

## Society Magazine

How to keep a parrot while diagnosed with Alveolitis or interstitial lung disease and 40% of lungs fibrosed

I have previously written in the Magazine about the great help I received from members of the Parrot Society in 2002 when my then two year old African Grey Bobbiegirl went awol. The next year 2003, I was put under the "care" of Hospital for having too much carbon dioxide and not enough oxygen in my blood, (passing out etc on the backdoor step and under bus wheels etc). Finally in November 2005, they decided to have me in for ten days and all the tests under the sun to find out why I was sweating so much and what was wrong with my lungs. They, amongst others, did a battery of tests to find out to which birds I was allergic. No response proved to parrot, big relief; and only very mildly to canary and cockatiel. Despite this I was told four days before Christmas 2005, callously, that the problem was easily solved - I had to get rid of my parrot!!\*\*!!~ ....just like that, no reference to how many I had, what type e.g. silly, sappy, hand reared, affectionate, bonded, etc etc. I was put in a spin, and not wanting to take it lying down, I decided to talk to the best people, including Alan K Jones who has been brilliant, Les Rance and John Hayward, who all gave moral support when it was very much needed. (Perhaps I should say that George Mills, her breeder, who had, with Hazel his wife, become such great friends and advisers, died while I was in the Brompton having these tests. The loss has been immense.) I should perhaps say that when I came home with the news that they insisted I get rid of Bobbiegirl as that would so easily solve my problem..... they sent me home with a severe infection in my lungs following the lung biopsy, that took 5 months to rectify, food poisoning following the follow up visit and a reaction to the radioactive stuff injected into my arteries and radioactive stuff breathed into my lungs followed by scans and x rays... The saving grace has been that soon after in the New year, Rob Harvey advertised a Trion Air filter in the Parrot Society magazine, which after much discussion I purchased. I was undoubtedly one of my wisest acquisitions to date. It requires a minimal amount of maintenance, once every three weeks or month, when the filters need removing, soaking in warm soapy water for thirty minutes, rinsing and drying by air for about an hour or less with a hairdryer. One has to be careful of the fine wire elements that create the charge that changes the ions in the dust. You really notice the difference in the air in the morning. I can thoroughly recommend it to anyone with allergy or breathing problems who wants to keep their bird, cat or dog etc. Since using it my lung function tests have improved. My breathing is markedly easier. Apart from being advantageous for my lungs the filter reduces noticeably the dusting I have to do. During the summer, the draught kicked out of the bottom front of the larger of the two machines available was very effective during the heat wave. I have acquired the smaller of the machines that puts the draught upwards on exit, think this may be better during the winter as I need it in the same room as the parrot and I where I/we relax, watch television, and operate my computer. It will I think however need cleaning more frequently.

One tip Alan Jones gave me was to shower/spray Bobbiegirl daily and before I remove the tray and papers to clean her out I spray the cage with fine mist water which stops me breathing the dander.

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All good wishes to parrot keepers everywhere.  
Gill