

March 2008

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>Yoshimi</i>	2
<i>Rainbow Bridge</i>	2
<i>Insulinoma claimed Fozzy</i>	3
<i>Why Volunteer</i>	4
<i>Treasurer's Report</i>	5
<i>Special Thanks</i>	5
<i>Items of Interest</i>	6

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Ferret Friends
C/O Dian Curran
PO BOX 594
Vail, AZ 85641

A 501(C)(3) Nonprofit,
No-Kill - Rescue, Shelter,
and Club in Tucson AZ

Hazards in the Home and Elsewhere

By Carol Owens

Anyone with ferrets soon learn that the little fuzzies will chew on anything that is soft, squishy, and/or tasty. While this sometimes means your toes or fingers, too often it is something hazardous or potentially hazardous. I have recently learned the hard way about how easy it is to overlook some dangerous items in my own house. After reading this article, if anyone else is inclined to do a real cleanup of your home my job to inform others is complete.

The real problem started with earplugs. I have a habit of sleeping with earplugs; it helps tame the snoring from my husband. I place the earplugs in the bathroom, when there not in use. I also had a very energetic dark ferret that would climb the bathroom fixtures in a flash if I left the door open. In the mornings I leave the door open to clean the water crocks. One day last fall he wasn't as boisterous as usual. Oh, well, he was off his feed for a day, I thought. A couple days later and he was quite thin and dehydrated. He wasn't spunky at all, and by then I could feel that he had something in his intestine. I was able to get him in to Dr. Strickland the next day but it was late so she referred me to Valley Animal Hospital where Dr. Moffet performed surgery. Dr Moffet called me when she was done with the surgery to let me know that he was OK; however about an hour later he expired and went to the Rainbow Bridge. What she got out was one very brown, formerly yellow foam earplug. I had to soak it in bleach to figure it out and remove the stink from it.

It is a constant chore to keep everything picked up that the ferrets might chew. I recently found a large piece of bubble wrap with every 1" bubble pierced by our own ferret that needed hairball surgery when I got him from the Humane Society a couple years ago. There are so many items that are a target for small sharp ferret teeth, chocolate wrappers carelessly discarded where they can get them, rubber bands dropped on the floor, pens with soft grips, pencil erasers, bandages, soft bumpers on cabinet doors, rubbery or vinyl strips on dustpans and vacuum cleaners, remote control and phone pads. Always make sure to pick up dropped bits of food, nuts, etc.

For the cabinet problem I have installed heavy duty magnetic cabinet latches near the bottom of the doors. They are really strong and the fert who was the worst one for going after the doors now ignores them. This also keeps them from actually going in the cabinets and dumping out the contents including potentially hazardous items that we all keep under our sinks. Also changes in where items are stored helps with most other problems. Waste-baskets can be changed to the type with a door on top, or can be kept in a cabinet with a magnetic latch on it. Other stuff can be placed up high in or on cabinets and shelves. Always watch for bits and pieces of things they might chew.

Please keep ferrets away from sweet stuff like soda and candy. Chocolate contains theobromines which can be fatal to ferrets (and dogs) in large quantities, and any sweet stuff can contribute toward the future development of insulinoma in ferrets. It is best to do without.

I have a booklet from a vets office put out by a pet insurance plan called *101 Things You Didn't Know Could Harm Your Pet*. It lists many items that are hazardous to our furry friends. Although it is about dogs and cats it pertains to ferrets as well. (You can get a free copy at: <http://www.petshealthplan.com/pet-insurance-101-book.aspx>) Take some time to check around for hazards in your home and correct what you can. The life you save may be your fuzzy's.



Over the RAINBOW Bridge

Shelter Ferrets:

Esme

Cracker

Timba

Clark

Friends:

**Mr Thunder Paws
Christ**

**Haylin McBride
Casey McBride
(dog)**

**Tracy Curran
Vetale Curran**

**Happy Owens
Foxie Owens-
Stewart**

Slick Palmer (dog)

Yoshimi

By Larisa Thomas

When I was in middle and high school I had raised rats. Every two years I would have to lay another rat to rest in the cold earth of West Virginia. This became very heavy on my heart. After having my last rat die in my hands, I decided to no longer raise rats. Many years passed without the thought of finding a small animal I could love with a longer life span. Ten years later, it came to me like an epiphany. Ferrets can live up to ten years if cared for properly! Why had I not realized sooner?

