



# AVIAN FLYER



HOLIDAY EDITION 2023

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ARTICLES, ADS AND PHOTOS  
ARE WELCOME  
AND ENCOURAGED!



## IN THIS ISSUE

2023 Officers	Page 2
The Prez Sez	Page 2
Club Christmas Dinner Info	Page 3
Treasurer's Report	Page 3
Member Ad	Page 3
Keeping Birds Entertained, Alert and Interested In Their Environment	Page 4
Meet The Birds Of The "Twelve Days Of Christmas"	Page 7
Advice From A Cardinal	Page 8
A Visual Guide To Conjunctivitis In Birds	Page 9
December Meeting Info	Page 10



## IT WILL BE THE END OF THE YEAR BEFORE WE KNOW IT!!

This year has rocketed by and as we approach the end of it, remember to renew your annual club membership, so you can continue to enjoy, among other benefits, your monthly Avian Flyer!

Our final meeting of the year will be our annual Christmas Dinner. All the details are in this issue of the newsletter, on page 3. It is a great time to not only feast on wonderful food but to enjoy the fellowship of other members in a festive and relaxed atmosphere. If you enjoy gift exchanges, check out page 3 for the info on that as well.

For a bird, especially if it is alone, being in a cage can be the ultimate in boredom if we don't enrich their lives with varying stimulus. Our feature article this month focuses on how we can analyze the activities of wild birds in order to better understand how to enrich the lives

of our captive ones. The more 'natural' we can make their lives, the healthier it is for them both mentally and physically.

If you enjoy listening to and singing along with our traditional Christmas carols, then you might want to check out this month's article about the birds that are featured in 'The 12 Days of Christmas.' It is an interesting look at precisely which birds the song refers to and what it all means. If nothing else, it might provide some fun trivia to share with family and friends.

We wish all of our members and their family and friends a truly blessed Christmas season and an amazing New Year!

Caleb Coblentz & Beth Murphy  
Avian Flyer Co-Editors



## 2023 Officers

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As we come to the end of 2023, I hope it has been a very good year for you and your family. It has been a good one for our club. Our membership has grown, we had a successful bird show, and I see real growth in the number and experience of our bird club members. It has been a pleasure to work with all of you.

Our December 9, 2023 meeting will be our annual Christmas Party. It will be held in the main large meeting room of the Clackamas Community Club, the building next door to where we hold our regular meetings. I hope you can join us in this time of celebration. Details about what to bring will be listed in another place in this newsletter.

Our January 13, 2024 meeting will focus mainly on evaluating our 2023 show and sale as we begin plans for our 2024 show. We will talk about what went well, what we can improve, and other suggestions. We hope you will join us for this important meeting too.

Remember that our February 10, 2024 meeting will be our bird sale. This is open to all members. You do not need to reserve a table in advance. Whoever shows up, we will squeeze in so that all can be included. It will be at the Clackamas Community Club main meeting room. Details will be in the January and February newsletters.

Remember to renew your 2024 club membership. You can do it on the club website or in person at our meetings.

Here is wishing you all a wonderful new year and a very successful breeding season.

*Dan Pitney*



**CCC Christmas Dinner**

Our annual Christmas Dinner will be on Saturday, December 9, 2023, noon, at the Clackamas Community Club main hall. Everyone is invited for a turkey dinner to celebrate a great year and introduce the newly elected officers for 2024.

Come help set up at 11:00 am. We will eat at noon and have a good time of conversation about birds and our mutual hobby.

Kris Rigdon is baking a turkey. Cynthia Nelson will provide the mash potatoes. Table service and drinks will be provided. The rest will be potluck. You should bring a salad, dessert, or other side-dish to share.

If you want to participate in a gift exchange, bring an ornament or other gift valued at \$10 or less.

The Clackamas Community Club is where we hold our regular monthly meetings. The address is 15711 SE 90th Avenue, Clackamas, Oregon 97015.



