

The Fuzzy Papers

NEWSLETTER OF THE MASSACHUSETTS FERRET FRIENDS

FALL 1999



Sylvia's Story

by *Bill Williamson*
and
Jo Fowler

THE phone call came in the midst of some computer work that I was trying to complete before we went on vacation. I was also waiting for several calls connected with a committee for which I had recently assumed responsibility. We had flunked a fire inspection and the building inspector wanted to know what we were going to do to fix the problem.

"Do you have anything to do with ferrets?" he asked.

There never is a good time for what my wife calls "a ferret call," but like many things in life, sometimes you don't get a real choice. Certainly the ferret didn't have one.

"Yes," I said, "what can I help you with?"

The person calling was a biologist who had received his own call and gone to pick up a lost ferret, but now didn't know what to do with it. He told me that it had quite a few ticks on it, but otherwise appeared fine. The large university wildlife clinic which he had contacted wasn't at all interested, and the Department of Fisheries & Wildlife thought that such a ferret should be killed because of the threat of rabies. The biologist was on a cell phone and would deliver the ferret to any nearby location for me.



Sylvia with her new family, Rob Cobb (left) and son Robby.

I made a few calls to find that Jo Fowler from the Luv of Ferrets shelter was out for the day, but that Dr. Zorngiotti, our local vet, had a cage available and would quarantine the ferret for us. She warned us, though, that she might be forced to put our ferret to sleep if it showed any signs of lethargy or hind-end weakness. Rabies shots were started for several who had come in contact with the animal, who was reported to be smelling a little like it had tangled with a sick skunk. Dr. Zorngiotti provided some tick medication, food, water, and a warm cage, complete with an old cashmere sweater for bedding.

Calls were made every day and the news got better as the week progressed. It turned out that "Sylvia" was a very young female ferret, probably six to eight months old, with

Siamese coloring. We guessed that she was from Marshall Farms because of her ear tattoos. Soon, Sylvia was eating (and pooping) like a horse, and showing renewed interest in her surroundings. On the following Monday we got the final call that Sylvia had passed her quarantine with flying colors. She had also received her distemper shot on Saturday, and had just received her rabies shot. She was free to go.

I arrived to find an alert, dancing, and thoroughly lovable little animal who will make someone a truly gorgeous little friend and sometime companion. Dr. Zorngiotti absorbed several hundred dollars' worth of boarding and examination fees. I paid for the vaccinations and brought Sylvia up to meet Jo, where a special cage had been reserved for her since mid-week. As expected, Sylvia quickly became friends with several others at the shelter, where she will soon be adopted out to a deserving family.

— Bill

IT was June 15th, 1999, when Sylvia the little traveler, officially became a resident of the Luv of Ferrets shelter. She was brought to me by Bill Williamson, just one of the many people who was instrumental in her rescue and trip through our shelter system. Earlier in the day, Bill had picked Sylvia up at Dr. Zorngiotti's veterinary hospital where she had been cared for while she was in her quarantine.

Once in the shelter, Sylvia

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quickly made friends with the other shelter kids and began her wait for the "perfect family" to fall in love with her.

That wait passed swiftly when only a few days after Sylvia's entering the shelter, Rob Cobb, a MaFF member who had recently lost one of his ferrets to an illness, came to the shelter to see if one of our furry kids awaiting a family might fill the void in his heart.

As they went from cage to cage, Rob (along with his son Robby) visited with each furchild, picking

them up, cuddling, petting, and receiving kisses in return. All of a sudden they came to a cage where a sleepy-eyed Sylvia stuck her head out of her sleep sack and looked at Rob. Immediately Rob exclaimed, "This is the ferret I want!" It was love at first sight!

Rob and I made arrangements for the following Tuesday afternoon, June 22, as the official day and time. Tuesday came, Rob and Robby came, and Sylvia is now a full-fledged member of the Cobb family.