So this was the beginning of the “honey please, I want a ferret” the winter of 2004. My poor husband heard this for four months straight. It is all I talked about. Ferrets this, and ferrets that. Little did I know that during this time, I should have been doing my homework on ferrets, rather than daydreaming about them.

So Christmas came. It was time to open gifts! I received from my husband that year a white envelope with only my name printed on the front. Inside was a computer print out of a small picture of a ferret and the paper read, “Good for one fuzzy animal of your choice!” “My choice?” I thought, “Well that easy. I choose a ferret.”

The very next day I started making phone calls to compare prices at local pet stores. I chose the pet store that charged the least for ferrets. I drove over immediately and bought my first ferret. The ferrets in the cage were un-kept and very dirty. Some had dried mucus around their noses and eyes. They all had very little energy and were covered with dried feces. I chose the one I felt the most sorry for. The one I thought needed to come home with me the most. She was a five week old dew; solid white, except for the tip of her tail, which was silver. After the decision was made, I grabbed the cheapest cage they had to offer and the minimal necessary supplies for housing a ferret: one hammock, water bottle, cheap food, and a little box. Not what I would call a luxurious cage set up. Luckily, it was common sense to me to fill the cage with bedding from my linen closet. The pet store attendant had told me nothing on how to care for this little girl.

I began to notice after about two weeks of having her home that Yoshimi had no energy. She never played, she only slept. After about three weeks, she was throwing up everything she ate and had very runny stools. I didn't know anything about ferrets at this time, but I knew it was time for a trip to the vet. I was about to learn about ferrets very quickly.

The vet felt around Yoshimi's belly and she let out a little squeak when he did. He informed me that she had a "knot" in her belly and an x-ray was advised.

“X-ray her then.” I said.

The x-ray showed a knot the size of a quarter in her intestines. The vet said it might have been an obstruction or something else. Exploratory surgery was advised.

“Explore away.” I said.

The vet performed the surgery and informed me the next day that Yoshimi had a tumor at the base of her intestines that was un-removable. He took a biopsy and sent it out to the lab. I spent the next two days sitting out back of the vet's office holding Yoshimi before she was released to come home. Here is this tiny 8 week old ferret with a stomach full of metal staples. Horrible. Three days later, no word.

I called the vet back numerous times and got no word on the findings from the lab where the biopsy was sent. Finally I was informed that the lab was un-able to identify the tumor and the sample had been sent to a lab in LA. Four days later, no word. Eventually, the results were given to me after waiting about two weeks. Yoshimi had avian Tuberculosis.

“Avian?” I asked. “Impossible.”

Yoshimi continued from Pg 2

Possible was the response. Yoshimi was proof. After talking with other experts, researching forums, many sleepless nights sobbing, I decided I had to put her to sleep. Yoshimi's life consisted of throwing up, diarrhea, and sleeping. The doctors informed me that there was no chance that her quality of life would get better, and that Avian Tuberculosis was highly contagious to humans.

It was the hardest thing I have ever done, to let her be taken out of my hands and put to sleep. When I bought her at the pet store I had walked in thinking, "here is my new companion for the next ten years!!" Truth was I only had her for about four months. Talk about detestation. I spent the next two months sobbing every day, and I had gone into hiding. I didn't want to talk to or see anyone.

After about seven months of mourning, I decided to call Ferret Friends of Tucson. Yoshimi had escaped once and the Humane Society had given me the number for their shelter to see if she had been turned in. I picked out a bonded pair of males; one about 12 months old and the other about 1 1/2 years. I was given a manual on caring for ferrets and had read many books on ferrets as well. I was ready to try again. I would urge anyone wanting a pet, ferrets especially, to go to a shelter and adopt, but not until you have done your research. I made many mistakes while buying Yoshimi. If I could do it all over again I would have gone to a rescue.

I now am the proud owner of 5 healthy, wonderful ferrets from Ferret Friends of Tucson. I volunteer with the shelter in helping educate the public with facts about ferrets and what it takes to be a good ferret parent.

