

## LITTLE “MISS FAITH”

by Lisa Leidig

[“Miss Faith” was first introduced to you (*AFR*, Nov/Dec 97) as the ferret who carries human thumbs as if they are her kits. Now hear her full story. —Ed]

Faith was picked up from Portsmouth Humane Society on June 10, 1997, released by her owner. When we came to pick her up, the first thing that I noticed was her lack of hair -- she was missing about 70% of body hair! The cage that she had lived in was filthy and about 18"x24", and there was no litter pan. The staff told us that she was a sweetie -- and so she is! A bright, alert face devoid of hair from the ears back peeked out of the blanket that the volunteer was holding her in. We then noticed that she was very thin -- almost to the point of emaciation. We estimated her age to be around 4 ½ years.

We took her home (after getting lots of ferret kisses) and began the plan to put her on the road to recovery. We gave her Totally Ferret and Iams kitten foods mixed together to fatten her up, washed the yuck off of her skin and began to litter pan train her. We waited until she was stronger to vaccinate her, and soon had her ready to integrate into the crew -- I never

saw such an energetic ferret!

Faith was a licker of monstrous proportions -- she licked at any opportunity! She had a friendly, happy disposition to people. The hair loss signaled that she mostly likely had an adrenal tumor, and the “thumb” incident happened before she had her adrenal surgery. In her case, the production of hormones by the tumor really brought out her maternal instinct!

We scheduled her for surgery to



remove the adrenal tumor, which was performed in September 1997. Faith did very well, and her right adrenal was debulked as much as possible. She was released to us with the veterinarian saying, “She’s been a little lethargic and her appetite isn’t what it should be but I know you would rather have her home.” We took her home (I was already planning the duck soup recipe for sick ferrets in my head), but when we put the carrier down and opened the door -- here comes Faith out of the travel cage, like Secretariat at the Belmont!!

Dooking madly, running from cage to cage, back to us, and to the food bowl where she began wolfing food down like there was no tomorrow! So much for lethargy! In fact, she was so energetic we had to put her in a small cage to keep from stretching her stitches!

Two days later, I was giving her the nightly medication, when I noticed in horror, pink ‘loops’ hanging down from her incision! All the clinics were closed, so we rushed her to the emergency clinic, Ernie holding a

sterile piece of gauze over the area, while I am playing Mario Andretti in my car! Her body had an allergic reaction to the stitches and had dissolved them. The emergency veterinarian cleansed her abdominal cavity, restitched the wound, and kept her overnight for observation. The loops hanging out were not her intestines (as I had feared), but fat surrounding the organs, so Faith got a tummy tuck as well! She was sent home with an “Elizabethan” collar, after removing

her body bandage twice and worrying the stitches. So for the next 10 days Faith looked like a mobile satellite dish!

Thank goodness, that was our last scare with Faith. She regrew her hair nicely and is a happy, bright little ferret. I am glad that she was given a second chance, since this little girl is a doll! She is a permanent resident of the shelter, but has a wonderful foster mommy and shelter mommy who love her.