent than we know because it is carried by asymptomatic birds, and not all birds exposed to PDD contract the disease. Dr. Ritchie talked at length about the diagnosis of PDD, illustrating his lecture with accompanying photos from EDRG's cockatiel study. "It's not PDD until your pathologist gives you a histologic diagnosis of lymphoplasmacytic ganglioneuritis," Dr. Ritchie emphasized. Individuals without clinical symptoms but diagnosed microscopically with PDD lesions, should be considered at extra risk of developing disease. Birds with clinical signs that are to be treated should be placed in strict isolation. But "isolate, don't euthanize," he begged, distress visible on his face.

AHN hopes to publish a more complete report of this presentation and about EDRG's cockatiel study in an upcoming issue of the Challenge.

About EDRG and Branson Ritchie, Ph.D., ABVP, ECAMS

Dr. Ritchie obtained his DVM from the University of Georgia's College of Veterinary Medicine in 1985 and his PhD in Medical Microbiology from the same institution in 1990. In 2000, he received the honored title of Distinguished Research Professor.

As a member of the multi-disciplined Emerging Diseases Research Group at the University of Georgia College of Veterinary Medicine, Dr. Ritchie has been involved in characterizing the PBFV virus, developing a DNA probe based assay for the PBFV virus, developing the avian polyomavirus vaccine and developing DNA probe based assays to detect polyomavirus, adenovirus and Pacheco's disease virus.

In conjunction with researchers at LSU, the Emerging Diseases Research Group has developed and tested assays for detecting chlamydia nucleic acid in clinical samples and is involved with the LSU group in testing a vaccine to prevent chlamydiosis. Currently, the psittacine disease research group is working on characterizing the suspect PDD virus and testing subunit vaccines to prevent polyomavirus-and PBFV virus-induced diseases.

The research group has published more than 50 scientific publications on infectious diseases of companion birds and Dr. Ritchie has edited two textbooks, *Avian Medicine: Principles and Applications*, and *Avian Viruses: Function and Control*. In addition, Dr. Ritchie is a Diplomate of the American Board of Veterinary Practitioners, and a Diplomate of the European College of Avian Medicine and Surgery.

Ritchie Road Report

ARLES – March 2005

Dr. Ritchie presented "Epizootiology of Proventricular Dilatation Disease in Breeding Cockatiels" at the 6th Scientific Meeting of ECAMS during the European Conference of the Association of Avian Veterinarians in Arles, France on April 26, 2005. Dr. Ritchie is a diplomate in ECAMS, the European College of Avian Medicine and Surgery.

Other papers presented in sessions at the four-day conference:

- U. Bendheim, A. Lublin, N. Edery, "Reliability of crop biopsy as a diagnostic tool for proventricular dilatation disease in psittacines" (Clinical and laboratory diagnosis session)
- U. Bendheim & I. Davidson, "Molecular Identification and Prevalence of Psittacine Circovirus in Israel" (ECAMS)
- T.A. Bailey & O. Combreau, "Domestication and Disease: Challenges for Houbara Bustard Captive Breeding Projects in the Middle East" (ECAMS)

- J. Grífols, F. Bargalló, D. Perpiñán, A. Ramis, J. Ballester, "Circovirus infection in a canary breeding flock" (Free-living and special species session)
- A. Lublin, S. Mechani, V. Bumbarov, "Diagnoses of rotavirus in pet birds vrs. poultry" (Clinical and laboratory diagnosis session)
- S. Pesaro, R. Ceccherelli, C. Tarantino, S. Scoccianti, E. Bert, G. Rossi, "The first Italian outbreak of polyomavirus infection in macaws" (EAAV Main Conference)
- S. Lafon, J-L. Pingret, C. Boucraut-Baralon, "Real-Time PCR for diagnosis of three common infectious diseases in caged birds: Chlamydiosis, beak and feather disease and avian polyomaviriosis" (Posters)

More:

- ECAMS: <http://www.ecams-online.org/public/conference.asp>
- E-AAV: <http://www.eaav.org/>
- Arles Conference program: <http://www.vogelklinik.vetmed.uni-muenchen.de/eaav/conferences/arles05.htm>

MARYLAND – May 2005

PDD in Cockatiels; Notes on West Nile Virus

The Bird Heard

May 22, 2005

Savage, MD

Slide presentations (reported above) about West Nile Virus and PDD Cockatiels colony study in conjunction with AHN's 2005 "Birds of a Feather Quilt" drawing.

