

Paw Print - Issue #11 - February 2011

{ EMBED Word.Picture.8 }

20 Years!

FACT celebrated our 20th year of operation in January. Whew!

I'm not quite sure how we got here; I certainly didn't expect to be rescuing ferrets this long when we began! As of the end of 2010 we had officially taken in 1,371 ferrets, and that number has climbed another 5 or 6 since then.

There are other shelters in the US who have been operating a long time, also, and many have rescued more animals. We've always known we couldn't save every ferret, but what FACT strives to do is provide a high-quality life and responsible medical care for the ones we do shelter. There are no cages here; long before large humane groups began to "community house" animals, our ferrets lived loose in a bright, airy room with lots of places to play & sleep. Our Foster program gives sick or elderly animals a real home to live in, with an individual caretaker.

FACT does far more than ferret rescue. We have continually published an informational and a donor newsletter, maintained a website that people literally around the world have visited, and answer questions from ferret caretakers daily. We like to think of ourselves as a resource for unbiased information, a model that other organizations can use, and a sustainable nonprofit business that puts the welfare of domestic ferrets FIRST.

Thank you to all the supporters who have made our work possible for so many years.

L. Vanessa Gruden, Shelter Director

Paw Print is the { [HYPERLINK "http://www.ferret-fact.org/"](http://www.ferret-fact.org/) }'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 { [HYPERLINK "mailto:LVGruden@ferret-fact.org?subject=unsubscribe"](mailto:LVGruden@ferret-fact.org?subject=unsubscribe) } to unsubscribe! FACT never sells or rents our e-mail lists.

Cat Furniture - Great for Ferrets

Here at the shelter we've found that cat "trees" are terrific for ferrets. They enjoy climbing and it's great exercise for them. Remember, a ferret was designed with strong front legs to dig after bunnies and rodents, so keeping those forequarters in good shape keeps your ferret healthier. I like to put them next to an installed window hammock. Ferrets love to lay in a sunny window, and the cat furniture gives them an easy way to reach their desired snooze spot.

Pet Tree Issues

Big pieces of furniture with lots of exciting levels can be expensive! Even a piece of cat furniture a couple feet high runs \$40+ in pet stores. Big ones can cost hundreds.

A big problem with nearly all commercially made cat trees is that they are covered in carpet and darn near impossible to clean. As most ferret owners know, anything fabric will pick up odor - after a while, the cat tree will simply STINK. The interiors are either made of wood or thick cardboard...another eventual repository of STINK. Some little furry darlings will poop on the base, so that will STINK, too!

Solutions?

You can clean carpeting with rug shampoo. This won't remove all odor - the carpet usually has canvas backing and there's no way to really clean that, but it will freshen the outside. If you're strong & handy, you can replace the carpet with scraps and an electric staple gun to keep the new carpet secure. In between shampoos, spray with Febreze™.

There's really no way to clean the interior wood or cardboard, however, so at some time you may have to throw away the whole tree. If it cost you a lot, that's a painful choice!

So search for cheaper ways to purchase cat trees! My source - and I'm a notorious cheapskate - is { [HYPERLINK "http://www.ferret-fact.org/Shopping.htm"](http://www.ferret-fact.org/Shopping.htm) }. They're not VERY cheap, but you can find a 6' tall tree with lots of levels, sleep boxes, and other features for about \$100. Shorter trees are \$30-\$60. That's HALF the pet store price - you're basically buying wholesale. I've checked amazon.com and this is one instance where ebay merchants have better prices.

Watch the shipping fees! Some merchants start bidding at practically nothing and charge \$100 for shipping; others charge a more realistic upfront price and will give you free shipping. Ebay makes it pretty easy to compare costs, though. I've bought several cat trees on Ebay; just be aware you will probably have to do some assembly at home, but you'll need little more than a screwdriver and a nut wrench.

Some people worry that their ferret might fall from a high tree. Yes, it can happen. Generally, even the most foolish ferret will learn to climb backwards down the tree and if it falls from partway up, will land on that rounded backside. Too-enthusiastic playing or squabbling might lead to a fall from a higher level. Thus far (knock on wood) I've seen no injuries from falling from any tree I've used, and I've used ones 5-6' tall.

Just be careful to look at the overall design before buying. Avoid models that are really tree-like, with one straight tall column and look for ones that have a couple columns with varying levels. Make sure each level is less than 12" apart - while a cat can leap long spaces, a ferret cannot. If the first level is high from the floor, I put a bed nearby to use as a "step," though you'd be amazed at what some ferrets can climb directly. If you're really nervous about falls, then buy a design that is only a few feet high. Some have "stairs" which a ferret won't use, but others do have ramps.

If you're handy & creative, another option is to make your own exercise toys. Even something as simple as tying a length of corrugated plastic drain pipe to a hook in the wall will give your ferret a chance to climb and tube - two favorite pastimes. A few pieces of wood or branches and some carpet remnants are inexpensive and you're limited only by your imagination. Add hooks and you can hang hammocks from beneath a level or across from columns and make your invention a bed, too.

Personally, I feel the health benefits outweigh any risks. And, just as importantly, you're providing your ferret with an enjoyable, interesting toy.

{ EMBED Word.Document.8 }

Here's an example of a tree I've used in our shelter. I did not install the top right perch.

Humor: Ferret Lore

By L. Vanessa Gruden

There's been a lot of interest recently in vampires. *Twilight*, *Vampire Diaries*, and *True Blood* are all popular entertainment. Each seems to have a pretty endless supply of vampire superpowers. Equally, there is an ever-changing number of odd ways you can stave off or kill vampires. One heretofore hidden way to keep vampires away is to own ferrets. Vampires don't like ferrets.

