



# CASCADE SUMMIT

NEWS FROM CASCADE FERRET NETWORK VOL. 9 ISSUE 1 / WINTER, 2008

## Network Status Update

### Who We Are

The Cascade Ferret Network (CFN) is different from traditional ferret shelters: instead of housing the ferrets in a single place, the CFN depends upon a network of qualified foster homes, each of which cares for only a few ferrets at a time. This network approach to sheltering ensures our foster ferrets receive the highest possible quality of care. You can leave a message for CFN at (503) 231-0887 or email us at [www.cascadeferret.org](http://www.cascadeferret.org)



### Ferrets

During October, November and December of 2007 the Cascade Ferret Network took in 17 ferrets and found new homes for 6 ferrets, 2 of which were through referrals. Sadly, 7 shelter ferrets died during the last three months of 2007. One had to be euthanized immediately because there was nothing that could be done to save her. Calaban and Zest were long time shelter residents, both of which struggled with multiple health issues over their last months. Turbo, Katie and Cyrano had not been shelter ferrets for a long time, but had been through months of intensive care and multiple medication regimes for serious health issues, none of which responded to treatment.

Diego's death was the hardest because he did not recover from the bilateral adrenal surgery that we felt was necessary. He had not been responding to Lupron and was having urination problems.

Veterinary care for the last months of 2007 included two surgeries to remove left adrenal glands, one bilateral adrenal surgery, one GI biopsy procedure, one surgery for insulinoma, and four procedures to remove growths of various kinds, as well as multiple Lupron injections to alleviate symptoms of adrenal disease.

CFN traveled more than 500 miles during the 4th quarter of 2007 in the course of transporting ferrets and educating the public. There are currently more than 50 ferrets in the network.

### Ferrets 2007

During 2007 CFN took in 37 ferrets, found new homes for 25 ferrets, and said goodbye to 13 shelter ferrets that crossed the rainbow bridge.

### Financial

Income from donations, the sale of merchandise, and fees from adoptions help to pay for the veterinary costs of the Cascade Ferret Network. The CFN relies on contributions to pay for food, bedding, litter and other expenses such as phone and utility bills. The following is a preliminary summary of the revenue and expenses for CFN during the fourth quarter of 2007.

#### 4<sup>th</sup> quarter 2007

##### Revenue

Adoption fees.....	\$330
Donations (cash).....	\$2,098
<u>Merchandise (gross).....</u>	<u>\$309</u>
TOTAL.....	\$2,737

##### Expenses

Vet/medical costs.....	\$3,502
<u>Other.....</u>	<u>\$223</u>
TOTAL.....	\$3,725

#### For 2007

##### Revenue

Adoption fees.....	\$780
Donations (cash).....	\$8,534
Boarding.....	\$145
<u>Merchandise (gross).....</u>	<u>\$2,638</u>
TOTAL.....	\$12,097

##### Expenses

Vet/medical costs.....	\$11,988
<u>Other.....</u>	<u>\$1,857</u>
TOTAL.....	\$13,845

## Helping Hands

### Volunteers

The backbone of the Cascade Ferret Network is our team of devoted volunteers. The CFN's high standard of ferret care is only possible because of our foster parents and volunteers.

One of the most rewarding ways to help the CFN is to provide foster care for CFN ferrets. A foster parent takes one or more ferrets into their home and cares for them as they would their own pets. The CFN is responsible for the ferret's medical costs and will provide a cage as well as other accessories. Some foster ferrets are short-term residents who may need a little extra time to recover from surgery or who are waiting to receive their vaccinations before they are placed into a permanent home. Other foster ferrets need extra attention to help them recover from a neglectful or abusive home -- these kids need anything from extra feedings each day to lots of handling and love to get them past problem behavior. (i.e. biting)

Another way to help out is to volunteer. There are lots and lots of opportunities for those who would like to contribute their time. Whether it's helping out at public events or assisting the organization to help it run more smoothly, ALL CFN volunteers are greatly needed and very much appreciated!



**Volunteer Acknowledgement**

The following people have been very generous to the CFN with their time during October, November and December of 2007. *Jennifer Fresta* transported a ferret from Medford to Portland on Christmas day. *Sandy Streit* provided care for CFN ferrets while their foster parents were out of town. Several people have been extremely helpful to a CFN foster home... *Jamie Stamberger, Jeni & James Lee, Lisa McLennan, and Jay Pinka* have all provided *Lavon Grahn* with much appreciated assistance in caring for her many foster ferrets, taking photos of the ferrets, and helping her with computer issues.

*April Gallaty* provides quarterly creative input for the newsletter and *Lisa Verdon* spends hours formatting the newsletter. *Amy Daniewicz* maintains the CFN scrapbook.