Sylvia and her story are a perfect example of how our shelter / rescue system works. Somehow, whether she was abandoned or had escaped from her home, Sylvia had become a wanderer. She was covered in deer ticks, but a Good Samaritan stopped and cared enough to make some phone calls until he reached the

right person (Bill Williamson). Then it was off to Dr. Zornotti's where she spent her quarantine and received her shots, a trip to the shelter where she had interaction with other ferrets, and finally she was placed in her very own human family who had more fuzzies at home for her to play with.

The time frame involved from initial rescue to final adoption was 20 days (June 3rd to June 22nd). Sylvia was one very lucky little girl.

If you would like to see Sylvia's adoption, watch carefully this coming fall for *Wild Rescue* on The Discovery Channel! It just so happens that a crew from the show was at the shelter that day filming a story about another ferret named Simon who had been adopted to a very proud ferret dad: Wayne Murphy of Andover.

— Jo □

The Fuzzy Papers

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<http://www.maferrets.org>

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If you have questions about ferrets, their health or behavior, please send them to:
Karen Purcell, DVM
Via E-mail to:
drkaren@world.std.com

Letter from the President

by Karen Purcell, DVM

JUST the usual update on the fate of MaFF these days. Attendance at monthly Board meetings has gone down, as is expected for the summer. Despite this, I feel that a lot is getting accomplished, particularly distribution of tasks so no one member is overloaded.

We have some changes in the committee chairs to announce. Tracey Goodwin is now our Membership Chair while still retaining her position as organizer for the Boston Pet Expo. After a short time on Barbaralee Baron's head, the hat for Events Coordinator is now on Lisa Wagner, combined with her Education Chair duties. She will also be in charge of organizing the Ferret Freedom Day festivities in March of 2000.

The Educated Ferret Chapter in western Massachusetts will continue to plan the Spring Frolic for next year. I hope that more members will attend

the monthly Board meetings now that the summer is winding down.

We have a number of education events planned for the fall — it seems that taking the summer off has given people energy to volunteer! Please see the Fuzzy Events page here in *The Fuzzy Papers* for the many places MaFF will be flying the banner. And please feel free to join in and help out! Volunteers are encouraged to wear their MaFF T-shirts to these events, and volunteers who help at any event will receive a MaFF T-shirt at a special discount as our thanks for helping out

On a personal note, I have recently decided to become a relief veterinarian. I will be traveling to different parts of Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and New York to work for various practices as needed. For those trying to track me down, my work schedule can be found at <http://www.world.std.com~dgp/schedule.html>. □

ASK DR. KAREN

by Karen Purcell, DVM

Dear Dr. Karen,
 I was wondering if you could post sometime to the FAIML or to me what you use and how much for pain medication after adrenal or pancreatic surgeries. My vet isn't very ferret-experienced, but he has done a few adrenals for our shelter ferrets. Only recently did I realize I should be requesting pain medication. I read someone was using Torbutrol, so I asked my vet to give me some to take home with the last adrenal surgery. We wasn't too sure about the dosage, and we finally decided on .05ml of the injectable version. I used it once during the night when the ferret seemed really agitated and in pain, and it totally knocked him out! Is this the desired effect, or should they just be drowsy? Actually, after I realized I hadn't killed him, it was good for him to sleep most of the night away. I am so glad I had it, but it would be helpful to us and my vet if I knew just when and how much is standard procedure. Thank you so much for your time!

Signed,
 -Concerned Ferret Mom

Dear Concerned,
 Pain medication is very important in the recovery of any animal going through surgery. While ferrets have an unusually good recovery time, it is even better with appropriate use of painkillers. There are many different options, depending on the site of the surgery, what procedure was done and the physical condition of the patient. I highly recommend using pain medication prior to surgery, to decrease the actual surgical trauma, after surgery to enforce rest (in fact, the

intent is to get these guys to sleep as much as possible), and then as needed during the recovery phase to enhance healing. I prefer not to list dosages in a public forum, but will be happy to discuss this topic with any veterinarian in need of the information.

Sincerely,
 — Dr. Karen

Dear Dr. Karen,
 I would like some information about hormone treatments for ferrets with adrenal gland problems. I found you on hotbot.com.