You might wonder why. After all, ferrets are adorably cute little furry creatures. Well, the problem is that ferrets bite vampires.

The vampires object to being bitten. Personally, you'd think they would take it in their stride - after all, they spend their nights biting people, it only seems fair that something would bite them. But no, the vampires do not like being bitten by ferrets. They will stay far away even if they catch a whiff of ferret.

Some of us have had the experience of wearing clothing the ferrets have been sleeping in and having someone - perhaps a grocery clerk - say "Do you have ferrets?" You probably worried that you stunk to high heaven. Not so! You carried with you only a very faint *eau du ferret*, and the grocery clerk was a vampire. (Yes, they have to make ends meet, too. When you stay up all night, your lighting bill is harsh.)

14 Sherbrooke Avenue, Hartford, CT 06106-3838 { [HYPERLINK "http://www.ferret-fact.org/"](http://www.ferret-fact.org/) }

Ferret Charms!

Made exclusively for FACT and available nowhere else, the 3-D design is based on our logo ferret. They have been hand painted, not dipped or sprayed, so the raised eye shows through clearly. It's a little hard to see but the tail curves around. 1" tall, 5/8" wide and 1/4" deep. Made of a solid metal alloy that is nickel-free and hypoallergenic. Each has a small molded loop on its head plus an added larger loop for easy add onto a chain or charm bracelet.

Colors: Silver; White; Dark Sable; Chocolate



Price: \$5.50 each, 4 for \$20.00.

Please add for shipping: orders up to \$15 +\$2.50
\$15 to \$40: +\$3.50 Orders over \$41 ship free!

To order via e-mail click { [HYPERLINK "mailto:lvgruden@ferret-fact.org?subject=Ferret%20charm%20order"](mailto:lvgruden@ferret-fact.org?subject=Ferret%20charm%20order) }.

We can accept paypal, personal check, or MasterCard/Visa (by phone only). **Ferret Shelters or Clubs:** We are offering discounts if you wish to purchase in bulk! Please e-mail for details.

Ferrets In Need of Homes

Itchy & Scratchy - (Below) Pair of boys, both in the 2 year old range. Owner was moving and abandoned them here. Both are shades of chocolate. Itchy does nip a bit.



Rachel - (Below) Rachel came from a hoarding situation. She is about a year and a good-sized sable mitt lady.



Ciao & Bella: Literally left on our doorstep, this pretty pair of girls is about 1 year old. Ciao is a sable mitt and Bella is a black sable.

Macho: A recent arrival of about 3. Macho's owner was moving. A dark-eyed white guy who loves to follow humans around.

We still have several older ferrets needing special homes. These animals are eligible for our Foster program, which places them permanently with kind people able to give them the care the need for the rest of their lives. You can read more about what's involved with being a Foster caretaker { [HYPERLINK "http://www.ferret-fact.org/FosterProgram.htm"](http://www.ferret-fact.org/FosterProgram.htm) }. If you can't Foster yourself but want to help, you can sponsor one of these gentle survivors { [HYPERLINK "http://www.ferret-fact.org/Foster.htm"](http://www.ferret-fact.org/Foster.htm) }.



Miso: Sadly, Miso lost his little friend Edaname in December. He would love to live with a quiet bunch of older ones who won't beat him up. Miso was being starved by his owner and was rescued by a concerned neighbor. Miso has adrenal disease and had a gumball-sized tumor in one ear, which we had removed. He loves a daily cup of "duck soup."

Why do ferrets bite vampires? Well, the reason seems to be the same reason ferrets do anything: Because they want to and because they can. They don't try to suck blood or kill them or do anything really harmful, they just take a good nip at 'em and it makes the vampires nervous. Even the most sweet-natured, cuddly ferret, when it meets a vampire, will reach out to chomp whatever part it can sink it's teeth into.

So, the point of this tale? It's that if you own ferrets, you are absolutely guaranteed to never get bitten by a vampire. Whether the ferret chooses to bite you, however, is another story.



Schuster: 4 year old chocolate Schuster came with Rachel and 5 others. He has adrenal issues which we hope to alleviate with melatonin...right now he's an "ear-sucker!"

Puck: Another of the hoarding group, Puck was naked but has regrown hair - we're not sure if it was due to better nutrition or the melatonin implant he received in December. Otherwise a bouncy and playful dark eyed white fellow.

Happy Valentine's Day to all Ferrets & Caretakers!

Paw Print is published by the { [HYPERLINK "http://www.ferret-fact.org/"](http://www.ferret-fact.org/) }, Inc., a nonprofit humane organization dedicated to helping ferret owners, caretakers, and most importantly, the ferrets themselves. Website: { [HYPERLINK "http://www.ferret-fact.org/"](http://www.ferret-fact.org/) }.

© 2011. All rights reserved.

Filename: #11.doc
Directory: C:\FACT\Paw Print
Template: C:\Documents and Settings\default\Application
Data\Microsoft\Templates\Normal.dot
Title: Right-aligned Column
Subject:
Author: Vanessa Gruden
Keywords:
Comments:
Creation Date: 2/3/2011 9:08 PM
Change Number: 3
Last Saved On: 2/3/2011 11:14 PM
Last Saved By: L Vanessa Gruden
Total Editing Time: 5 Minutes
Last Printed On: 2/3/2011 11:14 PM
As of Last Complete Printing
Number of Pages: 2
Number of Words: 1,656 (approx.)
Number of Characters: 9,444 (approx.)