In addition to fostering and helping at special events, the following people regularly volunteer their time to help CFN by serving on its board of directors, storing CFN equipment and supplies, transporting supplies and ferrets, interviewing potential new foster homes for shelter ferrets, interviewing those wanting to adopt ferrets, providing veterinary services, answering emails and phone messages, dealing with CFN accounting tasks, stapling, folding, labeling and stamping the newsletter, and keeping our web page updated:

*Kelli Carlson, Dr. Katrina Ramsell, Jennifer Fresta, Julie Tench, Lavon Grahn, Rebecca Bogorad, Brad Holt, Leonard Bottleman and Elayne Barclay.*

**Donations**

The Cascade Ferret Network is a 501(C)(3) non-profit corporation, so your donations may be tax deductible. Donations towards the veterinary bill can be made directly to Southwest Animal Hospital. Call them at (503) 643-2137. Their address is: 6139 SW Murray Blvd, Beaverton, OR 97008.

**Donation Acknowledgement**

CFN is grateful to all the individuals who donated equipment or supplies during October, November and December of 2007.

*April and Damon Gallaty* donated several bags of ferret food; *Julie Tench* donated a case of a/d and a bag of Totally Ferret; *Julie Andreca* sent CFN a \$100 gift card for Ferret.com; and *Marie Lockwood* sent CFN several boxes of facial tissue.

The only item appreciated as much as the donation of time or supplies is the donation of money! CFN is grateful to the following people for donating money to CFN during the fourth quarter of 2007:

*Ann Lynde, Tom & Christy Claassen, Lisa & Steve McLennan, Teresa Kaminski, Amy Daniewicz, Michelle Gregory, Jeannie Kinnick, Clyde Prince, Marie Lockwood, Sandy Streit, Shirley Reece, Crystal & Al Johnston, Tony Petrarca, Beverley Muhlbauser, Aron & Barbara Segal, David Lillie, Rhonda & James Kennedy, Mike Eadie & Anna Wellborn, Fran Harris, Susan Jenkins, Mark Walker, and Janet Erjaven.*

Two people made matching donations through their employer: *Elizabeth Paul* donated with a matching donation from PGE. *Brad Holt* made a very generous donation that was fully matched by his employer, *Autodesk*.

For the 5th year in a row, the Cascade Ferret Network has been the VERY grateful recipient of a \$1,000 donation through *Skip Simmons* of the *Mugs & Lacy Charitable Trust!*

*Jeff Mulcaster* is a special and generous CFN supporter who wrote out 12 post dated checks at the beginning of the year so that CFN gets a \$100 from him every month during 2007.



**CFN Foster Parents**

Thanks to the following individuals that provided foster care from October through December 2007. In addition to providing foster care, many of the foster parents listed below also help CFN by paying for the prescription diets and medications of their foster ferrets.

**Kelli Carlson:** Cyrano & Roxanne, Lancelot & Lily, and Elly Mae

**Debi Currier:** Oscar & Calvin, Dookie & Yuki, Wasabi & Sushi, Loki & Bowen

**Jennifer Fresta:** Eloise

**Katie Hanson:** Barnaby & Kit

**Carla Almaraz:** Tattletail, Jules

**Lavon Grahn:** Domino & Balboa, Zoe, Blackberry & Buffy, Sterling, Hamlet, Louie

**Rebecca Bogorad:** Violet & Daffodil

**Marilou Chamberlain:** Penny, Sheba & Amber

**Elayne Barclay:** Annie, Minnie Me & Mister, Mathilde, Xander, Longfellow, Merlin, Kookaburra & Dingo

**Teresa Kaminski:** Boo & Elliot

**Cherrie Williams:** Libby, Betty Boop, & Lola

**Tish Beltz:** Eloise

**Marie Lockwood:** McLovin

**Amy White:** Ajax & Katie, Harley & Dylan



### Tribute to Rascal



~Rascal~

No matter how many ferrets have passed through your life, the passing of each and every one is deeply felt, but having to say good-bye for the very first time is especially hard. Only other ferret owners can appreciate the depth of feeling these brilliant spirits are capable of evoking in the human and ferret companions with whom they have bonded.

This is a tribute to one such ferret: *Rascal*. Rascal passed in the arms of his loving human, *Crystal*, on January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2008. Crystal's father had these poignant and fond thoughts about Rascal's passing and the impact it has had on his family.

"The second night following Rascal's passing, Crystal, after spending hours in her room (crying), came to my room about 1:30 am and just stood at the door. I was awake... and realized what was going on pretty quickly. We went outside and talked a bit.... I encouraged her to talk to him and then backed off out of hearing range. After a bit she came back and we sat on the porch swing under the night sky for a while. I guess this was a final gift from my bestest boy.... as I will cherish that time with my 15 year old little girl forever.