Signed,
 -Randy

Dear Randy,
 There are currently three androgen-blockers available for use in ferrets with adrenal disease. But they are not recommended unless the ferret is not a good surgical candidate, because surgery is still the best treatment.

The three drugs currently in use are Arimadex, Casodex, and Lupron. The first two are available as oral preparations for once daily dosing at home. Lupron is administered by injection by your veterinarian. All of these drugs are experimental — they are currently being researched, but we have no long-term information on their use. If your vet is interested in the protocol, you can request it from MiskaBC@aol.com.

Sincerely,
 — Dr. Karen

Ferret Awareness at AGFA Corp!

by Jo Fowler

ON March 19th, Agfa Corporation of Wilmington, MA, offered their employees an in-house "Craft Display Day," so Ed Fowler of the Luv of Ferrets Shelter & Rescue seized the opportunity to do some ferret awareness for his fellow employees.

At his table (see photo!), where he answered many ferret related questions, were MaFF informational publications, MaFF membership applications, assorted ferret magazines (some of which had pictures of his personal ferrets in them), and assorted ferret books for the attendees to browse through. Ed also displayed a cage that he built and outfitted for a fuzzie kid to move right in.

As Ed's usual department is Engineering Prototype, he has put his skills together and perfected a cage that is both functional and very easy to access for cleaning. Of course, being a shelter Dad has given him much insight into this area of need.

Another big hit at Ed's informational display was the Luv of Ferrets Shelter & Rescue photo album featuring many happy adoption day photos and candid of shelter ferrets just "doing their thing."

All who walked away from the display certainly had a very warm fuzzy feeling and a lot of ferret facts.



The Fuzzy Papers

WRITERS! PHOTOGRAPHERS! SUBMISSIONS SOUGHT!

Submissions to this publication in the form of articles, letters, or photographs, are invited and encouraged.

Please feel free to send your submissions to the MaFF address below, or via e-mail to Jan Fleury at jfleury@maferrets.org

Articles or letters can be neatly handwritten, or typed, or submitted via e-mail or on 3.5" IBM formatted diskette as plain ASCII Text (no word processor-specific formats, please).

Photos can be reflective or transparent, must have permission of those depicted, and can be in either color or black & white.

Deadlines for Submissions to Upcoming Issues of *The Fuzzy Papers*

For the Winter 1999 Issue:
Thursday, November 16, 1999

For the Spring 2000 Issue:
Wednesday, February 16, 2000

For the Summer 2000 Issue:
Tuesday, May 16, 2000

You may send your submissions to:
MaFF / *The Fuzzy Papers*
PO Box 3123
Wakefield, MA 01880

A Shelter Report

by Donna Spirito

It was a Friday, and a very sweet female sable ferret appeared in the yard of a home set deep in the woods in Belchertown. She approached the woman who lived in the house when the woman went out to get her mail out of the box. The woman had a dog kennel in her back yard, and she was concerned that the little ferret would go there for a visit and come to harm, so she picked the little ferret up and brought her into her home. But the woman was about to leave for a trip to Australia, so she called her kennel help to purchase food and supplies for the ferret until she returned home.

On the day she returned, the woman called The Educated Ferret to see what could be done. She had named the ferret Friday, because that was the day she first appeared. Friday

seemed to be roughly 2 years old and in good health, but her vulva was swollen — almost a sure sign of an adrenal tumor — and so it was off to the veterinarian. Surgery was indicated, so Dr. Karen Purcell came to South Hadley to perform the surgery on Friday. In surgery, Dr. Karen removed Friday's left adrenal and a small piece of pancreas, and now she is doing well.