The friends I have made working with this rescue offer a great support group. They are full of knowledge and support when needed. Yoshimi's death may have been very tragic and dreadful, but the outcome has lead to some of the most influential and appreciated connections in my life.

Thanks to everyone at Ferret Friends for all the knowledge and friendship you have given me, and my fuzzies! If you would like to contact Larisa, her email is phaeriegrrl@gmail.com.

Insulinoma claimed Fozzy

Posted by: "Kim" Forgewizard@cfl.rr.com [forgewizard](#)

Tue Mar 18, 2008 3:18 am (PDT)



Another ferret succumbed to insulinoma at just 6 1/2 years old. I realize this is not a nutrition forum, but with insulinoma so rampant and being proved to be linked to a hi carb/ hi vegetable matter diet -it is obviously a VERY preventable disease!

Please help your ferret have a healthy longer life by offering them as natural a diet as possible. Ferrets ARE in fact obligate carnivores and do NOT need to eat oats, corn, rice, wheat, broccoli, barley, kelp, cranberries, garlic, rosemary, chicory, blueberries, bananas, raisins, potatoes or the plethora of other plant products processed in kibbles under the guise of "natural and nutritious and beneficial"!

Insulinoma is a horrible way to die and completely an unnecessary way to exit this world!

Your ferret's health is inextricably linked to the nutrition it gets. While some health issues can be related to genetics, early altering and housing. Insulinoma is diet related and preventable.

Fozzy came to me just 5 months ago. Most likely already with the insulinoma well established. Although the more nutritious and natural diet I fed him got him trimmed down, offered him more energy and improved his outward appearance and his emotional health, the insulinoma was waging war on his internal organs.

He rallied a bit once he began getting Prednisolone, but the insulinoma was too far advanced and pred is only a bandaid, it is NOT a cure.

AN ounce of prevention (in the form of an ounce of natural food) is worth a pound of cure is never more true than with the case of insulinoma! Please evaluate your ferret's diet and adjust as necessary - these tiny critters offer us so much - its unfair to kill them silently by feeding them stuff their systems are not designed to eat!



WHY VOLUNTEER?

by [Susan J. Ellis](#)

BENEFITS OF VOLUNTEERING

People volunteer for a wide variety of reasons, especially wanting to help others. But it's also OK to want some benefits for yourself from volunteering.

Some people are uncomfortable with the notion that a volunteer "benefits" from doing volunteer work. There is a long tradition of seeing volunteering as a form of charity, based on altruism and selflessness. The best volunteering does involve the desire to serve others, but this does not exclude other motivations, as well.

Instead of considering volunteering as something you do for people who are not as fortunate as yourself, begin to think of it as an exchange.

Consider that most people find themselves in need at some point in their lives. So today you may be the person with the ability to help, but tomorrow you may be the recipient of someone else's volunteer effort. Even now you might be on both sides of the service cycle: maybe you are a tutor for someone who can't read, while last month the volunteer ambulance corps rushed you to the emergency room. Volunteering also includes "self-help." So if you are active in your neighborhood crime watch, your home is protected while you protect your neighbors' homes, too. Adding your effort to the work of others makes everyone's lives better.

YOUR MOTIVATIONS

Think about how much you receive when you give and consider why you want to volunteer. You may have several different reasons. Here are just a few of the many possible motivations identified by other volunteers:

- to feel needed
- to share a skill
- to get to know a community
- to demonstrate commitment to a cause/belief
- to gain leadership skills
- to act out a fantasy
- to do your civic duty
- because of pressure from a friend or relative
- satisfaction from accomplishment
- to keep busy
- for recognition
- to repay a debt
- to donate your professional skills
- because there is no one else to do it
- to have an impact
- to learn something new
- for freedom of schedule
- to help a friend or relative
- for escape
- to become an "insider"
- guilt
- to be challenged
- to be a watchdog
- to feel proud
- to make new friends
- to explore a career
- to help someone
- as therapy
- to do something different from your job
- for fun!
- for religious reasons
- to earn academic credit
- to keep skills alive
- because an agency is geographically close