The things I will miss the most about Rascal, is watching him take care of his babies and the nose kisses he always gave out so freely. When we got Rascal, Roxy would often scruff him and drag him off to wherever she thought he needed to be. He was always very tolerant of this... like he thought she was the mom and knew what she was doing. This rapidly got to be quite a joke as he quickly weighed twice what she did. She would scruff him and try to drag... and he would just lay there with this look on his face like 'come on sis, I know you can do it...'

I will miss his big butt."

### Event Reports

**Santa Claws Fundraiser  
Gresham Petsmart  
December 1, 2, 8 & 9, 2007**



CFN got a last minute holiday gift, as we were asked to staff several Santa Claws photo sessions. The sessions are fundraisers sponsored by Petsmart. The store supplies everything and the organization staffs the session by providing someone to be Santa, someone to take the photos and someone to be an assistant. The organization gets \$5 for each photo packet sold. CFN volunteers staffed four Santa Claws sessions for five hours each; we sold over 100 photo packages and took photos of over 100 dogs along with a few cats; as a result, CFN should get a check for about \$500!

A very heartfelt thank you to the devoted volunteers that played Santa, took photos or helped with the photo packets: *Heather Christy and her friend, Amy Daniewicz, Elayne Barclay and her friend Mary Jo Andersen, Teresa Kaminski and a friend, Sandy Streit, Jamie Stamberger, Sally Filler, Cherrie Westover, Jeni & James Lee.*

### Jeanne Carley's Ferret Calendar 2008



#### "Ferret Motion"

Only a few left! 50% off remaining calendars (\$7) still at Southwest Animal Hospital. The calendar can also be purchased from CFN in person by arrangement. Call us at: (503) 231-0887 or send an email to: [ferret@cascadeferret.org](mailto:ferret@cascadeferret.org).

### HELP CFN AND SAVE A TREE!

The *Cascade Summit* newsletter is being offered in an electronic format (Adobe Acrobat) with color photos.

If you are willing to give up getting a hard copy in the mail, please let us know and give us your email address. The CFN will keep all email addresses private.





## Ferret Story Updates

Each issue of the Cascade Summit features the stories of a few shelter ferrets. In this first issue of 2008 we wanted to look back and give updates on the ferrets featured during 2007.



**Harley** was featured in the newsletter one year ago as needing special needs sponsors because he was in desperate need of adrenal surgery. He was unbelievably lucky to find a sponsor who paid for his entire surgery! His sponsor, *Coreasia Lind*, is a major animal lover from Missouri. Harley and his buddy Dylan were placed in a foster home where they fit in very well with the other ferrets and got lots of attention from the kids in the family. Harley recovered wonderfully from his surgery and the pair fit in so well that the foster family decided to adopt both Harley and Dylan in May. Sadly, they had to be returned to CFN in October due to the family's inability to pay for the vet care of all the ferrets in their home.



**Mathilde** arrived in October 2006 as a stray found in Lebanon. She was

unable to use her hind legs, but regained use of them over time and is able to walk normally again. She was featured in the winter issue of the newsletter to help her find a new home. Unfortunately no one snapped up this adorable girl and she continues to be the alpha ferret in her foster home. She does not accept the companionship of new female ferrets lightly, but appears to accept all males she meets. Mathilde acquired a special needs sponsor in March which helped pay for the removal of a sebaceous epithelioma from a front leg a few months ago. Her sponsor, *Adrien Pettit*, lives in Nevada and sponsored Mathilde in loving memory of her pet Rasputina.



~Domino~

**Domino and Balboa** arrived in October 2006 after being confiscated in California from a homeless person living in his car. They were featured in the spring issue of the newsletter to try to find them a new home. Unfortunately, these rough and tumble boys are still looking for a forever home despite making several appearances at public events.



~Roxanne~

**Roxanne** arrived in August of 2006 after going through several homes. Roxanne was featured as needing special needs sponsors because she required adrenal surgery. Roxanne was lucky to acquire both an incoming sponsor, *Lisa McLennan*, that paid for her ADV testing and vaccines, as well as a special needs sponsor, *Julie Andreca*, that helped pay for her adrenal surgery in October.



**Jules** arrived last year during a heat wave in July. He was found by the side of the road, severely dehydrated, emaciated, and unable to walk. He was featured in the summer issue of the newsletter as needing special needs sponsors because of his health issues which we felt might be permanent. Thanks to the intensive care from his foster parent, Jules has made a full recovery. Jules now has three special needs sponsors: *Anne Lynde*, *Julie Andreca*, and *Lisa & Steve McLennan*.