**IT'S TIME!**



**DON'T DELAY, RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP TODAY!**

**November Treasurer's Report:**

Beginning Checking Account Balance: \$5,519.25  
 Certificate of Deposit: \$7,056.72  
 Combined Accounts \$12,575.97

**EXPENSES:**

National Finch and Softbill Society Annual Affiliation Fee- \$30.00

**INCOME:**

Dues-\$25.00  
 Donation-\$57.00  
 Contribution toward Cascade Hall rental at fairgrounds for annual show-\$500.00  
 Total-\$582.00

Ending Checking Account Balance: \$5,946.25  
 Certificate of Deposit: \$7,085.73  
 Combined Accounts: \$13,031.98

**LOOKING FOR A GREAT CHRISTMAS GIFT??**

Mike Duyn is having to part with his doves due to a change in his health. Ring necked doves are very affectionate, long lived birds that do not bite! They mate for life so if you have just one you become it's mate. Having a pair doubles the pleasure, and they will both still bond to you! If you have ever considered having a dove for yourself or as a meaningful gift for someone special, now is the time! Contact Mike at 503-703-5015 or his email [mpdllc290@gmail.com](mailto:mpdllc290@gmail.com)

## HOW CAN I KEEP MY BIRDS ENTERTAINED, ALERT, AND INTERESTED IN THEIR ENVIRONMENT?

*by Bob Doneley BVSc FANZCVS (Avian Medicine)  
Professor, Avian and Exotic Pet Service  
Registered Specialist in Bird Medicine*

### Behavior of wild birds

There is an extensive body of literature devoted to observations of wild bird behavior. While there are a lot of species-specific differences in the detail of birds' daily behavior, their routine is often consistent and usually includes the following elements:

As the light increases with the dawn of a new day, birds begin to stir. After a short spell of grooming and stretching, they begin to call to each other to assemble the flock. There may be some playing activity and socializing before the flock sets out to search for food.

The flock often spreads out during this search but the calls of those who have found food soon brings them back together.

Feeding behavior depends on whether the birds are ground feeders or canopy feeders, but typically involves eating quickly and then moving to a safer (higher) location to avoid predation while the food is digested.

Most birds will rest in the middle of the day, napping in the safety of a tree and conserving energy, before resuming their search for food. Some birds will engage in 'play' activity throughout the day, especially if there is rain-fall.

As the day starts to draw to a close, the flock will start to head back to the roosting area for the night. Calling for each other and again engaging in playful activities, the flock settles in for the night and, other than occasional calling, sleep soundly through the night.

When this activity is analyzed, most researchers agree that wild birds spend 80% of their day searching for, and consuming, food. The rest of the day is spent socializing, grooming, playing, and sleeping.

### What happens if we don't provide appropriate enrichment?

In captivity the 80-20 ratio is virtually flipped; with the food in the same place at the same time each day, the birds only need to spend 10%-20% of their time eating their food. This leaves 80% of the day to be filled with other activities. When a bird is housed by themselves, with limited social opportunities available, it is no wonder that some captive birds develop behavioral problems such as over-grooming, stereotypic behaviors, and mental dullness.

Environmental enrichment is defined as "the stimulation of the brain by its physical and social surroundings in an attempt to reduce or overcome problems caused by containment". Its goals are to alter the bird's captive behavior so that it is similar to the normal behavior of birds in the wild, as described above.

Environmental enrichment therefore aims to provide activities for your bird to engage in that 'fill' the currently empty 80% of the day and stimulate the bird's brain while doing so.

It is generally considered that animals who are behaviorally well-adapted to their environment display 'species-specific behavior' as permitted by their social and physical environment and not abnormal behaviors. Birds who are not adapting well display a range of abnormal behaviors, including:

- \* Feather damaging behavior.
- \* Stereotypic behavior  
(repetitive behavior that serves no purpose).
- \* Aggression towards other birds and people.
- \* Constant screaming.
- \* Poor socialization skills  
e.g., chewing a cage-mate's feathers.
- \* Excessive sleeping.