THE CURRENCY CORNER: WORDS FROM THE TREASURER

Previous balance: \$4204.24

Deposits: \$1178.00
Strickland: \$1113.17
Valley: \$234.40
Other expenses: \$42.97



Present balance: \$3991.07

Why Volunteer? continued from Pg 4

- to have an excuse to do what you love
- to be able to criticize
- to assure progress
- to feel good
- to be part of a team
- to gain status
- because you were asked
- to test yourself
- to build your resume
- to be an agent of change
- because of personal experience with the problem, illness, or cause
- to stand up and be counted

You will probably have some special reasons of your own. Remember that the motivations you have to select the place to offer your services may not be the reasons why you stay. Once you're on the volunteer job, you will continue to serve as long as you feel that your efforts are accomplishing something, that your talents are appreciated, and that you make a difference. And if you also like the people with whom you work, so much the better!

As long as you are truly serving through your volunteer work, isn't it wonderful that such an exchange occurs? In fact, it tends to strengthen your commitment to volunteering when you can see the benefits to both the recipient of your efforts and to yourself. And it is much more comfortable than "charity" because it upholds the self-esteem of those with whom you volunteer.

This article was reprinted with permission by Susan J Ellis, it was found on the World Wide Web on October 8, 2007. You can find more information on volunteering at

www.energizeinc.com

If you would like to make a donation or help with volunteering please contact Carol at 520-762-5568 or Robin at 520-740-1707.

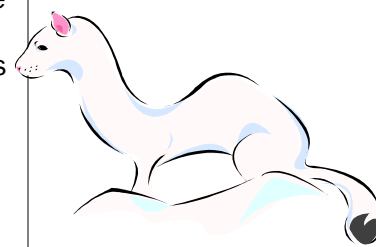
A special Thank you goes out from JoAnn McBride to Arcelia McBride and Steven Nazari for all the help they give her setting up and tearing down at all the events!

VETERINARIAN SURVEY

Please send Carol your opinion about your ferret vet- good, bad, caring, really ferret knowledgeable or just does shots. I would like to make up a chart of ferret vets in the Tucson area. With more people moving here all the time and adding more ferrets to the workload of vets around here we need to have good references when fuzzy lovers adopt or purchase babies. Please email your comments to Carol at queen-bee@gainbroadband.com or drop a note to me at 917 N Solar Dr, Vail AZ 85641

Thanks!

Carol Owens, President and chief pooper-scooper



We're on the Web
www.ferretfriends.org

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917 N Solar Dr
Vail, AZ 85641-9744

ITEMS OF INTEREST

Board Member

Meetings – Board meetings happen every other month on the third Saturday at 1:30 PM, contact 762-5568 for location.

Chicken Gravy –We are having a Chicken Gravy class. If you would like to attend or have questions please call Michelle at 664-1077 or Carol at 762-5568. You can also email ferretfriendsoftucson@yahoo.com for information or answers.

Donations— Please be generous with your donations! Make donations or membership fee checks out to Ferret Friends Inc.

Vaccination Clinic—We will be having a vaccination clinic on April 26 2008; for more details call Carol Owens at 762-5568 or visit the website.

Ferret Friends Store—

We are now selling cages and other items at the online store. Please look at the webpage for more info.

Yahoo Group—We have started a yahoo group: ferretfriendsoftucson. Go to our website and click on the Ferret Friends tab or follow this link:
<http://www.ferretfriends.org/aboutme.htm>.

PETCO Adoption

Partners— Ferret Friend Representatives have been taking ferrets and our newly made adoption books to local Petco's. To find out when and where please contact Jo Ann at 520-820-2374. To learn more about PETCO Adoption Partners go to:
http://www.petco.com/petco_Page_PC_petadoptionshowme_Nav_313.aspx

5th Annual Ginny Childs' memorial Picnic— TBD. The board meeting for November will take place here.

Ferret Magazine—

Looking for more information on FERRETS? Miss the Ferret Magazine? Go online to <http://www.smallanimalchannel.com/ferrets> and find more information there.

Questions?

Contact Michelle S. at
Phone: 520-664-1077
Email:
shadethecat@cox.net