Blackberry



Buffy

**Blackberry and Buffy** came to CFN in July 2007. They were turned over to the shelter because the owner could not afford to have a sebaceous epithelioma removed from Blackberry. The growth was removed several months ago and Blackberry has gained weight and



grown in a "glamour" coat of luxurious fur. The pair was featured in the summer issue of the newsletter in 2007 to try to find them a new home. A pair of first time ferret owners came over to meet Buffy, the younger of the two, but fell in love with the older Blackberry and adopted her in January. Buffy is a very energetic girl that is still looking for a forever home.



**Sterling** was removed in a sorry state from a terrible situation in California in July of 2007. He was found with a dead cage mate, he was underweight, covered in urine, with a weepy eye and an open sore on his side. He recovered quickly, but it was then discovered that he was both deaf as well as blind. Sterling is now being spoiled in a foster home, but he is showing the first signs of adrenal disease, so we were looking for some special needs sponsors for him. Sterling now has three sponsors: *Marie Lockwood, Clyde Prince, Mike Eadie & Anna Wellborn.*



**Xander** was another refuge from California who was given up by his owner. Xander was named the "greatest sock thief of all time" by his foster caretaker. He was featured in the last issue of the newsletter in 2007 to try to find him a new home, and it was a success. He was seen in

the newsletter by a couple with big ferret loving hearts who had already taken in two referral ferrets from an eviction situation. Xander was added to their business of six ferrets in January.

## WANTED: CFN Secretary

### Duties:

- \*Attend BOD meetings (2-3 hours, every other month) and take notes on what is discussed and decided.
- \*Type up notes for a permanent record of the meeting.
- \*Print and keep copies of meeting minutes.
- \*Read email from other board members every 24 hours and respond within 24 hours.

**\*If you can help, PLEASE contact CFN at 503-231-0887 or email us at [ferret@cascadeferret.org](mailto:ferret@cascadeferret.org) (THANK YOU!)**

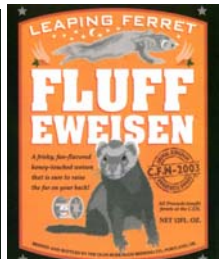
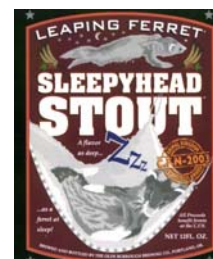
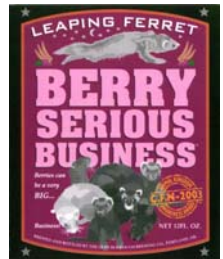
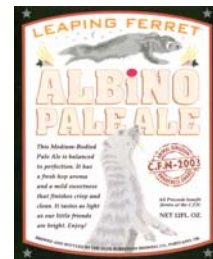
### CFN WISH LIST

- \*Foster homes
- \*Canned a/d
- \*Canned w/d
- \*Boxes of facial tissue
- \*Copier paper
- \*I.V. pump
- \*Litter
- \*Ferretone
- \*Bleach
- \*Quarantine homes
- \*Stamps
- \*Monetary donations
- \*Volunteers
- \*Laundry detergent (scent and dye free)
- \*Gift certificates to office supply stores

### Merchandise for sale...



- \*Socks with our Jolly Roger "Dead Socks Tell No Tales!" design on both sides. The socks are a natural color in crew style and come in small (6-8) and medium (9-11) sizes. The design is woven into the sock and the socks are made from the highest quality cottons and ultra spun acrylics (sensura yarn and spandex) which makes a very, very soft and very high quality sock. Socks are \$7 each.
- \*Ferret Art (many shirt designs and colors available)
  - purchase through the CFN link to the Zazzle on-line store: [www.cascadeferret.org](http://www.cascadeferret.org) (price depends upon shirt style)
- \*Erin Bishop's fantasy ferret designs T-shirts and cards
- \*Leaping Ferret Beer T-shirts
- \*Robo-ferret T-shirts
- \*Ferret design buttons, magnets, stickers & decals: 25¢ - \$2.50
- \*Custom button or magnet with your ferret's photo: \$5
- \*Cards with Erin Bishop's Artwork: \$3







## Quality of Life

### Enrichment: Specific Enrichments: Odor By Bob Church\*

This is perhaps one of the simplest enrichments to do, and one that is possibly the most appreciated by the ferret. Ferrets are extremely odor oriented, so much so that saying they "see" in scent would be somewhat accurate. Blind ferrets cope very well just using a combination of tactile (whiskers) and olfactory (odor) clues--so much so it is sometimes difficult to recognize that they have lost their sight. Polecats have been recorded locating and digging up frogs buried under more than a foot of mud where the ONLY clue is scent; not even a bloodhound can do that!

1. **Sponge Draggin'**: Soak a small (1 inch by 1 inch) section of sponge in the scent of your choice (mine like diluted chicken baby food, but yours may be different), tie a string to it, then drag it around the room, ending at a treat location. Change the ending point or the ferrets will just run over and eat rather than sniff out the location.