Environmental enrichment should therefore be seen as a means of both preventing and, to an extent, treating these abnormal behaviors.

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### Environmental Enrichment

A key concept in environmental enrichment requires that we know 'species-typical' information. It is then important to select enriching strategies that are behaviorally relevant and physically feasible for the bird. Designing an enrichment plan that is incompatible with the animals' normal behavior, physical attributes, or their existing environment may not only be fruitless but may also cause frustration and potential harm.

There is a tendency to think that environmental enrichment means just providing some toys or maybe some branches to chew on. This is only a small part of the process. An enrichment plan can include some or all of the following:

- \* Foraging enrichment
- \* Physical enrichment
- \* Sensory enrichment
- \* Social enrichment
- \* Occupational enrichment
- \* Foraging enrichment

Foraging is the act of searching for and finding food. As mentioned earlier, wild birds can spend up to 80% of their day foraging and feeding, most actively in the morning and the evening. Foraging therefore has great social and behavioral importance, but is one of the most severely constrained classes of behavior in captive parrots and other birds; obviously there are potential implications of this common behavioral deficit for bird welfare. Given that we know birds would normally engage in four basic behaviors on a daily basis – foraging, socializing, grooming and resting – removing the ability to forage (by feeding the same food in the same bowl at the same time) leaves a gaping hole that has to be filled with the other behaviors. A bird that lives alone without other birds to socialize with may therefore start to overgroom (feather damaging behavior) or sleep excessively. They may also develop stereotypic behaviors such as screaming, pacing, biting the

wire of their enclosure, etc.

Foraging enrichment therefore seeks to prevent or treat these problems. It requires the bird(s) to chew and sort through, manipulate and/or open objects to get to food. It should reflect the bird's natural foraging behavior and can be increased in complexity as the bird's skill levels increase.

One of the surprising things that researchers have found is that, given a choice between foraging or just eating out of a bowl, birds will always prefer to forage. Here's some ideas you can implement to allow a bird to spend more time foraging for food:

*Scattering the food over the floor of the cage or aviary.*

*Scattering the food in a sand pit or kitty litter tray filled with wooden blocks or recycled paper kitty litter.*

*Placing the food in small cardboard boxes or paper parcels that have to be chewed open to access the food.*

*'Baffle cages' – wire framed boxes that require beak dexterity to access the food contained inside.*

*Multiple food dishes around the cage the cage or aviary, some with food, some without... (birds develop resilience as they learn that they are not always successful).*

*Covering the food dishes with paper or cardboard that your bird has to chew through to access the food. (Only for hookbills!)*

*Pushing treats between the scales of a pine cone, so the bird has to demolish the cone to get to the food.*

It is vital that you realize that your bird will have to be taught how to use some of these foraging tools e.g., leaving a cardboard box open till your bird learns there is food in it, and then gradually closing it. Weigh your bird daily and watch for unexpected weight loss, suggesting your bird may be having difficulty locating food.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 6)

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### Physical Enrichment

Physical enrichment ranges from objects placed in the bird's environment (such as toys, swings, ladders, mirrors, etc.) to the environment as a whole (e.g., the space available for your bird to engage in locomotory behaviors such as flying, running, or swimming). This is where the toys that many people provide come in. There are some general guidelines to follow when considering safe enrichment items for birds:

*If the item is constructed of synthetic components, use sturdy and large enough materials to prevent ingestion. Avoid cotton or natural fibers, as these are frequently eaten and can lead to gut obstructions.*

*For multiple birds in a cage, provide multiple enrichment devices to reduce item guarding and aggression.*

*For birds fearful of new items, slowly introduce the enrichment to the bird's cage (or your bird to the enrichment area).*

### Sensory Enrichment

Sensory enrichment utilizes the bird's senses such as sight, hearing, smell, and touch. Providing 'a room with a view', background noises, videos, toys, etc. can improve a bird's welfare. It must be used with caution, as some birds may become visibly stressed with loud sounds, certain images, or a lack of security/privacy. Placing a bird's enclosure in the middle of the family room can certainly provide sensory enrichment but your bird must have the ability to 'get away from it all' when the family activities become too much.

