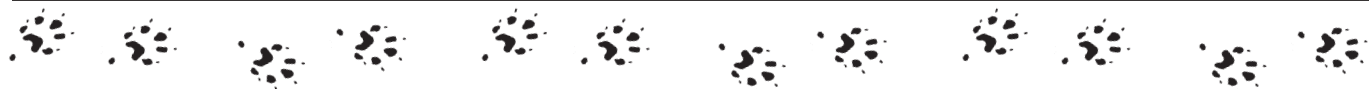


The Fuzzy Papers

NEWSLETTER OF THE MASSACHUSETTS FERRET FRIENDS

SPRING 2006



Letter from the President

by Phyllis M. Spy

AS we move into another year, I look forward to a very exciting couple of years for MaFF. On March 12th, we held the MaFF election for President and Clerk. Phyllis Spy was re-elected to a second 2-year term for President and Jody Renouf was elected as Clerk (winning by just 3 votes). At this meeting, there was an open discussion for attending members on key goals for 2006 - 2007. Our main topics were: 1) a new physical location for the MaFF Rescue and Shelter 2) work on getting legislation in place to insure the minimum age of baby ferrets in pet stores set at 8 weeks 3) disaster management and training, particularly for MaFF members involved with the foster or shelter ferrets 4) working on a study to determine safe titer levels for ferrets to help avoid over-vaccinating, and 5) continued education at pet stores, shelters, and schools.

It was determined that these items will be addressed in the order listed with study teams set up to research and report on each phase of

the project. The shelter project will consist of a Location Study Team, a Finance / Grant Study Team, a Staffing Study Team and an Equipment and Supply Study Team. The Minimum Age of Kits will consist of a study team to research current legislation and recommend changes to the appropriate state authorities to make it illegal to sell any kits under the age of 8-weeks of age. The Disaster Management Team will consist of enrolling in state programs that offer training and certification for assisting in incident management. MaFF will also be looking into forming a team to work with a qualified doctor in beginning a study to determine titer levels in ferrets. And finally we continue to provide education programs suitable for pet stores, shelters and schools.

I would like to invite all MaFF members to become involved in any study program that best suits their expertise. There is much to be done to see these goals become a reality and it will involve effort from all our members. ■

asked for more activities and education days in specific areas of Massachusetts, but we've always been limited by volunteer participation and the enormous challenge of trying to cover the whole state with a handful of members.

Since the organization of area coordinators we have seen an adoption day scheduled for a Petco in Taunton and an education day in Sudbury, bringing us increased visibility while getting information on the care and handling of ferrets out to more people.

When your area coordinators contact you, we hope you will volunteer for upcoming MaFF activities. They are working on projects that involve meeting with local shelters, setting up a network with our Shelter Director, leaving brochures on care and handling of ferrets, fundraisers for MaFF, and more. If you have never volunteered for an education day, we have to tell you that it can be so rewarding to talk to people about the joys (and trials) of being owned by ferrets.

Our area coordinators are:

NORTH SHORE AREA

Kenny Mayne

email: kbmayne@verizon.net

Donna Marshall

email: djamarshall@msn.com

METROWEST AREA

Heather Bowser

email: graneyh@hotmail.com

SOUTH SHORE AREA

Kristin Baker

email: cherrybronco@hotmail.com

WESTERN MASS

Donna Spirito

email: ds020801@aol.com ■

MaFF Area Coordinators

AFTER a long wait for this goal to become a reality, we're pleased to announce that MaFF now has four area coordinators who will be holding education days, events, and fundraisers in specified areas of Massachusetts. The four areas will consist of the North Shore,

MetroWest, South Shore and Western Mass. Each area will have a team of coordinators who will have a list of MaFF members in their area. They will be contacting each MaFF member for their assistance at upcoming area activities.