TIM, one lovable sealpoint male, about age 3, came to The Educated Ferret in June. He was very thin, and had some slight hair loss. After passing two hairballs and a black plastic cap, Tim also turned out to have an enlarged left adrenal. Following his surgery, he is now fat and happy (even aggressive to other ferrets!). He is recovering beautifully, and ready for adoption now! □

Sort-of-a Ferret Rescue

by Karen Purcell, DVM

ONE day in August, my husband Denis took a message from the local animal control officer. Henry and I go way back. I met him at my first job here in New England. He's one of the most compassionate animal lovers ever to walk into a veterinary hospital. The message read "a woman found a baby ferret on her porch. Can you come and get it?" I called Henry back, got directions, and headed out with husband and carrier in tow. As we drove off, I turned to Denis and said "Wouldn't it be great if this was a wild weasel, just like keeps happening out in New Mexico?" We chatted about the possibility, but I had never seen a wild weasel around here.

Well, we got to Henry's and he pulled out a cage with food, water,

and some paper for a hiding place, and out crawls the cutest, thin, chocolate brown WEASEL with a cream-colored belly and the pointiest nose! Needless to say, my wondering had come true — this was a wild animal! The woman who had turned it in had captured it in an empty dog food bag with no trouble. After much laughing, Henry and I decided on a good spot in the state forest for the release.

After Denis and I returned home, I did some research. Seems like our little friend is most likely a Least Weasel (*Mustela nivalis rixosa*), a native of North America that preys upon mice, voles, young rabbits, and birds. Now we New Englanders have a story to match our ferret-rescuing Midwestern brethren! □

Ferret Services of Freedom Attains Nonprofit Status

by Alicia Drakiotes

CONGRATULATIONS are in order for Stephanie Mudgett and Ferret Services of Freedom, in New Hampshire! They have just received their IRS letter of determination as a nonprofit. We welcome them to the world of nonprofit ferret sheltering! For those who wish to drop them a line (or a donation!), the address is Ferret Services of Freedom, RR1 Box 1592, Freedom, NH 03836.

You can meet Stephanie and Stephen of Ferret Services of Freedom at the upcoming Ferret Wise Reunion Picnic, Saturday, September 11th from 11AM to 4PM, where there will be fun

ferret games and a table full of wonderful items including Stephanie's stained glass ferrets and the NEW "Broken Heart Memorial Suncatchers!" All proceeds from the purchase of these items goes to benefit Ferret Services of Freedom. Also, don't forget to visit Ferret Wise at www.iGive.com, where Ferret Wise receives \$2.00 for every new person who signs on. It's totally free (and it only takes a few minutes of your time!) to help.

— Best from Alicia Drakiotes and the many faces at Ferret Wise. ☐

Special Thanks To...

Sandy Ferreira

For alerting us to the presence of 4 ferrets at the Methuen MSPCA who were available for adoption. Sandy also took the time to visit these ferrets regularly while they were being held by the MSPCA -and they have now been adopted out to a loving family!

Mr. & Mrs. Robert DeArmond Jr.

For their generous contribution of a TV and a VCR (!) for our use at events. This valuable donation will help us fulfill our education mission.

Richard Brown

For his donation of a Polaroid camera for use at events, and which will also allow the sale of pictures with Whitey the MaFF Mascot, along with our new (soon to arrive!) other MaFF Mascot (a butterscotch jill). Come to the Halloween Frolic and help us name her!

Richard has also donated the use of a fax machine for the remainder of Dr. Karen's term of office as MaFF President. Contact Dr. Karen for usage.

Jo Fowler, Brian & Tina McGovern, and Lisa Wagner
For facilitating the changeover of the Membership Chair's responsibilities to Tracey Goodwin. Their hard work is much appreciated!

... and as always, to all MaFF's hard-working volunteers and Committee Chairs.

ADOPT YOUR NEXT FERRET

CONTACT A FERRET SHELTER IN MASSACHUSETTS

Next time you're thinking about it, or if you're asked about the best way to get a ferret, we hope you'll remember the adoption option!

If you have access to the Internet, visit the MaFF Website at www.maferrets.org where you will find information about each of the ferrets available for adoption from the shelters listed below.

All the shelters can benefit from your kind donations of goods, dollars, or your volunteer time.

Call a shelter today to find out how you can help.