### Social Enrichment

Social enrichment is the social interactions between birds, and between birds and people. It can be indirect, where your bird can see or hear other animals, such as when a bird is in an outdoor cage or aviary. Direct social enrichment includes cage mate pairing, social rooms or flights with numerous birds inter-

acting, and allowing contact between enclosures. Done well, it allows the birds to perform 'species-specific' behaviors (especially when compatible birds are housed together), but it has the potential to have drawbacks and unwanted behaviors such as cage mate aggression. Social enrichment may need to be carefully chaperoned until it is clear the birds can safely intermingle and there is an escape mechanism in case aggression occurs.

### Occupational Enrichment

Occupational enrichment includes items that elicit activities including problem solving, learning, and choosing and controlling some feature in the bird's environment. (This is different from the use of puzzle foraging toys that do require problem solving.) Rather these may include items that give birds choices about how they spend their time. For example:

*Although it comes with certain risks (for more information see How will I keep my bird safe against household hazards?), free flight in the house can provide occupational enrichment.*

*If you are uncomfortable with free flight outside the house, going for walks together using an appropriate well fitted and safe harness and leash can allow your bird to experience both a change in environment and also sensory enrichment.*

*Leaving the indoor cage door open (under close supervision), giving your bird the freedom to come and go as and when they want, but without the opportunity to venture outside into a world of potential threats. (NOTE: Birds can fly into windows and be killed from the INSIDE too!)*

### A Word of Warning

Many birds suffer from 'neophobia' – the fear of something new. Providing them with new toys and activities must be done gradually to prevent your bird from being overwhelmed (stressed out) or 'flooded' – so overwhelmed by the new things that the bird gives up and becomes less interactive and more inactive.

## Meet The Birds Of The "Twelve Days Of Christmas"

*Partridges, geese, hens, and more... Here is a closer look at the many wild birds given as gifts in the popular Christmas carol.*

*by Melissa Mayntz*

There are various versions of the beloved Christmas carol, "The Twelve Days of Christmas," but they all share a common theme – the inclusion of numerous different types of birds. From the partridge in a pear tree to turtle doves, French hens, swans, geese, and more, the carol mentions a diverse array of birds. However, have you ever wondered why this Christmas carol specifically emphasizes birds as gifts, and which actual wild birds served as the inspiration?

"The Twelve Days of Christmas" was first published in England in 1780, though it was likely spoken or chanted as a lyrical poem much earlier. While the actual origins of the song have long since been lost in festive lore, it is likely to have had French or Scottish inspiration. The musical score was added to the song in 1909. Over the decades different cultures have made slight variations to the lyrics and tempo of the song we know today.

Ultimately "The Twelve Days of Christmas" is about romance, and the gifts "my true love gave to me" throughout the holiday season, one present for every day leading up to Twelfth Night. To emphasize love and caring, the gifts are typically oriented around food and bounty to provide a luxurious lifestyle. Later in the song's lyrics, the gifts extend into entertainment, keeping in tune with the festive nature of the season.

The most recognizable line of the carol is the first gift, which is the "partridge in a pear tree." There are 45 species of partridges worldwide, and there are also many quail, ptarmigan, and pheasants that could be considered partridges. The bird that most likely inspired the first lyric of the song is the red-legged partridge (*Alectoris rufa*). This bird is native to western Europe and can be found in the region throughout the year, including during the holiday season.

The accompanying pear tree is another gift of food. While many partridges perch and

roost in trees, they typically do not eat the fruit as they primarily consume grain and seeds. Pears, on the other hand, are commonly harvested in the fall and can be stored well into winter if done properly. Together, the bird and the tree are truly generous gifts.

