



Shelter Ferrets Are The Stars At Ferretstock

Rocky's Ferret Rescue And Shelter holds an annual fundraising event to benefit the shelter and its ferrets.

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This 130-acre Maryland farm is home to Rocky's Ferret Rescue And Shelter.

In June, about 100 ferret enthusiasts from across the United States arrived at Rocky's Ferret Rescue And Shelter in Maryland to celebrate Ferretstock 2008. This annual fundraising event for the shelter takes place at the 130-acre farm and can last for a weekend. It began in 1998 as a simple social gathering.

Barb Clay, director of shelter affairs, said it was exciting to greet guests one by one, see old friends and meet new ones. "We were honored to have representation from the president of Ferrets Anonymous and CDFEA, April from Totally Ferret, and about 12 shelter operators."

Fun With Fundraising

Event activities included music played by DJ and emcee Bob Adams, raffles, great food to eat and a bonfire. After 11 p.m., a pole dancing contest for adults began. "This is a fun event with a representative or the shelter operator taking to the pole next to the DJ and dancing," Clay said. "While dancing, the audience is encouraged to make donations to that shelter. How they place that donation is the silliness and fun of the event!"

Guests at Ferretstock are invited to tour the shelter, which is located in two dedicated buildings – one for quarantine of newly arrived ferrets until they pass a health screening and the other for the general shelter population. "The true stars of the event are the ferrets that reside at Rocky's awaiting their opportunity to go to a forever home," Clay said. After a stop at a parvovirus station for clean up, guests can meet and interact with the ferrets. "Rocky's volunteers are manning the station, as well as both buildings to supervise and answer any questions about the ferrets," Clay said.

People's personal ferrets aren't permitted at Ferretstock so that the shelter's ferrets are protected from diseases like ADV. It's truly an event for the shelter's ferrets.

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After Ferretstock, people gather at the Great Gunpowder River to relax.

Memorable Moments

Excessive heat was one factor that made this year's Ferretstock memorable. "To comfort our guests we set up a wading pool, as well as a misting station," Clay said. "It wasn't long into the day before all concerns about appearance were forgotten, and comfort and cooling were the focus."

Perhaps the best moment for Clay at this year's event was the announcement that 15 ferrets had been adopted. "Everyone just stopped what they were doing and erupted in cheering and applause," she said. "All adopters had previously submitted applications and had been pre-screened. It was just a matter of those people coming into Rocky's and seeing if they connected with any ferrets."

This year's Ferretstock was a success. "We measure the success of Ferretstock with first the guests' enjoyment and the adoptions," Clay said. "The financial success was truly appreciated when we were able to pay off a substantial outstanding vet bill and those credit cards that supported the operation of Rocky's. That debt was nearly \$5,000!" Of course, the bills continue to come in, but Clay appreciates the temporary respite.

So what happens after a weekend of ferret fun? "The day after Ferretstock, all of us go to the back of the 130-acre farm and relax and enjoy the Great Gunpowder River," Clay said. "The river trip is now a tradition, and a relaxing way to spend the day after such a high-energy event as Ferretstock."

Plans for next year's Ferretstock will be under way soon, but the fall event, Oktoberfest, is already set. It will take place on October 18, 2008.