

Three Rivers Ferret Council, Inc. February 2015 Newsletter

**March Meeting
Fourth Sunday***

March 22, 1 - 4 pm

**Trinity Lutheran Church
601 Brownsville Road
Pittsburgh PA 15210**



***The church needed the room
on the 3rd Sunday**

**Three Rivers Ferret Council, Inc.
145 Margaret Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15210
A 501c3 tax exempt charity
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In this issue:

**TRFC Business
Questions & Answers
Adrenal Disease
Joe on fostering
Memorials**



Lacey owned by Jess K

TRFC Business

The Presidents' Column

by Jess Knaus & Kay English

The logo is complete! Many many thanks to Dave Moore for all of his hard work and dedication to this project. With the new logo comes new business cards and a need for a new t-shirt! New business cards have arrived and will be at the meeting on the 22nd of March.

We are announcing a t-shirt design contest. We need to make t-shirts for the TRFC and are asking for your help. Use the logo that Dave drew and come up with a funny or cute saying to put on the shirt. One idea is "Got ferrets?" We are collecting ideas and then we'll vote on them during the May 17 meeting. The person who submits the winning saying will get a free t-shirt! You have until May 1 to submit your ideas. Be creative and have fun! You can submit ideas in person at the meetings, on the Facebook page, or via email to: unforgettable_wanderer@yahoo.com or passionatelykay@gmail.com

Also a quick picnic update. The grove is reserved and paid for. The picnic will be held on September 20, 2015 at the Silent Brook Barn in South Park (our usual location). We need people to volunteer to:

- Setup food
- Run the Grill
- Run the Raffle
- Run Games

Also as a reminder, PLEASE list ingredients with your potluck items. This will help people with allergies.



February Meeting Minutes

by Becky Marino

- March Meeting will be pushed back to the 22nd as the church has another event the previously scheduled day.
- March meeting will feature ferret holiday pictures. The group discussed alternatives if Lisa R can't make it.
- Today's meeting events will involve the name games and fleece no-sew sacks taught by Jackie
- Picnic Discussion
 - 2nd or 3rd Sunday of September
 - Grove reservation will be placed this week
 - Need teams for each category
 - Food setup
 - Someone to run the Grill
 - Raffle
 - Games
- Put ingredients list on the food for the picnic pot luck (as well as for meetings) as some members and guests have unusual allergies.
- Logo is finished and one of the alternative versions of it was displayed. The final version has a slightly different font to make it more visible.
- The TRFC is working on getting new business cards with the logo that include things such as the facebook link.
- Members were asked to come up with game ideas for ferrets to play. these games are to be brought to the May meeting where they will be played. Most popular games will make their way to the picnic this year.
- The group is attempting to get Dr. Wagner to come to the June or July meeting de-

TRFC Business (cont.)

pending on his schedule. The meeting he doesn't make it to, Barb will do a ferret care info session to help new ferret owners learn the basics.

- A group member also brought up identifying and preparing questions to ask Dr. Wagner such as having read that a mutated coronavirus that not only results in ECE temporarily but also lasting damage.
- Also food during Wagner's visit should be labeled as he has food allergies.
- Possible ways to bring new members in through facebook promotion was talked about. Barb has been testing it by having the TRFC page advertised to people who have ferrets listed as an interest and live in the region but we don't know the effect of that yet.
- A call for newsletter material was placed by Barb. We can use stories, pictures, poems, whatever members would like to contribute.
- The meeting ended with members breaking to play games and make no-sew fleece sleep sacks.