Two turtle doves are given as the second day's holiday gift. The common name "dove" can refer to over 350 species of pigeons and doves in the Columbidae family. However, it is widely believed that the song refers specifically to the European Turtle-Dove (*Streptopelia turtur*). At the time when the song was written, European Turtle-Doves were abundant and prevalent in western Europe. Currently, their population is declining, and they are classified as vulnerable. Despite this, giving a pair of doves as a gift is a wise choice because they can breed throughout the year if there is enough food. A breeding pair of doves can be a considerable gift for many meals to come.

As far as the 'three French hens', the term "hens" generally refers to female domestic poultry. The fact that these particular hens are French could be a nod to the possible French inspiration of the twelve days of Christmas song. There are approximately 40 chicken breeds that originated in France and could have been easily imported to England. Unfortunately, the song does not provide any further clues to narrow down the exact breed of these gifted hens. Any domestic chicken can be a generous gift, especially a trio of productive hens. Depending on the species, these three birds could lay up to 900 eggs per year! While it may not be possible to consume all of the eggs, they could also be sold or allowed to hatch, resulting in young chickens that could be used for meat or for further egg production.

The fourth day of Christmas still relates directly to birds with "four calling birds." Some lyrics, however, use an older term, "colly" birds. While "calling" can refer to a variety of songbirds, "colly" is an Old English word for black or coal. Fortunately, both "calling" and "colly" can

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 8)

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7)

can refer to the same bird—the Eurasian black-bird (*Turdus merula*). A black thrush with a lovely voice, this bird perfectly suits the song and is a melodious gift to share.

The gift of “six geese a-laying” represents another animal-related food gift. While there are 30 species of wild geese in the world, the most likely bird to be associated with this gift is the graylag goose (*Anser anser*). In addition to wild geese, there are also over 125 breeds of domestic geese that have been selectively bred for their egg-laying abilities. Although domestic geese are not as prolific as three French hens, each one can still lay up to 20 eggs per year. It is worth noting that this gift could also refer to the meat of the geese, or even the feathers of the resulting flock. Goose down, in particular, is highly valued for its insulation properties, making it an ideal choice for winter wear. Therefore, the gift of “six geese a-laying” is quite fitting for the coldest season of the year..

Seven is an interesting choice for this next gift, as there are seven species of wild swans in the world. The most likely candidate is the mute swan (*Cygnus olor*) which is widespread in the region of the song’s origin and is a year-round resident, even in winter. Because these birds aren’t specifically noted as laying, this is most likely a gift of luxury, as swans are a symbol of romance and elegance.

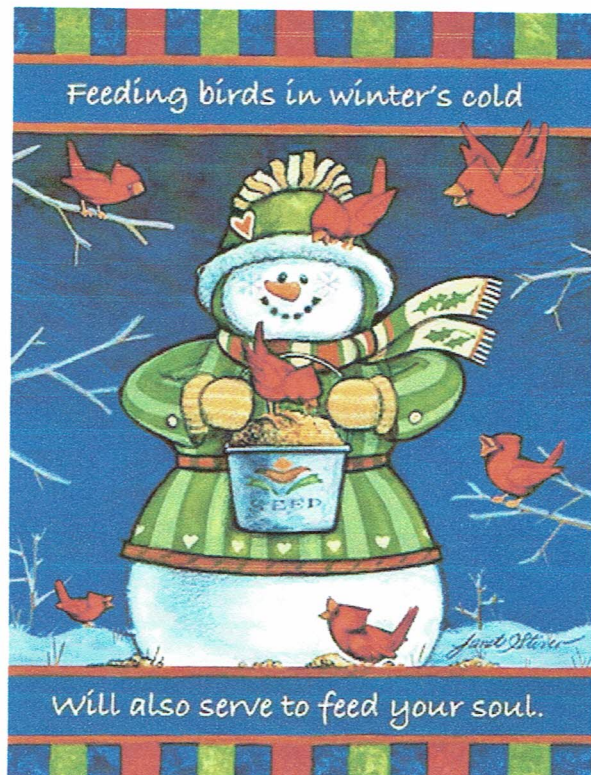
Could “11 Pipers Piping” Be About Birds? Quite possibly, every birder who hears the lyrics “eleven pipers piping” could easily assume that the song is referring to the shorebirds, pipers, and peeps. There are more than 25 sandpiper species in the world, and they can often be found on sandy shores even in winter. Another contender could be the piping plover (*Charadrius melodus*), particularly since this bird is considered endangered.