MONTEREY – August 2005

26th Annual Association of Animal Veterinarians Conference

August 8-12, 2005

Monterey, CA

Dr. Ritchie will not be presenting at the AAV Conference this year. PDD-related papers will include:

- Proventricular Dilation Disease in a Peregrine Falcon - H Shivaprasad, BVSc, MS, PhD
- Case Report: A typical Presentation of Proventricular Dilatation Disease in a Double Yellow-headed Amazon (*Amazona ochrocephala oratrix*) - Tarah Hadley, DVM

BELFAST – September 2005

Dr. Ritchie has accepted an invitation to be a plenary speaker at the International Conference on "Animal Circoviruses and Associated Diseases" at Queen's University in the heart of Belfast, Ireland, between September 11 and 13th, 2005. This conference, sponsored by the European Association for Veterinary Virology, will provide an opportunity for scientists, veterinarians and other end-users to meet, debate and discuss important aspects of circovirus research with particular focus on pathogenesis, epidemiology and control of circovirus diseases.

- <http://www.happen.co.uk/esvv2005/speakers.htm#BransoRitchie>

Veterinary Vocabulary

A **pathogen** (literally "birth of pain" from the Greek *παθογένεια*) is a biological agent that can cause disease to its host. A synonym of pathogen is "infectious agent". The term "pathogen" is most often used for agents that disrupt the normal physiology of a multicellular animal or plant. However, pathogens can infect unicellular organisms from all of the biological kingdoms (see Viruses, below). [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pathogen]

Etiology (alternately aetiology, aitiology) is the study of causation. The term (deriving from the Greek words *aitia* = cause and *logos* = word/speech) is used in philosophy, physics and biology in reference to the causes of various phenomena. It is generally the study of why things occur, or even the reasons behind the way that things act.

[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiological]

Assigning or seeking to assign a cause of a specific disease [www.genecrc.org/site/glos/glosadv.htm]

GRASS ROOTS FUNDRAISING

- Collaborative fundraising
- The Wowwie Contest and the tradition of avian activism
- It's a Small World
- Rumors and Announcements

Corporations and celebrities busy themselves with bigger causes when they turn their attention to good works. We who support research into a disease afflicting the psittacine populations are a pretty specialized population

ourselves. The grass roots efforts of individuals and charity organizations, bird clubs, publications, etc., can really help to make a difference...

GRASS ROOTS FUNDRAISING

....is a beautiful, collaborative thing.

Who can forget Valerie Wixen's "Grey PoopOn Challenge" (TGPC), a remarkable testament to her lost companion Mocha? This collaboration of artists and vendors and a generous avian public to raise research funds across the Internet helped to define a new paradigm for electronic fundraising. All of AHN's fundraising programs have been inspired and informed by TGPC, including the new 2006 Quilt Challenge.

On March 28, 2004, the Buffalo Hookbill Association together with Parrot Fund International sponsored the "Buffalo Parrot Conference 2004" at D'Youville College in Buffalo, NY, raising \$8,750 for PDD research.

Now we have The Wowwie Contest, spontaneously ignited when Nathalie Ross' companion grey Wowwie passed away on May 4, 2005. Sponsored by Kyle Sandler of Parrotrents (Online Bird, Inc.), this drawing features prizes that "are things Wowwie loved," including toys and supplies provided by a number of vendors. Len Charette of C&L Aviary, long known for his commitment to PDD research, donated a Sterling scale as the grand prize, and pledged to match a thousand dollars. To enter the drawing, provide Online Bird with a donation to PDD research, or a receipt for a donation, between now and May 31, 2005. At this writing, the contest has received more than \$2000 in donations and donation receipts.

All proceeds will be donated to the Emerging Diseases Research Group (EDRG) at the University of Georgia to support PDD research. The contest ends on May 31, 2005; drawing results will be available on June 5.

- The Wowwie Contest: <http://www.parrotrents.com/wowwie.html>
- Buffalo Parrot Conference: http://www.buffalohookbill.org/conference_2004.html
- About The Grey PoopOn Challenge: http://www.stoppdd.org/about_ahn/tgpc.html

Note: While The Wowwie Contest is not an AHN-sponsored event, it provides a similar value to donors and to research organizations by organizing small sums of money into more significant donations. EDRG and the foundation which supports it are not set up to process small donations - it has been known to cost them more than the value of the donation to do so. By aggregating donations and using volunteer time and effort to defray administrative costs, fundraising events like the Wowwie Contest and AHN's Quilt Challenge help to keep researchers and research dollars focused on research, not administration.