Luv of Ferrets Shelter & Rescue

Jo Fowler
978 / 851 7781
Tewksbury, MA
E-mail at Weldj@aol.com

The Educated Ferret Agency

Donna Spirito
413 / 538 7108
South Hadley, MA

Gimme Shelter Ferret Rescue

Jan and Mark DeJesus
508 / 291 1850
Wareham, MA
E-mail at markld1609@aol.com



MaFF Committee Chairpersons

Here are the current MaFF Committee Chairpersons and their contact information (also available at the MaFF website at www.maferrets.org)

SHELTER

Catherine Bell
(cbell@maferrets.org)

MEMBERSHIP

Tracey Goodwin
(tgoodwin@maferrets.org)

TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

Brian McGovern
(tmcgover@maferrets.org)

PUBLICATIONS

Jan Fleury
(jfleury@maferrets.org)

EVENTS & EDUCATION

Lisa Wagner
(ldwagner.lisa@worldnet.att.net)

MaFF Outreach Reaches Extra Far!

by Karen Purcell, DVM

IN June I received a letter via MaFF Special Investigations Committee Chair (and founding President of MaFF) Sharon Burbine. The letter had come from Susan Malone of the Fanciful Ferrets shelter in Tulsa, Oklahoma. This private shelter had been overwhelmed by victims of the tornados, and they were in dire need of supplies. I passed the letter on to the MaFF membership via email. I want to thank Gail Fairbanks for donating a collapsible cage for MaFF to FedEx to the Fanciful Ferret shelter to assist them. I also would like to thank MaFF member Bill Williamson for his generous donation of a Midwest cage and for taking care of the shipping arrangements and costs.

This is what MaFF should be all about — stepping in to help ferrets in need, in this case whether within the state or not. Our shelters do this every day. Thank you once again to Gail, Bill, and Sharon for going that extra mile.

Here is the text of a followup message we received from Susan Malone of Fanciful Ferrets:

Hi... I am not sure who will get this letter, but maybe you can help me get it to the right people. [Mission accomplished, Susan! - Ed.] This is Susan Malone in Tulsa, OK... I am the one who you received a forwarded email from about my shelter needing help a while back.

I just want to send a heartfelt thanks to you all.

I received several packages and donations that came from Massachusetts... imagine my shock, considering I don't know anyone there and did not send my email request for help in that direction.

Several of the packages were anonymous and the only clue I have was the MA postmarks, so I assume they came from your members.

At this point, I have no way of knowing who sent what, but please let all members know that I and my fuzzies are very grateful for the help - and fascinated by the way ferret lovers all over would help out a stranger.

Thank You,

-Susan Malone □

Doctors Brust Open New Practice

by Jo Fowler

DR. Robert Brust has for the last three years been the shelter vet for the Frisky Ferret Shelter and the Luv of Ferrets Shelter & Rescue. Many of the MaFF membership have also gone to Dr. Brust for their ferrets' medical needs.

As of the end of May this year, Dr. Brust left the practice he had been associated with for the previous six years and along with his wife, Alyssa (also a veterinarian), opened their own veterinary hospital in Henniker, New Hampshire. The name of their new practice is Henniker Animal Hospital.

Jo Fowler (of Luv of Ferrets) and Lorraine (of Frisky Ferret), as well as the MaFF wish the Doctors Brust much success and happiness in their new endeavor.



The Adventures of MacLeod MacFerret

Episode 2: Halloween in the Witch City

by Barbaralee Baron

[Gentle Readers: In honor of the season, we are running this episode now and will present you with *MacLeod Goes to the Park*, as promised, but as Episode 3 in our Winter issue. -Ed.]

HALLOWEEN is a fun time of the year for humans and ferrets alike. It's the one time of the year when we can dress up and be anything we want other than ourselves. It's also the pagan New Year. I like Halloween — there are leaves all over the ground to tunnel through, and bounce in. The air is cool, and has these wonderful smells to it.