The more you know about the birds featured in “The Twelve Days of Christmas,” the better you’ll be able to appreciate the richness and symbolism of the carol!



## Advice from a CARDINAL

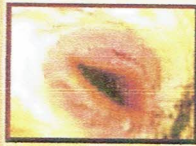
Stand out in a crowd  
Go out on a limb  
Be a bright spot in others' lives  
Speak up!  
Be home before dark  
Add color to your life  
It's OK to be a little flashy!





# What is Conjunctivitis?

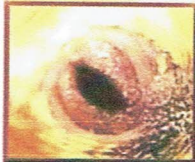
Conjunctivitis is a symptom ~ a visual alert to a problem



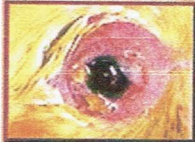
The conjunctiva is the tissue between the eye and the eyelid. It is normally not visible, and is light pink in a healthy bird. The conjunctiva is actually a membrane that covers the whites of the eyes and the inner surface of the eyelids. This membrane contains tiny blood vessels that only become visible when inflammation sets in. Conjunctivitis occurs when the conjunctiva becomes swollen and visible



Normal



Blepharitis is an inflammation of the eyelid margins.



Mycoplasma OR Hypervitaminosis A (excess) typically shows as as swollen eyelids with crusty thickened buildup around the eyes



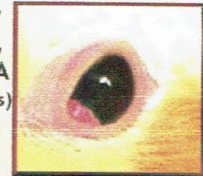
Prolapse of Third Eyelid



Drooping lower Eyelid



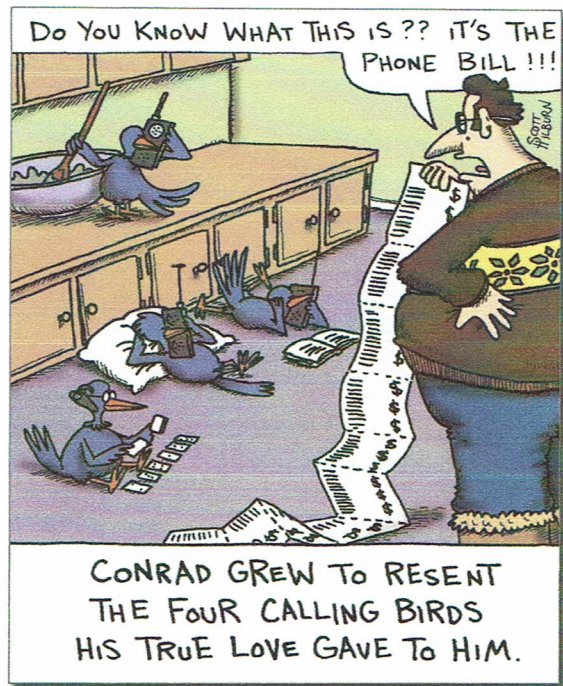
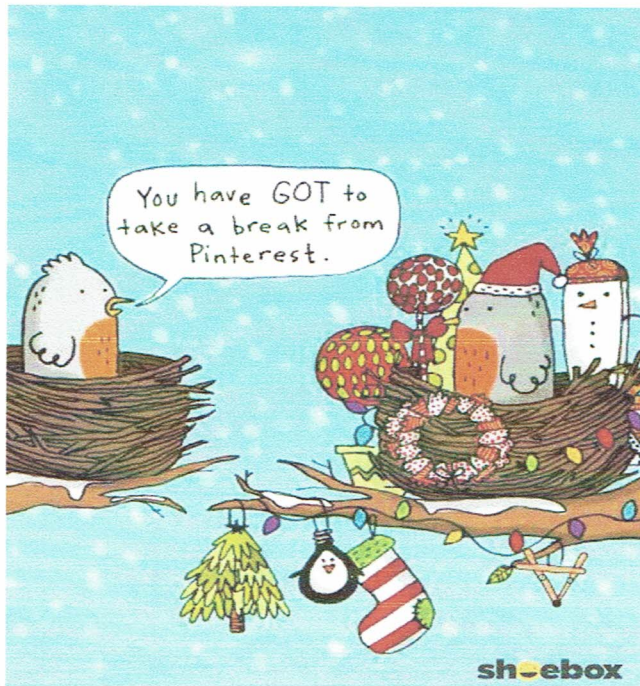
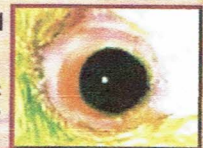
Genetic OR debris caught in membrane



