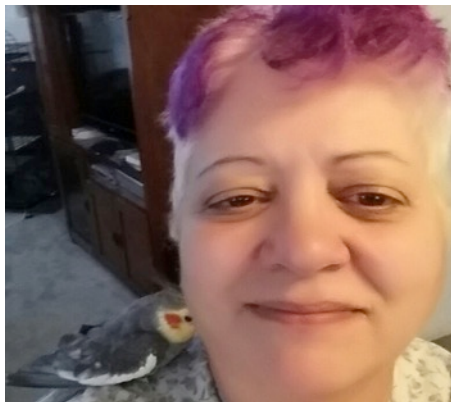


Article from "The Mickaboo Bird Rescue Companion"
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Featured Volunteer – Catie Kniess By Shauna Hill



Being a Mickaboo species coordinator is a lot of work (I know this as I am the Lovebird coordinator) and when you are on the team that handles one of the most often surrendered species (budgies, aka parakeets), it takes teamwork to keep up with the calls and emails from individuals who want to surrender their birds, shelters who want us to come get their birds, people who might provide foster homes, others interested in adopting, and ... well, you get the idea! There is a lot of work involved. In this article, we feature one of the awesome members of this team, Catie Kniess. She goes above and beyond and volunteers in other roles as well. I recently had the privilege of interviewing this very busy volunteer so we could all have a chance to get to know her better.

SH - So Catie, tell us about yourself. Did you grow up having pets?

CK – I was born and raised in Rochester NY. I had enough of snow by 1977, sold all I owned, came to California on a Trailways bus with one suitcase, one guitar and \$300. Hey it was 1977, \$300 went pretty far then! The bus arrived at midnight in Oakland, who knew that would not be a good thing, LOL. I stayed briefly with a friend in San Jose, and then got an apartment and a motorcycle - all I could afford! I went to school and worked - did all the usual stuff. I have been married 22 years, divorced for 12. I have two sons, one who is 30 (a casino card dealer in Fresno) and another who is 25 (a nursing student at De Anza).

I spent 25 years as a technical writer at various high-tech companies. After the last lay-off, I decided I'd had enough. I went back to school, learned American Sign Language, and worked at the California School for the Deaf for a couple of years. I came back to work in San Jose to help a friend grow a small specialty eyeglass company. I worked there until he moved the company to Florida. Now I am semi-retired, though I work two days a week at a small office, drive for DoorDash, and dog-sit for Rover.com.

My dad always had a parakeet when I was growing up. Only one at a time - we didn't know we should have had a flock. Plus it's a wonder any of them lived, since he did everything wrong, based on what I've learned from Mickaboo. We fed seed to our parakeets. Every morning, my dad would put a teaspoon on the table next to his breakfast. It would contain a couple of cheerios mixed with coffee and milk, exactly what he was eating! The bird would swoop down and eat breakfast with him. Our bird was always allowed free flight, and would always be involved with us. My mom and I would play cards on Sunday afternoon, and I have photographs a bird coming to the table and taking a card out of our hands. Guess we weren't paying attention to him! I never had cats or dogs growing up. As an adult, I had a dog until a couple of years ago, and up to four cats at one time! Once they were all gone, I found birds again.

As hobbies, I enjoy card making, scrapbooking, knitting, jigsaw puzzles, and beer.

SH - How did you hear about Mickaboo?

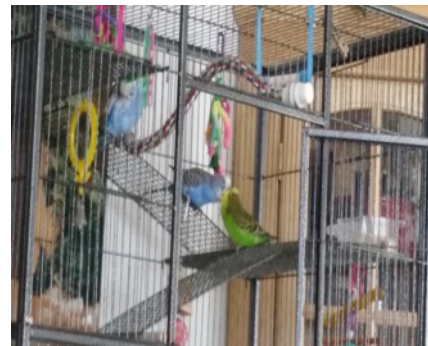


Proud mom with her two sons

CK - A friend posted a link for a wildlife rescue that was looking for knitted nests. I thought, "I can do that!" and did. The rescue sounded so interesting that I contacted them, asking if they had anything I could do to help down here (they are in Novato, I'm in San Jose). They said no, and I thought there MUST be something here. I did a Google search, and Mickaboo came up! I signed up for the bird care class thinking I could do computer work or other things, NOT foster birds. I changed my mind before I finished the first class, thinking, "Well, MAYBE I could foster..." <sigh>

SH - Are you fostering or have you adopted any Mickaboo birds?

CK – I have fostered 20 or so budgies, and have four now; several cockatiels; one sun conure; and several lovebirds (two now). I broke down and adopted Elvis, my foster cockatiel, TODAY. (Elvis is pictured in the photo at the top of this article with Catie.)



My other foster birds are: (at left) Fern and Moondust, (center) Amarilla, Fern, Joy - lovebird, Ruka, (right) 3 budgies – not named yet.

SH - What other volunteer roles have you been involved in with Mickaboo?

CK – I do several things:

- I am part of the budgie team.
- I get the Mickaboo mail and process it.
- I help input the bird class rosters, so potential adopters and fosters can get credit for taking our class.
- I represent Mickaboo at events like the Bay Area Pet Expo, do tabling at Pet Food Express, and volunteer at Mickaboo's Holiday Party.
- Bring foster birds to the bird care classes held monthly at Andy's Pet Shop in San Jose.

SH – So as one of the budgie team-members, what can you say to our readers about how wonderful these little guys and gals are?

CK - Budgies are good company. They are sociable with each other and, with patience and training, will be sociable with their human. Even when they are not tamed, they are still great company. Their antics are fun to watch and their budgie murmuring is such a wonderful sound. It makes me smile when they chatter chatter chatter; it's such a happy sound. You can hear them sometimes escalate from chattering to "budgie bitching" when one is getting on another's nerves, or maybe just hogs the food bowl or the toy of the day, but it's typically over quickly with no harm done. Plus they are so beautiful! So many different colors, seems like no two budgies are exactly alike.

SH - Approximately how many budgies do we have looking for their forever homes?

CK - Mickaboo has 88 budgies listed as adoptable.

SH – Thank you Catie, really appreciate you doing this interview and all you do for Mickaboo!