



University of Houston
Division of Administration and Finance

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 4, 2009

CONTACT: Cydney Rax
Communications Coordinator, Plant Operations
Voice Phone Number: 713-743-8027
Email Address: crax@uh.edu

BIRD FEEDING STATION TO BE TEMPORARILY DISPLAYED ON CAMPUS

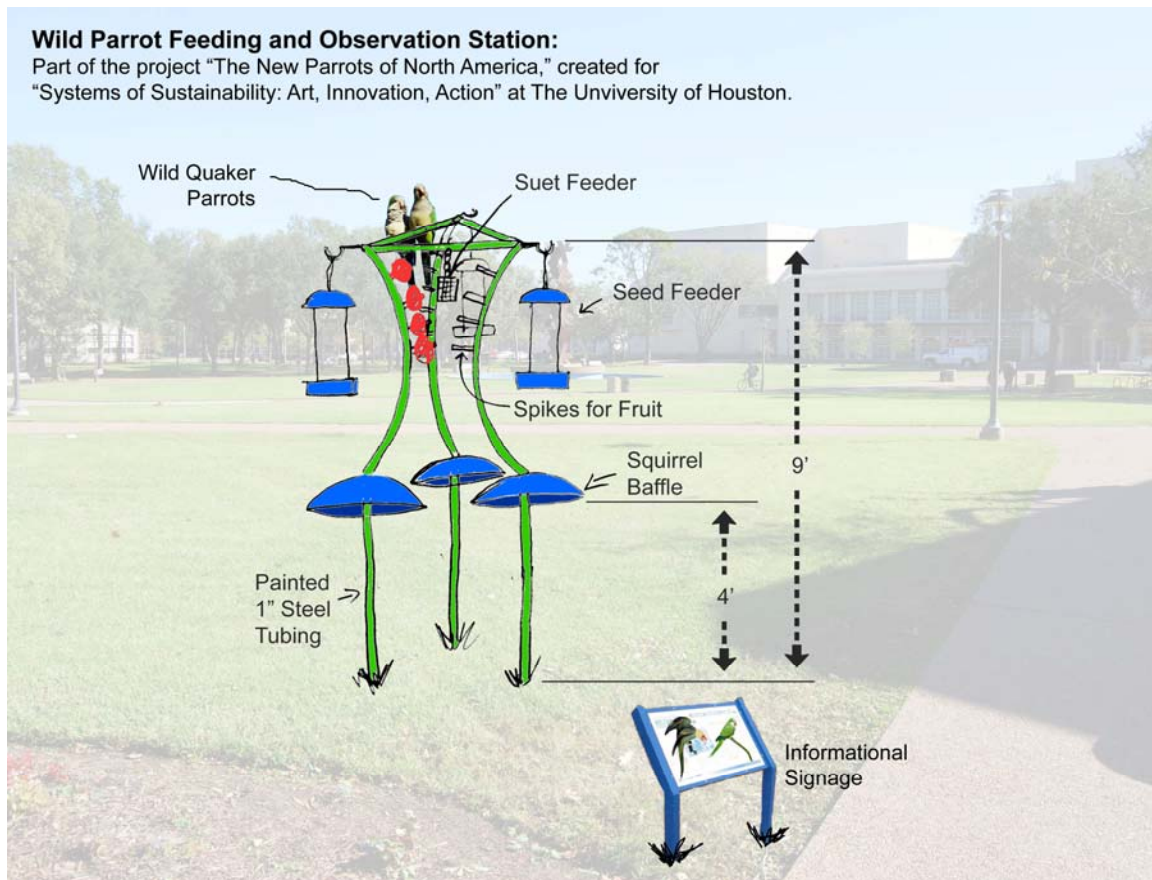
Beginning January 14th, the UH campus will open its arms to welcome some talkative, yet feathery visitors. Brian Collier, a Kansas City artist, will erect a nine-foot Quaker Parrot feeding and observation station in the Music Courtyard (between the Music building and Fine Arts). Once installed, the feeder is expected to attract Quaker Parrots and other native and non-native birds. This exhibit is a temporary display that leads up to a symposium entitled “Systems of Sustainability: Arts, Innovation, Action (S.O.S.)” The sustainability event consists of the feeder exhibit plus a Collier led-tour of nesting sites near the UH campus, and is co-sponsored by Blaffer Gallery and the Cynthia Woods Mitchell Center for the Arts. Scheduled from March 27-29 at Blaffer Gallery, the event is open to the public.

David Sarkozi, manager of public safety systems in the department of public safety, is a bird expert who served as former president of the Texas Ornithological Society. He has been invited to assist with the tour and pointed out how the surrounding area already has lots of naturalized parrots. Sarkozi replied, “The birds hang around the cell phone tower near McDonald’s all the time. Also,” he explained, “the Carolina Parakeet is extinct, so these Monk Parakeets fill the niche vacated by these common birds...which originate from Argentina.”

Because the feeder is a short-term exterior installation, permission had to be cleared through the custodial and grounds department which oversees utility lines, irrigation matters, animal issues, and landscaping concerns. Director Alex Alexander replied, “We are very familiar with this campus and will monitor the installation to see if we have to

make any adjustments in regards to taking care of lawns.” Additionally, the grounds department is the first responder when it comes to animal concerns and is familiar with various species. “Green wild parakeets often have problems feeding themselves in the winter. The [installed] bird feeder will help ensure that they make it through the winter.” Although Alexander suspected that the installation won’t interfere with any of his department’s operations, he was concerned, about the possibility of bird-loving feral cats being enticed to show up. “We just hope the [cats] won’t go over there to eat...they just very well may try to do that.”

Although the goal of the feeder is to attract other wild parakeets, Sarkozi acknowledged that “we’re not sure how successful we will be at getting the parrots to discover the feeding station.” Certain tasks must be done to increase their chances of getting the birds attention. But because Monk Parakeets are highly intelligent and social birds, it is believed more than likely they won’t have any trouble spotting and inhabiting the exhibit, fitting in, and enjoying the campus.



-END-