MAKING IT COUNT

A Bank of America employee figured out how to make her donation in Wowwie's name (see GRASS ROOTS FUNDRAISING, above) count four ways! She

- donated \$50 to AHN's StopPDD campaign,
- doubled the donation by registering it with the Bank of America's matching gift program,
- used her receipt to enter the Parrotrents-sponsored Wowwie Contest with a chance to win great prizes,
- and qualified AHN as a recipient for future donations by BoA employees!

Everyone wins - especially the birds! Way to go!

Over on the Bird Board, The Outlaw suggested a letter writing campaign to Jimmy Buffett. Or anything! "You can make a difference," The Outlaw writes, "Quit smoking, put that money in a jar and send off a check for whatever [you] save. The next time you go to the grocery store and use merchant coupons, put that money aside and do the same thing. I know that on any given month, I find at least \$5 in the washer and dryer. I've been saving that for 2 years now and sending off contributions. Hell, I don't even miss it!" And suddenly others begin to pledge, one after another: the cost of carton of cigarettes each month, a day's pay, a letter to Jimmy Buffett, a resolution to spread the word about protecting beloved birds... (*Ed. Note: Say, Parrotheads, Jimmy's not the only celebrity with a penchant for parrots ... gotta get em' all!*)

On hearing AHN's announcement of the 2006 "Birds of a Feather" Quilt Challenge to StopPDD, Bob Howard, the avian photographer featured in *ParrotChronicles*' article about PDD last year, volunteered his professional services to shoot high-quality stills of the new quilt for publicity and promotion next year. Outstanding, Bob – thanks!

IT'S A SMALL WORLD!

While AHN's 2004-2005 "Birds of a Feather" fundraiser quilt was the first of its kind among avian charity organizations, it was not the last. Diane McKinney, who managed AHN's first quilt program briefly in 2004, subsequently created her own quilt and donated it to The Alex Foundation, where it was raffled off on May 2, 2005. In a remarkable twist of fate, winning ticket 183258 belonged to AHN president Valerie Schuster. "I've always supported Dr. Pepperburg's research," Valerie explained, her companion grey, Cleo, audible in the background. "It's because of Alex that I first got interested in African Greys." Since contest rules make our directors ineligible to enter AHN-sponsored drawings, Valerie leaped at the chance to make a personal contribution to the Alex Foundation and support Diane McKinney's generous contribution to avian research. "But I never expected to win!" Valerie exclaimed, "I've got to figure out a way to keep this good karma going!" She says she is considering donating the handsome quilt to an undisclosed avian charity foundation for display in its corporate offices.

- The Alex Foundation (<http://www.alexfoundation.org/>)

NEWS AND NOTES

Congratulations to AHN volunteer Ingrid McCue on the birth of her baby boy Aaren on April 26, 2005. At more than eight pounds, the baby is healthy, his mother recovering cheerfully. Still pitching in from her bedside, Ingrid volunteered to proofread this newsletter.

THE FINE PRINT

The *Challenge* is a newsletter for volunteers, donors, and other participants in the fundraising and outreach activities of Avian Health Network, Inc. (AHN). AHN does not warrant the accuracy or completeness of the information, text, or other items contained within these materials. AHN cannot guarantee the accuracy or timeliness of the information contained herein, nor the information distributed by other groups or resources referenced in this document. Any veterinary information contained herein is for informative purposes only, and is not meant to substitute for quality avian veterinary care. Those with birds exhibiting *any* symptom of illness should immediately seek the advice of a qualified avian medical professional.

Newsletter articles may be reprinted on the WWW if attributed to AHN's Challenge newsletter or StopPDD campaign. We encourage you to link to the home page of our public charity website at URL <http://www.StopPDD.org/>, and to download banners for use at your website. AHN does not cross-post links.

Avian Health Network, Inc. is a 501(C) 3 headquartered and incorporated in the Commonwealth of Virginia. We are an organization of volunteers with no paid personnel. We are committed to raising public awareness and funds for avian diseases such as PDD. Financial Statement is available upon written request from the State Office of Consumer Affairs, Commonwealth of Virginia. Proceeds generated by the StopPDD campaign will go to help subsidize the research of the Emerging Diseases Research Group (EDRG) at the University of Georgia's College of Veterinary Medicine.