Bud

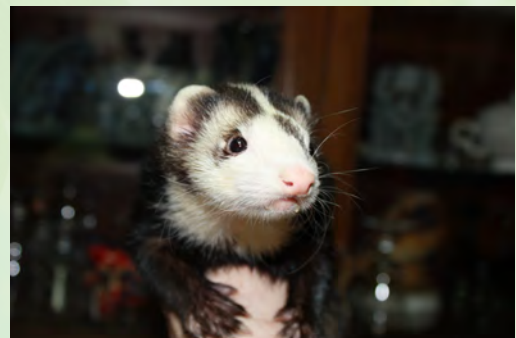
Results from Facebook Promotion

Start Date:2015-02-03
End Date:.....2015-03-04
Ad Set Name:Promote TRFC
Reach:2353
Clicks:81
Page Likes:.....67
Amount Spent:.....\$34.34
Cost Per 1,000 People: ...\$14.59
Cost Per Click:\$0.42

We ran a promotion between February 3 and March 4th with a maximum budget of \$5 a day. We ended up spending a little over \$34. Facebook said 2,353 people saw our ad, 81 people clicked on the ad and 67 new people liked the page. A few unliked the page after looking at it.

Whether that translates into new TRFC members isn't clear. It certainly seemed to increase the traffic on the Facebook page.

We should probably also pursue a membership campaign (try to get people on our list to pay dues and get previous members to renew). We could also make a flyer or poster and post it in various pet stores, vet offices, etc.



Jack

Questions and Answers

Q: How many N-bones are safe to give my ferret?

A: There are no scientific studies to use as a guideline except for those given for cats:

According to an article on pets.webmd.com, "... they 'should be a very small part of the diet,' says Marla J. McGeorge, DVM, an Oregon vet who treats felines only.

How small? Many experts recommend cat treats make up no more than 10% of the total calories a cat eats."

Since cats and ferrets are both obligate carnivores, the guidelines should be similar. The hard part is figuring out how many calories a ferret eats and how many calories are in the treat.

From the Petco website, the ingredients for N-Bone Ferret Chicken Chew Treat are: Rice flour, vegetable glycerin, wheat gluten, gelatin, corn starch, water, soy protein concentrate, corn gluten meal, chicken, soybean oil, ginger, taurine, rosemary, mixed tocopherols (a preservative).

Just looking at the ingredients, we can tell these really aren't all that great for our ferrets. It lists 35% protein, which doesn't sound bad, except very little of it is meat-based protein and therefore very little is actually available to a ferret. But we're not feeding treats as food, so while it's not an ideal treat, a small amount is okay.

On the package, it says "3200 kcal/kg" That's really hard to figure out.

Since I'm not a scientist, I'd say either don't feed N-bones or keep it to no more than 1/2 stick per day. I feed them less often. I'll give them one whole stick once a month.

A little better are Cheweasels (if you can find them) or the Marshall star chews. Those are

mostly gelatin (made from animal sources) but I'm sure aren't all that nutritious.

Even better would be dehydrated chicken (if you can find something NOT made in China). I often recommend getting chicken or turkey baby food (just the meat--no noodles or vegetables) and give that off your finger. Ferrets like to be fed.

Even handing them a piece of their own kibble seems to register as a treat to them. Hiding pieces of kibble around the room can be a fun game and you know it won't compromise their nutrition.

A quick search of the Internet will find Dogswell Vitality Chicken Breast Dog Treats. It looks good -- "Made with all-natural, cage-free chicken breast..." It says no flour, wheat, corn, or soy, no fillers, no BHA/BHT. But you would still need to examine the bag carefully to make sure it was made in the USA. I wouldn't feed anything made or sourced outside the US at this point (and even inside the US isn't all that great sometimes).

Even better would be making your own treats. Anyone want to start a business?



A Quick Look at Adrenal Disease

For such a common ailment do you know what it means if your ferret is adrenal? Let's take a quick look at adrenal disease.

Located just in front of a ferret's liver is the adrenal gland which produces hormones such as sex hormones and cortisol (hormone that helps respond to stress). If this gland has tumors it is called adrenal disease. There are three forms of adrenal disease: hyperplasia, benign tumor, or carcinoma tumor. In hyperplasia there is excessive growth of the adrenocortical tissue and the glands still function normally. With benign tumor the adrenal gland is enlarged, begins to lose its normal functions and may begin to affect the ferret's overall health. In the carcinoma stage the gland is no longer functioning normally and the ferret's health is severely compromised. During this late stage it is possible for the adrenal gland to rupture.