2. **Stink Bomb**: Take a pair of well-used socks, and soak them in a small amount of water. The resulting fluid is loaded with that lovely foot odor that makes locker rooms so pleasant, but is ambrosia to scent-hungry ferrets. Put the sock-smell into a spray bottle, then soak down a fluffy toy, drop it in with your ferrets, and watch the fun!

3. **Dirty Ferrets**: Buy several different brands of potting soil (or take a drive and collect your own) and place a few handfuls in a gallon-size ziplock bag. Zip inside

(with the dirt) a small towel or washcloth. After a couple of days, toss the cloth in with the ferrets and enjoy.

4. **Dirty, Stinkin' Ferrets**: Take what soil (from above) is NOT placed in the ziplock bag, and pour in on a tray or inside a plastic box. Just let your ferrets roll around in the dirt. I love it when they have their noses in the dirt and make that snorting sound.

5. **Take A Walk on the Wild Side**: One of the best olfactory enrichments is to simply take your ferret out on a walk in the woods or along a lakeside area. TAKE YOUR TIME, and let your ferret spend as much time as they want soaking up the smells.

\*Reprinted from the Ferret Mailing List July 2003

### ★ Just for Fun ★



### FERRET TAROT

YOUR CARD: Three of Cups

It's time to warm up! The cold months are upon us and we need to

celebrate the things that the cold brings us. It brings us extra weight and beautifully full coats that keep us warm. Don't just huddle in your own coat, because, let us not forget, that there are friends to snuggle with and share our blessings with!

View the entire Ferret Tarot set at: [http://www.falconsmew.com/product4\\_1.html](http://www.falconsmew.com/product4_1.html)

### CFN Ferret Sponsors

Thanks to the following individuals that provided financial support by sponsoring a special needs shelter ferret during the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2007:

- Anna Wellborn & Mike Eadie** (Annie & Sterling)
- Clyde Prince** (Sterling)
- Peter Muhlhausler** (Longfellow)
- Rebecca Bogorad** (Diego)
- Laura Satterfield** (Lance & Mister)
- Fran Harris** (Tattletail)
- Dee Ann Holmes** (Lance)
- Ann Lynde** (Mister & Jules)
- Julie Andreca** (Roxanne, Mister, Lance & Jules)
- Aron & Barbara Segal** (Lance)
- Coreasia Lind** (Zoe)
- Jackie Gross** (Lance)
- Crystal Johnston** (Daffodil & Violet)
- Tika Wolff** (Cyrano)
- Adrien Pettit** (Mathilde)
- Beth Felix** (Mister)
- Kat Schroeder** (Minnie Me & Mister)
- Lisa & Steve McLennan** (Lance & Jules)
- Tom & Christy Claassen** (Eloise),
- Marie Lockwood** (Sterling)

Thanks to the following individuals that provided financial support by being an Incoming Sponsor (paying for ADV testing and vaccines) during the 4th quarter of 2007:

- Michelle Gregory** (Kokaburra & Dingo),
- Crystal Johnston** (Hamlet)



## Health Matters

### Emergencies and Critical Care of Ferrets

By Katrina Ramsell Ph.D, DVM

As a ferret owner, it is important that you are familiar with what constitutes an emergency and what the appropriate steps are to provide the best outcome for you and your ferret. Knowing what you would do ahead of time could relieve you a bit when you may be panicking. Knowing who to call and when to call could also be quite beneficial.

#### What is Normal?

It will be easier to know when you have an emergency if you know what the normal parameters are for a ferret. A normal ferret should be bright, alert, and responsive (unless sleeping, which they do a lot of!). They should be eating, drinking, urinating, and defecating normally, and they should have an activity level that is normal for that particular ferret. Normal ferrets have a temperature of 100-104°F, a respiratory rate of around 35 breaths per minute, and a heart rate of around 200-250 beats per minute.

#### Preventive Measures

It is important to try to prevent problems whenever possible. Ferrets should be: 1) fed a healthy, high quality diet; 2) housed in an appropriate area that is large enough for adequate movement, safe/ferret-proofed, and kept sanitary and at a reasonable temperature; 3) provided with socialization and exercise regularly; 4) groomed on a regular basis (toe nail trims at least every two weeks +/- baths as needed); 5) felt and looked over regularly for anything abnormal; and 6) weighed monthly if a scale is available. You should monitor the ferret for any changes and report any concerns you may have to your vet.