Over the years members have



The Voice

by Diddy Wheeler

Our companion animals have a language of their own
Perhaps it's a meow and a purr, or a bark and a growl,
Or perhaps it's a dook or a hiss
(not to discount the language of chirps and burbles and squeaks)
Not all hoomans are gifted enough to speak a furr-eign language
An interpreter must be chosen and trained to speak for those who have no words

Today, I am the speaker for the ferrets
I will teach you the difference between
A hiss of fright or a hiss of pain
I will teach you the joy
Of listening to your companion dook with mischief
I will even teach you to interpret the stamping of tiny little feet
Be they demanding a meal, a crinkly
Or a hooman to roll on the floor with

I will warn you that never again
Will a sock or a stray shoe be safe from ferret piracy
Never again will you put away groceries alone
Or hear the crinkle of a shopping bag
Without first checking for tiny furred bandits
I will laugh with you as you learn
That utter bliss can be found in a single roll of toilet paper

I will be there through your laughter
But I will also be there through your tears
For the most precious and hilarious of Da Boss's creatures
Is only gifted with a few short years

I will teach you when a dook means
"please let me go, for it hurts"
Hold my voice to your ear as you learn the hardest lesson
That sometimes it is kinder to let the spirit free
To travel to the Rainbow Bridge
Than it is to throw every last dime and resource
At a tiny creature who fought harder than most hoomans ever could

I speak for the smallest and most helpless
Who have no home of their own
I shout for those thrown away and abandoned
And hold my anger and my tears in check
As I help you shake the commitment you once made

The Fuzzy Papers

*Is a publication of the
Massachusetts Ferret Friends, Inc.
(MaFF)*

Our mailing address is:
PO Box 283
Marshfield, MA 02050

We can be reached via Email at:
info@maferrets.org

For late-breaking news
and other information,
you can reach us at
The MaFF Hotline:
781 224 1098
or visit our Web site at:
<http://maferrets.org>

Managing Editor:
Phyllis Spy

Layout:
Jan Miele

Contributing Editors:
Bob Church
Shirley Hewett
Jo Ouellette
Donna Spirito
Trudy Wallach
Diddy Wheeler



Contributions to this publication are
invited and encouraged.

Send articles or ideas for articles to the
MaFF office address above, or to Phyllis
Spy at publications@maferrets.org

Buddy & Tito

by Trudy Wallach

THANKSGIVING is supposed to be a time of joy and celebration, but it was anything but that for Renee when she went with her boyfriend to his mother's house for dinner.

If you remember, this past Thanksgiving was a cold, rainy day, and what Renee found broke her heart. She knew that her boyfriend's mother had ferrets, but they were nowhere to be seen, so she asked where they were. To her horror, they were outside in the rain in a cage filled with feces and a few Cheerios.

Renee had never owned ferrets, but she couldn't leave them there to die. So Renee took the two home and realized rather quickly that something was horribly wrong when one of them couldn't even walk. The next day she rushed them to a vet who checked them over and sent her home with medication, food, a large vet bill, and instructions on how to put some weight on these poor skinny little boys. These weren't her ferrets, but how could she leave them there?

Shortly after, Renee called MaFF to ask for help. When Renee brought these boys to the shelter on November 29th, she had already purchased a cage, food, blankets, and toys—all of the things that a pet that is loved should have—but these boys didn't. Renee didn't have to do this, but she did and she asked to be kept updated on Buddy and Trouble's progress.

The first thing I did—once they were settled in—was to introduce them to Duck Soup. They wolfed down a couple of bowls of it before drifting off to sleep in a nice warm, dry hammie.

The second thing I did was to change Trouble's name to Tito. If his prior owner thought he was

"Trouble," I wanted no part of that!

Tito wasn't in too-bad shape: a bit thin, but other than that, no worse for the wear. Buddy on the other hand had no use of his back legs. Being the little trooper that he was, he never missed the litter box. He would drag himself in there each and every time. Do you think he was trying to be good so he wouldn't be tossed out again?

It was probably about 4 days after they arrived when I first noticed Buddy stand. It was only for a split second, but I was elated. This poor undernourished little boy had a chance to be normal once again! It was about two weeks later when you wouldn't have even known that Buddy ever had a problem to begin with. This little man, still a bit on the thin side, was running around the house, playing in the tubes, and sliding down the slide. The whole time, Tito never left his side. They were inseparable, and what a zest for life they had.

On January 21st, they were adopted by Kelly Rasimowicz to join her other two ferrets Martini and Hennesy. When they left the shelter, Buddy weighed in at 2.8 pounds, and Tito was slightly more. Since then Kelly and her husband and daughter have come back and adopted 3 other ferrets from MaFF to fill out their extended ferret family. Each time they have brought Buddy and Tito (now named Rascal) back to visit. You can see how much love they have been given and they will never want for anything ever again. Now that's a Happy Thanksgiving!