FYI: Did you know know that Giardia, Hypervitaminosis A Ectoparasites (mites) Can look like Psittacosis



Do NOT assume or treat for this until tests are run



DECEMBER MEETINGS

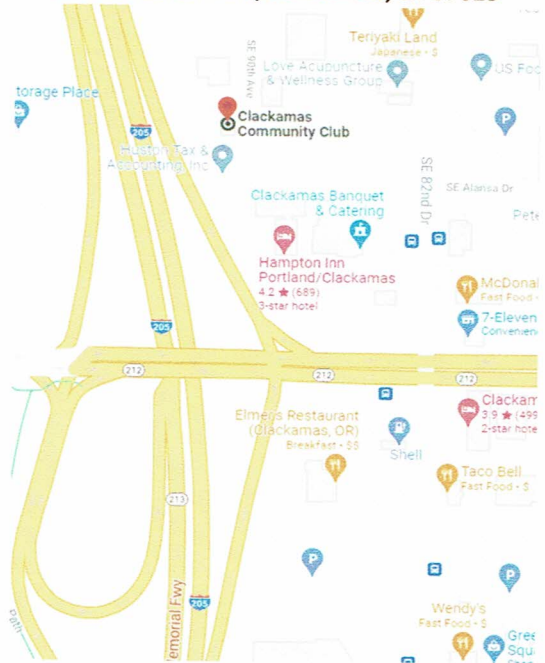
Our annual Christmas Dinner will be on Saturday, December 9, 2023, noon, at the Clackamas Community Club main hall. SEE PAGE 3 FOR WHAT TO BRING AND OTHER DETAILS!!!

DIRECTIONS TO CLACKAMAS COMMUNITY CLUB

FROM THE SOUTH: I-205 North to Exit 12 for OR-212 E toward OR-224 E/Damascus/Estacada. Use middle lane to turn right onto OR-212 E. Turn left at the 1st cross street onto SE 82nd Drive. Turn left onto SE St. Helens Street. Turn left onto SE 90th Avenue. Destination will be on the left after a right hand curve. Smaller of the two buildings. (Was once a residence.)

FROM THE NORTH: I-205 South. Take exit 12A to merge onto OR-212 E toward Damascus. Merge onto OR -212 E. Turn left on 82nd Drive. Turn left onto SE St. Helens Street. Turn left onto SE 90th Avenue. Destination will be on the left after a right hand curve. Smaller of the two buildings. (Was once a residence.)

CLACKAMAS COMMUNITY CLUB MAP 15711 SE 90th Ave, Clackamas, Or 97015



Columbia Canary Club P.O. Box 2013 Clackamas, OR 97015

