

AFA COMMITTEE POSITIONS OPEN

Think about it: you love ferrets. The AFA loves ferrets. That's what brought you to us in the first place, right? Our mutual love of mustelids.

Maybe it's time to take the next step and get more involved. Let's face it: even as we celebrate victories large and small related to legalization and health advancements of the domestic ferret, we're still fighting a number of battles on our pets' behalf. The California legalization bill was vetoed last fall. Misinformation continues to abound regarding the safety of owning a ferret (read any good letters to the editor lately?).

We need to do something...and we need your help. If you're willing to make a larger commitment to the ferret community at large, please consider volunteering for an AFA committee.

All Committee Directors are expected to evaluate the needs of the ferret community and the ferret as a species on an ongoing basis to determine what issues their committee should address.

Shelter Committee Volunteers

Develop, publish, and maintain guidelines for general shelter operations. Also promote for sale the shelter guidelines. Keep current the latest list of shelter/rescue organizations in the U.S. and Canada via the AFA Web site. Serve as a liaison between shelter/rescue organizations and the AFA. Promote goodwill to the shelter/rescue organizations on behalf of AFA. Promote AFA membership and benefits of joining the AFA to non-member shelter/rescues. Respond to correspondence from the public on matters pertaining to this committee's expertise and responsibilities. Contribute a minimum of one article per year to the American Ferret Report.

Legal and Legislative Committee Volunteers

Investigate and pursue current legal issues concerning ferrets and ferret ownership. Assuring that current and future legislation will not unjustly discriminate against the domestic ferret as a companion animal. Addressing discrimination and issues concerning the domestic ferret as manifested in current and proposed anti-ferret laws, legislation, ordinances, status, codes and policies. Serve as a liaison with states and individuals pursuing free and unencumbered ownership of ferrets. Support efforts toward legalization of domestic ferrets in all states, countries, territories, and municipalities of the U.S. Support efforts to change any discriminatory policies regarding ferrets. Respond to correspondence from the public on matters pertaining to this committee's expertise and responsibilities. Contribute a minimum of one article per year to the American Ferret Report.

Fundraising Director and Volunteers

Working closely with the Public Affairs to develop and maintain fundraising events, projects, and programs to benefit the AFA. Help obtain advertisements in AFA

publications, sponsorships, and donations for the AFA funds and projects. Contribute a minimum of one article per year to the American Ferret Report.

Public Affairs Volunteers

Define and establish the AFA's relationship to the public, the press, the community, other clubs, and the AFA membership. Promote public awareness and acceptance of the domestic ferrets. Promotion of all AFA meetings, activities, positions, and special events, issues, and concerns developed, supported, or initiated by the AFA. Serve as a liaison to the press. Respond to the public and press inquiries. Contribute a minimum of one article per year to the American Ferret Report. Promotion of membership/donor level drives, fund-raising events, and similar activities.

Breeder Director and Volunteers

Promote responsible ferret breeding and educate in accordance with the AFA ferret breeders' Code of Ethics. Develop and write policy statements relating to good ferret breeding practices. Develop and maintain a current breeder list for the U.S. Develop and maintain breeder-related programs. Respond

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THE AFA RECOGNIZES ITS 2004 DONORS

H. Pierson, Pennsylvania - BFF and Pam Slack Medical Grant Fund	J. Samu, New Jersey, Illinois - General Fund
T. Wheeler, Georgia - General Fund	L.M. Sherry, Massachusetts - General Fund
S. Laliberte, Pennsylvania - BFF, Pam Slack Medical Grant Fund	J. and C. Housman, Maryland - General Fund
T. Jack, Nebraska - BFF, General Fund	L. Barber, Maryland - Pam Slack Medical Grant Fund
K. Johnson, Florida - BFF	B. Ferguson, California - BFF
Curtis Critter Fund in the Community Foundation, Idaho - General Fund	C. Housman, Maryland - BFF
K. Ormond, Illinois - General Fund	N. Brauer (in memory of Mocha), Virginia - Pam Slack
D. and F. Vandenbroucke, Virginia - Pam Slack Medical Grant Fund	E. McGinn, Maryland - BFF
R. Field, Virginia - General Fund	J. and R. Deitva, Virginia - Pam Slack

NEWS

to correspondence from the public on matters pertaining to this committee's expertise and responsibilities. Contribute a minimum of one article per year to the American Ferret Report.

Health Affairs Director and Volunteers

Promotion of the Public Health through disease prevention in ferrets and preventive health practices through regular vaccination, health evaluation, and treatment of the domestic ferret. Providing correct and current scientific and medical information on health issues concerning the domestic ferret. Encourage, act upon, and evaluate research efforts to health issues consistent with the purposes of the organization. Act as a resource and support for health professionals in their activities to promote and foster health in ferrets and good public health practices. Evaluate and establish criteria for standard care and maintenance of ferrets. Serve as a liaison with health care professionals in the U.S. and neighboring countries. Respond to correspondence from the public on matters pertaining to this committee's expertise and responsibilities. Contribute a minimum of one article per year to the *AFR*.



FERRETS AND THE MATRIX

The surprising results of a recent scientific study at the University of Rochester showed that approximately four-fifths of our cognitive power is working behind the scenes—that is, without our knowledge.

To reach this conclusion, scientists used ferrets as test subjects. Said researcher Michael Weliky, "Adult ferrets had neural patterns in their visual cortex that correlated very well with images they viewed, but that correlation didn't exist at all in

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very young ferrets." In other words, "The very basis of comprehending vision may be a very different task for young brains versus old brains."

In his study, Weliky recorded the brain response of 12 ferrets watching the movie *The Matrix*. In addition to noting how the ferrets' brains responded to the film, he also paid attention to the brains' response to television static or to a darkened room. By statistically recording the motion within the motion picture, Weliky captured the way objects move across the visual field. The objective, then, was to determine if a correlation existed between the motion in the film and the firing of neurons in the ferrets' brains.

When testing adult ferrets, Weliky was surprised to find their neurons did, in fact, fire at the times of action in the film. However, when testing younger ferrets, he found almost no relationship. Thus, although the kits were taking in visual stimuli, they were not processing it consistent with reality.

Weliky likened the discrepancy to dyslexia. "It may be that in very young brains, the processing takes place in a way that's not necessarily disordered, but not analogous to how we understand reality to be," he explained. Along similar lines, infant humans process reality differently than their adult counterparts.

In other aspects of Weliky's test, he was surprised to find that the brains of ferrets in a darkened room were still processing at a high rate of activity. As he explained, "This means that in adults, there is a tremendous amount of real-world processing going on, 80 percent, when there is nothing to process." By doing the math, Weliky computed that opening our eyes adds just 20 percent processing ability. Just what is the brain doing when it is supposed to be idle?



Let's See Some Paws Up for These Positions

If you are interested in helping out with any of the committees above, please contact Tara Palaski at 1-800-FERRET1 or afa@ferret.org.