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Paw Print - Issue #2 – January 2010

Happy New Year!

Can you believe this is a new decade? One trend we hope to see during the next 10 years is people **adopting** animals rather than **purchasing** them. Hopeful indicators:

Less pet stores sell animals. According to ***Pet Age***, a pet industry trade magazine, the number of stores that sell animals has decreased. In 2007, 55% of stores sold pets; in 2008 only 46% did.

The Shelter Pet Project, a collaboration between Maddie's Fund, an animal welfare foundation, the Ad Council, and the Humane Society of the United States, is a 3 year campaign to encourage pet lovers from throughout the country to make animal shelters and rescue groups the first place they turn to when acquiring companion animals.

Like so many other people, I obtained my first ferret at a pet store. BUT that was 25+ years ago and times have changed! Throughout the US there are wonderful people running shelters and rescues specifically for ferrets. Many large humane organizations also accept and adopt out ferrets. And the internet has made finding the perfect little friend for you as easy as a Google or Petfinder search.

Be a trendsetter! Adopt your next pet.

L. Vanessa Gruden, Shelter Director

Paw Print is the Ferret Association of Connecticut's online newsletter. You are receiving this message because you contacted us for information. If you do NOT want to be on our e-mail list, please click here to unsubscribe! FACT never sells or rents our e-mail lists.

Featured Article: *Why I Run a Shelter - Bianca*

14 Sherbrooke Avenue, Hartford, CT 06106-3838

www.ferret-fact.org

Quick Tip/Easy Ways to Help Ferrets

If you own ferrets, you know paper towels are high on the list of necessary accessories. My personal favorite (and shelters are experts!) is Bounty, made by Proctor & Gamble. Every so often P & G will do a store promotion where if you purchase $20-$25 of products, the store will give you a coupon for $5 off your next store purchase or 5 Redbox rentals. This week Shaw's Supermarkets is offering a coupon for $10 off your next Shaw's purchase – Bounty is on sale, too! Click here to find a Shaw's in your area.

If you regularly shop at Shaw's or Star Markets, you can give to ferrets at **no cost** to you! Link your Rewards card to FACT (our ID is 49001022799) and they'll donate 1% of most purchases made on Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday. Click here to sign up!

Events

Please join us on Saturday, January 16th for our annual Anniversary Party from noon to 3 pm. Light refreshments will be served and you are welcome to browse in the Ferret Treasures store. Please drop a note to LVGruden@ferret-fact.org if you plan to attend. Directions can be found here.

FACT – and I – are going into 19 years of ferret sheltering this year. A lot of things have changed, but some haven't. I used to be young(er) and cranky, now I'm old(er) and cranky. And boy, are there days when I wonder why I continue shoveling sand against the tides of animal abandonment. EVERY ONCE IN A WHILE, however, I'm reminded why I continue. Bianca is one of those reminders.

A call from Animal Control in Enfield asked us if we could take in one female ferret. She was mostly hairless and the vet where the ACO brought her determined she was older – 4 years or more.

I arrived in Enfield to find a very nice ACO and a little ball curled up in a blanket in a cage. She'd been one of the results of a cruelty investigation – the other was a very unhappy-looking cat. He didn't go into details, but said there were at least 4 different people who had owned, or claimed to own, this ferret. He managed to get a surrender form signed by who appeared to be the latest set of owners, who were feeding her canned cat food. They called her Bianca.

When removed from the blanket, Bianca was a pretty sad sight. No hair along her sides or bony back, she was thin and she smelled sour – usually a sign she'd been kept in a dirty cage. The vet had clipped her nails, at least. But she had spirit! Put into the small pet taxi, she bit at the bars with determination before settling into a sleep pouch. She was nice; no biting at people, and otherwise healthy and wiggly. The ACO explained she'd been enthusiastically eating the kibble he'd purchased.

Upon my return home, a bath was the first order of business. Since the regular shelter room was full, I figured I could try her out with my bunch of personal and Foster Ferrets. It was clear she would have to be Fostered due to her age and possible adrenal disease.

Bianca was not a sad little abused ferret, like you might imagine. She didn't try to hide or shy from the others, but ran all around the room, returning often to the full food and water bowl and chowing down. My crew is released into the living room each night to loot & pillage. Bianca came right out with them and proceeded to climb the couch, play with all the toys, and hop up and down cheerfully.

Adoptable Ferret of the Month

Flower was abandoned by someone's roommate. She came to us covered in fleas and ticks and smelling BAD. About 1 year old, Flower is now parasite-free, smelling MUCH better, and seeking a forever home!

Flower is a pretty silver mitt who loves to sleep with other ferrets. She occasionally nips humans so wouldn't be suitable for a home with young children, but is trainable and has never bit hard.

If you're interested in seeing her photo, please visit FACT's Petfinder web page: Flower. If you live within travel distance to Hartford, CT and would like to request an adoption application, please click here.

Featured Foster Ferret

Read about Bianca, shown below, in the article at left. To learn how you can sponsor Bianca, make a one-time donation or sponsor one of the other 30-40 ferrets in FACT's Foster Program, visit: Make a Donation

FACT is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and donations are deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Featured Ferret Treasures Sale Item: Ultra Soft Sleep Sacks

It's hard to explain, but sometimes when a ferret arrives you can get an idea of their background just from the way they act. Any youngster will leap and run around somewhere new. But some ferrets will leap with such joy that it becomes clear this is absolutely best place they have ever been, if not in their entire lives, in a very long time. Bianca definitely had that attitude.

I don't adopt or Foster a lot of ferrets myself – there are always 4 or 5 oldies "permanently in residence" and along with my own 5 adoptees and the shelter horde, it makes for a full house. Bianca, however, had a way of snuggling inside my sweater to sleep, with her head on my hand, that made her irresistible. So Bianca will live here for the remainder of her life as a FACT Foster Ferret, supported by the kind people who donate $5 per month to sponsor the old/ill ferrets FACT accepts.

Currently we're waiting for spring to see if her hair grows back on its own – sometimes ferrets can lose hair due to poor nutrition and/or filthy conditions and her loss is not the typical adrenal pattern. If it is adrenal disease, then FACT will take care of her medical expenses.

Since her arrival the week before Christmas, Bianca has put on weight and settled in. She made ONE "mistake" before taking right to using the newspaper for litter. She's taken over a small painted cradle next to the baseboard heating as her special sleeping spot. She pops her head out of the blanket when I call. Bianca hasn't learned to like other ferrets enough to sleep with one yet, but is beginning to show interest when the others play. She takes no "stuff" from anyone inclined to bully – she will stare them right down until they back off. She has a special fondness for the Babble Ball™ toy and enjoys pushing it around.

Bianca is a success story…and these little successes are what makes all the work of running a shelter worthwhile.

Lighter than our normal faux fur sleep sacks, these feature a velvety plush that will have you wishing to sleep in one yourself! Measuring approx. 15 x 15" and fully washable. We have a VERY limited supply. Available in 2 animal prints (lighter Leopard and darker Giraffe) or a solid Blue. Please provide two color options in case we've sold out of your choice.

Only $10.00 + $2.50 for US domestic postage for one. Two to three can be shipped for $5.50 – contact us for a shipping quote for more. You can purchase an Ultra Soft Sleep Sack by e-mailing: Ferret Treasures. Your purchase helps the homeless ferrets cared for by the Ferret Association shelter. Thank you!

Paw Print is published by the Ferret Association of Connecticut, Inc., a nonprofit humane organization dedicated to helping ferret owners, caretakers, and most importantly, the ferrets themselves. Website:

www.ferret-fact.org

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