

# The American Federation of Aviculture's Aviculture Badge Program



*The Junior Girls scouts learn about safe and fun birds toys. (l-r) Adrina (with Picasso the Caique), Laurie, Elisa, Haley and Karlee. - Photo by Janet Boeger.*

at home, was silent. "Typical grey!" Janet said. But Janet's Brownie daughter, Jenna, gave away Dresden's secrets. At home, he has learned to mimic the order Jenna frequently receives from her older brother, Preston: "Jenna, get out of my room!" No matter how the Scouts squealed and begged for a performance of this phrase, the bird kept his dignity and silence. More reserved and possessed of a larger beak, Dresden wasn't allowed to get too cozy with the girls but was well-mannered and sat patiently for some group pictures.

The girls came away with a new affection and respect for the parrot family. "My favorite part was holding the bird," said Adrina, one of the Junior Scouts. "I was afraid it might bite me. But it just went up and down my arm. I'm not afraid anymore."

*Janet Boeger contributed to this story. Jamie Cackler Bennetts is mother of two young girls and a teenage stepson, and lives in Antioch, Calif. Formerly a newspaper reporter and editor, she has been an elementary school teacher for the past five years. ■*

The American Federation of Aviculture has taken an opportunity to reach out to young people to teach them responsible bird ownership. This program was initially created by one of the AFA's affiliated clubs from Texas called the River City Bird Club. We would like to thank RCBC for their generosity in sharing their program with the American Federation of Aviculture and allowing us to in turn share it with our affiliated clubs around the country. The River City Bird Club has been giving this program in Texas for several years with great success. In early 2004, the program was piloted by AFA in New Jersey and sponsored by one of our specialty organizations, the Arcadia Bird Sanctuary and Educational Center by Terri Jones, New Jersey State Coordinator. In August of 2004, the initial program was delivered to all House of Delegates attendees at the AFA convention in San Francisco, CA. Over the course of the year, several more AFA Aviculture Badge packets have been sent to a number of clubs and organizations requesting information.

In early 2005, AFA determined that we should modify the Aviculture Badge program such that all content would be on a single compact disk. This way, each club or organization would be able to modify the content as needed – module information, schedules, quizzes, etc. The clubs could also modify the content based on the age or experience of the audience. The aviary tour has been revised as well as the overall structure and content. Special thanks to Howard Hammack, Nancy Speed, and Matt Schmit for photos and help revising the program onto CD. At the 2005

House of Delegates meeting at the Miami convention, each attendee was given a copy of the revised AFA Aviculture Badge program.

Now in 2006, Ohio State Coordinator Sassy Pickard, with the help of others with educational backgrounds, is again revising the AFA Aviculture Badge program to make it more versatile and user friendly. We hope to have an update on the updated program in the coming months. AFA will provide badges for the children who successfully complete the program. Clubs may also create and provide their own club-specific badges if they choose to.

The American Federation of Aviculture feels strongly that the future of aviculture is dependant upon the youth of our nation. We need to expose young people to the beauty of birds and the art & science of aviculture at an early age and foster that interest. The AFA Aviculture Badge is one way to further that goal and we encourage all clubs to include the AFA Aviculture Badge program as part of their annual calendar of events. If you would like a copy of the program, please contact the AFA Office at [afaoffice@aol.com](mailto:afaoffice@aol.com) or 816-421-BIRD. ■

hear her words. I just kept thinking about Cosmo, all white and yellow and gray. His bored little orange cheeks. The reddish-orange droppings caused by his unnaturally dyed fruity pellets. The water bowl sullied hourly by his droppings because I didn't know you could use a water bottle in a bird cage. The pathetic, static pair of toys that hadn't really changed in a few years. Also, he hated the yellow, banana-shaped pellets in his fruity mix. He would only eat the green, red and orange round pellets. We were wasting our money and filling him with additives at the same time!

During both of Janet's presentations, I drew chastising gazes from each of my daughters. They were thinking about Cosmo too.

So, we went home that night and stared at Cosmo for quite a while. We took him out and let him ride on our shoulders longer than usual, cleaned out the water dish a couple of times, and spent a good deal of conversation on the sorry size of his cockatiel cage. About the only good thing we could say about our bird husbandry was that he had natural, manzanita branch perches.

We all jumped on Daddy when he came home. Did he realize how terrible Cosmo's conditions were? What should we do about it? Didn't he feel just awful too?

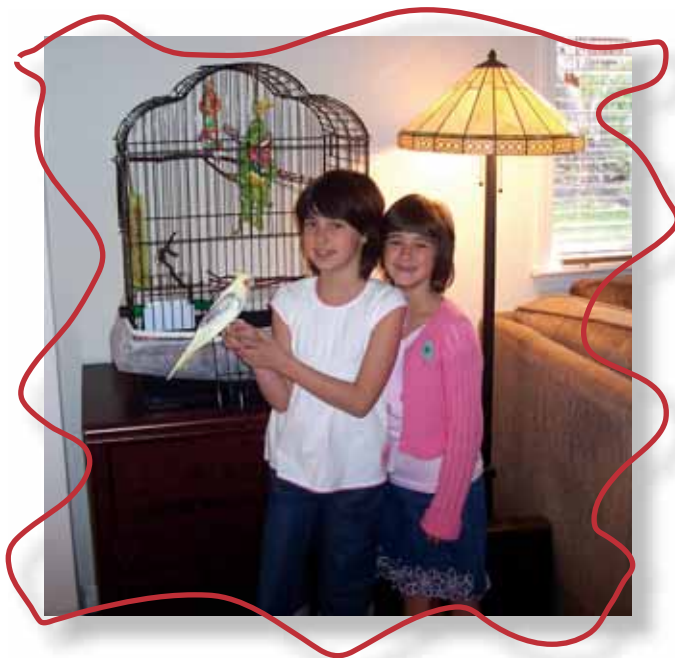
# Cosmo's Story

By Jamie C. Bennetts

While the AFA presentation hopefully will lead these young ladies to make careful pet choices during their adult lives and spread the word to others, it had a more immediate impact on one little cockatiel named Cosmo.

Cosmo is owned by this article's author, Jamie Bennetts. I'm Janet's co-leader and mother of a Brownie and Junior in the troop, Miranda and Haley.

As I listened to Janet talk about the discomfort of undersized bird cages, the misery of too few toys, the unnecessary dyes in some pellets, and the sad boredom of a bird left alone too much, I could hardly



*Cosmo with Haley and Miranda Bennetts in front of his brand new cage and toys.*