For this special night, mom and I traveled to the "witch city," Salem, Massachusetts. Instead of me walking on my leash, mom carried me in a pouch so I wouldn't get stepped on by all the humans, who were everywhere! They didn't look normal. All of them had funny colors on their faces, and dressed really strangely. Mom called these things "costumes." One human was dressed like a big cat, and another had a green face with metal things coming out of his neck! Plus, there were witches all over the place. Both real and pretend. Humans are funny.

All the real witches gathered at a place called Gallows Hill. Someone said humans had been hanged there. I didn't see anyone hanging from the trees. I was ensconced in my pouch and watched everything that went on. Some of the humans carried long white sticks with fire at the end of

them, and some carried pumpkins carved with designs on them. Everyone was standing in a big circle. I tried to escape a few times, but settled for watching. One lady walked around with a big knife in her hand. This scared me, so I hid in my pouch and went to sleep. Some time later I awoke to see everyone walking back to town. I began to wiggle a lot to let mom know I needed the potty. Putting me down, I backed into the first corner and sighed with relief. Back in my pouch, I head mom mention food. I was hungry.

Unfortunately, all the places had this thing about pets. Don't they know we have to eat, too? Mom drew her coat over me and we went inside. I cautiously stuck my head out and kept very still. Maybe no one would see me, or they'd think I was part of mom's costume! All the humans looked really funny. The girl who took our order was dressed like a huge ferret with a big pouch in front. I wanted to explore the pouch, but mom kept drawing her coat over me. I finally gave up and went back to sleep, dreaming of costumes. Maybe next year mom will let me dress like Super Ferret, or maybe William Wallace, since I was a Scottish ferret. □

Next Time: MacLeod Goes to the Park

HELP TEACH OUR "FERRETING 101" COURSE!

We need volunteers to help teach "Ferretting 101." Classes will be held in basic ferret husbandry, care, and home medical treatment. Teams of two will meet at various pet stores in the state to demonstrate and answer questions. Please contact Lisa Wagner or call the MaFF Hotline at 978 / 957 9886 if you are interested in finding out more.

MaFF Committee Chairpersons NEEDED!!

We are in dire need of volunteers to step forward and become MaFF Chairpersons for the following Committees:

FUNDRAISING

This position needs a dynamic and energetic (ideally a duo!!) person or persons to take on this VERY IMPORTANT heart-of-the-operation committee.

Could it be YOU, or you and a good pal you enjoy working with?

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Here is another key spot we need filled right away.

Are you good at Press Releases, and do you have excellent people-diplomatic skills and great corporate connections?!! We're YOUR CAUSE!!!

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR HALLOWEEN FROLIC AND PET EXPO!

MaFF NEEDS volunteers to help us at our upcoming events. Please call the MaFF Hotline at 978 / 957 9886 if you are interested in helping out at the Halloween Frolic on October 24th and/or the Boston Pet Expo on October 30th and 31st.

Massachusetts Ferret Friends — Fall 1999

There's No Time Like the Present . . . Join the MaFF NOW!

If you're not already a contributor to the MaFF, or if you'd like to renew your membership, you can do so by filling out this coupon and sending it in, or send email to info@maferrets.org, or call us at 978 / 957 9886 for a contribution form.

Please indicate one of the following — New Membership Renewal

name _____

address _____

telephone () _____

Level of Support — Friend (Individual) \$25 Family \$35 Sponsor \$50

Total enclosed \$ _____

Your contribution is valid for one year from date of issue and includes a MaFF card, a subscription to the MaFF newsletter, *The Fuzzy Papers*, and special offers on ferret-related items from other interested businesses and organizations. Massachusetts Ferret Friends, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Please send this coupon, along with your contribution as a check or money order to: Massachusetts Ferret Friends, Inc., PO Box 3123, Wakefield, MA 01880

TAKE A LOOK AT YOUR MAILING LABEL for the expiration date of your membership!
Be sure to renew your membership before your expiration date so you won't miss even a single issue of *The Fuzzy Papers*! If you need a renewal form, use the coupon on this page, or contact the Membership Group by calling the MaFF Hotline at 978 / 957 9886, or sending e-mail to member@maferrets.org. DO IT TODAY!

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