#### What is an Emergency?

Obvious emergencies include (but are not limited to): 1) extreme lethargy, flat out; 2) unresponsive, teeth clinched,

neck arched; 3) shock or cold to the touch; 4) fever; 5) trauma (e.g. broken limb, dragging back end, etc.); 6) bleeding (can you tell where it is coming from?); 7) major wounds; 8) painful, crying, or panicking; 9) labored or irregular breathing; 10) vomiting and not wanting to eat; and 11) dehydration (moderate to severe). If you find that your ferret is experiencing an emergency situation, it is imperative that you call your regular [ferret knowledgeable] vet or an emergency clinic recommended by your vet. Some vets will give clients a way of contacting them in an emergency. If you are lucky enough to have a vet willing to do this for you, it is crucial to not abuse it and restrict contacting them to true emergency situations.

#### Hypoglycemia (low blood sugar levels)

Hypoglycemia is most commonly caused in ferrets by insulinomas (tumors in the pancreas that produce too much insulin and drive the blood glucose down) and occasionally by a severe systemic bacterial infection. **Mild signs** include: sleeping more, "spacing off", head bobbing, and progressive lethargy. Supplemental feedings will help stabilize the glucose levels, medications may be needed, and the blood glucose level should be monitored regularly.

**Moderate signs** include: pawing at the mouth and/or tooth grinding (indicating nausea or abdominal discomfort), drooling, falling over, and hind end weakness. Ferrets with these symptoms should have Karo® syrup or concentrated sugar water applied to their gums with a cotton-tipped applicator (don't get bitten). You should call your veterinarian, and the ferret should be examined as soon as possible. The ferret will likely need medications or surgery, and the glucose should be monitored regularly. **Severe signs** include: seizures, screaming, coma/unconscious, teeth/jaws clinched, and cold to the touch. Again, Karo® syrup or concentrated sugar water should be applied to the gums, and the ferret should be given gentle heat support if cold to the touch and seems "shocky". An emergency veterinarian should be contacted immediately if your regular veterinarian's office is closed. The ferret will need immediate medical

attention and will likely need long-term medication or surgery if it survives the immediate episode, as well as regular monitoring of glucose levels.

#### Black/tarry or bloody stools

Black or tarry stools represent the presence of digested blood that has come from an ulcer in the mouth, stomach, or small intestine of a ferret. A few causes for ulcers include inflammatory bowel disease, bacterial overgrowth, sepsis (infection in the blood stream), and Helicobacter (bacteria) infection. **Mild to moderate** clinical signs associated with an ulcer include dark stools, tooth grinding, and pawing at the mouth. Your regular veterinarian should be called with an update and for advice if a ferret is showing mild to moderate signs.

Medications such as antibiotics and gastrointestinal protectants will be necessary. **Severe** signs include profuse black stools, pale ears, gums, nose, etc. from blood loss, cold to the touch, teeth clinched, and unresponsive. Your veterinarian should be contacted immediately for a ferret exhibiting severe signs, and severely ill ferrets will require immediate veterinary attention with aggressive medical therapy.

#### Urinary blockage (inability to urinate)

This condition is most common in male ferret with adrenal disease whereby the amount of debris and thickened cells shed from the prostate accumulates and causes obstruction of the urethra (means by which urine leaves the bladder and exits the body). Ferrets with bladder stones can also have obstruction of the urethra. Signs of decreased ability to urinate and possible/probable urethral blockage include: 1) jumping in and out of the litter box frequently; 2) small amounts of urine being voided frequently; 3) crying, groaning, and straining when urinating; 4) dribbling urine; 5) dampness in the hair around the prepuce (skin covering the end of the penis); 6) blood in the urine; 7) lethargic, cold to the touch, decreased responsiveness; and 8) dehydration. Your vet should be contacted, especially if the ferret is panicking and/or showing severe signs. If the ferret cannot urinate because of complete obstruction, then a urinary catheter will need to be placed to



allow emptying of the bladder. Fluids, antibiotics, and pain medications will likely be needed also. Surgery or medication will likely be necessary for resolving the issue long term.

### **Trauma/Bleeding**

Possible causes include: being stepped on, dropped, or crushed, or getting bitten by a dog or cat for example. Gentle pressure should be applied if the source of bleeding can be found. The ferret should be kept warm and comfortable and movement should be minimized. A veterinarian should be contacted immediately, and the ferret will likely need urgent medical and possibly surgical care.

### **Congestive Heart Failure and Respiratory Distress**

Upper respiratory infections often result in nasal congestion, nasal discharge, and/or sneezing. Lower respiratory infections usually cause slow, deep breathing (e.g. pneumonia). Ferrets with respiratory infections will likely need diagnostic tests such as x-rays and will require medications. Heart disease is most common in older ferrets, and coughing and exercise intolerance can indicate heart disease (an enlarged heart can press on the trachea to result in coughing). Fluid in the chest from congestive heart failure can make breathing very difficult because the fluid in and around the lungs hinders lung expansion and oxygenation. X-rays can show if there is fluid in the chest and if the heart is enlarged. An ultrasound can show if the heart muscle is too thick or too thin and how well the heart is able to contract. Treatment for fluid in the chest may require partial removal of the fluid by tapping the chest and/or by a medication that promotes water loss from the body. Ferrets in respiratory distress should receive immediate veterinary attention.