Many thanks go out to Renee who made this happy ending all possible! ■

*Make a contribution to
MaFF's Shelter Fund.*

The Fuzzy Papers

Deadlines for Submissions to
Upcoming Issues of
The Fuzzy Papers

For the Fall/Winter 2006 Issue
March 10, 2006

For the Spring/Summer 2007 Issue
August 10, 2007

**Submissions are accepted
throughout the year!**

Snailmail your submissions to:
MaFF / *The Fuzzy Papers*
PO Box 283
Marshfield, MA 02050
Or e-mail to: Phyllis Spy at
publications@maferrets.org

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 above, or via e-mail to Phyllis Spy at publications@maferrets.org

Articles or letters can be neatly handwritten, or typed, submitted via e-mail, or on CD as Word documents or as plain ASCII text.

Photos can be digital images, prints or transparencies, must have permission of those depicted, and can be in either color or black & white. If you wish to e-mail photo images, kindly e-mail us first at publications@maferrets.org for advice on sending image files via e-mail.



Outdoor Ferret Playgrounds

by Shirley Hewett

TO all of the folks who emailed me wanting to know how to build an outdoor enclosure:

1. Think big. The more ground space you can give, the more variety of habitats the ferrets can have.
2. Allow the ferrets to have access to Mother Earth. They were born to dig and it is a wonderful exercise for them. Anything else is just another cage.
3. Plant trees, shrubs and ground covers. Most ferrets are acrophobic and prefer to play under cover. For a quick cover, I plant pumpkin seeds, sweet potatoes or some other fast-growing creepers.
4. The perimeter fencing doesn't have to be very high, but needs to be smooth and continue underground for 2-3 feet so that the ferrets can't tunnel out.
5. The fencing can be extended as high as you like (so you can run and play with your ferrets or sit and have a glass of your favourite tippie while you watch them) with chicken wire and covered over the top with the chicken wire too. The smooth part of the perimeter will occlude mice, ants, etc. and the netting cover will stop birds of prey, dogs, etc from entering.

6. Allow access to the playground from the house by cat-door, tunnel, or something so the fuzzies can go there at will.
7. Yes, have a pond and you can even make it very deep as long as it is always kept filled to the top and designed so that ferrets can get out after a swim.
8. Let your imagination run riot in providing a safe joyous area for your fuzzies.

[Editor's Note: Printed with permission from Shirley. Shirley lives in Australia where the climate is a bit different from here in New England. She is a great advocate of non-caged ferrets.] ■



Heritage Days at North Attleboro Middle School

by Phyllis Spy
and Jo Ouellette

MAFF has been invited again this year to participate in Heritage Days at the North Attleboro Middle School on Friday, May 12th.

We will be giving eight lectures, which include a slide show presentation on the history and care of the domestic ferret. Four very special fuzzies will be there in a playpen to entertain and delight the children with their tricks and antics. Last year we spoke to 110 children and answered almost as many questions on ferrets.

To round off our visit to the North Attleboro Middle School, we will be holding an adoption day at the North Attleboro PetsMart sometime after June. This will give any child interested in adopting a ferret an opportunity to bring their parents to discuss whether a ferret is the right pet for their family.

We are very excited about this program and wish to thank the faculty at the North Attleboro Middle School for inviting us back. ■

Heritage Days: in the classroom with Phyllis Spy!

Bob Church on Bumper Stickers

Donated by Bob Church – talktobobc@yahoo.com

QUESTION for Bob Church: "Some time ago you posted some funny ferret sayings. Do you have any for bumper stickers, and can we use them to raise money?"

Bob Church: Ok, and you can use them as long as ALL profits go to ferret shelters or clubs. Just tell me when you do it.

With all the traveling I've been doing lately, I've seen a lot of bumper stickers in that time, so the timing is somewhat timely.

In no particular order:

- ❖ Wanna Watch My Weasel Dance?
- ❖ Ferret Slaves Unite!
- ❖ Household Ruled By Weasels
- ❖ Ferrets Don't Kill Humans: Dogs Do
- ❖ Excuse Me, Is That A Ferret In Your Pocket?
- ❖ I'd Rather Have A Ferret In Front Of Me Than A Frontal Lobotomy
- ❖ Ferrets Need Scruff Love
- ❖ Ferrets Have Cornered the Poop Market
- ❖ Ferrets Have CaCaLand Cornered
- ❖ You Can't Ferret-Proof Your Heart.