Common symptoms include hair loss, muscle loss and/or potbelly, lethargy, and weight loss. With the fur loss it usually, but not always, starts at the tip of the tail and moves toward the shoulders. Females can develop an enlarged vulva and males can develop an enlarged prostate causing difficulty urinating and may show aggressive behavior. It is estimated that 40%-50% of all ferrets will grow adrenal tumors at some point in their life and most commonly affect ferrets age 4 and up.

There are a few ideas as to what causes adrenal disease. Notions include high exposure to light, inbreeding, early spaying/neutering practices, diet, etc. High exposure to light and early altering are the most popular theories. Light stimulates the pineal gland

which, through chemical reactions, triggers the gonads (testicles and ovaries) to secrete sex hormones. With ferrets that are "fixed" there are no gonads to tell the body to stop producing the sex hormones therefore this can cause the adrenal glands to enlarge.

Treatments can include medication and surgery. Surgical removal of the infected gland is most effective and has a better than 90% success rate. However, there is no guarantee that the disease won't reappear. Some medications include Lupron treatment, melatonin treatment. Implants are another option. The once yearly Deslorelin implant is a popular and effective treatment option but is currently not FDA approved therefore are hard to come by. Once treated, a ferret can live a normal happy life with adrenal disease.

Information compiled by Kay English from: Ferret Universe: Adrenal Disease (<http://tinyurl.com/oo44ltc>); Ferret Association of Connecticut: Adrenal Disease & Treatment Options – What Ferret Owners Should Know (<http://tinyurl.com/ntcfxjk>); PetMD: Adrenal Disease in Ferrets (<http://tinyurl.com/nf427jg>)



Joe talks about fostering

Since both of my ferrets crossed the bridge in 2014 I decided to wait a bit before I got any new ferrets. I was asked by Barb to foster two ferrets for Dr. Wagner's ECE Vaccine program. Hannah and Cookie needed to be



Cookie

kept away from the shelter for one month while the vaccine took effect. They then had to return to the shelter, so I knew upfront not to get too attached and just have fun with them for the month. The shelter supplied the food and litter and I did was keep them happy and healthy and loved.



Hannah

Fostering is good for the ferrets. It keeps them socialized with people so they are better pets when adopted. I teach my fosters to use litter boxes. I attempt to leash train them so they can safely go outside. They learn that duck soup is good food. I've given them all a taste of raw food. Cookie would eat some, but Hannah? Nope.



Charlotte

My second foster was a single deaf girl ferret named Charlotte. She was looking to be loved and bonded with me quickly. She took to the basics of eating raw with no encouragement. I was so glad she was quickly adopted and is in a great home.

Next up I took on the trio of Sissy, Bud and Jack. This is a great group. I was worried about trying keep three going in the litter boxes but they are holding an 80% average. They have the run of three rooms, so sometimes they make a mistake.

They have three very different personalities. Sissy is a silent loner. She is up at all hours walking around by herself. She can also

Joe talks about fostering (cont.)



Jack, Sissy and Bud (L to R)

hold her own against the two bigger boys. Bud is a big lazy ferret. He is always the first to go back to sleep. He loves to be petted and brushed. Bud will eat any raw food you give him. Jack is a frantic little deaf boy. He doesn't have time to be held – he has things to do. Jack is the bowl cleaner -- he eats everything in sight.

Fostering is not for everyone. You have to be able to give them up when their time comes for a forever home. So if you are experienced with ferrets and have space in your home and some love to give consider fostering a ferret.



Jack being a good boy



Sissy and Jack



Charlotte browsing for dinner



Memorials



Old Man

Old Man: This older male ferret came in with Jack, Sissy and Bud. He'd been taken in by the previous owner from someone who wasn't caring for him. He came in on January 3 of this year. He was very adrenal, so we got him a Lupron shot and Samantha S was fostering him. His hair grew back, and he was turning into quite the handsome boy. Then apparently his kidneys failed and he went downhill quickly. It was very frustrating to lose him only a couple months after getting him, but when their little bodies are worn out, they are worn out. He had a couple good months with Samantha and he got lots of attention, so we hope he enjoyed his short time with us.

--Barb Carlson w/Samantha