### **Vomiting and Regurgitation**

Ferrets may vomit secondary to ingestion of a foreign object or toxic substance. Hairballs can also occasionally cause an obstruction, which can cause heaving or vomiting and not wanting to eat. Regurgitation is where undigested food comes back up after sitting in the esophagus, and it often occurs shortly after eating. This

condition is often caused by a serious disease known as mega esophagus. Treatment of vomiting or regurgitation can vary, depending on the cause. Veterinary care will likely be necessary, and your veterinarian should be contacted as soon as a problem is suspected.

### **Allergic Reactions**

Allergic reactions most often occur secondary to being given a vaccination, and signs are usually observed within thirty minutes of the vaccine being given. Symptoms can include vomiting, diarrhea (may be bloody), lethargy, shock, panting, etc. This is a true emergency, and injectable medications will be necessary to relieve the symptoms. It is recommended that ferrets be monitored carefully for at least thirty minutes after receiving a vaccine. Oral diphenhydramine (Benadryl®) can be given before the ferret is vaccinated to help prevent a vaccine reaction.

### **Dehydration**

A ferret that is moderately to severely dehydrated will need supplemental fluids. Dehydration can be assessed in a number of ways: 1) increased skin turgor - the skin on the back of the neck continues to stand up and it does not lie down flat again, or it does so very slowly, after being gently pulled up between your index finger and thumb; 2) the ferret's gums are dry and sticky; and/or 3) the ferret's eyes are slightly to very sunken in, depending on the level of dehydration. [It should be noted that the eyes may also be sunken in secondarily to recent and rapid weight loss, and the skin turgor may appear increased with changes in the skin from adrenal disease.] Supplemental fluids may be given under the skin at home if you have the fluids and equipment available and have received the proper training to administer them. Otherwise a veterinarian will administer the fluids either under the skin, or directly into the vein if the ferret's level of dehydration is critical.

### **Preparing for an Emergency**

Have a list of phone numbers of ferret knowledgeable veterinarians and emergency clinics (willing to treat ferrets) easily accessible at all times (on

the fridge, in your wallet, etc.). The following supplies should be near by: 1) Karo® syrup or concentrated sugar water and cotton tipped applicators (e.g. Q-Tips®); 2) A way to gently warm the ferret if needed (blankets, warm water bottle, etc.); 3) Fluids (if you are comfortable giving and have been shown how to administer); 4) Thermometer (digital, flexible tip, quick read); 5) Scale (0-2 kg or up to 4 lbs. recommended); 6) Stethoscope; and 7) Glucometer – especially if you have a ferret with insulinomas and you have been shown how check glucose levels.

### **OVERVIEW:**

#### **Make an appointment with your veterinarian:**

- 1) Mild signs of hypoglycemia
- 2) Abnormal stools
- 3) Mild-moderate signs of adrenal disease (hair loss, swollen vulva, itchy, etc.)
- 4) Coughing/wheezing
- 5) Eye discharge, squinting
- 6) Mild bleeding
- 7) Mild dehydration
- 8) Mass that can be felt, skin tumors
- 9) Weight loss, muscle wasting
- 10) Decreased appetite
- 11) Anything that seems not right but is not an emergency

#### ***Emergency – Call a recommended emergency clinic immediately!!***

- 1) Very lethargic, flat out
- 2) Unresponsive, teeth clinched, neck extended, back arched
- 3) Shock, low body temperature
- 4) Trauma
- 5) Wounds
- 6) Bleeding
- 7) Painful, crying
- 8) Respiratory distress
- 9) Black/tarry or bloody stools
- 10) Can't urinate
- 11) Allergic reaction
- 12) Vomiting
- 13) Dehydration (moderate to severe)
- 14) Ingestion of foreign object or toxic substance
- 15) Anything you think may be an emergency







# Ferret Stories

Each quarter we'll relate the tale of a ferret or two who overcame adversity to find a better life. We would also love to have updates on ferrets once they have found a home, so send us photos and stories!



## Elly Mae's Story

Elly Mae could use some "special needs" sponsors. Elly Mae was found as a very thin and scruffy stray walking down a busy street in Aloha in July of 2007. The people that found her were ferret owners and wanted to keep her as a companion for their ferret. They had contacted CFN to report finding her in case anyone called about losing their ferret. After talking with them extensively, it became evident that Elly Mae had a swollen vulva. Once I explained what that meant, they decided not to keep Elly Mae, but purchased a baby ferret from the pet store.