For residents of California:

- ❖ My Ferret Is Smarter Than California
- ❖ My Ferret Is Smarter Than Ron Jurek
- ❖ My Ferret Is Smarter Than Your Governor
- ❖ My Ferret Is Smarter Than The California Fish & Game ■

Bob Church and ferret pal.



What Could It Be?

by S. Pyron

I still can feel it lingering,
the tingling on my face.
Its touch, so soft, so genuine,
the mark not soon erased.

It's not only upon my face,
that it has left is mark.
But there is too, the memories,
emblazoned on my heart.

I know you must be wondering,
what causes things like this.
Oh it's a blessed side effect,
left from a Fuzzie's kiss.

Join Our Can Drive for MaFF Shelter and Rescue

MaFF Shelter and Rescue is in need of some shelter cages to better handle the shelter and foster ferrets.

Our Shelter Director has selected a beautiful roomy 3-level PVC-coated cage that will offer plenty of diversity for setting up appropriate housing for single or multiple ferrets. These cages will give our Shelter Director some much needed room in the shelter as well as making cleanup so much faster and easier.

In order to raise the money needed for at least 3 new cages, MaFF is holding a Can Drive. We are asking that you save all your redeemable cans and bottles to be turned in to a central location for redemption.

This Can Drive will run for at least 3 months (or longer, if needed). We will post on the website a date, time and location for redemption—but if you find it easier, you can redeem your cans and bottles at your local redemption center and send the money directly to:
MaFF Cage Drive
PO Box 283
Marshfield, MA 02050

This is a wonderful opportunity for all to participate in helping the fuzzies who are waiting for their "forever home."

Where You Can Find Us — Upcoming Events

Blessing of the Animals

Saturday, May 6th

10 AM

at The Old South Church—645 Boylston Street, Boston

For more information, maps and directions, visit www.oldsouth.org

All creatures great and small are invited to the Old South Church's Gordon Chapel for a special Spring Blessing of the Animals. Children are invited to bring their stuffed animals as well. Old South's ministers will lead us in a brief service of song and prayer and gratitude for the gift of companionship and the love our pets provide us. During the Parade of Pets, each critter—real and stuffed—will be given a blessing from the ministers.

7th Annual Petfest Walk for Animals

Sunday, May 7th

11 AM to 3 PM (Rain or Shine)

Sponsored by: Down to Earth Natural Foods for People and Pets

at Buttonwood Park, New Bedford, MA

Registration from 11 AM until 12 Noon — 2 Mile Walk begins at Noon.

A fundraising, pledge-sponsored walk to raise funds for the Humane Coalition for Animals.

New this year: Doggie Fashion Show presented by Doggie Boutique of New Bedford! . . . Prizes . . .

Raffle . . . Chinese Auction . . . Music . . . Food . . . Contests . . . Gifts and Goodies!

To find out more, visit www.ci.new-bedford.ma.us/nbac.htm

Ferret Education Day

Saturday, May 13th

10 AM to 4 PM

at Petco, 45 Holyoke Street, Holyoke, MA (Tel. 413 539 9197). To find out more, visit the Petco web site (www.petco.com) and click on the Store Locator.

Ferret Education Day

Saturday, May 20th

10 AM to 2 PM

at Petco, 10 Sylvan Street, Peabody, MA (Tel. 978 531 7387). To find out more, visit the Petco web site (www.petco.com) and click on the Store Locator.

Ferret Adoption / Education Day

Sunday, May 21st

1 to 4 PM

at Petco, 216 Colony Place, Plymouth, MA (Tel. 508 747 4132). To find out more, visit the Petco web site (www.petco.com) and click on the Store Locator.

MaFF 2nd General Meeting

Saturday, June 10th

11 AM to 3 PM

at Alan & Jo Ouellette's home in Attleboro, MA

It's a Cookout! Steamers, Shrimp Cocktail, Hamburgers and Hot Dogs! The Pool will be OPEN!

The meeting will include discussions on the many activities MaFF is currently working on as well as the selection of committee members for King Noah's Ferret Faire to be held in October. There will also be a short slide show presentation on Alternative Foods for Your Ferrets.

