

Paw Print September 2013 Issue #27



Falls & Failures

Fall in New England is usually a wonderful time – crisp air, leaves erupting into gorgeous colors, and for me, a renewed sense of energy as the humidity drops. But this fall brings sad news: the Greater Chicago Ferret Association shelter is battling canine distemper. Our hearts & thoughts go out to the volunteers in Chicago doing their best to save animals. You can read their news release at: <http://gcfa.com/>

FACT is sincerely hoping that sharing our experience with distemper will help. We were the first ferret shelter to use the Polypropylene Immunostimulant, manufactured by Sass & Sass. Combined with interferon, we believe it had a definite impact on the further spread of the disease within our shelter. FACT has offered concrete assistance as well – the Canine Distemper Fund, which we administer, within days of the news had ordered and paid for \$660 of vaccines and supplies for GLFA.

Right now we are urging readers to help with a cash gift. And you can DOUBLE your contribution! They have a matching grant opportunity made possible by the kindness of Tracy Tye & Keven Stephens. Up to a maximum of \$4,000, any amount you donate will be matched by the Stephens'. Just visit the GLFA.com website and click on the Donate button. Every dollar helps.

There are other ways to help, also. To replenish the CD Fund, whose mission is to provide immediate funds in cases exactly like this, the Xavier – A Ferret Abroad group on Facebook is adopting out adorable plush ferrets. Each one is different and comes with an adoption certificate and personal story.

Here's one currently available for adoption:



Too cute! Visit here to see more: <https://www.facebook.com/search/500410600008173/photos-in>

The adoption fee for a one-of-a-kind benefit dressed plushie is only \$16.75. To have him or her shipped to you, add \$3 for a padded bag or \$5 for a box. You can send funds via paypal to CDFunds@ferret-fact.org. For more info, you can contact one of the group administrators.

You can also sponsor a plushie to visit you for a week for only \$8. While you have your plushie, take him/her places, post photos, and share your

Events

Adoption Days – September 7 & 8

Come visit FACT at the Petsense store in Norwich, CT. Meet FACT board members, learn more about our work and adopting. Have you adopted from us before and want to add to your family? Contact us IMMEDIATELY! Petsense is offering adopters a goodie bag valued at up to \$100. If you've already adopted from FACT, we can meet you there with a couple potential new furry friends. We'll be at the store from about 11 to 3 pm.

Picnic – September 28

A fun event for ferrets and their folks! FACT has reserved Shelter #2 at Northfield Brook Lake Park in Thomaston, CT, just north of Waterbury. Approximate hours will be 11 am to 3 pm. Ferrets are welcome! For safety, ferrets should be transported in small cage or pet taxi and always be on leash while exploring.

Grills are available onsite and the pavilion has tables, so the picnic will go on rain or shine. There is no formal fee to attend, however we are asking a \$5/family donation to help cover the cost of renting the building. There is no parking charge.

Please bring your own lunch plus something to share! To coordinate the potluck offerings or for more info, please contact Wendy at wendale56@sbcglobal.net.

The lake has been closed for human swimming due to vegetation overgrowth, but there is a small stream for fuzzies to check out the water. FACT will provide some flea spray to help ensure you don't bring home any extra "pets," but you may also want to flea shampoo your pets afterwards just to be sure. We'd love to see you there!



exploits. The Xavier group also helps provide vital canine distemper vaccinations by donating to shelters who sponsor a vaccination clinic. Read all about it on the Facebook group page!

Of course, that presumes vaccines are available, which brings me to the "Failure" part of this editorial.

For the second year in a row, Merial Animal Health, the manufacturer of Purevax™ canine distemper vaccine, has had production interruptions. The last of the previous run expired a few months ago. New doses will not be available until mid-October. Essentially, that means during these dangerous summer months, when ferrets arrive in shelters in droves and contagious diseases are often at their worst, there is no way to protect our animals.

This is unacceptable. While the Merial representative to whom I spoke said they regretted the problem and inferred it was beyond their control, you have to ask, "well, if you're the MANUFACTURER, then who ELSE is to blame?" Did they run out of test tubes? Rumors I've heard suggest that Purevax is not a big moneymaker for Merial. Maybe they would sell more if it were regularly available!

What are we to do? Should our vets start using an unapproved vaccine with untested efficacy? Do we go without? Vaccines are not infallible, but it's the best way we have to guard against this fatal disease.

I appreciate that Merial continues to manufacture Purevax and understand it's a small part of their product line. But I'm frustrated and angry when it's unavailable for months at a time. If you love ferrets, you should be upset, too.

That's why I'm asking you contact Merial to express concern. Ask them to resume production NOW – and to try to ensure this does not happen again. Maybe you can't afford to donate to Chicago or adopt a plushie. But you can help by spending 10 minutes voicing a (polite, please!) message to Merial that protecting ferrets against canine distemper is important.

There are 3 ways you can contact Merial Animal Health:

- Phone: 1.888.637.4251, option 3. Hours are 8 am-6 pm EST.
- E-Mail: corporate.communications@merial.com
- Post: Merial Animal Health, Corporate Communications
- 3239 Satellite Boulevard, Duluth, GA 30096

Thank you, for the ferrets.

L. Vanessa Gruden, Shelter Director



FACT, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit and donations are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. You can donate via paypal at: donate@ferret-fact.org.



Special Ferrets

We introduced you to Shaylee in our July issue. Shaylee's news has been mixed; while she recovered wonderfully from surgery to remove the benign tumors on her shoulder, just as her fur began to grow in, the tumors grew back, too. Another, deeper surgical excision went well, but our vet had to remove some of her muscle. If the tumors grow again, we're not sure what Shaylee's options will be. If we remove too much muscle, her front leg will be useless, and we can't amputate her entire shoulder. Shaylee is such a happy, good-natured little girl – please share our hopes she will be OK.

For Adoption!



Robert is a very handsome, 3-pound platinum silver fellow, only about 8-10 months old. Robert was found lying in the road on a hot summer night. Filthy and with an injured front foot, Robert recovered quickly and is now in need of a home. REALLY in need, because Robert is a water-digger. Water-diggers & food-diggers are a test of any shelter operator's patience. I feel bad about yelling – he's just a big baby, but boy, can he make a mess! Robert can empty a quart-size water bowl in minutes with his fat little front feet. Robert would LOVE to attend the FACT picnic with a new mom or dad and try to drain the lake! He's otherwise a very sweet boy who loves playing with other youngsters and will cuddle on your lap. Robert needs lots of room to play and lots of attention. Interested? Contact us right away! Just e-mail info@ferret-fact.org.