Heavy sigh. Luckily a foster home had requested the next female middle-aged ferret that came into the network. Elly Mae became the companion of Lily. Lily is apparently very picky about her friends and except for her long time cage mate Lance, she only likes female ferrets. Lily needed another companion because Lance was having a lot of health issues and was not a very active playmate for Lily and the foster parent worried what would happen when Lance died. Luckily these two dark-eyed white girls get along great because Lance did pass away in January. Both of Elly Mae's adrenal glands are abnormal and because of her age and the problems we have had with bilateral surgeries, we are opting to give Elly Mae monthly Lupron injections rather than having surgery. In the long run this will cost more, but it is working great to control her symptoms. Her vulva is no longer swollen and she has a gorgeous fluffy white coat. Sponsorships would help pay for Elly Mae's Lupron injections (~\$30/month). If you become a "special needs" sponsor for Elly Mae, in return you will receive photos and quarterly updates on how she is doing for a year. If you are interested in becoming one of Elly Mae's "special needs" sponsors, send CFN a note and a check for \$60 or go to the CFN web page ([www.cascadeferret.org](http://www.cascadeferret.org)) and follow the instructions to sponsor her online. Like all contributions to CFN, your sponsorship is tax deductible!



~Buttertubs~

## Buttertubs, Verity and Jinglepot's Story

This is the first time the newsletter has featured ferrets that aren't currently in the network, but if these kids don't find a new home soon, they will end up in the network. The trio is owned by someone that was hired for a six month internship in Alaska where she could not bring her ferrets. CFN helped her find someone to pay to take care of her ferrets until she came back. After the six months were up, the owner told the person caring for the ferrets that she would not be able to take them back after all. The caretaker really likes these guys, but he knows he cannot afford to add three more ferrets to his household. The following is from their former owner:

"Buttertubs was purchased from Petco 5 years ago, but he was an adult when I got him. He is a huge creamy colored guy that has never had any medical issues. He has been around cats and kids. He loves water, enjoys lounging in the sun and looking out the window, likes to go for walks on his leash and likes to sit on your shoulder when you are on the computer and watch what you are doing.

Verity is a 5 year old sable female that was purchased from Petco. She has been around cats and dogs, but is not always fond of kids. She enjoys lounging in the sun and looking out the window. Verity is a big bandit: she will steal anything that she wants (everything). She loves plastic balls (ping pong ball size) and likes to be on the bottom of the pile when sleeping with other ferrets. Verity will get mad and pout when she doesn't get her way.

Jinglepot is a 4 year old male dark-eyed white purchased from Petco. He is good with kids but has not been around cats and dogs. He gets excited easily with a bottlebrush tail. He loves to play and play and play. He tends to lose wrestling matches and is at the bottom of the pecking order of the three. He is a lover and loves kids a lot. He is very attached to Buttertubs and Verity and is sensitive to changes in his environment."

If you think you can provide this gregarious trio a permanent loving home, please contact CFN at (503) 231-0887 or email us at [ferret@cascadeferret.org](mailto:ferret@cascadeferret.org).



~Verity~



~Jinglepot~

Cascade Ferret Network  
PO Box 14884  
Portland, OR 97293-0884



## NOTICE!



### DR. RAMSELL NO LONGER AT SOUTHWEST ANIMAL HOSPITAL

*After careful consideration, I made the decision to leave Southwest Animal Hospital last December. Unfortunately I was unable to contact clients before I left to let them know that I would no longer be at SWAH. Many of my previous patients and clients have been in my thoughts, and I wish them all the best. I am sure they will continue to receive quality care from Dr. Burgess and Dr. Surrency at SWAH.*

*Forwarding contact information is available with the staff at SWAH or anyone may contact me directly by emailing me at [exoticpetvet@hotmail.com](mailto:exoticpetvet@hotmail.com) or by calling me at 503.356.4948 It continues to be a pleasure to serve as president and shelter veterinarian for CFN, and I look forward to continuing my work in the ferret community, as I plan to offer veterinary services to ferrets as well as other exotic pets in the near future.*

*Sincerely,  
Katrina D. Ramsell Ph.D, DVM*

### \* Upcoming Events \*

Northwest Pet & Companion Fair  
April 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup>, 2008  
Expo Center  
Portland, OR

Oregon State University  
College of Veterinary Medicine's  
21st Annual Pet Day  
& Open House  
May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2008  
Corvallis, OR

Cascade Ferret Network's  
7th Annual Ferret Awareness Day  
July 19<sup>th</sup>, 2008  
Oregon Humane Society  
Portland, OR

*\*We are thinking about an Indiana Jones theme... "Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Ferret"?*