For more information, visit the MaFF web site at maferrets.org, and click on Events. RSVPs will be greatly appreciated at events@maferrets.org!



Health Tip for Spring

by Donna Spirito, Director of The Educated Ferret

It is hairball time and we usually receive over 30 emails and phone calls a week to the rescue at this time of the year from people whose ferrets are either throwing up, have diarrhea or small poops. We usually do a hairball regimen recommended by Dr. Karen Purcell.

Prepare a batch of Duck Soup and feed the ferret(s). Wait 45 minutes, then give them Petromalt. Wait three hours and do this again, and then a third time just before bed. This keeps them from getting dehydrated or low blood sugar, and assists them in passing any hairballs.

We check the poops each time they go for about 12 to 24 hours. I usually keep any suspected ones by themselves until they poop, if you know which ones are having an issue. We always do this at hairball time and when we find someone with heavy shedding. On the second day, we give Laxatone (or equivalent) twice, and then every other day until they have all finished shedding. Of course, always give the Petromalt or Laxatone treatments at least 45 minutes after eating, so the hairball treatments do not hinder their absorption of food. The girls can get 1/2-3/4 inch a day, and the boys 3/4 to one inch a day. ■

Liberty: MaFF's Black-Footed Ferret!

MaFF has adopted Liberty—a female black-footed ferret—from Prairie Wildlife Research, Inc. She was born on June 20, 2003 at the National Black-footed Ferret Conservation Center (NBFFCC) in Wyoming. Her dam is Staten and her sire is Ragu. Staten was born in 2002 after the tragedy of 9/11, and she and her siblings were named after the five

boroughs of New York City. Liberty and her sister, Macy, continue the tribute to New York City, and they are both part of the breeding population at the NBFFCC. Liberty has another sister who was released into the wild in Arizona during the fall of 2003.

Black-footed ferrets were thought to be extinct until a small population was discovered in

Parting Thoughts

by S. Pyron

How do I say good-bye to you,
when I want you to stay?
No words, no thoughts, no heartfelt
prayers,
prepared me for this day.

The days, the years, went quickly by,
and to you I held tight.
But now's the time for letting go,
the Bridge is now in sight.

Of all the days I cherished you,
and oh that nose I kissed!
I hold you now, and say good-bye,
too fast it came to this.

My heart will never let you go,
my life, you filled so much.
When I am still, in quiet thought,
I know I'll feel your touch.

Oh thank you my sweet precious friend,
go now, for it is time.
You'll always live inside of me,
your soul will be with mine.

I'll always have you here with me,
death cannot make us part.
Your love remains, to always stay,
forever in my heart.



Wyoming in 1981. The last 18 known wild ferrets were taken into captivity between 1985 and 1987 for breeding. Today, about 300 black-footed ferrets live in five captive breeding facilities and two pen-breeding/pre-conditioning facilities.

For more information and updates on Liberty, visit the MaFF web site (maferrets.org). We are very excited about our new ferret and wish Liberty all the best. ■

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

If you're not already a contributor to MaFF, or if you'd like to renew your membership, you can do so by filling out this coupon and sending it in, or by sending an e-mail to info@maferrets.org, or by visiting our web site at <http://maferrets.org>, or by calling us at 781 224 1098 and asking for a contribution form.

Please indicate one of the following — New Membership Renewal

name(s) _____

address _____

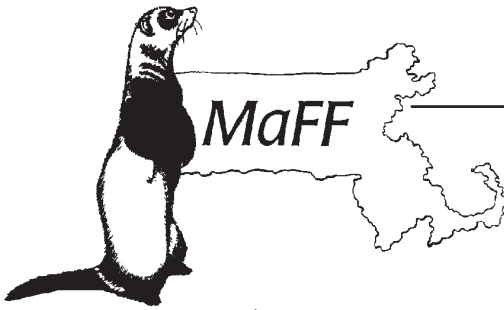
telephone () _____

Level of Support — Friend (Individual) \$25 Family \$35 Sponsor \$50 Patron \$75
 Benefactor \$250 Angel \$300

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 283, Marshfield, MA 02050



Massachusetts Ferret Friends, Inc.

PO Box 283
Marshfield, MA 02050

(a nonprofit organization)

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 781 224 1098, or sending e-mail to membership@maferrets.org. DO IT TODAY!